



# 2b: Information

## Media & News

This module is about media and news. In this module, learners will develop their ability to access information in the community from key local institutions and organizations, in person and online. Through the core's focus on media, learners will increase their understanding of a recent event in Canada. They will also develop their media literacy skills. In the project, learners will develop their ability to work collaboratively toward a common goal.

*Track 2b is adapted from ELSA 7 Unit 1: The Media.*







# Learning Outcomes

## Content Outcomes







Learners will do the following:

- develop and demonstrate their ability to understand authentic news content.
- build their vocabulary.
- sharpen their critical thinking skills and learn how to target, collect, manage, and synthesize information from multiple sources.
- improve their ability to collaborate effectively in pairs and groups.
- learn how to use a computer program to create and lay out a newspaper, newsletter, blog, or website.

## Target CLB 8 Outcomes

-  **8-II Comprehending Instructions**  
Understand extended multistep directions or instructions for technical or non-technical tasks.
-  **8-I Interacting with Others**  
Participate in brief professional phone calls.
-  **8-IV Sharing Information**  
Give detailed information; express and qualify opinions or concerns; present solutions and options; indicate opposition or support for a stand in one-on-one interactions and small group discussions or meetings.
-  **8-I Interacting With Others**  
Understand moderately complex social messages (such as those conveying general opinions, assessments of current events or situations, and responses to complaints or sympathy).
-  **8-III Getting Things Done**  
Get information from moderately complex business/service texts containing proposals, recommendations and statements of rules, regulations or policies.
-  **8-I Interacting with Others**  
Convey personal messages in formal and informal correspondence for an expanding range of social purposes (such as expressing and responding to sympathy, clarifying a conflict, or giving reassurance).

## Target CLB 7 Outcomes

-  **7-II Comprehending Instructions**  
Understand moderately complex directions and instructions for technical or non-technical tasks.
-  **7-I Interacting with Others**  
Participate in routine phone calls.
-  **7-IV Sharing Information**  
Give detailed information; express and qualify opinions and feelings; express reservations, approval, disapproval, possibilities and probabilities one-on-one and in small group discussions or meetings.
-  **7-I Interacting With Others**  
Understand moderately complex personal and public social messages (such as those conveying appreciation, complaints, hopes, satisfaction and dissatisfaction).
-  **7-III Getting Things Done**  
Get information from moderately complex business/service texts containing assessments, evaluations and advice.
-  **7-I Interacting with Others**  
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).

## At a Glance

Needs  
Assessment



Core Tasks



Project Tasks

### Overview and Outcomes

Learners gather information on a media literacy issue. Alternatively, they investigate a recent piece in the news.

#### Core Task 1

Learners discuss a media literacy topic or a recent event, story, or topic in the news.

#### Core Task 2

Learners access information from informational pamphlets, brochures, or websites about a media literacy issue or public service campaign or social media technology and services.

#### Core Task 3

Learners listen to instructions related to a local, regional, or national public service or media literacy campaign, or a social media tool.

### Overview and Outcomes

Learners work collaboratively to create a class or organizational newsletter, newspaper, blog or website. As they identify and access relevant information from sources, learners develop the confidence and language skills needed to gather, edit, and produce news as a team.

#### Community Project

Learners develop a newspaper story about a community topic.

#### Workplace Project

Learners develop a newspaper story about a workplace topic.

#### Study Project

Learners develop a newspaper story about a study topic.

## 2b: Media & News Core Tasks

### Possible Topics

#### Media

- the media's role in shaping beliefs, attitudes and perceptions
- free speech and censorship in the media
- the impact of social media on how news is created
- new media versus traditional media
- the pros and cons of living in a wired world
- cyber-bullying, the sexualization of youth, parental controls, and other issues related to youth and the internet

#### News

- general or human interest stories
- municipal, regional, or national current events
- comparisons of how news stories are presented in different countries
- local, national or international newsmakers
- news talk shows and what they say about local and national values and priorities

# Core Task 1

## Overview

Learners explore and debate a current event in the news, or an issue or trend concerning traditional or new media, social media, or media literacy.

## Target CLB Outcome: 🗣️ 8-IV Sharing Information

Give detailed information; express and qualify opinions or concerns; present solutions and options; indicate opposition or support for a stand in one-on-one interactions and small group discussions or meetings.

## Modify to 🗣️ CLB 7-IV Sharing Information

Give detailed information; express and qualify opinions and feelings; express reservations, approval, disapproval, possibilities and probabilities one-on-one and in small group discussions or meetings.

## Description

Learners will participate in informal class, group or pair discussions on a popular event in the news, or issues related to media literacy or social media in a contemporary context. Instructors should conduct a needs assessment to identify key interest areas prior to the discussions. Different readings or videos should be assigned to individual learners, pairs, or small groups using jigsaws so different learners are tasked with presenting and requesting different information. During the discussion, learners share facts, opinions, problems, and solutions with other group members. During the discussions, learners will do the following:

- provide detailed information and present options as needed.
- ask relevant questions to gather, share, analyze, and compare information.
- summarize information and ideas to clarify and expand understanding.
- express and qualify opinions, feelings, doubts, and concerns.
- hold the floor, share the floor, draw others out, and thank them for their contribution.
- participate effectively in interactions.

After the discussion, have the class make a record of the issues discussed and the ideas presented, including possible resources to consult. For instance, newcomer parents who are concerned about their ability to control their children's use of social media might search for materials and support groups that provide advice about this topic. Encourage students to choose a topic of personal interest or relevance from the ideas generated by the class to follow up with in the subsequent core tasks.

## Formative Assessment

See the Rubric, *Formative Assessment Toolkit* (CLB 🗣️7-IV), p. 91. Adapt as needed. Find this on Tutela.ca.

## Skill Building Tasks for Core Task 1

### Diplomatic Language

Review diplomatic language and strategies for giving opinions, agreeing and disagreeing, interrupting, and maintaining a conversation. Participate in a group discussion about a controversial topic related to media/news and encourage learners to apply the practiced strategies during the conversation. See **LINC Vol. 1, 378** for more information.

### Managing Conversations

Review language helpful for managing conversations. Have learners participate in a mock informational interview or a short pair discussion to use this language. See **EFW 47** for more information.

### Non-Verbal Communication

***You're Hired Now What; Chapter 5***, discusses body language and non-verbal customs common in Canada. Some topics that would be of value to learners include reading people's moods from their gestures, body language and facial expressions, making eye contact and smiling to show interest, and respecting others' personal space.

### Canadian Communication Styles

***You're Hired Now What; Chapter 6***, covers typical styles of Canadian communication and conversation patterns. Areas to highlight include direct vs. indirect styles of addressing others (with Canadians being in the middle culturally), ping pong conversational styles (good for learners from cultures that are accustomed to giving extensive monologues).

## Core Task 2

### Overview

Learners read about a media literacy topic or about a recent event, story, or topic in the news.

### Target CLB Outcome: 8-III Getting Things Done

Get information from moderately complex business/ service texts containing proposals, recommendations and statements of rules, regulations or policies.

### Modify to CLB 7-III Getting Things Done

Get information from moderately complex business/ service texts containing assessments, evaluations and advice.

### Description

In pairs or individually, choose one topic to focus on from either media or a recent event, story, or topic in the news.

This task encourages students to access one or two business or service texts related to the issue that contain proposals, recommendations, and advice (e.g., a school's pamphlet advising parents how to teach children media literacy on the internet, a bulletin from a media literacy advisory body, guidelines for joining and participating in an online chat group, or other types of community or company newsletters or bulletins, pamphlets, business letters, or municipal notices). Texts should be about one to three pages. While reading the text, do the following:

- identify layout and organization of the texts to find needed information.
- identify main ideas, key details and implied meanings.
- identify writer's purpose, intent, mood and attitude in sections of the texts.
- scan texts and make inferences to select the relevant information.
- find and integrate three or four pieces of information for comprehension and use.

Integrate and reduce the information from the two texts into a short pair or individual presentation, outlining the issue and the recommendations, advice, or proposals from the text. Presentations should be no longer than five minutes.

### Formative Assessment

See the Comments Chart, *Formative Assessment Toolkit* (CLB  7-III), p. 98. Find this on Tutela.ca.

## Skill Building Tasks for Core Task 2

### Public Information Texts

Public information texts often provide information about rights, the law or government services. These texts are accessible on the internet.

**LINC 5 Managing Info 45** reviews some common vocabulary related to navigating a service website.

### Grammar for Expressing Urgency & Importance

Instructors may want to provide lessons on grammar structures that are often used for expressing urgency, or giving warnings, such as the imperative, the subjunctive, and modals of necessity and obligation.

See the following resource related to this topic:

<http://www.grammar-quizzes.com/modal3.html>

### Passive Voice

Review the use of the passive voice and have learners find and underline examples in the reading texts. Discuss appropriate uses of the passive voice in written and oral communication.

Further develop learners' understanding of the passive voice by reviewing the use of other common passive reported speech structures such as "it's believed that..." and "it's generally thought that..." See the following resource related to this topic:

<http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/passive.htm>

### Facts and Opinions

Compare writers' perspectives and points of view by comparing types of text on the topic (e.g., official government communications compared to a newspaper report). Encourage learners to identify tone and attitude, and differentiate fact from opinion. See [BBC Skillswise: Fact or Opinion](#) for more information.



## Core Task 3

### Overview

Learners watch an instructional video about the chosen tool for publishing the class news project.

### Target CLB Outcome: 8-II Comprehending Instructions

Understand extended multistep directions or instructions for technical or non-technical tasks.

### Modify to 7-II Comprehending Instructions

Understand moderately complex directions and instructions for technical or non-technical tasks.

### Description

In this core task, learners will improve their ability to follow instructions. A good skill-building task related to the theme that an instructor might use to introduce the task could be a pre-recorded audio recording giving instructions on how to navigate and locate information in a local, regional or national newspaper. Learners should also practice following prompts from an automated phone recording. In pairs or individually, have learners choose a “How-to” topic of personal interest related to information technology, media literacy, or social media (e.g. how to install an anti-virus program, how to set-up and use a new phone or electronic device, how to program parental controls on a child’s computer, how to set up a LinkedIn profile, how to join, navigate and participate in a social conferencing platform, etc.). Next, have learners locate and watch an instructional video, taking notes on the directions or demonstrating comprehension by performing an action.

While listening to the instructions, learners will do the following:

- follow sequence markers, cohesive devices (connecting words, pronoun reference, parallel structure, substitution) or other linguistic clues to infer the order of the steps.
- respond with actions to directions and instructions.
- seek clarification and confirmation if required.

Finally, in preparation for the unit project task, have students work in small groups and record details of a basic tutorial on a desktop publishing program (e.g., Microsoft Word, Microsoft Publisher, or Adobe InDesign), blog (e.g., WordPress or Blogger), or website. While watching or listening to the tutorial, write accurate, neatly organized steps on how to use basic functions of the layout program to share with the group.

### Formative Assessment

See the *Formative Assessment Toolkit* for ideas on creating formative assessment tools on Tutela.ca.

## Skill Building Tasks for Core Task 3

### Sequence Markers

Elicit and provide signal words and time transitions. Give students transcripts of instructions with cohesive devices omitted and have students work in pairs or groups to add the missing cohesive devices to make the instructions more comprehensible. Before listening to samples, provide cut-ups of the steps in transcripts and have pairs or groups put them in order. See the BBC "[How to... Give Instructions](#)" for an instructional video.

### Subordinating Conjunctions

Review the grammar rules of complex sentences, which are usually found in detailed instructional texts or audio texts. [UVIC's Study Zone](#) provides a short and concise lesson on common subordinators, and followed by exercises for practice.

### Parallel Structure

Instructions are usually written in parallel structures for clarity. The short lesson entitled, [Stylistic Devices – Parallelism](#), provides a succinct explanation about why parallel writing is important when giving instructions.

### Clarification Techniques

Review the use of clarification techniques, such as paraphrasing or repeating back for confirming or clarifying instructions. See **LINC Vol. 1, 377** and **378** for audio and situational role play cards.

### Imperative

BBC SkillsWise has a short handout on the grammar of instructions, with an emphasis on using the imperative. See this resource [Understanding Instructions](#). For more information.

### Automated Phone Lines

Identify the intonation patterns used in the instructions. Have learners practice using the intonation patterns with a script or set of instructions. See **LINC Vol. 1 390-391** for practice using automated phone lines.

# Project Overview

## Produce a Newsletter, Newspaper, Blog, or Website

### Description

Learners will work collaboratively to create a newsletter, newspaper, blog, or website for their community, class, or settlement organization. As they identify and access information from relevant sources, learners develop the confidence and language skills needed to gather, edit, and produce news as a team. In this project, learners will do the following:

**Pre-Task** Brainstorm and decide on a focus of production, topics to include, and preferred medium to present the message. Watch an instructional tutorial and take notes about how to use the tool of choice to produce and design their project. Work in groups to produce a publication that contains news articles relevant to the learners. First, brainstorm possible topics and ideas with the group. During brainstorming, group members should practice the skills learned in Core Task 1 to make decisions and reach a consensus.

**Task 1** Make phone calls to request information. Appropriately greet and close a conversation or leave a detailed message.

**Task 2** Read sample social or business emails, letters to the editor, and social media blogs for ideas, Find newsletters on the internet for models of style, social media comments, common idioms, and modes of correspondence.

**Task 3** Practice and use email conventions to work collaboratively via email to produce articles. Send emails to community contacts to request information, follow-up, and thank sources for their contributions.

### Content Outcomes

Learners will do the following:

- research a topic of interest related to their community, workplace, or study and learn how to use a computer program to create and lay out text and graphics for publication.
- learn common email, telephone, and other social media conventions in Canada.
- improve their ability to collaborate effectively in pairs and groups.

### Target CLB 8 Outcomes

#### 8-I Interacting with Others

Participate in brief professional phone calls.

#### 8-I Interacting with Others

Understand moderately complex social messages (such as those conveying general opinions, assessments of current events or situations, and responses to complaints or sympathy).

#### 8-I Interacting with Others

Convey personal messages in formal and informal correspondence for an expanding range of social purposes (such as expressing and responding to sympathy, clarifying a conflict, or giving reassurance).

### Target CLB 7 Outcomes

#### 7-I Interacting with others

Participate in routine phone calls.

#### 7-I Interacting With Others

Understand moderately complex personal and public social messages (such as those conveying appreciation, complaints, hopes, satisfaction and dissatisfaction).

#### 7-I Interacting with Others

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).

### Possible Topics

#### Community

- recent news, special events, and interviews in the local community
- news about newcomers and newcomer programs in the community
- first-person narratives about the immigrant experience

#### Workplace

- a publication about career tips for newcomers
- the use of social media in the workplace
- a workplace newsletter
- news regarding upcoming job fairs, apprenticeship programs, job prospects, and skill profiles

#### Study

- a publication about education and studying in Canada for newcomers
- publications about Canadian current events written for other learners
- a publication about a popular media or digital literacy issue
- an organization (school, settlement or college) newsletter providing updates.

# Project Task 1

## Overview

Learners conduct telephone calls to gather information for the class publication.

### Target CLB Outcome: 🗣️ 8-I Interacting With Others

Participate in brief professional phone calls.

### Modify to 🗣️ CLB 7-I Interacting with Others

Participate in routine phone calls.

## Description

Elicit and teach language for making brief professional phone calls, such as phrases for opening and closing conversation and requesting and clarifying information. Use the phrases to develop a script in which learners do the following:

- open, maintain and close the phone conversation in a professional manner.
- provide information in a professional manner.
- clarify and confirm information.
- use an appropriate level of formality with increased ability.

In pairs, use the scripts to role-play the telephone conversations that they need to make with the chosen organization or individuals to gather information to publish in the class newspaper or newsletter. For instance, students might contact a retiring long-term employee at the students' organization to gather information for a feature,

Conduct a real telephone conversation by contacting one of the chosen organizations or individuals and reporting back to the class on the conversation in a class discussion on the chosen issues or listen and provide feedback on the other learners' role-plays. Emphasis should be on courtesy and social interaction, formulaic expressions (thanking sources appropriately, responding with empathy or encouragement to sources' personal stories), rather than content.

## Formative Assessment

See the Self-Reflection, *Learner Self-Assessment Toolkit* (CLB 🗣️ 7-ALL), pp. 57-58. Find this on Tutela.ca.

See the Speaking Ability Rating Scale, *Learner Self-Assessment Toolkit* (CLB 🗣️ 8-I), pp. 69-70. Find this on Tutela.ca.

## Skill Building Tasks for Project Task 1

### Phrasal Verbs

Review common phrasal verbs used in telephone conversations. Have learners practice using separable and inseparable phrasal verbs. See **LINC Vol. 2, 324-325**.

### Pronunciation Patterns

Highlight pronunciation patterns in the telephone scripts (e.g., intonation patterns in questions). Learners practice speaking clearly in the telephone role-plays and focus on producing key information clearly. Record the role-plays and have learners listen to them again, identifying areas to work on. See **EFW 10, LINC Vol. 2, 373** for more information.

### Register

Discuss appropriate register for different types of phone conversations (e.g., routine, professional, friendly, etc.), and have learners identify language for appropriate telephone etiquette for different situations. **LINC Vol. 2, 373**

### Conversational Language

Listen to language for requesting information, changing the topic, and opening and closing a meeting. Have learners create a script for a mock informational interview, and encourage them to incorporate reviewed language in the script. See **LINC Vol. 1, 378** for more information.

### Reported Speech

Review the use of reported speech, including different grammar structures used with reporting verbs. Have learners give feedback to a partner on the telephone script, using reported speech structures or when reporting orally on a discussion related to the task topic. See **LINC Vol. 2, 385** for more information.

### Situation Scripts

Have learners develop additional situational scripts for different types of telephone conversations (e.g., calls between friends to make arrangements, calls financial institutions to solve problems, etc.). As a class, use the scripts to create a checklist for common types of routine or professional telephone calls. Have learners use the checklists to give peer feedback on the telephone role-plays. See **EFW 29, EFW 27, LINC Vol. 2, 418** for more information.

### Managing Conversations

Review language helpful for managing conversations. Have learners participate in a mock informational interview or a short pair discussion to use this language. See **EFW 47** for more information.

## Project Task 2

### Overview

Learners examine newsletters and blogs and analyze for typical stories/ elements and formulaic expressions (from work, schools, etc.) upcoming event/thanks/ letters to the editor thanking volunteers, etc. for work on / sad news/ obits/ birth and wedding announcements

### Target CLB Outcome 8-I Interacting with Others

Understand moderately complex social messages (such as those conveying general opinions, assessments of current events or situations, and responses to complaints or sympathy).

### Modify to CLB 7-I Interacting with Others

Understand moderately complex personal and public social messages (such as those conveying appreciation, complaints, hopes, satisfaction and dissatisfaction).

### Description

In this task, learners will read the email, letter, or blog entry to do the following:

- identify factual details and implied meanings.
- identify the purpose of the message.
- identify the relationship between the reader and the writer.
- identify the tone and the intended emotional effect.
- identify context and situation.
- identify register and style.

The email, letter, newsletter, forum or blog entry should be one to two pages long and be related to a personal experience or familiar context. Hold a small group discussion expressing and qualifying opinions or experiences outlined in the letter, email, or blog entry.

### Formative Assessment

See the *Formative-Assessment Toolkit* for ideas on creating formative assessment tools. Find this on Tutela.ca.

## Skill Building Tasks for Project Tasks 2 and 3

### Email Etiquette

Examine email etiquette before having learners search the internet for explanations of formal and informal language. Have learners read sample emails to determine level of formality. See **LINC Vol. 1, 216**, and **EFW 56**.

### Thanking

Review email conventions for thank-you emails. Practice these conventions using the worksheets in **EFW 54** and **EFW 67**). Have learners write thank you letters, whether formal or informal to anyone who helps them with their staff project (e.g. an administrator at another office who coordinates their student writing contributions for the newsletter.

### Making Requests

Read sample request emails to identify phrases and structures for making requests. Have learners write a request email and include these phrases and structures. See **LINC Vol. 1, 219, 366 - 367**.

### Hope and Wish

As in the practice activities in Core Task 2, encourage students to incorporate hope and wish structures in the class newsletter or blog (e.g., *I wish you the best on your retirement, We hope you keep in touch, etc.*) See **Learning English with the CBC, Manitoba EAL, Lesson 41**.



# Project Task 3

## Overview

Learners examine effective email practices to work collaboratively and produce articles for their group newspaper.

*This task can be done in conjunction with Tasks 1 and 2.*

## Target CLB Outcome ✍️ 8-I Interacting with Others

Convey personal messages in formal and informal correspondences for an expanded range of social purposes (such as expressing and responding to sympathy, clarifying a conflict, or giving reassurance).

## Modify to CLB ✍️ 7-I Interacting with Others

Convey personal messages in formal and informal correspondences for an expanded range of social purposes (such as expressing and responding to appreciation, complaints, disappointment, satisfaction, dissatisfaction or hope).

## Description

In this task, learners will read websites or online texts giving recommendations or suggestions on how to write effective emails. They will review and practice these structures for email etiquette and communication. Students must establish and maintain contact with the group by email to collaboratively produce the newspaper. The emails should be about three paragraphs long and do the following:

- convey a clear message to the reader.
- demonstrate an understanding of the audience in language, register, tone, and format.

In addition, the emails should:

- develop and join ideas appropriately to form a coherent text.
- contain an introduction, development of ideas, and a conclusion.
- demonstrate control of spelling, punctuation, complex structures, vocabulary.

In support of this task, have students practice diplomacy and tact, for example, following up with sources who haven't got back to them yet, reminders about deadlines, problems with distribution, etc. Learners might also reassure teammates that they will finish their tasks on time, or resolve a conflict between team members.

## Formative Assessment

See the Rubric tool, *ELSA 6/7 Formative Assessment Toolkit* (CLB ✍️8-I) page 116.

## Media & News Resources

### [Canadian Immigrant Magazine](#)

This is a great free resource for both teachers and learners. It offers information on settlement in BC, culture, education, money and business, etc. It also has a very good collection of immigrant stories, in which Canadian immigrants discuss a wide variety of topics about life in Canada.

### [CBC](#)

This site offers Canadian and international headlines, articles, wireless services, email digests, and live internet radio.

### [Learning English with the CBC](#)

This site offers two kinds of podcasts and ESL materials. One is a weekly news report ranging from local, national and international. They are targeted at a CLB level 4. The other is a monthly feature story, targeted at a CLB 6+ learner and considerably longer in length. These are accompanied by ESL materials that cover communicative listening, speaking, reading and writing skills. They also include vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation activities.

### [CBC Manitoba EAL](#)

Here you will find English as an Additional Language (EAL) lessons, which are based on CBC Manitoba radio stories broadcast on CBC Radio One. The lessons are designed for intermediate-level learners, but there are tips on how to adapt them on the teacher's page. Each lesson has a classroom version and a self-study version. All of the lessons are available on the website.

### [CBC News In Review](#)

This is a website that features lessons about important news stories of the day, written collaboratively by a team of journalists and teachers. There are many audio-visual resources, as well as in-depth analysis of the story told from multiple perspectives. Lesson plans and comprehension questions accompany the stories, which are a good level for CLB 7 and 8 learners. Some of the stories that relate to this module include, "*The Decline of Traditional Media*," "*Bill C30 and Internet Privacy*," "*The Internet, 40 Years Later*," "*Life, Work, and Smartphones*," and "*How Facebook Changed the World*."

### [Intersections: CBC Radio One](#)

A weekly radio broadcast that explores issues related to multiculturalism in Canada. The stories dig beyond the cliché and look at the potential culture clashes that can occur in a country that is evolving and changing every day.

### [Media Smarts: Canada's Centre for Digital and Media Literacy](#)

This is a fantastic website that offers video, lesson plans, and tip sheets about a wide range of topics. Designed to educate youth, this is great material for ESL learners that perhaps come from cultures with more restrictions in their press. You can search for lessons on this site by medium or by topic.

### [Center for Media Literacy](#)

This American website is an excellent resource for teachers seeking guidance on how to teach critical thinking and media literacy. A free PDF of their 2003 book *Literacy for the 21st Century* is available on the site, with ample teaching resources for purchase.

## Media & News Resources, Continued

### [Global News](#)

Global News Online offers Canadians from coast to coast news and information, from breaking news in the community to deep engaging content that puts complex world issues in perspective.

### [BBC Learning English](#)

This site is designed to help ESL learners develop their media literacy skills. There are news stories, recipes, words of the day, audio and video segments, quizzes, and tutorials to guide learners through stories in the news.

### [Incorporating Critical Thinking Skills Development into ESL/EFL Courses](#)

Written by Andy Halvorsen, this site offers an accessible summary of key approaches to teaching critical thinking to ESL learners. He describes critical thinking as the product of two key skills: examining an issue from multiple perspectives and considering our own relationship to an issue. He offers three techniques for teaching critical thinking: Debate, Media Analysis, and Problem Solving.

### [Maclean's](#)

A national weekly current affairs magazine, *Maclean's* enlightens, engages, and entertains readers with strong investigative reporting and exclusive stories from leading journalists in the fields of international affairs, social issues, national politics, business, and culture.

### [The Globe and Mail](#)

The site includes articles, video, features, top-rated comments, and poll results. To ensure that the content is relevant, use the search engine on the website.

### [The Province](#)

This is an online source of news on British Columbia, BC, Canada, and around the world.

### [Vancouver Sun](#)

This is an online source of news on British Columbia, BC, Canada, and around the world.

## ESL and Skill Building Resources

***LINC 5-7 Classroom Activities, Volumes 1 & 2.* Toronto Catholic District School Board. (2010)..**

One of the good lessons for this module is, "If We Are Going To Talk Citizenship, Let's Have a Principled Debate," a reading that would be a good primer for the discussion task in Core Task 1. Also, there are a lot of lessons on interacting with others, both socially, and in a professional or customer service setting. **Volume 1, Chapter 5** covers business writing, and **Volume. 2, Chapter 7** features telephone skills.

***Teaching Reading Skills In a Foreign Language.* Nuttall, C. Oxford: Macmillan. (2005).**

This seminal work presents strategies for teaching reading skills using authentic materials. Nuttall's approach involves enabling learners to enjoy reading unfamiliar authentic texts independently and at appropriate speed with adequate understanding. She explores these ideas and gives a wealth of strategies for teaching reading skills using authentic content. Teachers will find pages 30 – 39 particularly useful.

***Listening in the Language Classroom.* Field, J. London & NY: Cambridge University Press. (2009).**

This is an excellent general resource for novice and experienced teachers who want to learn current practices in the teaching of listening. Although the rather scholarly overview may not appeal, more hands-on teachers will appreciate the tips on selecting and leveling listening tasks using authentic materials and the specific, practical ideas and techniques for teaching listening.

***Well Said: Advanced English Pronunciation.* Grant, Linda, Boston: Heinle & Heinle. (1993).**

Chapter 7 of this text, "Rhythm in Sentences," focuses on linking and reductions and contains an activity wherein learners are to record a short telephone message (for an answering service). Have learners assess themselves or their peers on their pronunciation of content words and reductions of function words. In Chapter 9, "More Functions of Intonation," students practice conversation management strategies and intonation patterns for requesting clarification or more information, or registering surprise.

**[ESL Telephone Alphabet: Thompson Language Centre](#)**

This handy chart will help learners practice the common strategy of using small words to represent letters of important names, addresses, etc.

***ELSA Net Resources for Higher Levels: Small Talk* (Find this resource on [Tutela.ca](#))**

This amusing resource from ELSA Net contains an activity about identifying appropriate topics for small talk, discussion questions, and instructions for a class speaking game. This resource is entitled, **30-Second Small Talk**, and links to other resources about email writing.

***Writing for the Real World 2: An Introduction to Business Writing.* Barnard, R. & Meehan, A. London: Oxford University Press. (2005).**

This resource includes functions commonly used in letter writing: making inquiries, complaining, placing orders, etc. It also includes a unit on writing a short report.

## ESL and Skill Building Resources, Continued

***Technically Speaking: English at Work*; 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Drolet, S. & Seguin, A. Quebec: Pearson Longman (2008).**

This textbook features extended moderately complex readings about business writing and social media, in addition to practical instructional lessons about telephone skills and email writing.

***You're Hired ...Now What? An Immigrant's Guide to Success in the Canadian Workplace.* Goldman, Lynda, Ontario: Oxford University Press. (2010).**

This is a great resource for the classroom, and even those learners who don't plan on entering the workforce can benefit from the tips and information about Canadian soft skills and intercultural communication. This resource also features chapters on telephone interactions and business writing.

***LINC 5-7 Classroom Activities, Volumes 1 & 2.* Toronto Catholic District School Board. (2010)**

There are a lot of good modules in both volumes of this resource that work with this curriculum. See Volume 1, Chapter 3, for lessons about social interactions. **Volume 1, Chapter 5** covers business writing, and Volume 2, Chapter 7 features telephone skills.

***Breakthroughs: An Integrated Upper Intermediate English Program.* McPherson-Ramirez, G & Engelking, M. Don Mills, Ontario: Oxford University Press. (2011).**

Unit 4, Stay Tuned...is on the topic of young people's use of new media and has many skill building activities.

***EFW Activity 118*** – EXT Handout 2, 235-236; Social Media Tools

This resource provides an overview of social media trends and other related vocabulary in Unit 4, "Stay Tuned," and a lesson about reported speech.

[GCFLearnFree.org](http://GCFLearnFree.org)

This website, which is run by a non-profit organization called the Goodwill Community Foundation International, offers free interactive tutorials on computer and social media technology. The language is purposely written very clearly, and is a great resource for students who are intimidated by technology. The website also includes some digital literacy lessons about understanding the different types of websites on the internet, and how to assess sources for reliability.

***Focus on Grammar 5, 4<sup>th</sup> edition.* Maurer, Jay. Pearson Education ESL. (2011).**

Many of the units in this series focus on media, advertising and communication. In a chapter highlighting reported speech, students read a journalism textbook about accuracy in news reporting. Another chapter compares and contrasts simple and progressive tenses and action and non-action verbs through a transcript of a radio talk show and an editorial.

***EFW: Activity Plan 182***

This lesson is about writing thank-you notes for meetings and other social interactions.