

To ensure that learners are on an appropriate course

To help teachers and trainers plan to meet the learners' needs

To enable learners to meet course and personal objectives and maximise progress

To identify starting points for new learners joining the group

To identify starting points for existing learners progressing from one course to another

Competence at an appropriate level in the skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing

Any previous learning of the taught language or other languages

Personal objectives for learning the language

At enrolment sessions prior to registering for a course

At any pre-course information, advice and guidance sessions

During learners' initial sessions on the course

Assess any previous experience of learning other languages, including community languages

Establish learners' reasons for learning a language

Identify learners' previous knowledge of the taught language from holidays

Adopt a positive attitude and ensure the activity is a natural part of the learning session

Explain that it will help you to meet their individual needs and personalise their learning

Emphasise the benefits of initial assessment for making maximum progress

To assess listening and speaking skills use role-plays, icebreakers or discussions

To assess reading skills, use signs, public notices or newspaper articles

To assess writing skills ask learners to write messages, postcards, shopping lists or letters

To measure learners' progress over time

To show learners what progress they have made and motivate them

To inform future planning of courses and sessions

Support learners in setting realistic goals for their individual learning plans to maintain motivation

Use the information gathered to plan your sessions to meet learners' diverse needs and to personalise learning