

Course
ANG-5101-2
Examining Issues

English as a Second Language



Introduction

The goal of this 50-hour course, the first of three courses in Secondary V (for which adult learners earn credits in second language), is to allow adult learners to develop, through a variety of learning situations and activities, their ability to:

- communicate orally in order to discuss factual information, share opinions, as well as discuss and promote viewpoints on national and international social issues
- construct the meaning of informative, expressive and persuasive texts related to national and international social issues

By the end of this course, adult learners will be able to apply knowledge of the English language, such as language functions, grammar and vocabulary, to understand and discuss familiar and unfamiliar topics. They will be able to obtain this information by reading, listening to and viewing moderately complex informative, expressive and persuasive texts and by talking with others. They will be able to understand and participate in discussions, informal debates, inquiries and interviews.

Subject-Specific Competencies

The two subject-specific competencies targeted in the course *Examining Issues* are shaded in the table below.

Competencies	Key Features
<i>Interacts orally in English (C1)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Engages in oral interactions – Constructs the meaning of the message – Monitors own development as a communicator
<i>Reinvests understanding of texts (C2)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Broadens knowledge of texts – Constructs the meaning of the message – Carries out a reinvestment task – Monitors own development as a reader, listener, viewer
<i>Writes and produces texts (C3)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Broadens knowledge of texts – Uses writing and production processes – Monitors own development as a writer/producer

For information on these competencies, please refer to the following sections:

- *Interacts orally in English (C1)*, Chapter 3, Section 3.2
- *Reinvests understanding of texts (C2)*, Chapter 3, Section 3.3
- *Writes and produces texts (C3)*, Chapter 3, Section 3.4

Although only C1 and C2 are targeted in this course, C3 is implicit as writing activities may complement the learning situations.

Competencies are developed and demonstrated through the mobilization and effective use of various resources that include functional, linguistic and textual knowledge as well as language processes, communication and learning strategies.

Processes and Strategies

Language processes are series of actions or operations that support competency development and help adult learners become more effective speakers, listeners, readers, viewers, writers or producers of texts. Although all four language processes (Oral communication, Response, Writing and Production) are important resources for adult learners, the two processes suggested for this course are shaded in the table below.

Processes	Phases
Oral communication	Planning (tasks)
Response	Mobilizing resources (performing tasks)
	Reflecting (on completed tasks)

Strategies are actions, behaviours, steps and techniques that enable adult learners to overcome obstacles, attain goals and achieve success. Communication and learning strategies are important resources that adult learners may use to become more effective speakers, listeners, readers, viewers, writers or producers of texts.

The communication and learning strategies suggested for this course are illustrated in the table below.

Strategies		
Communication	Verbal	Asking for repetition/clarification Recognizing and correcting inaccuracies
Learning	Cognitive	Making sense (inferring) Summarizing
	Socioaffective	Asking for and giving constructive feedback
	Metacognitive	Setting goals Planning steps related to a task Self-evaluating

Additional information on processes and strategies is provided in the following sections:

- Chapter 3, Section 3.5
- Appendix (Inventory of Strategies)

Cross-Curricular Competencies

Cross-curricular competencies are generic skills that can be developed and used outside the school setting. They are developed in tandem with subject-specific competencies. Given the nature of this course, the shaded cross-curricular competencies listed horizontally could easily be developed simultaneously with the shaded subject-specific competencies listed vertically. Since teachers have the option of choosing learning situations other than the ones suggested in this program, they may also decide to develop cross-curricular competencies other than those shaded the table below.

Cross-Curricular Competencies → Subject-Specific Competencies ↓	Uses information	Solves problems	Exercises critical judgment	Uses creativity	Adopts effective work methods	Uses ICT	Cooperates with others	Achieves his/her potential	Communicates appropriately
Interacts orally in English					■			■	■
Reinvests understanding of texts			■		■			■	■
Writes and produces texts									

For more information on the key features and manifestations of the cross-curricular competencies, please refer to the General Introduction to the Programs of Study.

Subject-Specific Content

The subject-specific content includes knowledge and cultural references. The prescribed functional, linguistic and textual knowledge for the development of the competencies targeted in this course is provided below.

Although knowledge from preceding courses may be necessary to carry out the learning tasks for this course, it has not been added here to avoid repetition. The lists and examples below are not restrictive; teachers may complement them with additional or more complex knowledge if they feel it might be beneficial to adult learners. However, it must be understood that any additions to the lists are not subject to evaluation. The tables in Chapter 4, Sections 4.1.1, 4.1.2 and 4.1.3 provide an overview of the knowledge for Secondary III, IV and V.

Functional Knowledge

Families of Learning Situations and Language Functions

Informing

- Analyzing, comparing and evaluating information on an issue, a phenomenon, a problematic situation or a series of events
- Asking for and summarizing information about an issue, a phenomenon, a problematic situation or a series of events
- Formulating a hypothesis to solve a problem
- Identifying main ideas, supporting details and contradictory information in texts
- Inquiring about and relaying/reporting the findings or conclusions of texts in various modes
- Predicting and speculating about outcomes
- Understanding, explaining and discussing the steps, actions, procedures and conditions to resolve an issue, a problem or a situation

Expressing

- Understanding and expressing opinions, attitudes and reactions related to social issues (e.g. agreement, disagreement, approval, disapproval, neutrality, indifference)

Persuading

- Promoting, defending and supporting personal ideas, opinions or viewpoints on social issues

Linguistic Knowledge

Grammar and Syntax

Grammar and syntax elements include adjectives, adverbs, conjunctions, modal auxiliaries, nouns, prepositions, pronouns, verb/time references and other linguistic structures needed for the construction of well-formed and grammatically correct utterances and sentences. The list below provides information that is particularly pertinent to this course.

Prepositions

- Relationship: to show omission (e.g. *except, but*)

Verb/Time References

- Future progressive

Other Linguistic Structures

- Complex sentence structure (affirmative, negative, interrogative, exclamatory)
- *Either, neither* and *so* to emphasize or confirm a previous statement
- Sentences with *I wish* + simple past (e.g. *I wish I lived*)
- Second conditional: present unreal (e.g. *If* + subject + past + object; subject + *would* + verb + object)

Vocabulary (related to)

- Broad areas of learning (e.g. Environmental Awareness and Consumer Rights and Responsibilities; Media Literacy)
- Cross-curricular competencies (e.g. *Exercises critical judgment; Achieves his/her potential; Adopts effective work methods; Communicates appropriately*)
- Immediate environment (e.g. social, commercial, educational, vocational and/or recreational)
- Interests/needs (e.g. employment, education, lifestyles, current events, social issues)

Semantics

- Abbreviations and acronyms (e.g. countries, titles, newspapers, file extension, corporations, organizations)
- Antonyms (e.g. *abroad/home*; *admit/deny*; *lead/follow*) and synonyms (e.g. *attempt/try*; *correct/right*; *understand/comprehend*)
- Heteronyms (e.g. *address, live, close, abuse, associate, conflict*)
- *Make vs. do* (e.g. *make a mistake*; *do your best*)
- Metaphors (e.g. *a weighty subject*; *difficult to swallow*; *stir up emotions*)
- Phrasal verbs: separable/non-separable according to meaning (e.g. *check out*; *turn out*; *pass on*; *mix up*)
- Prefixes/suffixes (e.g. *pro-/anti-* to state position: *pro-choice/anti-abortion*)

Phonology

- Relaxed pronunciation, including linking/blending
(e.g. *Have you ever + past participle?* > *Ever + past participle?*)

Textual Knowledge

Coherence/Cohesion

Coherence and cohesion include agreement, use of conjunctions, organization of ideas, use of parallel structure and transitional expressions. The list below provides information that is pertinent to this course.

- Organization of ideas
 - claim to counter-claim
- Transitional expressions
 - emphasis (e.g. *in my opinion, in fact*)
 - summary (e.g. *because of this, in conclusion, in other words*)

Textual Organization

Selected text types: information-based and popular

- Knowledge of internal features
 - appropriate language register when participating in discussions or informal debates on social issues
 - text development (introduction, body and conclusion) in oral texts, and layout or text components in written texts and multimedia productions (e.g. title, graphic design, headline, caption, diagrams, charts, menu bar, hyperlinks)
- Knowledge (i.e. recognition) of external features
 - context (e.g. making choices as to where to purchase consumer goods, discussing improper social practices of large companies, participating in informal debates on substance abuse)
 - purpose: informing, expressing and persuading (i.e. any of the bulleted items under Functional Knowledge)
 - target audience (i.e. determine whether the text is intended for a specific gender, age group, social class or social group, e.g. consumers, parents of young children)

Cultural References

In this course, adult learners may explore the sociological aspect of English culture in North America by considering social issues that marked North American or world history (e.g. segregation/civil rights movement in the U.S.; apartheid in South Africa; suffrage movement in Canada). However, any other cultural aspect may be used if deemed more appropriate.

Families of Learning Situations

In this program, “families of learning situations” correspond to macro-functions of language use, i.e. communicative intents that can be classified into three categories. The families of learning situations tied to subject-specific competencies targeted in this course are shaded in the table below.

Families of Learning Situations	
▶	Informing
▶	Expressing
▶	Persuading

All three families of learning situations are targeted in this course. **Informing** is associated with asking for and giving, identifying, classifying, describing, explaining, analyzing, comparing and discussing information related to social issues. **Expressing** relates to the sharing of opinions and feelings with others. **Persuading** is associated with promoting, defending and supporting ideas and viewpoints.

Additional information on the families of learning situations is provided in Chapter 2, Section 2.2 of the program.

Broad Areas of Learning

The table below illustrates the broad areas of learning. These five areas are significant contemporary issues selected on the basis of their importance for our society. Environmental Awareness and Consumer Rights and Responsibilities as well as Citizenship and Community Life (listed horizontally) are well suited to this course, as demonstrated in our examples of learning situations. Both areas could easily serve as a springboard for the development of the subject-specific competencies listed vertically.

Broad Areas of Learning → ↓ Subject-Specific Competencies	Health and Well-Being	Career Planning and Entrepreneurship	Environmental Awareness and Consumer Rights and Responsibilities	Media Literacy	Citizenship and Community Life
Interacts orally in English			■		■
Reinvests understanding of texts			■		■

Each broad area of learning comprises an educational aim and focuses of development that may help teachers delineate knowledge that might be explored in certain learning situations.

By considering issues related to Environmental Awareness and Consumer Rights and Responsibilities, adult learners may develop a greater awareness of the social, economic and ethical aspects of consumption (e.g. understanding of the importance of the production and consumption of goods and services in social and economic organization).

By considering issues related to Citizenship and Community Life, adult learners may develop a better understanding of the mechanisms that contribute to poverty and illiteracy.

Since teachers have the option of choosing learning situations other than the ones suggested in this program, they may decide to develop broad areas of learning other than those suggested for each course in the program.

For more information on the broad areas of learning, their educational aims and focuses of development, please refer to the General Introduction to the Programs of Study.

Examples of Learning Situations

The following examples of learning situations illustrate how a broad area of learning may serve as a springboard for the development of subject-specific and cross-curricular competencies. The development of a competency requires the use of a variety of resources.

In the case of the subject-specific competencies, these resources may include, for instance, oral, written and multimedia texts; functional, linguistic and textual knowledge of English; as well as language processes, communication strategies and human resources.

In these learning situations, adult learners are presented with the following scenarios:

a) Outsourcing Jobs

Some large Canadian corporations outsource jobs as a way to cut costs. Outsourcing jobs means shutting down domestic manufacturing plants and offices and giving the work load to people in developing countries where workers are paid substantially less than Canadian workers. The threat of outsourcing jobs to third-world countries puts pressure on Canadian workers to accept lower salaries. Outsourcing may be considered by consumers to be advantageous because it keeps the price of goods down. However, for those whose livelihood is on the line, the perspective is very different. Is outsourcing a good thing? Research the subject, take a stance, express and defend your opinion on the subject.

b) Charity Begins at Home

You are in an English-speaking environment where friends or acquaintances are talking about organizations that raise funds to help eliminate third-world poverty. Someone makes the comment that “charity begins at home.” You are puzzled by the comment and decide to research the situation of homelessness and poverty in Canada. After getting information on the issue, you meet with the group again to share your information, reveal your stance and discuss what you see as possible solutions to this problem. Be prepared to support whatever position you take on the issue.

End-of-Course Outcomes

By the end of this course, adult learners will be able to demonstrate their development of the competencies *Reinvests understanding of texts* and *Interacts orally in English* by employing a range of resources to:

- communicate orally to exchange factual information and opinions and promote viewpoints
- interpret information conveyed in informative, expressive and persuasive texts they read, listen to and view

Adult learners will be able to discuss factual information, express opinions and promote points of view on national or international social issues. They will be able to ask and answer questions (e.g. main idea, supporting details, contradictory information, hypothesis, reactions, outcomes), using forms of present, past and simple tenses as well as most progressive and perfect forms. Adult learners will be able to use both a language register and text development that are appropriate for the context, as well as a discourse that is connected and reasonably fluent with little hesitation and few pauses. They will also be able to use simple, compound and some complex sentence structures with a range of common vocabulary and idioms.

In this course, oral interaction tasks can include discussions, informal debates, inquiries and interviews and are based on conversation with others or on written, audio, live or on video-mediated texts. Oral interactions are expected to be 4 to 6 minutes in length, depending on the context. More detailed information on texts related to the development of Competency 1 is provided in Chapter 3, Section 3.2.3.

Adult learners will be able to identify (orally and in writing) the context, purpose and target audience of a text and recognize the text components. They will also be able to answer questions by identifying and communicating pertinent information (e.g. main idea, supporting details, contradictory information, hypothesis, reactions, outcomes). The written information-based and popular texts used for developing and demonstrating comprehension should be related to national or international social issues and be three to five paragraphs long. Live or video-mediated texts could be as long as 90 minutes; audio-mediated texts, no longer than 6 minutes. More detailed information on texts related to the development of Competency 2 is provided in Chapter 3, Section 3.3.3.

Texts used for developing and demonstrating comprehension may consist of:

- magazine and newspaper articles
- news reports
- expert panels
- blogs
- interviews
- discussions
- debates
- documentaries

Evaluation Criteria for the Competencies Targeted by the Course

Competencies	Evaluation Criteria
<i>Interacts orally in English (C1)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adequate participation in oral interaction in English at all times • Pertinence of the message expressed • Coherent articulation of the message
<i>Reinvests understanding of texts (C2)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstration of understanding through the response process • Pertinent use of knowledge in a reinvestment task