

TEACHING ESOL LEARNERS WITH BASIC LITERACY NEEDS

TEN TOP TIPS

ESOL LEARNERS WITH BASIC LITERACY NEEDS CAN BE FOUND IN ESOL, FUNCTIONAL SKILLS AND VOCATIONAL CLASSES. THEY MAY HAVE MISSED OUT ON EDUCATION BECAUSE OF POVERTY, ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS OR WAR; THEY MAY OR MAY NOT BE ABLE TO SPEAK ENGLISH WELL, AND MAY OR MAY NOT BE LITERATE IN ANOTHER LANGUAGE. WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP THEM?

- 01 Assess learners' literacy needs**
- Carry out an assessment of each learner's reading and writing skills, including recognising common social sight words and their ability to form letters.
 - Talk to and observe the learner informally over several sessions to identify what they can or can't read/write, including in their first language.

- 02 Get help with planning and teaching**
- Use the Entry 1 Basic Literacy Reading and Entry 1 Basic Literacy Writing curricula to help plan meaningful and contextualised activities which relate to the learners' lives.
 - Use adult-appropriate resources such as the Scottish ESOL Literacies materials.

- 03 Use graded reading strategies**
- Reading is a complex process, so start with familiar whole words and meaningful text instead of individual letters or the alphabet.
 - For complete beginner readers, use words they are familiar with, e.g. family names and key social sight words such as 'EXIT', 'Road' and 'No smoking'.

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- 04 Highlight letter sounds in a meaningful way**
- Introduce phonics by teaching sound-letter(s) correspondences in words learners already know, and build on this.

- 05 Use simple reading texts**
- Begin with oral work, which is essential for setting the context, and pre-teach key vocabulary. Recommended techniques, are for example, choral reading, paired reading and repeated reading.
 - Use visuals, video clips and relate the text to learners' experiences.

- 06 Use learners' own words**
- Create texts using the language experience approach, i.e., what learners can say, so that texts are meaningful and relevant to them.

- 07 Exploit language experience texts**
- Record learners' texts so they can read and listen at the same time.
 - Create gap-fills or matching activities, e.g. word or sentence cards to match with words or sentences in the text.
 - Select sounds for teaching phonics and choose words for spelling practice.

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- 08 Use very simple forms**
- Use personal information forms to create practice activities, e.g. gap fills and matching words using upper-case and lower-case letters such as 'NAME' – 'name'.

- 09 Support handwriting skills**
- Observe whether your learner can hold a pen/pencil and form letters correctly.
 - Provide plenty of handwriting practice activities if they haven't learned to write before.

- 10 Use a variety of text-types for reading and writing**
- Find out what your learners need to read and write in their everyday lives.
 - Relate classroom tasks to the reading and writing skills they need both in and out of the classroom.

**FOR FURTHER READING AND LINKS TO RESOURCES VISIT:
[ESOL.EXCELLENCEGATEWAY.ORG.UK/VOCABULARY/EGAUDIENCE/PRACTITIONERS](https://www.esol.excellencegateway.org.uk/vocabulary/egaudience/practitioners)**