

Course  
**Satisfying Basic Needs**  
**ENG-B123-4**

Literacy





“Literacy is not a luxury; it is a right and a responsibility. If our world is to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century we must harness the energy and creativity of all our citizens.”

President Bill Clinton (1946- )

## Presentation of the Course *Satisfying Basic Needs*

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The goal of the course *Satisfying Basic Needs* is to help adult literacy learners use oral and written discourse to deal competently with real-life situations related to the basic necessities of everyday living.

This course develops adult literacy learners’ language proficiency by involving them in a variety of speaking, listening, reading and writing activities that provide them with an opportunity to put very basic language skills into practice in situations related to satisfying the basic requirements of everyday life.

By the end of the course, adults will be able to understand and produce some short, basic informative, expressive and aesthetic

texts in order to satisfy basic needs. They will, for example, write goodwill expressions in cards, keep a basic journal, fill out simple forms as well as produce basic lists, messages and notes. They will also understand simple schedules and instructions, identify specific information in ads and flyers, read simple illustrated stories and understand some specific information in radio and television weather and traffic reports. When interacting orally, they will be able to ask for, obtain and give basic information, instruction and advice, state needs, express satisfaction or dissatisfaction, request assistance and share personal experiences related to satisfying basic needs.

## Dealing with Real-Life Situations

Dealing effectively with real-life situations is based on actions. These actions are grouped into categories and make use of a set of resources that include operational competencies and essential knowledge. During the learning process, adults are expected to construct knowledge related to these resources in order to be able to deal appropriately with their real-life situations.

The class of situations, categories of actions, operational competencies and essential knowledge constitute the compulsory elements of the course. These elements are detailed in their respective rubrics.



## Class of Situations Addressed by the Course

This course addresses a single class of situations: *Using language to satisfy basic needs*.

This class of situations includes a wide range of real-life situations in which adults are required to use basic oral and written discourse related to satisfying basic needs. Dealing competently with such situations requires adults to be familiar with basic common vocabulary related to satisfying basic needs, use a variety of meaning-making strategies and be familiar with a wider range of the forms and conventions of written language in order to ask for,

understand and give basic information, instructions and advice, state needs, request assistance, express satisfaction or dissatisfaction and share personal experiences, ideas and feelings.

Some examples of real-life situations include looking for work, finding affordable housing, consulting health professionals, preparing meals, and using public transportation.

Class of Situations	Examples of Real-Life Situations
Using language to satisfy basic needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Using public transportation</li> <li>▪ Looking for work</li> <li>▪ Working part-time</li> <li>▪ Consulting health professionals</li> <li>▪ Finding affordable housing/daycare</li> <li>▪ Parenting</li> <li>▪ Finding best buys</li> <li>▪ Using the telephone</li> <li>▪ Preparing/ordering meals</li> <li>▪ Keeping informed about weather/news/sports</li> <li>▪ Paying bills</li> <li>▪ Dealing with emergency situations</li> </ul>

## Categories of Actions

The *categories of actions* are groups of actions that are appropriate for dealing with the real-life situations addressed in the course. *Examples of actions* are provided to illustrate the scope of the category across a variety of contexts.

Categories of Actions	Examples of Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Interacting orally to satisfy basic needs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Requests assistance in an emergency situation using basic vocabulary, routine expressions and terms (e.g. when reporting a theft, car accident)</li> <li>▪ Asks for, obtains and gives basic instructions (e.g. regarding food preparation, telephone use)</li> <li>▪ Asks for, obtains and gives basic information and advice (e.g. regarding bus routes, restaurant food)</li> <li>▪ Expresses needs using c basic vocabulary, routine expressions and terms (e.g. housing/health problem)</li> <li>▪ Expresses satisfaction, dissatisfaction and needs using vocabulary and routine expressions and terms (e.g. daycare costs/schedules)</li> <li>▪ Shares personal experiences (e.g. restaurant service, store refund practices)</li> <li>▪ Shares feelings and emotions</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Listening to informative texts to satisfy basic needs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Listens to television and radio reports, recognizing common vocabulary and routine expressions and terms (e.g. weather, traffic)</li> <li>▪ Listens to television and radio commercials, recognizing common vocabulary and routine expressions and terms (e.g. regarding sales promotions, job postings)</li> <li>▪ Listens to basic announcements, recognizing common vocabulary and routine expressions and terms (e.g. in bus and train stations)</li> </ul>

Categories of Actions	Examples of Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Reading informative, expressive and aesthetic texts to satisfy basic needs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Reads ads, flyers, coupons to locate specific information (e.g. brand names and prices, rentals)</li> <li>▪ Reads very simple schedules, locating specific information (e.g. movies, bus, primary school timetables, garbage pick-up, public pool hours)</li> <li>▪ Reads simple maps and symbols (e.g. bus and metro)</li> <li>▪ Reads utility bills and fines to locate specific information (e.g. electricity, gas, phone, parking tickets)</li> <li>▪ Reads simple messages, notes and notices for specific information (e.g. telephone messages, teacher's requests, locations of community events)</li> <li>▪ Reads short two- to-three step instructions with pictures (e.g. simple recipes on packages, microwave cooking instructions, vending machine instructions)</li> <li>▪ Locates specific services in community phone books (e.g. community centre, CLSC, library, daycare)</li> <li>▪ Reads goodwill expressions in cards and notes (e.g. Congratulations, Get well, Thanks, Miss you)</li> <li>▪ Reads very simple illustrated children's stories</li> <li>▪ Reads basic high-interest/low-vocabulary adult content books</li> </ul>

Categories of Actions	Examples of Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Writing informative and expressive texts to satisfy basic needs</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Writes basic lists (e.g. shopping lists)</li><li>▪ Writes basic messages and notes (e.g. regarding child's absence from school, lost and found items)</li><li>▪ Writes basic, short instructions (e.g. simple directions to one's house)</li><li>▪ Writes basic schedules (e.g. children's medication, after school activities)</li><li>▪ Fills out simple forms (e.g. change of address, video club registration)</li><li>▪ Writes goodwill expressions in cards, notes (e.g. Congratulations, Get well, Thank you, Miss you)</li><li>▪ Writes cheques (e.g. rent, instalment payments)</li><li>▪ Keeps a basic journal (e.g. pictures with short captions)</li></ul>

## Compulsory Elements and End-of-Course Outcomes

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Dealing effectively with real-life situations is based on actions. These actions are grouped into categories and make use of a set of resources that include operational competencies and essential knowledge. During the learning process, adults are expected to construct knowledge related to these resources in order to be able to deal appropriately with their real-life situations.

The class of situations, categories of actions, operational competencies and essential knowledge constitute the compulsory elements of the course.

### Class of Situations

Using language to satisfy basic needs

### Categories of Actions

- Interacting orally to satisfy basic needs
- Listening to informative texts to satisfy basic needs
- Reading informative, expressive and aesthetic texts to satisfy basic needs
- Writing informative and expressive texts to satisfy basic needs

### Operational Competencies

#### Communicates

- Determines a purpose for communicating
- Listens attentively to the interlocutor
- Maintains conversation by responding appropriately to the interlocutor's interventions
- Adapts language to the degree of formality of the situation

#### Acts methodically

- Uses meaning-making strategies, procedures and techniques including print-decoding strategies to make sense of written texts
- Uses strategies, techniques and procedures to encode meaning in the production of written texts
- Uses compensatory techniques to repair communication difficulties
- Observes conventions for initiating, sustaining and closing the exchange

### **Essential Knowledge**

- Types of discourse (informative, expressive, aesthetic)
- Oral and written discourse cues and features
- Speaking, listening, reading and writing strategies, techniques and procedures
- The sound system
- The writing system
- Language functions
- Sociolinguistic features
- Grammar and syntax
- Vocabulary related to satisfying basic needs

The end of course outcomes describe how adults make use of the compulsory elements to deal with the real-life situations addressed in the course.

### End-of-Course Outcomes

In order to deal competently with the class of situations *Using language to satisfy basic needs*, adults use some very basic language resources to decode and encode meaning. They begin to read and write very simple messages. Whether they are speaking, listening, reading or writing, adults determine a purpose for communicating.

When interacting orally, adult literacy learners use language functions to achieve their communicative purposes such, as to ask for, obtain and give very basic information, instructions, and advice. They state needs, request assistance, express satisfaction or dissatisfaction, using common, basic vocabulary and some routine expressions and terms and share feelings and personal experiences on matters related to their basic needs. They listen attentively to their interlocutor, maintain conversation by responding appropriately to their interlocutors' interventions and observe appropriate conventions for initiating, sustaining and closing the exchange. They use features of oral discourse such as body language and eye contact to enhance the effectiveness of their communication. If necessary, they use compensatory techniques such as circumlocution and approximation to repair communication difficulties.

When listening to informative texts, such as basic simple instructions and directions or radio and television weather reports, they use techniques such as predicting and identify discourse cues, such as keywords and phrases, to help construct meaning.

In the process of reading, adult literacy learners show awareness of sound-symbol correspondence and the relationship between the printed word and the spoken word. They use print-decoding strategies, such as recognizing sight words and syntactical cues, and other meaning-making strategies, such as setting a purpose, using graphics and pictures, recognizing textual cues and referring to existing knowledge. They understand key words and phrases in such informative texts as basic schedules, simple messages and short, illustrated instructions and recognize common, familiar street names and metro stops in simple metro maps. They find specific information in simple texts with a clear layout. They read expressive texts, such as goodwill expressions in cards, and aesthetic texts, such as short, simple, illustrated children's stories and high-interest/low-vocabulary adult content books.

When writing, adult literacy learners use pre-writing techniques, such as brainstorming to explore and organize ideas, and continue to develop and apply writing techniques and procedures, such as using simple writing conventions or appealing to models. They write informative and expressive texts, such as basic messages, notes, and journal entries, keep basic lists and fill out simple forms, using correct grammar, syntax and conventions of the writing system, such as correct punctuation and spelling.

When speaking or writing, adult literacy learners respect the sociolinguistic features of discourse by adapting their language to the level of formality of the situation. They understand and use vocabulary associated with satisfying basic needs.

## Evaluation Criteria

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- Interacts using basic, common oral texts in routine situations at a functional level
- Understands basic, common oral texts in routine situations at a functional level
- Reads predictable, basic, common texts at a functional level
- Writes short, basic, common texts at a functional level

## Operational Competencies

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The contribution of each operational competency is described in terms of the actions that are appropriate for dealing with the real-life situations of this course. These operational competencies are addressed in other courses, and therefore all of the courses taken together contribute to their development. In this course, only the following operational competencies are addressed: *Communicates* and *Acts methodically*.

In this course, only the following operational competencies are addressed: *Communicate* and *Acts methodically*.

### Contribution of the Operational Competency *Communicates*

The operational competency *Communicates* is the capacity to express meaning simply and clearly and to understand the basic meaning expressed by others. It is solicited in real-life situations in which people exchange meaning and is linked to the class of situations *Using language to satisfy basic needs*.

Adult literacy learners exercise their communicative competency by determining a purpose for communicating. When interacting orally, they listen attentively to their interlocutor and maintain conversation by responding appropriately to their interlocutor's interventions. They adapt their language to the degree of formality of the situation in order to achieve their communicative purposes in real-life situations related to satisfying their basic needs.

### Contribution of the Operational Competency *Acts Methodically*

The operational competency *Acts methodically* involves the effective identification and use of appropriate strategies, techniques and procedures in order to achieve a specific purpose. It is solicited in all real-life situations linked to the class of situations *Using language to satisfy basic needs*.

Adults act methodically when they use print-decoding strategies, techniques and procedures, such as recognizing sight words and syntactical cues, and other meaning-making strategies, techniques and procedures such as rereading and referring to existing knowledge. Adults also act methodically when they observe conventions for initiating, sustaining and closing the exchange and use compensatory techniques, such as circumlocution and approximation, to repair any communication difficulties.

## Essential Knowledge

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The essential knowledge for the literacy level courses is found at the end of the literacy courses.

## Attitudes

The following attitudes are provided as suggestions only. The development of these attitudes can help adults to become more competent in dealing with the real-life situations in this course.

Willingness to take risks	Self-confidence
<p>Willingness to take risks involves being ready to experiment and not being inhibited by fear of making errors. This attitude is a crucial factor in language development and depends on recognizing and accepting the fact that learning is a trial-and-error process. It is by showing initiative, accepting new challenges and experimenting with various forms of communication in different situations that adults increase their language proficiency and improve their level of competency.</p>	<p>Self-confidence can be defined as having faith in one’s abilities. It is an attitude that allows adults to have positive and realistic views of themselves and their situations and to progress. When adults are self-confident, they show a readiness to learn, a willingness to interact orally with their interlocutors and to undertake new reading and writing challenges. This attitude allows adult literacy learners to reflect upon their achievements, establish new goals and actively participate in the construction of new knowledge and the development of language proficiency.</p>
Perseverance	
<p>Perseverance can be defined as persistent determination. Adults who persevere continue their language studies even though they may sometimes feel discouraged. They are committed to hard work. This attitude allows adults to learn from their mistakes and to purposefully participate in learning activities to increase their level of competency. Perseverance is a key attitude for the development of language and lifelong learning.</p>	

## Complementary Resources

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The following resources are provided as suggestions only and consist of references that may be consulted in learning situations.

Social Resources	Material Resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Community centres</li> <li>▪ Libraries</li> <li>▪ Government agencies</li> <li>▪ Non-government agencies</li> <li>▪ Museums</li> <li>▪ Theatres</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Picture dictionaries</li> <li>▪ Beginners' dictionaries</li> <li>▪ Spelling reference books</li> <li>▪ Beginners' grammar reference books</li> <li>▪ Writing models</li> <li>▪ Audio books</li> <li>▪ High-interest/low-vocabulary adult content books</li> <li>▪ Children's books</li> <li>▪ Authentic teaching materials (e.g. schedules, calendars, phone books)</li> <li>▪ Multimedia materials (print and non-print)</li> </ul>

## Contribution of Other Subject Areas

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Essential knowledge from other subject areas is also useful for dealing competently with the real-life situations in this course. While this knowledge is pertinent, it is not subject to formal evaluation in this course, nor does it constitute a prerequisite.

In Literacy, the same situation can be treated in more than one course and can solicit essential knowledge from other subject areas such as Mathematics, Science and Technology.

## Andragogical Context

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It is understood that for learning to take place, adult literacy learners must perceive it as meaningful and relevant to their life. It is from this perspective that the English, Language of Instruction program of study has been developed. The content of the courses in the program has been organized around the real-life situations of the learners. Consequently, in order to make learning concrete and useful, all learning situations are based on these real-life situations.

Learning situations target the construction of the essential language knowledge and the development of the operational competencies necessary to deal competently with real-life situations. Adults develop these operational competencies with the help of the teacher who calls particular attention to the significant actions associated with them by engaging the adults in meaningful speaking, listening, reading and writing activities. As a result, adults build essential knowledge, solicit the appropriate operational competencies for the given real-life situation, and reflect upon their learning, the strategies used, the reinvestment and transformation of their existing knowledge and the attitudes adopted.

In this learning context, teachers play the role of facilitator, mediator and guide. They establish a safe learning environment for adult literacy learners where mutual respect and trust create a climate conducive to learning. With the support of the teacher, adult literacy learners share responsibility for their learning. They define their learning needs, taking into consideration their existing knowledge and experience. Emphasis is placed on the learning process used to

construct the essential language knowledge and to develop the operational competencies. It is therefore important that the learning situation be linked to the needs of the adult literacy learners. By participating in the learning situation that is linked to a real-life situation, adults perceive the relevance of their learning to their life, which in turn stimulates their motivation and involvement.

The learning situation occurs in the adult's place of learning. It is not specific to the needs of a particular adult; rather it is sufficiently open and global to allow all adults to explore important aspects of language related to dealing competently with the real-life situation. Throughout the learning situation, teachers observe the adult literacy learners in action, whether they are in small or large group discussions or interacting with peers. They guide and advise them on the appropriate strategies for constructing the necessary resources and give specific instruction to individuals and groups as needed. The teacher encourages the learners to make links between new knowledge and existing knowledge, and to reflect on and evaluate their learning process and the degree to which they have developed their competencies.

The courses in the English, Language of Instruction program of study are especially designed to promote adult literacy learners' active participation in their own learning. It encourages them to develop their autonomy by providing them with the opportunity to build the language skills required to function competently in real-life situations.

## Learning Situation

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The learning situation that follows is provided as an example to show teachers how the principles of pedagogical renewal can be applied in the classroom.

It is authentic, in the sense that it addresses a real-life situation, taken from the class of situations in the course, that adults may find themselves in. It is sufficiently open and comprehensive to allow adult learners to explore several important aspects related to dealing with this real-life situation.

The examples of actions presented in the course help the teacher to identify those actions that an adult would take to deal with the real-life situation. The teacher can then refer to these examples in order to develop pertinent learning activities.

The learning situation is organized in terms of the three steps of the teaching-learning process, namely:

- planning learning
- actual learning
- integrating and reinvesting learning

These steps highlight the principles of pedagogical renewal insofar as they encourage adults to be active, to reflect on their learning and to interact with their peers when the learning context is suitable. They include learning activities and may also include evaluation activities intended to support adults in the learning process.

These activities help learners to construct knowledge related to the compulsory elements of the course that are targeted by the learning situation concerned: one or more categories of actions, essential knowledge and the actions of the operational competencies associated with the categories of actions.

The example provided also refers to certain teaching strategies—pedagogical methods and techniques—that can be selected according to the learners, the context and the learning environment. Certain learning strategies may also be suggested, as well as a variety of material and social resources.

## Example of a Learning Situation

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### The Note

In the class of situations *Using language to satisfy basic needs*, one of the examples of real-life situations is *Working part-time*.

As a warm-up activity, the teacher shows a picture of an adult worker giving a note to his or her superior. The instructor leads a discussion with the class on the many purposes a note can serve, emphasizing the important role that language plays in communicating information. In order to deal competently with this real-life situation, adult literacy learners engage in different learning activities in order to produce a note explaining an absence. To do so, they use reading, writing, speaking and listening resources and reinvest essential knowledge, such as vocabulary, phonemic awareness and writing conventions, constructed in previous learning situations. In this learning situation, adult literacy learners engage primarily in two categories of actions: reading and writing to satisfy basic needs. They call upon their operational competencies *Communicates* and *Acts methodically* and further develop them by engaging in the significant actions associated with them.

To begin, the teacher leads a discussion with the whole class on the contents of the note, eliciting from the learners the specific information that must be included: the date, the name of the person for whom the note is intended, the clear message and the name of the person who wrote the note. The teacher then provides the learners with a model of a very short, simple note and asks them to read it individually. To help with this activity, the teacher first reviews previously learned meaning-making strategies and encourages them to explore new ones. For example, before reading the entire note, the adults skim or scan the note to identify the location of the

specific information contained in the text, thereby appropriating the idea that a written text is always organized according to certain discourse conventions. They are encouraged to look for familiar vocabulary and recognize textual cues. For example, “Dear\_\_\_” signals that the message will follow and “Sincerely,” signals the end of the note. The teacher moves around the class observing and helping the learners individually, encouraging them to refer to their existing knowledge of the language and reading strategies and to construct new ones. The teacher listens to the learners as they read the text aloud and instructs them on sound/symbol correspondence when necessary.

To prepare for the writing activity, the teacher organizes the learners in groups of three or four and asks them to discuss the purpose of their note, the audience for whom it is intended and the specific information that must be included. The teacher moves from group to group, encouraging them to verbalize the content of the message that they want to include. Using the model as an aid to their writing, each learner then individually composes a note explaining an absence. In the note, the learners must write the current date, the name of the addressee, one or two simple sentences stating the reason for the absence, as well as their signature. The teacher introduces the learners to some very basic writing techniques and procedures. For instance, the learners must use simple writing conventions correctly (e.g. capitalization, spelling, punctuation). The instructor then distributes written exercises that teach and reinforce how to write the date with the proper capitalization, spelling and punctuation. To make certain that the information in their note is

complete, the teacher asks the learners to make a simple checklist of the types of information that must be included in a note. In pairs, the learners correct their partner's note, using their checklist, consulting material resources such as a beginner's dictionary to ensure correct spelling or asking the teacher for verification of correct sentence structure. They then rewrite their notes, incorporating the corrections.

At the end of the learning situation, the teacher animates a discussion with the whole class on the value of the learning situation. They discuss the information they learned, the strategies they applied, and the problems they encountered. Individually, each learner verifies the achievement of the task by filling out an evaluation grid previously prepared by the teacher. The learner also reflects on the knowledge gained and on the effectiveness of the strategies used. They then record their reflections in their journals (e.g. with pictures and a few short sentences) so as to facilitate any reinvestment and adaptation of constructed language knowledge in a real-life situation of working part-time.

## Elements of the Course Addressed by the Learning Situation

Class of Situations	
Using language to satisfy basic needs	
Learning Situation	
The Note	
Categories of Actions	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reading informative, expressive and aesthetic texts to satisfy basic needs</li> <li>Writing informative and expressive texts to satisfy basic needs</li> </ul>	
Operational Competencies	Essential Knowledge
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communicates</li> <li>Acts methodically</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Types of discourse (informative and expressive)</li> <li>Discourse cues and features</li> <li>Reading and writing strategies, techniques and procedures</li> <li>The sound system</li> <li>The writing system</li> <li>Language functions</li> <li>Sociolinguistic features</li> <li>Grammar and syntax</li> <li>Vocabulary pertaining to satisfying basic needs</li> </ul>
Complementary Resources	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Beginners' dictionaries</li> <li>Spelling reference books</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Beginners' grammar reference books</li> <li>Writing models</li> </ul>

