



BACKGROUND INFORMATION



ESL FOR NUTRITION EDUCATORS
DESCRIPTIONS OF ESL LEVELS & COURSE CONTENT *

*From English-as-a-Second Language Model Standards for Adult Education Programs, California Department of Education., 1992.



ESL Beginning - Low Course Content

General Nature of Instruction

Accuracy

Emphasis is on developing students' ability to listen and understand. There is little emphasis on grammatical accuracy.

Topics

Course content is relevant to the lives of the students. It integrates language functions and language forms with informational sources, skills, and topics. Topics are chosen in accordance with students' goals: general or vocational. Samples of informational sources, skills, and topics at this level are as follows:

Topics			
Informational Sources	Skills	General	Vocational
Lists Signs Schedules Calendars Ads	Scanning	Personal Identification Weather Money	Job titles Following simple instructions

Additional topics based on students' needs should be added. All of these topics may be taught at higher levels of instruction.

Culture

Cultural aspects such as nonverbal behavior (gestures, eye contact, body language) and cross-cultural communication (awareness of differences, respect, tolerance) are taught implicitly in context through demonstration and interaction.

Specific Focus of Instruction

Language Skills

- Listening: On exit, students will be able to:
 - Demonstrate comprehension of simple words in context of common, everyday situations.
 - Demonstrate comprehension of basic commands through physical action.
 - Demonstrate understanding of simple face-to-face conversations using previously learned material.
 - Demonstrate strategies to check for understanding—clarifying by attempting to reproduce what has been heard, for example.
 - Respond appropriately to short emergency warnings ("Stop!"; "Get back!"; "Slow down.").
- Speaking: On exit, students will be able to:
 - Make statements related to basic needs using previously learned words and phrases.
 - Answer simple questions with "yes," "no," one word, or short-phrase responses.
 - Ask simple questions.



- Reading: On exit, students will be able to:
 - Relate phonological sounds to letters and clusters of letters (sound/symbol correspondence).
 - Recognize basic sight words.
 - Interpret sentences using vocabulary and structures previously learned orally.
- Writing: On exit, students will be able to:
 - Print the letters of the alphabet legibly.
 - Write numerals.
 - Write a list—a shopping list or an invitation list, for example—from material read or heard.
 - Copy or transcribe familiar words, phrases, and high-frequency expressions from learned materials.
 - Fill out simple forms which require biographical/personal information.
 - Write simple sentences based on previously learned vocabulary and structures.

Language Functions

On exit, students will be able to use English for:

- Factual information: command, agree/disagree, tell
- Social and interpersonal relations: introduce, take leave, express satisfaction/dissatisfaction
- Suasion: request

Language Forms

On exit, students will be able to use the following structures:

- Sentence types
 - Simple statements: affirmative and negative
 - "Yes," "no," "or," and "wh_" questions and answers
 - Compound sentences with "and" and "but"
- Verb tenses
 - Simple present ("He studies every day.")
 - Simple past ("He studied yesterday.")
 - Present continuous ("He is studying now.")
 - Future with "going to" ("He's going to study tomorrow.")
 - Modal "can" ("He can study this evening.")



ESL Beginning—High Course Content

General Nature of Instruction

Accuracy

Fluency and communication begin to be emphasized. The instructor begins to assist students in correcting their own errors.

Topics

Course content is relevant to the lives of the students. It integrates language functions and language forms with informational sources, skills, and topics. Topics are chosen in accordance with students' goals: general or vocational. Samples of informational sources, skills, and topics at this level are as follows:

Sources	Skills	Topics	
		General	Vocational
Telephone Directory	Alphabetizing	Housing	Job Skills
Indexes		Transportation	Classified Ads
		Emergencies	
		General Health	Job Safety

Culture

Social customs—standing in line or expressing politeness in handling everyday situations, for example—are taught explicitly through modeling positive and negative examples and through controlled practice, such as role-playing.

Specific Focus of Instruction

Language Skills

- *Listening:* On exit, students will be able to:
 - Demonstrate understanding of simple words and phrases drawn from learned topics.
 - Identify the main topic of conversation in familiar material.
 - Demonstrate understanding of non-face-to-face speech in familiar contexts, such as simple phone conversations and routine announcements.
 - Recognize words that signal differences between present, past, and future events.
 - Respond appropriately to short emergency warnings (“Be careful!”; “Slowdown!”).
- *Speaking:* On exit, students will be able to:
 - Answer simple questions related to basic needs using previously learned phrases or simple sentences.
 - Make statements in the past, present, and future tenses related to basic needs and common activities using previously learned phrases or simple sentences.



- Ask questions related to basic needs using previously learned utterances.
- Communicate simple personal information on the telephone.
- *Reading:* On exit, students will be able to:
 - Interpret isolated words and phrases in familiar contexts (traffic signs, store ads, fast food menus).
 - Interpret terms on simplified forms (personal identification, school registration, checks, change of address).
 - Scan for numerical information—the time a store opens, for example—and other specific information in simple life-skill materials related to immediate needs (ads, schedules, signs, forms).
 - Use strategies such as predicting or phonics decoding to interpret new words in familiar contexts.
 - Read and demonstrate understanding of short, simplified narrative paragraphs on familiar topics containing previously learned vocabulary and sentence patterns.
 - Identify the sequence of a simple narrative passage.
- *Writing:* On exit, students will be able to:
 - Copy materials that are meaningful to the students (recipes, directions, stories generated during language-experience activities).
 - Write lists—grocery or laundry items, for example.
 - Write simple sentences based on personal experiences or familiar material.
 - Write a simple telephone message or note—a note to a child's teacher, perhaps.
 - Write a series of related sentences based on personal experiences or familiar material.

Language Functions

On exit, students will be able to use English for:

- Factual information: ask for information, describe, express necessity, ask permission, agree, disagree
- Social and interpersonal relations: compliment, express preference, express wants/desires
- Suasion: direct, invite

Language Forms

On exit, students will be able to use the following structures:

- Sentence types
 - Compound sentences
 - with "and ... too" ("I like this, and Maria does, too.")
 - with "and ... either" ("I don't speak Chinese, and Maria doesn't either.")
 - with "or" ("Do you want to study, or do you want to watch TV?")



- Verb tenses
 - Future: "will" ("I will call you tonight.")
 - Modals
 - "have to" ("I have to study.")
 - "could" ("I could come to school tomorrow.")
 - "should" ("You should see the doctor.")
 - "must" ("I must get a driver's license.")
 - "may" ("You may stay up late.")
 - "would" ("Would you open the window?")
- Verbs followed by infinitives ("He wants to dance. He likes to read.")



ESL Intermediate-Low Course Content

General Nature of Instruction

Accuracy

Emphasis is on fluency and communication; however, the instructor begins to encourage students to check themselves when they use basic grammatical structures.

Topics

Course content is relevant to the lives of the students. It integrates language functions and language forms with informational sources, skills, and topics. Topics are chosen in accordance with students' goals: general or vocational. Samples of informational sources, skills and topics at this level are as follows.

Topics				
Informational Sources	Skills	General	Vocational	Academic
Dictionary	Categorizing Test taking	Medicine labels Food: recipes Shopping Banking	Paychecks Job applications Job search strategies Work schedules	Autobiographies Nutrition Famous people

Additional topics based on students' needs should be added. All of these topics may be taught at higher levels of instruction.

Culture

Rules of common etiquette .

Specific Focus of Instruction

Language Skills

- Listening: On exit, students will be able to:
 - Demonstrate understanding of simple questions and answers, statements, and face-to-face conversations in standard dialect containing some unfamiliar vocabulary.
 - Recognize basic constructions such as subject-verb agreement ("He work" versus "He works").
 - Demonstrate understanding of telephone conversations on familiar material in familiar contexts.
- Speaking: On exit, students will be able to:
 - Participate in simple face-to-face conversations dealing with basic survival needs and minimum courtesy requirements (thanking, meeting, apologizing).
 - Ask and answer questions in simple present, past, and future tenses on familiar topics.



- Participate in simple telephone conversations.
- Describe a sequence of events in the past on a topic related to their personal lives.
- **Reading:** On exit, students will be able to:
 - Interpret simplified short narrative and descriptive passages on familiar topics.
 - Interpret simple narrative and descriptive passages on unfamiliar topics if material includes visuals or other aids that orient students to the passages.
 - Scan for specific information in simple life-skill materials (ads, schedules, signs, forms) related to immediate needs.
 - Predict meanings of unfamiliar vocabulary in material rich in contextual clues.
 - Interpret newspaper headlines on familiar topics.
 - Interpret abbreviations for words previously learned in context of specific topics—employment and housing, for example.
- **Writing:** On exit, students will be able to:
 - Take notes on familiar material transmitted orally.
 - Write related sentences to form paragraphs on a topic.
 - Write telephone messages.
 - Write short thank-you notes.
 - Complete simple forms (medical history, job application, banking).

Language Functions

On exit, students will be able to use English for:

- *Factual information:* express obligation, explain, indicate certainty, express ability or inability
- *Social and interpersonal relations:* apologize, make excuses, express worry and disappointment, give and get permission, make offers
- *Suasion:* suggest, advise

Language Forms

On exit, students will be able to use the following structures:

- *Sentence types*
 - Complex sentences
 - Adverbial clauses of time: “before,” “after,” “when” (“I’ll call you when he comes.”)
 - Adverbial clauses of reason: because (“I was absent because my child was sick.”)
 - Direct speech (He said, “It’s time to pay the rent.”)
 - Exclamatory sentences (“What a beautiful day!”)
- *Verb tenses*
 - Used to (“I used to live in Mexico.”)
 - Modals
 - Might (“It might rain.”)
 - Must (“You must be tired.”)
- Past continuous (“I was taking a shower when he called.”)
- Present perfect (“I have lived in the United States for two years.”)
- Present perfect continuous (“I have been studying English since last year.”)
- Future conditional (“If I get a job, I’ll take night classes.”)
- Verbs followed by gerunds (“He enjoys dancing. He likes swimming.”)



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- Verbs followed by gerunds ("He enjoys dancing. He likes swimming.")



ESL Intermediate—High Course Content: General Nature of Instruction

Accuracy

Emphasis is on fluency and communication. The instructor teaches students the skills of self-monitoring in the context of situations which require the use of English for communication.

Topics

Course content is relevant to the lives of the students. It integrates language functions and language forms with informational sources, skills, and topics. Topics are chosen in accordance with students' goals: general, vocational, or academic. Samples of informational sources, skills, and topics at this level are as follows:

Informational Sources	Skills	Topics		
		General	Vocational	Academic
Newspapers Encyclopedias Tables of Contents Maps	Note taking Outlining Map reading	Post office forms Health information; medical history Community resources Leisure activities Tenant's rights	Social security Preparedness for job interviews Wages and deductions Benefits	Major historical events Current events Stories/fables

Culture

Students have participated in enough culture-oriented tasks in the classroom to act appropriately when faced with situations involving cultural differences. Topics such as taboos and politics are taught explicitly by focusing on contrasts among the students' own cultures.

Specific Focus of Instruction

Language Skills

- *Listening*: On exit, students will be able to:
 - Identify main ideas and most supporting detail in factual material relating to everyday topics.
 - Detect the mood of a message by determining to a limited degree such components as the attitudes and feelings of the speaker or the urgency of the message.
 - Demonstrate understanding of stories and other passages when vocabulary and structures are in familiar contexts.
 - Demonstrate understanding of everyday conversation with some repetition or slower speech.



- **Speaking:** On exit, students will be able to:
 - Participate in face-to-face conversations on some topics beyond immediate survival needs, such as personal histories and descriptions of people or places.
 - Display some spontaneity and creativity in producing language patterns not previously learned or memorized; however, students make errors often.
 - Adjust language forms to the level of formality required to fulfill basic courtesy functions in face-to-face conversations.
 - Clarify utterances by rewording or repeating in order to be understood by the general public.
 - Communicate on the telephone on familiar subjects with clarification.
- **Reading:** On exit, students will be able to:
 - Interpret simple authentic materials on familiar topics (newspaper articles on current events, social letters, public information notices).
 - Identify the main idea of a paragraph on a familiar topic.
 - Guess the meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary and phrases from context.
 - Find information that requires drawing from different sections of a reading passage.
 - Draw meaning from passages by using syntactic clues, such as pronoun references.
 - Identify relationships within a passage by using syntactic clues, such as transitional words—"therefore," for example.
- **Writing:** On exit, students will be able to:
 - Write short paragraphs describing daily activities or past events, using chronological order.
 - Write personal letters.
 - Fill out authentic job applications and medical history forms.

Language Functions

On exit, students will be able to use English for:

- Factual information: compare and contrast, express possibility and probability, offer to do something
- Social and interpersonal relations: express sympathy, hope, and regret
- Suasion: recommend, solve problems, instruct

Language Forms

On exit, students will be able to use the following structures:

- Sentence types
- Adjectival clauses:
 - "Who" ("The person who made the announcement was the manager.")
 - "Which" ("The book, which is on top, is mine.")
- Embedded questions ("Do you know what time it is?")
- Indirect speech ("He said he was going.")



- *Verb tenses*
 - Past perfect ("He had worked there for ten years before he got a promotion.")
 - Past perfect continuous ("She had been crying when her mother found her.")
 - Conditional contrary-to-fact ("If I were rich, I would buy a house.")
 - Passive simple present ("The mail is delivered every afternoon.")