

# Chapter 14 Outline

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# Phase I

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## Objectives

To recognize Phase I learners and their skills and needs

To identify the outcomes and expectations for Phase I

To share effective practices in the Phase I classroom

## Learner Profile: Phase I

An at-a-glance profile of adult ESL literacy learners at Phase I  
All skills are measured according to the Canadian Language Benchmarks  
and the Canadian Language Benchmark Literacy Phases

Years of Formal Education	Reading and Writing Skills	Range of Listening and Speaking	Range of Numeracy
1-3 or previous ESL literacy	Phase I	CLB 1-5	Phase I-II
Typical Age Range		Gender	
adults of all ages		usually more women than men	
Common Challenges in the Classroom	Common Strengths in the Classroom	Common Barriers to Learning	
little classroom experience frequent exhaustion few formal learning strategies highly dependent learners developing vocabulary building awareness of print	taking risks collaborative learning oral repetition prior practical knowledge survival skills	poverty lack of adequate housing lack of childcare lack of transportation limited ability to access help issues may be in crisis before learner receives help	
Typical Social and Political Background		Indicators a Learner is Ready for Phase I	
learner can come from any country in the world often rural villages often highly oral societies learner may have spent time in refugee camps or in additional countries before immigrating learner may have experienced war, famine, displacement, poverty, or social or political unrest		learner can read and write the letters of the alphabet and connect most letters to their sounds learner can copy words and short sentences learner can write letters and words on the line, and begin to use spacing between words consistently. learner can read simple sentences learner recognizes a small bank of sight words	
Typical Educational Background		learner recognizes the purpose of different kinds of text, such as letters, stories, signs, or bills learner can fill out a simple form	
1-3 years of formal education formal education has been interrupted or cut short any previous formal education may have been in a second language any previous educational setting may have lacked resources, facilities, or educated teachers			

## The CLB Literacy Phases

The Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks (CCLB) has published two documents that provide a set of outcomes for ESL and ESL literacy learners in Canada. The first document, *Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000: English as a Second Language for Adults*, divides language learning into twelve different levels, called Benchmarks, in four different skill areas: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. This document is NOT intended for use with Learners with Interrupted Formal Education; it assumes a previous formal education, even at the lowest benchmarks. The second CCLB document, *Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000: ESL for Literacy Learners* (the CLB Literacy Document), focuses on ESL literacy and LIFE. It sets outcomes for four different levels, called Phases, in three different skill areas: reading, writing, and numeracy. ESL literacy programs who use this document measure their learners' levels by using the Phases for reading, writing, and literacy, and by using the Benchmarks for listening and speaking. Each Phase can further be broken down into Initial, Developing, and Adequate stages, and it is important to note that the difference among the stages is considerable.

At Bow Valley College, we use the CLB Literacy Document and the literacy Phases in our ESL literacy programs. There are two clear advantages to this document: there has been a considerable amount of material produced by the CCLB to support the Benchmarks and the Phases, and this is a national standard, so learners can more easily “transport” their education from one institution to another or from one province to another. We strongly recommend that any Canadian ESL literacy program look into using the CLB Literacy Document in their program. If you are not familiar with the CLB literacy Phases, Section Three of the handbook can still be useful to you; it provides a thorough introduction to ESL literacy at each of the four Phases, which are equally applicable to learners of different levels no matter what the levels are called (Foundation Phase, Phase I, Phase II, Phase III; Beginner, Intermediate, Upper Intermediate, Advanced; ESL literacy 1,2,3,4, etc.).

## Introduction: Phase I

The world of written language is just beginning to open up for Phase I learners. They are already beginning to develop a sense of sound-letter correlation, are aware of some English literacy concepts such as the direction of text, and have developed a small bank of sight words. They are becoming increasingly familiar with the classroom environment and have developed some strategies to support their classroom learning.

Over the course of Phase I, learners build their sight word vocabulary and begin to acquire some decoding skills. They are working at the level of words: they can copy more accurately and are better able to spell and label appropriately. Learners in Phase I tackle reading sentences that are short, familiar, and follow a predictable format. It is important to note that learners in Phase I can have a wide range of oral skills, anywhere from CLB 1 to CLB 5.

Although Phase I learners are better able to remember spelling than Foundation Phase learners, they are still not able to fill in a cloze exercise – a fill in the blanks activity – without a word bank to copy from. Provide Phase I learners with the support they need; make sure every activity has a word bank.

Phase I learners are sometimes mistakenly placed in mainstream ESL classes, particularly when their listening and speaking benchmarks are still low. When a Phase I learner is in a mainstream class, the instructor might notice that the learner frequently places pages upside-down or backwards in the binder, needs more practice to master a skill or concept, or struggles with a simple cloze passage that others in the class complete with little difficulty. When the learner's oral English skills become stronger, an instructor may learn that his or her schooling in the first (or second) language was interrupted, or that the quality of education the learner experienced was different from what we might expect, such as a learner whose only formal educational experience was with 50 other learners in a class in the refugee camp where she lived much of her life.

Phase I learners, like other Learners with Interrupted Formal Education, come to language learning with a variety of barriers, visible or imperceptible to instructors. Their language learning is often affected by stressors outside of the classroom. Learners may struggle with basic settlement issues, healthcare issues, and employment issues. Learners' attendance can be affected by not having enough money to buy a bus pass or by lack of access to or money for childcare. One learner might work all night to make ends meet and come to class first thing in the morning, while another has experienced violence in the past or present that makes focusing on learning a challenge. As a result, ESL literacy instructors need to prioritize creating and maintaining a safe learning environment from the outset of the course.

In addition to having diverse barriers to learning, Phase I learners have many goals and needs. Their reasons for studying might be to gain better employment, communicate with people in their community, or help their children in school. They may already have purchased a house together with relatives, or they may struggle to pay their rent on their minimum wage job while they wait for government subsidized housing.

# Angie's Story

## **A Phase I learner**

*Angie came to Canada three years ago with absolutely no formal education. While her parents are both university-educated, she lost her opportunity to access education in Somalia when war broke out. Angie moved from place to place until she came to Canada. Still a young woman in her early twenties, she is eager to learn to read and write. Her young daughter recently started school as well, and this has fueled Angie's drive.*

*As a Phase I Developing learner, Angie's handwriting is large and not always on the line. While her listening and speaking are at a CLB 3, she struggles to decode even basic words. She has developed a small bank of sight words that has helped her with things like filling out forms. Angie's numeracy skills are very basic. She doesn't know the value of various coins, and while she knew some simple math facts, her problem-solving skills are limited.*

*While Angie is highly motivated, she doesn't feel confident for the first few weeks in class. This results in a slow process of learning to trust herself as she learns to read and write. In time, her bank of sight words increases dramatically, and she takes greater risks with spelling and reading, though she will still defer to the instructor to see if she is right or not. She rereads story books for fifteen minutes before she goes to sleep every night.*

*After a few weeks, Angie begins to set goals for herself and be more independent in the classroom. When learners write stories about their lives, Angie refuses help from the instructor and is determined to find the spelling of words from her sight word cards, the vocabulary section of her binder, and the picture dictionaries at the back of the class. After many hours of work, she writes several lines about her life.*

*Angie has developed her numeracy skills so that she now has a solid basic understanding of number concepts. The two largest areas of growth she describes to her classmates and instructor are with time and money. She says that now when people on the street ask her the time, she can tell them, whereas before she would cover her watch and say it didn't work.*

*Angie makes very good progress in her Phase I class, developing her reading, writing, and numeracy, as well as her oral skills. Perhaps the greatest breakthrough she makes is with her self-confidence, as she moves on to Phase II more willing to take risks and help others.*

## When is a Learner Ready for Phase I?

LIFE who are ready to move into Phase I have developed an awareness of English text. Phase I learners usually recognize the front and back of a book and understand that English text moves from top to bottom and left to right. These learners hold their books right-side-up and start at the front of the book.

Learners who are ready to enter Phase I write words on the line and are able to write legibly, though their writing may still be large, and they still need more time to write words. They are able to copy short amounts of text and are learning to leave space between words.

Phase I learners are capable of reading a small number of sight words. They recognize that letters represent sounds and are able to tell you the sound for most letters. Phase I learners are beginning to be able to hear initial consonant sounds in oral language and use this to help them write words.

Phase I learners come with a diverse set of listening and speaking skills. Those who have lived in an English-speaking environment for several years may have listening and speaking skills up to CLB 5, while others who are new to Canada may initially be assessed at a CLB 1.

Learners who are ready to enter Phase I in numeracy may or may not be Phase I literacy learners. Learners who are ready to enter Phase I in numeracy can count to at least 20 and are able to solve simple addition or subtraction problems based on concrete life scenarios, like numbers of people at home or in the classroom. They are able to relate numbers to manipulatives. They have a few memorized math facts as well and understand the purpose of adding and subtracting.

*Chapal is a young man from Pakistan who has been in Canada for a year and a half. He was too old for high school when he arrived in Canada and spent a year working in a garage before beginning ESL literacy classes. Chapal's reading and writing skills are Phase I Adequate, while his listening and speaking are CLB 3. He struggles a great deal with both reading and writing. His decoding skills are inconsistent, and while he may be able to read a short passage one day, the next day he has difficulty with the same words.*

## Phase I Outcomes

Outcomes describe what learners will be able to do when they complete a unit, level, or program. The CLB Literacy Document provides a list of outcomes for each Phase, as well as conditions for these outcomes. When working with these outcomes, or basing classroom outcomes on the CLB Literacy Document, it is essential to recognize the conditions as well. The conditions describe in what circumstances a learner will be able to complete an outcome and are just as critical as the outcomes themselves. Conditions may state, for example, how much support is



allowed and required from the instructor, how long a reading text should be, or how relevant and familiar a topic should be for writing. At all literacy Phases, conditions ask for considerable instructor support and familiar circumstances for all reading and writing tasks.

Outcomes in Phase I typically begin with developing oral language within any thematic unit and using the vocabulary and structure gained to meet reading and writing outcomes. While each unit theme will vary in its vocabulary and types of text, the outcomes remain consistent throughout. Learners continually develop reading skills using stories, for instance; however, some units lend themselves to other formats as well. For example, an employment unit is conducive to a lesson on reading a schedule and filling out a form; a unit on public transportation is an opportunity to read schedules once again and also to practice reading clocks; and a unit on Canada is an opportunity to use a map.

Outcomes at the Initial, Developing, and Adequate stages of Phase I do not change much; rather, the amount and type of support and scaffolding provided by the instructor change according to the needs of each learner. Phase I learners are still developing the skills needed as learners in a western school system, and as language development is a key component of instruction in Phase I, so are organizational and time management skills. The development of learning strategies is essential for learners to begin to become independent learners.

The CLB Literacy Document sets outcomes in three areas: reading, writing (including reading and writing strategies), and numeracy. Depending on the program, instructors may choose to set outcomes in other areas as well, including learning strategies, vocabulary, and life skills. In the following chart, there are examples of outcomes in each of these areas. There are hundreds of possible outcomes to set in a program; this chart provides samples to give an idea of what outcomes look like at this level. For more information on setting outcomes, please see Chapter Three.

Spelling tests are an excellent activity at this level. They do more than test spelling: they teach learners accuracy, attention to detail, and study and learning skills.

Spelling tests encourage learners to complete homework themselves and make them accountable for their learning.

Spelling tests also help learners to build sight words.

## Sample Outcomes for Phase I

Reading	Writing	Vocabulary	Numeracy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• demonstrate awareness of directionality</li> <li>• recognize and read letters of the alphabet and relate most letters to sounds</li> <li>• recognize and read high frequency sight words</li> <li>• begin to sound out simple words</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• copy letters and words and write on the line more frequently</li> <li>• begin to use invented spelling to write simple text</li> <li>• begin to write personal journal entries with support</li> <li>• fill out a very simple form with support</li> <li>• spell familiar words</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• use familiar thematic vocabulary</li> <li>• match new words with appropriate pictures in group tasks and games</li> <li>• copy new words into appropriate places in writing frames</li> <li>• use new vocabulary to express wants or needs, likes, dislikes, and to ask for help</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• count to 100 by 1s, 2s, 5s, and 10s</li> <li>• add and subtract using manipulatives</li> <li>• create and recognize basic patterns</li> <li>• read and record information on a monthly calendar</li> <li>• read a clock to the quarter hour</li> <li>• tell the value of coins and dollar bills</li> <li>• use comparatives to describe value of various measurements</li> </ul>
Reading Strategy	Writing Strategy	Learning Strategy	Life Skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• use pictures to predict text</li> <li>• use initial consonants and vowels to read text</li> <li>• use background knowledge to bring meaning to text</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• find words in a picture dictionary or other supportive materials to assist in writing</li> <li>• hear and record sounds in words, particularly initial and final consonants</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ask for help when needed</li> <li>• use first language to assist development of English language skills</li> <li>• organize school papers and books</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ask for help before a problem becomes a crisis</li> <li>• access medical care, legal advice, and financial help when needed</li> <li>• use a calendar to record and keep appointments</li> <li>• understand and talk about money, income, and expenses</li> <li>• talk about successes and challenges set learning goals</li> </ul>

## Approaches and Activities for Phase I

Scaffolding – providing decreasing levels of support as learners develop their skills – and a safe learning environment are essential elements in a Phase I class. Learners at this level may not have experienced success in school in the past, and every opportunity to experience success must be provided to each learner. Approaches and activities should begin with a high level of instructor support. This support should only be decreased when it is appropriate for each learner, as building confidence and experiencing success are more important than working independently at this Phase.

**Keep it Relevant and Authentic:** Introduce topics and themes that are relevant. New vocabulary lists should consist of words learners will find in their day-to-day lives.

**Build Oral Fluency and Learners’ Word Banks:**

Learners need oral language before they begin to read and write. Provide systematic, repetitive vocabulary-building exercises that develop each learner’s bank of words, which he or she can later use to read and write. Introduce new vocabulary using interactive, tactile games, and rehearse through as many means as you can think of every day. Provide handouts with the same vocabulary: provide learners with listening and speaking activities and reading materials that practice the same words you have introduced.

**Use of Learners’ First Language:** Allow and encourage learners to use their first language to help themselves and others understand new language and concepts. Learners who share the same first language may be able to help each other navigate instructions – oral and written – or clarify concepts and vocabulary.

**Patterned Reading:** Reading materials for this level should primarily use words with which learners are familiar. Sentence structures and vocabulary are repeated within the text to give learners the opportunity to predict text and experience success as readers. The instructor should give a great deal of attention to the size and font of the text, and clear images should support textual meaning.

*Chapal is passionate about cars and it doesn’t take long for his instructor to realize that the way to motivate this young learner is through his interests. In a thematic unit of advertising, Chapal chooses to make a poster about cars. During this unit, he shines as a student because he speaks with confidence. It is an opportunity for him to be an expert in the classroom, a feeling that is both compelling and unfamiliar.*

**Supported Writing:** Writing at this level needs to be fully supported, as learners have little exposure to writing and possibly very few strategies of their own to help them. Provide a sample text for learners to copy, and encourage them to change parts of the text so the story becomes about them. Allow learners whatever support they need to feel successful, such as their vocabulary sheets, picture dictionaries, and other simple texts with which they are comfortable. Learners at this level should be given whatever they need in order to feel successful and positive about their learning.

**Read for Pleasure:** While the number of reading materials suitable for adults in Phase I is limited, it is important that learners have access to whatever books there are. Learners at the upper end of Phase I may be able to read up to 15 minutes on their own, while others will need support to read for even a few minutes. Wherever possible, listen to and support one or two learners during each reading period. Learners are encouraged to read familiar texts in pairs if they choose, and in this case, a stronger and weaker reader may read a text aloud together.

**Teach Strategies:** We may take for granted that learners know the ins and outs of learning, but many of these strategies are learned during the first eight years of a formal education, which most Phase I learners are missing. Teach learners reading strategies (eg. what to do when they don't recognize a new word), how to organize a binder, how to think about writing a word they don't know how to spell, how to find information, and so on. Don't assume anything about what learners do or do not know how to do or how to figure out. One highly effective instructor frequently talks about letting learners in on the secrets. A favourite question to ask of the learners is "How do you know?" For more information on teaching strategies, please see Chapter Eight.

**Teach Grammar in Context:** Grammar structure is an important part of language, and Phase I learners are capable of grasping the concepts in a way that is relevant to their use of language. A Phase I learner can, for example, learn about the past tense, and the concept can be introduced and rehearsed in ways that are authentic to language used in the classroom. Ask learners how they talk about yesterday. How is the weather today? It's rainy. How was the weather yesterday? It was sunny and warm. Reuse the structures in oral exercises, in reading materials, and in other discussion during the days and weeks to come.

*Tanisha comes from Tanzania and is in her late 60s. She came to Canada four years ago with her husband, having followed several of her children. Tanisha's writing is at Phase I Developing. She studies hard for her spelling tests and takes time to sound out words. Her writing is currently limited mostly to copying; however, she takes risks to write occasional sentences and she is greatly motivated to learn more. Tanisha's grandchildren in Toronto send her letters and e-mail messages to her husband's account. She tells her instructor she wants her own e-mail account so she can write back to her grandchildren. After opening her account, with support from her instructor, she proudly writes her first e-mail.*

**Make Learning Experiences Varied and Interesting:** Matching picture and word flashcards, and playing *Pictionary* and *Go Fish* (with flashcards) are great ways to vary experiences while rehearsing the same material. Pencil and paper activities such as basic word searches and vocabulary worksheets (eg. writing words under the correct picture) provide opportunities for learners to work more independently. Recognize that learners have different learning styles and preferences, and that language should be practiced in as many ways as possible to provide learners with a successful learning experience. Alternate between group activities and independent paper and pencil activities. Give learners an opportunity to move around the class and interact with each other to build a team atmosphere.

**Accept Learners Where They're At:** Each person in your class comes with different strengths and weaknesses. Talk to the learners about this, and help them to talk about their own strengths and areas for improvement. If instructors can appreciate that every learner comes with different strengths and needs, learners will learn to accept this as well. Comparing themselves to others is not only unnecessary, but unconstructive, as there will always be someone who is better at something than they are.

**Celebrate Success:** In Phase I, a gain that might be almost imperceptible to some, is actually a challenging and large step for another who has had limited success with formal language learning in the past. Acknowledge gains made, small as they may seem. Many learners take enormous risks, putting themselves in a learning environment that is new and maybe intimidating for them. This in itself is no small feat. Encourage and teach learners to recognize their own successes and provide learners a platform to talk about them.



**Teach Categorization:** Help learners to continue to develop their understanding of categorization. This is an important cognitive as well as linguistic skill. Begin with clearly different categories, such as animals and clothes; then work toward sub-categories. Use manipulatives at first, then eventually paper and pen activities.

## Materials for Phase I

Materials for Phase I should adhere to the general good guidelines for materials for ESL Literacy. That is to say that materials must be appropriate in terms of language, both structure and vocabulary, as well as in terms of layout, font, images, and whitespace. Materials should also be effective – they should support the lesson being taught and help guide learners through tasks to reach outcomes. At Phase I, give learners a high level of instructor support no matter the

Materials at this level shouldn't be cluttered: remember to include a large, easily read font (such as Century Gothic in as large as 20 pt.) as well as lots of white space on the page. Visuals should be clear and easily understood. Photographs are often more effective than line drawings.

task. It is best to break larger tasks down into smaller pieces and to scaffold assignments: provide decreasing levels of support or guidance as learners develop their skills and are able to work increasingly independently. Unfortunately, there are not a lot of commercially-produced, ready-to-use materials available for ESL literacy. Most instructors find that they have to adapt or create the bulk of their materials for class. For more information on materials, please see Chapter Nine.

Suggested materials:

- *English Express* ([www.englishexpress.ca](http://www.englishexpress.ca))
- *Grass Roots Readers* (Grass Roots Press, Edmonton, Alberta)
- *Gatehouse Books* (Gatehouse Media, Manchester, England – also available through Grass Roots Press)
- *The Page Turners Collection* (PRACE, Australia – available through Grass Roots Press)
- *Adult Phonics Stories* (Multi-Cultural Educational Services: [www.mcedservices.com](http://www.mcedservices.com))
- instructor-created materials, including reading books, flashcards, worksheets, and scaffolded writing materials

See the following pages for examples of materials suitable for Phase I. These materials are available in “clean” copies for photocopying in the back of the handbook. Please feel free to adapt these materials to suit the needs of a particular group of learners. They are examples only and can be changed depending on level, theme, or program outcome.

**Tips for Use**

Form layout with increased complexity

Personal information practice can be transferred to a multitude of theme areas: banking, employment, education, shopping, etc.

**Personal Information**

Write 

Personal Information

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

(Last) (First)

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

(City) (Province) (Postal Code)

Sex:            Male            Female

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

### Word Listing

TASK: Put these words in alphabetical order.

#### Tips for Use

Can be modified for any theme or level

Provides practice for spelling or dictionary use

groceries      cash      buy  
purchases      receipt      sale

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____



## Story about Me

My name is \_\_\_\_\_.

I am \_\_\_\_\_ years old.

I am \_\_\_\_\_.

I have \_\_\_\_\_ sons.

I have \_\_\_\_\_ daughters.

### Tips for Use

Provides scaffolding and support for writing a basic paragraph

Can be used as a basis for further reading

Highly adaptable to other themes

Copy the story:

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## Tips for Use

Reinforces vocabulary  
while practicing  
categorization

Encourages learners to  
focus on meaning of words  
rather than just copying

## Female or Male?

Read the words. Copy the words in the correct column.

mother                      sister                      grandmother  
father                      son                      grandfather  
brother                      daughter                      wife

female	male

Tips for Use 

Learners can answer for themselves or interview others

Can be used for numeracy lesson: *How many learners like fish?*

Practices structure of simple present questions without overtly focusing on grammar

Highly repetitive to reinforce form

## Do You Like...?

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Do you like fish?

Yes

Do you like spaghetti?

Yes

Do you like apples?

Yes

Do you like pizza?

Yes

No

Do you like TV?

Yes

No

Do you like Calgary?

Yes

No

Do you like winter?

Yes

No

Do you like snakes?

Yes

No

Do you like school?

Yes

No

## Classroom Routines for Phase I

Phase I learners have generally not spent much time in a classroom setting before beginning ESL literacy. For some, this may be their first experience with formal education, while others may have had up to several years of formal schooling. Regardless, learners will need help with developing an understanding of their new school system and western expectations for the classroom

. A good classroom routine helps learners to build this understanding, but it is also effective in that it creates a productive learning environment. Phase I learners, for example, are not used to sitting for long periods of time working with a pencil or reading a text. This is exhausting work for them and should be interspersed with opportunities to talk and move around.

The following are ideas for classroom routines that work well with this level:

*Tanisha does not complete tasks in the class as quickly as some of the other learners, but she works hard. Sometimes her instructor can tell that she is getting tired; this is a good sign that it's time to do something fun or different.*

*Tanisha enjoys speaking activities; she loves to tell stories about her life and her children, and she loves to give caring advice to the younger people in the classroom, including her instructor. For Tanisha, school is both a place for learning and belonging.*

**Start with the Day's Agenda:** Talk about the day and date and write them on the board. Make sure each learner has a weekly schedule in his or her binder, and have him or her refer to it as you write the day's agenda on the board. Predictability provides learners with a sense of security.

**Change Activities Often:** Gauge learners' attention span and "saturation point." To keep learners engaged and not overwhelmed, change activities every 15 to 20 minutes. Seated exercises can be interspersed with class surveys or other activities where learners need to get up and move around.

**Vary Types of Activities:** Provide opportunities for collaborative and independent learning preferences, as well as kinesthetic, visual, and oral preferences, so that every learner has an opportunity to learn the way that works best for him or her.

Mix it up! Phase I learners are not used to sitting in a classroom focusing on one thing for long stretches of time; remember to vary activities. After an intense reading or writing activity, do something that allows learners to move around. Remember that many LIFE are kinesthetic or aural learners; make sure you include activities that appeal to these learning styles as well.

**Make Reading Part of the Class Culture:** Create a small library in the class and make reading for pleasure part of the class routine. Provide supported reading experiences with the help of an assistant or community volunteer, as well as through classmate reading partners.

## Sample Theme Unit for Phase I

A theme unit is a series of connected lessons, taught over a longer period of time, from a week to several weeks. There are many advantages to teaching in theme units; it is an excellent way to introduce vocabulary and concepts, and it means that the instructor can recycle outcomes without the lessons feeling repetitive to the learners. For more information on theme units, please see Chapter Ten.

In this Phase I theme unit, learners encounter and learn food-related vocabulary, read and follow simple recipes in class, and finally follow a model to write their own favourite recipe, which is displayed on poster board with graphics on the classroom walls.

Food is a universal topic, a consideration especially at the beginning of a new term, when the instructor is getting to know the new learners in class. All learners can relate to and have experience with the topic and are motivated by the opportunity to make food in class. As well, they get to share something low-risk about themselves, a recipe that they use and love. Oral language is informally assessed and developed from the outset of the unit, and new vocabulary development supports reading and writing processes that follow. The same vocabulary is recycled throughout the unit.

This theme unit is appropriate for Phase I Adequate learners, although it can be adjusted to be more or less challenging or more or less supported by the teacher. To illustrate this, the sample lesson plan that follows the theme unit is a little lower, at Phase I Developing. It should take about two to three weeks of full-time class to complete this unit.

## Sample Theme Unit for Phase I: Food

### Introducing the Theme: Food Vocabulary and Reading Recipes

#### Reading & Writing Outcomes

- read and follow a simple recipe, supported with graphics

#### Speaking & Listening Outcomes

- use thematic vocabulary to talk about likes

#### Strategic/Life Skills Outcomes

- use pictures to understand text
- access background knowledge

#### Brief Lesson Descriptions

1. Create two teams to play a game where learners cooperate to match words with pictures of common foods. Use this game to informally assess vocabulary of learners. When learners have matched all of the words they know (as a collective), walk around the class to read the words together, and help them to match the words they don't know.
2. Write an oral prompt on the board: "What is your favourite food?" Write the frame on the board "My favourite food is \_\_\_\_\_." Demonstrate the question and answer orally with volunteers in the class. Ask them to ask this question of three other learners.
3. Give learners a simple recipe in story format that uses the vocabulary they have just practiced and which is heavily supported by clear graphics. Read together as a class and then independently.
4. Lead a class discussion on what kind of food they enjoy and like to make. This can include conversation about traditional foods as well.

### Developing the Theme: Graphing Favourites and Following Recipes

#### Reading & Writing Outcomes

- read aloud a simple story
- read and follow instructor-adapted recipes that include images

#### Speaking & Listening Outcomes

- tell what is their favourite and explain why

#### Strategic/Life Skills Outcomes

- use pictures to understand text
- identify new vocabulary in a text

#### Brief Lesson Descriptions

1. Hand out a short, instructor-adapted story about the history of chocolate with images to support vocabulary. Have learners highlight new words in the text. Ask them to write new words on the board. Practice reading strategies together to read the new words (learners can read parts of a word; perhaps another learner recognizes the word and can explain). At this point draw out prior knowledge from learners about the topic.
2. Read the story together as a class, or ask for volunteers to read short parts of the text.
3. Provide samples of three kinds of chocolate (eg. dark, mint, and milk). Offer learners the option of sampling each kind if they like. Those who sample the chocolate identify their favourite chocolate. Those who do not want to sample the

<p><b>Numeracy Outcomes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• use a table to organize and report information</li> <li>• display survey results in a bar graph</li> </ul>	<p>chocolate can use the opportunity to express why, for example “I don’t like chocolate because it is sweet.”</p> <p>4. With learner participation, write the results in a table format on the board. Then create a bar graph together and answer questions on it. (“How many students like dark chocolate best?”)</p> <p>5. Bring in instructor-adapted recipes and the ingredients and supplies required to make them (for non-bake foods, a blender can work wonders). Hand out the recipes, and have learners highlight new vocabulary. Work together with the class to split tasks. Make the food.</p>
<p><b>Final Product: Writing a Recipe</b></p>	
<p><b>Reading &amp; Writing Outcomes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• write a simple recipe</li> <li>• create a poster, linking graphics with text</li> <li>• read classmates’ recipes and identify key steps</li> </ul> <p><b>Speaking &amp; Listening Outcomes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• explain recipes orally</li> </ul> <p><b>Strategic/Life Skills Outcomes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• use repetition in text to predict</li> <li>• use a writing frame to write a story</li> <li>• use fine motor skills: cutting, pasting, drawing</li> </ul>	<p><b>Brief Lesson Descriptions</b></p> <p>1. Continue to rehearse the vocabulary in varied ways throughout the theme unit.</p> <p>2. Rehearse the initial recipe/story as well, so that learners are comfortable with the new vocabulary.</p> <p>3. Ask each learner to copy the story, adapting it so that the story is about their own favourite food. Learners may copy words from the vocabulary section of their binder, or use a picture dictionary to help, in addition to getting help from other learners who speak the same first/second language. Learners may use pictures from magazines or their own drawings to illustrate. The recipe does not need to include measurements, but should include a list of ingredients.</p> <p>4. Once learners have finished writing their first copy, do a general edit to make sure the stories make sense.</p> <p>5. Provide learners with poster paper. Learners copy their own stories onto their posters, using illustrations or photos from magazines and share.</p>

Tools	
<p><b>New Vocabulary &amp; Concepts</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• vocabulary about food and food preparation</li> <li>• following the format of a recipe (imperative sentences with bulleted ingredients)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Language Structure</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• simple present statements</li> <li>• simple present questions and answers about preference (What's your favourite...?)</li> <li>• imperative</li> </ul>
<p><b>Resources &amp; Materials</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• flashcards from <a href="http://www.esl-library.com">www.esl-library.com</a></li> <li>• instructor-created vocabulary worksheets</li> <li>• an instructor-created recipe story</li> <li>• instructor-adapted recipes, as well as recipes from <a href="http://www.englishexpress.ca">www.englishexpress.ca</a></li> <li>• a simplified/adapted story about chocolate from <i>Weaving it Together</i> (Heinle and Heinle)</li> <li>• several kinds of chocolate for learners to sample</li> <li>• poster paper, markers, rulers, old magazines, sticky tack</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Assessment</b></p> <p>The learners are assessed throughout the unit in their abilities to meet the outcomes. Where suitable, they can choose one or two tasks to be included in their portfolios. For further information on portfolios, please see Chapter Eleven.</p>	



## Lesson Planning for Phase I

Lesson planning for Phase I means creating meaningful, effective lessons that help learners to meet the outcomes of the class. Lessons are often connected to a wider theme. The first of our sample lesson plans is connected to the sample theme unit; the second is another example of a possible lesson.

In a good Phase I lesson, vocabulary is practiced and put into context. Lessons can also give the class the chance to practice listening and writing (strengthening the idea that they can begin to write words using invented spelling – an important step in developing the self-confidence to write), reading both formatted and unformatted texts, and using computers and the internet. None of these skills will be mastered in one session alone; the instructor recycles the vocabulary throughout the theme and key outcomes throughout the class.

There are several key features to a good Phase I lesson plan:

- No activity takes longer than 20 minutes.
- A variety of activities is used, including speaking, listening, reading, writing, and computer use.
- The lesson begins with oral vocabulary before moving to reading and writing.
- More challenging textual work is broken up with opportunities to talk and move around.

Sample Lesson Plan for Phase I: Writing a Recipe

Part of Theme: Final Product

Level: Phase I Developing

Lesson Objectives:

- practice food vocabulary
- fill in a cloze activity of final consonants
- write an ingredients list and a simplified recipe
- put a story in correct sequence
- write down final sounds from a dictation

Timing	Activity Description
5 minutes	<b>Warm-Up:</b> Greet learners. Ask them to tell you what they ate for breakfast or dinner. Ask them what they brought for a snack.
15 minutes	<b>Review Food Prep Vocabulary:</b> Hand out a cloze worksheet reviewing this week’s food preparation vocabulary ( <i>cut, dice, fry, bake, etc.</i> ). Go over it orally and then have learners fill in the cloze using the word bank. Remind them to cross out the words they have used. Go over it orally when they are all finished.
10 minutes	<b>Group Work:</b> In groups of four, have learners discuss their favourite meal and tell each other in their group how to prepare the meal.
20 minutes	<b>Writing an Ingredients List:</b> Have each learner write a list of ingredients needed for their favourite meal. Allow learners to use the vocabulary sheets in their binder to help them. Once learners are finished their writing their first copy, do a general edit to make sure they have most of the ingredients listed and spelled correctly. Hand out lined paper titled, “My Favourite Meal.” Learners copy their list of ingredients. Then they draw or find pictures from magazines to illustrate two or three items on their list. Share.
10 minutes	<b>Writing a Recipe Together:</b> As a class, ask one learner to describe how to make his or her favourite meal. Write this on the board in recipe format as the learner is speaking. (Chop onions; put onions and chicken in a pan; etc.) Read it back to the learner to make sure it is right. Have class read it chorally. Have learners read it individually, then copy it into their notebooks.

30 minutes	<p><b>Mr. Bean:</b> Show the part of the episode where Mr. Bean makes a sandwich. Have the learners retell the story. Put story strips in random order in a pocket chart. Read the strips together as a class. Ask each learner to come up and point to specific words such as <i>fish</i>, <i>lettuce</i>, <i>sock</i>, <i>salt</i>, and <i>butter</i>. Hand the strips out and have the learners put them in the pocket chart in the correct sequential order. Read it together. Hand out individual story strips and scissors. Learners cut up the story strips and glue them onto another worksheet in the correct sequential order.</p>
10 minutes	<p><b>Singing:</b> Sing a food song such as “Oats, Peas, Beans and Barley Grow” or “On Top of Spaghetti.”</p>
10 minutes	<p><b>Listening and Dictation:</b> Tell the learners you are going to practice reading and writing final sounds. Review some of the final sounds the learners already know. Introduce two new final sounds. Solicit words from the learners that have the target sounds in word-final position and write these on the board. Review them with the class. Hand out a worksheet of 10 three letter words with the final sound missing. Read each word and have learners fill in the missing letter. Go over the exercise with the class.</p>
10 minutes	<p><b>Portfolio Work:</b> Remind the class about the different worksheets they have done this unit. Hand out three post-it notes to each learner. Have learners reflect on the unit by looking through their binders and putting a post-it note on the three pieces they like best. Then go around to each learner and look at the ones they have chosen. Help them choose one piece for their portfolio.</p>

## Sample Lesson Plan for Phase I: Weather

Part of Theme: Developing the Theme

Level: Phase I Adequate

Lesson Objectives:

- introduce weather vocabulary
- take simple word dictation with short vowel sounds
- introduce the concept of temperature, including highs and lows
- read formatted text and locate information: weather forecasts

Timing	Activity Description
5 minutes	<b>Warm-Up:</b> Greet learners. Ask learners to look at their weekly schedules in the front of their binders, and have them tell you what the class is doing today. Write the agenda on the board, and add any further information about the theme or special events for the day.
20 minutes	<b>Listening and Dictation:</b> Place the individual whiteboards and markers on each table. Review the short vowel (cvc) sounds, referring to the pictures that match each sound (a- apple, e- elephant). Rehearse the sounds together and review the shape of the mouth for each sound.  Read words, one by one, to the learners, giving them plenty of time to write the words on their whiteboards. Repeat each word several times slowly, and encourage learners to think about the shape of their mouth when they say the words. Each time, ask a learner to spell the word for you and write it on the board.
20 minutes	<b>Review Weather Vocabulary:</b> Review this week’s thematic vocabulary, weather, with a game of <i>Pictionary</i> on the class whiteboard. Allow learners to use vocabulary sheets to help them remember or guess the correct word.
20 minutes	<b>Temperature, Highs, and Lows:</b> Introduce the concept of temperature. Referring to an enlarged photocopy of this morning’s paper, talk about the words <i>high</i> and <i>low</i> . Discuss what kinds of temperatures are hot, cold, warm, and cool. Write the next question on the board: “What’s the high for today?” Elicit an appropriate answer, and write it on the board. Practice questioning and answering with a few learners, until they are comfortable using the sentence frames. Do the same for the next question, “What’s the low..?” Have the class practice together.

15 minutes	<b>Thematic Reading:</b> Read a story about the weather as a class, giving each learner an opportunity to read a page (one sentence) aloud to the class. Then have learners read the story again in partners.
10 minutes	<b>Weather Discussion:</b> As a class, discuss the weather in various parts of the world, particularly in the countries the learners come from, as well as the location they live in now. If there is a community volunteer, create two groups of learners for this discussion. Elicit learner knowledge about appropriate clothing for the four seasons in Canada.
15 minutes	<b>Computer Lab Reading:</b> In the computer lab, have learners go to <a href="http://www.englishexpress.ca">www.englishexpress.ca</a> and direct them to one of the stories about weather and seasons.
15 minutes	<b>Computer Lab Checking Weather Forecasts:</b> Still in the computer lab, have learners go to a website such as <a href="http://www.theweathernetwork.com">www.theweathernetwork.com</a> . On the class screen, model how to find the weather for a given location. Then have learners check the weather in various places.

## Conclusions

While Phase I learners may begin to see new possibilities for themselves with language development and the opportunities that can open up in their lives as a result, they still have many barriers to their learning. Phase I learners have developed a small bank of sight words and may identify that for the first time they are beginning to pay attention to English text in their environment, like advertisements on the bus, or are able to recognize some words in a letter they receive in the mail. Their writing/printing is becoming neater as fine motor skills continue to develop, and they are beginning to write text in appropriate places on a page. These areas of growth are exciting and are an occasion for celebration.

The Phase I learner is highly supported, both instructionally and with any other barriers they have to learning. It is essential that both instructors and programs recognize the tension that can be created as a result of the barriers, and offer as much understanding and support to the learners as they are able. As learners move through Phase I, some supports can gradually be removed or lessened, to the extent that this is appropriate for each learner. As they move into Phase II and eventually III, they will have less and less support, and it is important that learners become more independent.

Phase I learners are beginning to take greater ownership over their learning as well, and are learning to identify their strengths and challenges in relation to their English language development. With the support of a learning portfolio, they are able to communicate their growth and areas for improvement to their instructor and classmates. This self-awareness will benefit learners as they move into Phase II and continue to develop life and learning goals for themselves.

*Angie, Chapal, and Tanisha all work hard in their Phase I class. They face different challenges: Angie must develop her self-confidence, Chapal must find ways to motivate himself to learn, and Tanisha struggles with writing. Their instructor helps them accept that this is okay, as they also have different strengths. Angie develops quickly as a reader, Chapal learns to organize his thoughts, and Tanisha brings strong oral skills to the classroom. After working at Phase I for one to two semesters, all three have strengthened their ability to read and built their sight word vocabulary, and can now write a full simple sentence independently. They are ready to move on to Phase II.*