

Course
ANG-5106-2
Current Events

English as a Second Language



Introduction

The goal of this 50-hour course, for which adult learners can earn supplementary credits in second language, is to allow adult learners to develop, through a variety of learning situations and activities, their ability to:

- construct meaning of current local, national or international news stories and the reactions of others to these stories
- ask and respond to oral questions related to current news stories
- write and produce summarized descriptions of current news stories and reactions to these stories

By the end of this course, adult learners will be able to apply their knowledge of the English language, such as language functions, grammar and vocabulary, to understand current news events and stories. They will be able to obtain information by reading, listening to and viewing moderately complex texts such as editorials and news reports in newspapers and magazines, on television and on Web sites. They will be able to write and produce summarized descriptions of current news stories and relate reactions to these stories. They will be able to understand and participate in question periods and unrehearsed discussions following presentations of the written or produced summaries of news stories.

Subject-Specific Competencies

The three subject-specific competencies targeted in the course *Current Events* 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*

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. Given that all four language processes are important resources for adult learners, the four processes suggested for this course are illustrated in the table below.

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

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	Reorganizing information to make it meaningful Summarizing
	Socioaffective	Encouraging self and others
	Metacognitive	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 in 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.

Functional Knowledge

Families of Learning Situations and Language Functions

Informing

- Analyzing, comparing and evaluating information related to news stories
- Identifying main ideas, supporting details, complementary and contradictory information
- Understanding, summarizing, reporting on and discussing news stories

Expressing

- Finding out about and describing opinions, reactions, viewpoints and feelings related to news stories

Persuading

- Advising or warning others about situations related to news stories
- Influencing perceptions
- Understanding, defending/supporting or denouncing points of view

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 pertinent to this course.

Other Linguistic Structures

- Subjunctive mood:
 - past, present and future (e.g. *I suggested that she go...; I suggest that he ask...; I will suggest that she look into...*)

Vocabulary (related to)

- Broad areas of learning (e.g. Media Literacy; Citizenship and Community Life)
- Cross-curricular competencies (e.g. *Uses information; Adopts effective work methods; Communicates appropriately*)
- Immediate environment (e.g. social, commercial, educational, vocational and/or recreational)
- Topics related to local, national or international news stories (e.g. sports, health, environment, politics, relationships)

Semantics

- Abbreviations and acronyms (e.g. corporations, unions, transportation companies)
- Antonyms (e.g. *bravery/cowardice; motorist/pedestrian; capture/release*) and synonyms (e.g. *cautious/careful; conceal/hide; predict/forecast*)
- Heteronyms (e.g. *present, progress, rebel*)
- Metaphors (e.g. *bittersweet memories; a shady character*)
- Prefixes/suffixes (e.g. *il-: illogical; multi-: multinational; eco-: ecosystem*)

- Three-word phrasal verbs: (e.g. *cut out for; get away with; go through with; put up with; stand up for; look forward to*)

Phonology

- Any necessary elements from previous courses required for oral or multimedia productions
- Pronunciation (e.g. Canadian, American, British variations)

Orthography

- Any necessary elements from previous courses required for written or produced texts

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.

- Any necessary elements from previous courses

Textual Organization

Selected text type: information-based

- Knowledge of internal features
 - appropriate language register when communicating factual information and personal reactions to news stories
 - text development (introduction, body and conclusion) in oral texts (e.g. broadcasts, interviews, discussions), and layout and components of written or multimedia texts (e.g. title, organization, message of text, photos and graphic material, sound effects)
- Knowledge (i.e. recognition) of external features
 - context (e.g. watching news bulletins; summarizing a newspaper article; using downloaded audio and video podcast files)
 - 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 community, e.g. coworkers, friends)

Cultural References

In this course, adult learners may explore the sociolinguistic aspect of culture by examining the variety of accents and dialects of the English language (e.g. Canadian, American, Australian, Irish, Scottish and British), as well as the semantic difference of some words. 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 information; identifying, classifying, describing, explaining, analyzing, comparing and discussing information. **Expressing** relates to finding out about and describing opinions, reactions, viewpoints and feelings. **Persuading** is associated with understanding, defending, supporting or denouncing points of view; influencing perceptions; and advising and warning others about situations.

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

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

By considering issues related to Media Literacy, adult learners may develop a greater awareness of the place and influence of the different media in their daily lives and in society.

By considering issues related to Citizenship and Community Life, adult learners may exercise more critical thinking regarding various ideologies and forms of political organization.

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.

Example of a Learning Situation

The following example of a learning situation illustrates 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 this learning situation, adult learners are presented with the following scenario:

a) In the News

You enjoy discussing current events with English-speaking friends or acquaintances. You watch and read news stories as well as commentaries, which provide different perspectives on the subject. To develop this ability, you summarize pertinent information (factual, expressive and persuasive) in writing and prepare a multimedia text to be presented to others (i.e. peers, teachers). Following the presentation, you explain your reactions to the story and respond to the questions and reactions of others.

End-of-Course Outcomes

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

- communicate orally to discuss and present current news stories and relate the reactions they generate/cause

- interpret information conveyed in informative, expressive and persuasive texts they read, listen to and view
- write and produce summarized descriptions of current news stories and relate the reactions they generate/cause

Adult learners will be able to report and summarize as well as discuss current news stories. They will also have the ability to relate the reactions these stories generate/cause. They will be able to ask and answer questions (e.g. nature of a phenomena or issue; causes and effects; existence, occurrence, duration, frequency, speed; location, position, distance, numbers, quantity and degree; opinions, predictions, conclusions, statements, reactions, viewpoints and feelings of the characters within the new stories and those who read or hear about them), using simple tenses as well as some progressive, conditional and perfect forms. They will be able to advise or warn others about risky and perilous conditions and situations related to news stories. Adult learners will be able to use simple, compound and some complex sentence structures. Both the language register and text development of the interaction will be appropriate to the context. Adult learners will be able use language with some idioms and their discourse will be reasonably fluent with minor hesitation and pauses. In this course, oral interaction tasks may include conversations, discussions, inquiries and interviews based on conversations with others or on written, audio, live or video-mediated texts. Oral interactions will include question periods and unrehearsed discussions with peers or a teacher. The oral interactions will follow presentations of written, media or multimedia news stories. The interactions are expected to be 3 to 5 minutes in length, depending on the context.

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 ideas and supporting details; opinions, reactions, viewpoints and feelings of the characters in the news stories and those who read or hear about them).

Texts used for developing and demonstrating comprehension may consist of:

- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| ○ editorials | ○ interviews/discussions |
| ○ news reports (newspapers, Web sites, television, radio) | ○ debates |
| ○ radio/television programs | ○ feature stories |
| ○ blogs | ○ documentaries |

The written information-based and popular texts used for developing and demonstrating comprehension should be between three and five paragraphs long (up to 500 words). Live or video-mediated texts could be as long as 90 minutes; audio-mediated texts, no longer than 6 minutes.

Adult learners will be able to produce a written report or a summary of local, national or international news stories. They will be able to convey relevant information, using simple tenses and most progressive, conditional and perfect forms. Adult learners will be able to use simple, compound and

some complex sentence structures to present information in a coherent text which presents the main idea clearly and supports it with appropriate, relevant details (e.g. nature of a phenomena or issue; causes and effects; existence, occurrence, duration, frequency; location, position, distance; numbers, quantity and degree; opinions, predictions, conclusions, statements, reactions, viewpoints and feelings of the characters within the new stories and those who read or hear about them). Discourse patterns may occasionally be typical of the mother tongue. Language codes and conventions will be appropriate for the context and audience. In this course, written or produced tasks can include standard or electronic newsletters, commentaries, blogs and feature stories that are three or four paragraphs long or composed of 150 to 250 words, depending on the text type and context; or multimedia texts that are 3 to 4 minutes in length.

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
<i>Writes and produces texts (C3)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coherence of the content • Clear formulation of the message