

# ESOL Literacies: Access 2

## Tutor guide



## **Acknowledgements**

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## **Publishing information**

First edition

Published date: March 2008

Publication code: BB4354

First Published 2008

Published by the Scottish Qualifications Authority  
The Optima Building, 58 Robertson Street, Glasgow G2 8DQ  
Ironmills Road, Dalkeith, Midlothian EH22 1LE

[www.sqa.org.uk](http://www.sqa.org.uk)

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## ESOL Literacies (Access 2) Learning Support Materials

### Introduction

The Adult ESOL Strategy for Scotland (the Strategy) was launched in March 2007. The Strategy sets out the direction and structure of ESOL provision in Scotland, as well as proposing a structure of support and professionalisation for the ESOL teaching community in their delivery of ESOL in the 21st century.

Adult ESOL literacies learners are one of the groups supported within the Strategy. An adult ESOL literacies learner is a person who has little or no literacy in English and who may or may not have literacy in another language and whose spoken English may range from basic to fluent.

To coincide with the launch of the Strategy, the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) has produced two National Units for such learners within the revised NQ ESOL framework. The materials included here are designed to supplement existing resources when preparing learners for these new Units. Below is a brief outline of the Outcomes they are designed to support, as follows:<sup>1</sup>

Unit Title	Outcomes
English for Speakers of Other Languages: An Introduction to Beginner English Literacies 1	1 Communicate orally in English for transactional purposes
	2 Demonstrate an understanding of social sight vocabulary
	3 Demonstrate an understanding of simple number concepts
	4 Copy written English on lines
English for Speakers of Other Languages: An Introduction to Beginner English Literacies 2	1 Communicate orally in English for personal and social purposes
	2 Demonstrate an understanding of simple written texts
	3 Produce simple written English on lines

Although there is a difference in challenge in terms of reading and writing between the two levels – ESOL: Literacies 1 candidates being asked to copy, and ESOL: Literacies 2 candidates to produce, written English, for example – the spoken competence required is the same. The materials presented here are **not** differentiated between ESOL Literacies 1 & 2; as will be discussed, they are designed to be adapted by tutors, not just in terms of difficulty but also regarding cultural, social and personal contexts.

<sup>1</sup> For more detail, see the relevant Unit specifications and NABS for Units F1AF08 and F1AG08, available from [www.sqa.org.uk](http://www.sqa.org.uk)

As both Units cover a range of topics relevant to both transactional and personal/social contexts, the materials produced have been divided into sections corresponding to SQA's suggested topics list within the Unit specification.

**Ringbinder 1** contains the following packs:

Tutor Guide  
Alphabet  
Personal identity  
House, home and environment  
Daily life

**Ringbinder 2** contains:

Free time and leisure  
Health  
Shopping  
Travel  
Food and drink

In addition, other sections have been included. The first, Alphabet, numbers and phonics, contains materials designed to help learners with letter and number formation, as well as recognising and deciphering the sounds of simple English spelling conventions. Within this section, Times, days and dates, deals with notions of time. These can be used in conjunction with any of the other materials to supplement or extend learners' work. It is worth noting, that exercises on phonics, letter formation and notions of time are already present in much of the materials. This is no bad thing, as much of the work with learners at these levels involves finding many different ways to practice a specific task.

### **Guidelines on using the packs**

These support materials should not be used as stand-alone lessons. They take the form of supporting materials to be used within a lesson. Some are linked according to context and can be used, adapted or even transformed altogether to suit the needs of the learner. Please note:

- The packs can be used in any order and at either level, ie ESOL: Literacies 1 or ESOL: Literacies 2.
- The packs are available as pdf and Word files from SQA Co-ordinators. The Word files can be adapted to your learners' contexts eg change 'city' to 'town'; change Eastern European names to African.
- Please ensure, when you are photocopying pictures from the pack, that the photocopier is set to the highest resolution.
- It is suggested that the 'Health' and 'Shopping' packs are used towards the end of the course, ie at Literacies 2 level, just before the learners move on to the Access 2 Units.
- Please ensure you refer to the relevant Unit Specification for each ESOL: Literacies Unit before you use this material.

## Some useful approaches

### Reading

A combination of the 'phonic approach' where learners begin to decipher individual letters, using blends and digraphs in order to read unknown vocabulary, and whole-word recognition, is perhaps best for developing reading skills for learners at these levels. Throughout the materials, therefore, flashcards have been included to encourage the learning of whole words (particularly those social sight words and number concepts necessary for success in Literacies 1), as well as phonics exercises which focus on individual sounds. Context is all-important, recognising that literacies are social practices, and so authentic materials that the learners would encounter in everyday life have been incorporated where possible. It is essential that tutors introduce their learners to a variety of relevant text types. Recognition of the layout of such texts as notes, timetables, tickets and so on is particularly key to success in ESOL Literacies 2.

Learners should also be encouraged to start using simple dictionaries, or picture dictionaries, from as early a stage as possible. The making of personal dictionaries can be a good way of teaching alphabetical ordering as well as reinforcing the phonics of initial letters. With any vocabulary, kinaesthetic ordering activities (whether by alphabet, word-class or some other category) are useful, as well as the reassembling of syllables into whole words. Much of the vocabulary presented here is designed to be cut out for just such exercises. It is recommended, however, that any new vocabulary is presented orally (perhaps via images or mime) before it is read. Even a few items of unknown vocabulary in a text can form an impenetrable barrier at these levels.

It is hoped that the layout of the worksheets here, lacking the sometimes daunting clutter of conventional course books, will be simple enough to encourage learners to read as much as possible for themselves. For many learners, however, much assistance will be required with even the simplest of instructions or reading tasks. A good strategy can be for the learner to read the text aloud with the tutor and other learners, then read again, paired with another suitable learner, before finally tackling the text alone. This builds reading confidence and quickly draws the tutor's attention to any particular problems.

Some of the short texts and related exercises included here demonstrate the possibilities of exploiting reading material for these levels. In short, there are many ways to approach even a short paragraph of text: comprehension questions, sentence reconstruction, gap-fills, simple grammar work, phonics work, word-searches, copying, re-punctuating, personalising and so on. Tutors should adapt and select whatever exercises will suit their learners' needs.

Throughout, answer keys have been provided, which should be of particular use for mixed-level classes where some learners finish ahead of others and want to check their answers. However, please note that it is not essential that learners are able to write their answers down. In the assessments, as with these worksheets, answers to reading tasks can be given orally.

## Writing

The types of writing task included here range from simple tracing and copying exercises to the guided production of simple sentences and short paragraphs. At ESOL: Literacies 2 level, learners are expected to produce short sentences which they have already given orally in Outcome 1 of the assessment. They are also required to write out their name and address accurately from memory. While the latter relates clearly to everyday practical literacy, the former is designed more to develop study skills. As many ESOL learners who require literacy support have had little or no education in their mother tongue, the ability to write on a class worksheet in the correct place, even with inaccuracies, can be a major and hard-won achievement, and essential to further progress in the subject.

As the assessments require learners to write accurately and in proportion on a line, there are many exercises which guide learners towards this. Fitting words into the correct shape, developing left-right orientation, differentiating between capital and lower-case letters and placing the correct spacing between words are just a few of the many sub-skills of writing which learners at these levels need to begin to acquire. In addition, awareness of simple sentence structure and punctuation is encouraged through such kinaesthetic ordering exercises as are described above.

## Language Experience

One approach which has inspired some of the materials included here, and is generally applicable in developing basic reading and writing skills in many contexts, is language experience. The basic building blocks of this approach might be described as follows:

- With the tutor, a learner (or learners) discusses some issue, activity or story relevant to them. The language therefore emerges from the learner's own experience and the vocabulary should be largely familiar to them.
- The tutor distils the experience discussed into a few simple sentences (depending on the ability of the learner) and writes these onto paper. Different colours of paper can be used as an aid to the next steps.
- The text produced is read by the learner(s) together with the tutor. Particular key words might be focused on, or particular consonants, vowels, digraphs and blends that the learner has difficulty with. For example, the tutor might ask 'Show me the word "house"', or 'Show me where you can see "sh"'. Comprehension questions are also asked to check understanding.

- When the text has been read several times – perhaps by the learner on her own, if able – and the learner is confident, the tutor begins to cut the text up. Initially, this could be into sentences, then into words and full stops, or even into syllables. The learner must read and reassemble the text. For beginner learners, different colours can be very useful at this stage.
- When the text has been reassembled satisfactorily, perhaps a number of times, the learner can begin to copy the sentences. The idea is that she will not be copying something abstract and unintelligible, merely for formation practice, but will be reproducing something which has real meaning for her. As confidence grows, it is possible that the learner will be able to produce parts or even all of the text without copying.
- Following the lesson, the cut-up words can be put in an envelope and taken home by the learner for further practice.

The key point about this approach, and which can be extended to all aspects of ESOL literacies teaching, is the importance of context. ESOL literacies learners do not generally have the resources to cope with written materials much outwith their experience. Language experience places the learner at the centre of the lesson – precisely the manner in which the materials presented here should best be adapted and employed.

### **A note on using the materials and assessment practice**

While many of the worksheets are self-explanatory, guidelines on their use have been included in the contents section at the beginning of each topic section. Answer keys have been provided where appropriate.

Throughout each topic section are several exercises designed to prepare learners specifically for assessments at Literacies 1 & 2. These have been marked by an asterisk (\*) next to the page number in the contents sections. Tutors will need to produce more such material to prepare learners for the NABs, in particular to familiarise learners with the social sight lexis and number concepts necessary for Literacies 1, and the text types required for Literacies 2. The materials here will hopefully act as a useful model for this.

Other materials not included, but which can greatly aid the learning process for these levels, are individual learning plans, writing checklists, learner feedback forms and other such indicators of needs and progress. Details and examples of these can be found in some of the literature below.

The SQA's PDA in ESOL Literacies: teaching adults Reading, Writing and Numeracy qualification may be of interest to tutors delivering these ESOL Units. For more information contact SQA.

## References and some further reading

The Adult ESOL Strategy for Scotland:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2007/05/09155324/0>

Examining the impact of EU enlargement and the introduction of the UK citizenship test on provision of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) in Scotland:

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