

The Canadian Language Benchmarks*

What is the CLB?

The CLB is a series of descriptions of language ability in English as an Additional Language (EAL) covering 12 levels (benchmarks) in each of **four skills: Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing.**

For each skill, at each benchmark, the CLB includes:

- A profile of learner abilities (e.g., “The learner can...when the communication is...”).
- Statements of competencies and tasks that learners can do in English. These are divided into categories such as interacting with others, giving instructions, getting things done, and sharing information. They are not specific to a context, but can be applied to different contexts.
- Sample tasks for each competency statement, contextualized into community, work, and study settings.
- Indicators of ability for each competency statement. Useful for identifying sub-skills to focus on and useful for assessing a learner’s success when performing a task.

What can I use the CLB for?

- Assessing a learner’s language level
- Identifying language learning needs
- Deciding what to focus on (identifying outcomes/objectives/goals)
- Programming
- Planning curricula
- Planning instruction
- Assessing a learner’s performance

How long does it take to move from one level to another?

There is no set number of hours of instruction required for moving from one benchmark to another. However, one study found that it took an average of 283 class hours for students to complete a LINC course (that is, to progress approximately one benchmark in each of the four skills). (*Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada Client profile and performance indicators*, 2009, p. 13)

It is important to keep in mind that learning a new language takes significant time and effort. Learners progress through the benchmarks at different rates. Also, a learner may improve faster in one skill than another. Their progress may speed up, slow down, and even plateau – at different times and in different skills.

The following are some of the many factors that can affect how fast learners progress:

- how different their first language is from English
- how much formal education they’ve had
- how much English they are exposed to outside of the classroom
- their language level
- what learning strategies they use and how diligent they are in learning English
- how and what motivates them to learn
- whether they are dealing with any learning disabilities or previous life traumas
- what is happening in their lives outside of the classroom
- their stage of cultural adjustment

* Created August 2014 by Sara Gnida. For information about accessing our FREE services, please contact your Rural Routes regional advisor or visit our website: www.norquest.ca/ruralroutes

What key CLB resources should I be familiar with?

Most of following resources can also be accessed through the Rural Routes website.

Canadian Language Benchmarks	This is the basic document that includes all that is described above. Focus on the pages that are specifically relevant to your learner.	https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/ircc/migration/ircc/english/pdf/pub/language-benchmarks.pdf
Can Do Statements	Lists of what learners "can do" at each benchmark level, for each skill, in language that is accessible to learners. Good for needs assessment and getting a general idea of a learner's CLB level.	http://www.language.ca/product/can-do-statements-pdf-e/
CLB Support Kit	A companion document to the CLB with sections on teaching grammar, pronunciation, pragmatics; teaching multilevel classes, EAP, EWP, and special needs learners; and exemplars of tasks at all levels.	http://www.language.ca/product/club-support-kit-pdf-e/ Or http://bookshelf.language.ca/
CLB Online Self-Assessment	Online assessment of CLB levels for reading and listening	http://www.clb-osa.ca/home
Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks	The centre of expertise that supports the CLB. Includes assessment and teaching resources, documents, and more	http://www.language.ca/

Is there curriculum tied to the

YES!!! Most curricula developed in Canada are tied to the CLB. The following are just a few of the many resources available:

Sample CLB Lesson Plans	Sample lesson plans submitted by ESL teachers across Canada	https://tutela.ca/PublicHomePage
LINC 1-4 Classroom Activities	Reading, writing, listening, speaking activities related to 12 LINC themes; includes audio files and online versions of the activities. Be sure to scroll to the bottom of the page to access the audio files and online activities.	http://wiki.settlementatwork.org/wiki/LINC_1-4_Classroom_Activities
LINC 5-7 Classroom Activities	A collection of classroom activities based on the communication situations and themes in the LINC 5-7 curriculum guidelines. Scroll to the bottom of the page to access on-line learning resources.	http://wiki.settlementatwork.org/index.php?title=Language_Training#ESL.2FLINC_Classroom_Activities
CLB/ES Lesson Plans	Sample lesson plans linked to the CLB and Essential Skills	http://www.itsessential.ca/itsessential/display_page.asp?page_id=217
Tutela.ca	A national online repository that contains learning activities, worksheets, templates, and more	https://tutela.ca/PublicHomePage