

Course
ENG-5102-2
English and Written Narratives

English Language Arts



Introduction

Narrative texts are a time-honoured way of recording and interpreting human experience. Examples include various works of fiction, literary biographies, human interest stories, and fictional or factual accounts of the private lives of public figures, to name but a few. In fact, many of us look to skilled writers of literary narratives to flesh out and unravel the complexities of common human dilemmas and important social or historical events. Skilled narrative writers inspire us to reflect deeply on the situations depicted, and this reflection in turn develops our interpretative and critical thinking skills. Furthermore, solid familiarity with these texts broadens our knowledge of the expressive, aesthetic and symbolic aspects of language that form the cornerstone of cultural appreciation.

In this 50-hour course, the second of three courses in Secondary V (for which adult learners earn credits in language of instruction), adult learners participate in a variety of learning situations and activities to develop their ability to discuss and analyze short stories and novels. Although these texts all belong primarily to the Narrative genre, whose social function is to depict human experiences and themes in an imaginative way and to stimulate an interpretive, reflective or affective response, they may contain persuasive, informative, explanatory and argumentative elements as well. (See the explanation on social functions and their corresponding genres in Chapter 1, Section 1.2.)

This course helps adult learners broaden their knowledge of the communication conventions used in short stories and novels. By the end of the course, adult learners will be able to apply this knowledge when they interpret these texts and when they write short stories and critical essays on selected novels.

Subject-Specific Competencies

Competencies are developed and demonstrated through the mobilization and effective use of various resources. Among these resources are language processes, strategies and textual and linguistic knowledge. The subject-specific competencies targeted in the course *English and Written Narratives* are shaded in the table below.

Competencies	Key Features		
Uses language/talk to communicate and to learn (C1)	Develops resources for communicating orally and for learning	Interacts with others in different contexts	Interprets how speakers shape an oral message to create a relationship with the audience
Reads and listens to written, spoken and media texts (C2)	Develops resources to make sense of various written, spoken and media texts	Extends understanding of various written, spoken and media texts	Interprets his/her relationship to the text and the context
Produces texts for personal and social purposes (C3)	Develops resources to produce written and media texts	Follows a process to produce written and media texts	Creates a relationship with his/her audience suitable to the text and context

Although only C2 and C3 are targeted in this 50-hour course, C1 is implicit as it complements the learning situations.

For more information on the subject-specific competencies, refer to the following sections:

- *Uses language/talk to communicate and to learn (C1)*, Chapter 3,Section 3.2
- *Reads and listens to written, spoken and media texts (C2)*, Chapter 3,Section 3.3
- *Produces texts for personal and social purposes (C3)*, Chapter 3,Section 3.4

Processes and Strategies

Language processes are series of actions or operations that support competency development. In other words, they are important resources that adult learners may use to become more effective speakers, listeners, readers, viewers, writers or producers of texts. In all, there are four language processes (Research, Reading, Writing and Production); the processes suggested for this course are illustrated in the table below.

Processes	Phases
Research	Planning task at hand Mobilizing resources Reflecting on the resources employed to achieve the task
Reading	
Writing	

Communication and learning strategies are actions, behaviours, steps and techniques that enable adult learners to overcome obstacles, attain goals and achieve success. They are additional resources that adult learners may use to become more effective speakers, listeners, readers, viewers, writers or producers of texts. The communication and learning strategies suggested for this course are illustrated in the table below.

Strategies	
Communication	Verbal and nonverbal Rhetorical Organizational Writing
Learning	Cognitive Activating prior knowledge Meaning-making Listening Reading/viewing Information-gathering Interpretation Note-taking
	Socioaffective Feedback Collaborative
	Metacognitive Procedural Feedback Self-evaluation

Additional information on processes and strategies is provided in the following sections:

- Chapter 3, Section 3.5
- Appendix (Inventory of Strategies)

Cross-Curricular Competencies

The cross-curricular competencies are generic skills that can be developed and applied outside the school setting. They are developed in tandem with subject-specific competencies. Given the nature of the course *English and Written Narratives*, the shaded cross-curricular competencies listed horizontally could easily be developed simultaneously with the shaded subject-specific competencies listed vertically. Since teachers have the option of choosing learning situations other than the ones suggested in this program, they may decide to develop cross-curricular competencies other than those shaded in the table below.

Cross-Curricular Competencies →			Exercises critical judgment		Adopts effective work methods				
↓ Subject-Specific Competencies	Uses information	Solves problems		Uses creativity		Uses ICT	Cooperates with others	Achieves his/her potential	Communicates appropriately
Reads and listens to written, spoken and media texts			■		■				
Produces texts for personal and social purposes			■		■				■

For more information on the key features and manifestations of the cross-curricular competencies, refer to the Diversified Basic Education Program.

Subject-Specific Content

The subject-specific content includes knowledge and cultural references.

Knowledge

The prescribed textual and linguistic elements, necessary for the development of the competencies targeted in this course, are listed below in alphabetical order.

<p>Textual Elements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ audience and communication context ✓ coherence, cohesion and conciseness ✓ consistency or logical presentation of ideas ✓ emotional/aesthetic/intellectual appeal of text ✓ literary elements (characterization, climax, conflict and resolution, dialogue, narrative point of view, plot, setting, symbolism, theme) ✓ main and supporting ideas ✓ methods of organization (e.g. analogy, cause/effect, chronological order, comparison/contrast, example, explanation) ✓ paragraphing (features of introductory, body and concluding paragraphs) ✓ relevant vs. irrelevant details ✓ social function(s) of a text ✓ story development (clear beginning, middle and end; action propelled by a central conflict) ✓ sufficient vs. insufficient development of main ideas ✓ textual features of novels and short stories: title and author; chapters and/or sections ✓ thesis statements and topic sentences
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Linguistic Elements

- ✓ agreement (of person, subject and verb, verb tenses, pronoun and antecedent)
- ✓ appositive phrases
- ✓ capitalization and punctuation (commas, quotation marks, ellipsis, end punctuation)
- ✓ common sentence errors (e.g. fragments, run-on sentences, misplaced modifiers, phrases and clauses)
- ✓ commonly misspelled or confused words
- ✓ language (descriptive, aesthetic, figurative, colloquial)
- ✓ language devices (e.g. hyperbole, humour, irony, personification, understatement; imagery, metaphors, similes)
- ✓ language functions (contextualizing, summarizing, paraphrasing, rephrasing)
- ✓ language tone and register (style/level of language suitable to the context)
- ✓ paragraphing (features of introductory, body and concluding paragraphs)
- ✓ parallel structure
- ✓ relative clauses
- ✓ simple, compound and complex sentences (coordinators, subordinators)
- ✓ syntax
- ✓ transition expressions including time and sequence markers

Cultural References

In this course, adult learners can explore the sociological aspect of culture by focusing on the different sorts of conflicts that arise between key characters in the narrative texts examined. In truth, there is no story without conflict, for conflict is what moves the action forward.

By focusing on interpersonal conflicts, adult learners become more aware of how these conflicts are connected to the social roles and responsibilities the characters assume in relation to one another. Generally speaking, “family” relationships are considered more primary than relationships formed at work, school, church or elsewhere. Society, in other words, expects certain kinds of behaviour from people who are related by blood, marriage or long-term friendship. Parents, for example, are seen as having more obligations to their young children than their children have to them; while grown children are generally seen as responsible for their aging or infirm parents. Furthermore, siblings, husbands, wives and close friends are expected to be loyal, supportive, caring and committed to each another, and so on. This means that when people who are connected by blood, marriage or friendship fail to meet societal or personal expectations, the stage is set for a central conflict. Of course, conflict can arise between people who are not related in these ways, but since their social obligations to each other are much weaker (less is expected of in-laws than of blood relatives and even less of neighbours, acquaintances, coworkers, strangers and so on), these conflicts are often considered minor. By and large, society recognizes that a person’s difficult relationship with key figures such as family members, life partners or dear friends may have damaging or far-reaching consequences, i.e. it may dramatically impact the person’s life story.

Narrative texts are essentially concerned with the complexities of interpersonal relationships, particularly the divisive factors that can rupture the bond between fellow human beings. By

considering these texts, adult learners become aware that society attributes more importance to specific kinds of interpersonal relationships.

Alternatively, teachers may decide to focus on the aesthetic or the sociolinguistic aspect of culture. (See Chapter 4 for additional information on the three cultural aspects.)

Families of Learning Situations

The term “families of learning situations” refers to groupings of learning situations that vary in style and complexity but share some common characteristics. The families of learning situations targeted in this course are shaded in the table below.

Families of Learning Situations	
▶	Exploring and creating literary diversity
	Seeking and imparting information
▶	Developing and supporting a stance

Exploring is associated with the communication purposes of reading, examining and discussing literary texts such as short stories and novels. **Creating** is associated with the communication purposes of conceptualizing, outlining, writing and refining/revising short stories that narrate actual or fictional situations in aesthetic and imaginative ways.

Developing is associated with the communication purposes of constructing, sharing and adjusting interpretations of complex narrative texts such as literary novels and short stories. **Supporting** is associated with the communication purposes of providing sufficient evidence to explain and justify these interpretations in oral discussions and in critical literary essays.

Broad Areas of Learning

The table below illustrates the broad areas of learning. These five areas are selected on the basis of their importance to society. Each comprises an educational aim and focuses of development that help teachers delineate the knowledge that can be explored in specific learning situations.

Broad Areas of Learning →	Health and Well-Being	Career Planning and Entrepreneurship	Environmental Awareness and Consumer Rights and Responsibilities	Media Literacy	Citizenship and Community Life
Subject-Specific Competencies ↓					
Reads and listens to written, spoken and media texts				■	
Produces texts for personal and social purposes				■	

As demonstrated in the chart above and the example of a learning situation below, Media Literacy is a broad area of learning well suited to this course.

When adult learners focus on Media Literacy, they may develop:

- an understanding of media representations of reality (e.g. distinction between reality, imagination and virtual reality)

Other broad areas of learning could also be selected to create different learning situations.

For more information on the broad areas of learning, their educational aim and focuses of development, refer to the Diversified Basic Education Program.

Example of a Learning Situation

Creating a Blog for Family Stories

In this learning situation, adult learners are presented with the following scenario:

On your way to work or school, you hear a radio program about two actresses who have written an account of a pivotal event in the life of a family member and created a Web site inviting others to submit similar stories. Since you instantly think of a family story you'd like to share, you decide to follow the story guidelines posted on the Web site.

The story you submit should be under 500 words. It should describe a true, pivotal event in the life of someone in your family. The story should have a clear beginning, middle and end. The story should also have a defined setting (time and place), and its characters should be developed so that the reader can picture them and get a sense of their personalities. The story should include dialogue and have a central conflict and theme. After your story has been carefully edited and it is ready for general distribution, post it online so that others may read and enjoy it.

End-of-Course Outcomes

By the end of this course, adult learners will be able to:

Discuss and analyze

- **short stories** (e.g. mystery/action/romance/science fiction stories and fables)
- **a novel**
- **a critical essay on a short story or novel**

When adult learners discuss and analyze short stories of different types, they focus on the stories' social function(s), target audience(s) and communication conventions. They begin by discussing the tight narrative structure of a short story, which by its nature is a condensed form. They understand that a short story generally has a fast-moving plot, a small cast of characters clearly delineated with a few precise details, and a central conflict and theme. They adopt a suitable reading stance when reading a selected short story. They identify its text type and any distinctive features. They also discuss some examples of aesthetic or figurative language and language devices such as humour, hyperbole, personification, imagery and irony. They evaluate the effects of the language and language devices identified. They analyze the story's literary elements: the central plot and climax; characterization (descriptions/reactions/relationships/roles/traits of main and minor characters); dialogue; main internal/external conflicts and their resolution; main and minor themes; narrative point of view; protagonist and antagonist; setting; and symbols. They construct interpretations of the story's main characters, events and themes and support their interpretations by providing relevant, detailed evidence from the primary text as well as from their own experiences and observations. They discuss how the story relates to their own lives or life in general. They evaluate the story's persuasive, argumentative, explanatory and informative elements.

When adult learners discuss and analyze a selected novel, they focus on its social function(s), target audience(s) and communication conventions. They begin by discussing the narrative structure of the novel in general and understand that a novel may include a large cast of characters, several main themes, many conflicts, and poetic and descriptive passages not directly connected to the action in the story but satisfying to readers on an aesthetic level. They adopt a reading stance that is suitable to the passage in the novel they are examining and the type of information they are seeking. When discussing their selected novel, they analyze its language in terms of style and complexity. They identify some examples of connotative, aesthetic, figurative and possibly colloquial language. They discuss the novel's literary elements in detail. For example, early on in their reading, adult learners identify the narrative point of view used in the novel, some of the main characters and general circumstances, and also the setting. They do any necessary research on the setting or social/historical backdrop to the novel and discuss how this research information affects their understanding and enjoyment of the novel. As their reading of the novel progresses, they identify the antagonist(s) and protagonist(s) in the novel and the main internal and external conflicts faced by the protagonist(s). They analyze the motivation of the main and important minor characters and analyze the characters' traits, roles and reactions.

Adult learners discuss the central plot and subplots and identify examples of linear and/or nonlinear plotting. They analyze key passages in the novel as well as its main and minor themes and explain the personal relevance of these themes. For all interpretations, adult learners provide clear substantiating details such as relevant dialogue/examples/passages/events from the novel. They also draw upon their personal experiences and observations when drawing conclusions about the characters' actions/motivations/central conflicts, or when explaining the personal relevance of the novel's main or minor themes. In addition, adult learners evaluate the interpretations of others and the evidence provided and, if necessary, adjust their own interpretations in light of this new evidence.

When adult learners discuss and analyze a five-paragraph critical literary essay on a short story or novel, they focus on its social function(s), target audience and communication conventions. They adopt a suitable reading stance and appraise the formal tone and vocabulary used. They discuss the contextualizing information provided in the introductory paragraph concerning the title of the novel, the author's name, the novel's setting and the circumstances of the characters discussed in the essay. They identify the placement and formulation of the thesis statement and its role in the essay. They identify the topic sentences in each of the body paragraphs, the topic sentences' role in the paragraph and their connection to the thesis statement. Adult learners also identify the controlling idea in each topic sentence and evaluate the quality of the details provided to support these sentences. They analyze how the author of the essay makes links between the body paragraphs and the details the paragraphs include. They also analyze the role of the concluding paragraph and understand that its role is to summarize the main points advanced in the essay. Adult learners discuss how the author uses rephrasing in the concluding paragraph to avoid repetition of the wording in the body paragraphs. They note the author's use of direct quotations from the source text and discuss how the quotations are contextualized, inserted and identified. They evaluate the essay's persuasive, argumentative, explanatory and informative elements.

Produce

- **a traditional short story**

When adult learners write a traditional short story, they include the following literary elements: characterization, climax, conflict, dialogue, narrative point of view, plot, setting and theme. Their story has a beginning, middle and end and contains time markers and transition expressions to establish the sequence of events. Adult learners provide detailed descriptions of the main and important minor characters and other relevant details to flesh out the story events. Their story contains a central theme and a pivotal conflict. They incorporate features that are characteristic of the selected text type and use some connotative, descriptive, aesthetic or figurative language to add to the story's appeal.

Text length: 400-500 words

Communication context: familiar or unfamiliar audience; formal or informal tone and register suitable to the text type and target audience

Produce

- **a critical essay on a novel**

When adult learners write a five-paragraph literary essay on a novel, they use suitably formal and concise language throughout. In their introductory paragraph, they identify the title of the novel, the author, the setting and the characters to be discussed. They also briefly describe these characters and their circumstances. This description leads to their thesis statement, which is usually the final sentence in the paragraph. The thesis statement identifies the central argument of the essay.

In each of their three body paragraphs, adult learners develop a separate point that supports the thesis. They begin these paragraphs with a topic sentence that summarizes the main point developed in the paragraph and has a controlling idea. The topic sentences are supported in turn by specific, relevant evidence and examples taken from the novel. The evidence includes quoted excerpts with page references. When quoting dialogue, adult learners identify the speaker and the context. They also use paraphrasing to avoid plagiarizing when describing the novel's characters, setting, events, etc. They make links between the supporting details in each body paragraph (by using transition expressions and linking words such as coordinators and subordinators), and they make links between the body paragraphs as well. In their concluding paragraph, adult learners summarize or restate their main points, and when doing so, they rephrase the wording used in their body paragraphs. Ideally, they connect the main points so as to move their central argument forward.

Text length: 500-600 words, excluding quotations, prepositions and articles

Communication context: unfamiliar audience; formal tone and register suitable to the text type and target audience

Teachers need to ensure that adult learners use planning tools such as brainstorming, lists, outlines, storyboards and discussions as they begin creating their texts. Teachers also need to ensure that adult learners actively reflect on what they learned and how well they communicated in the texts they created. For example, adult learners may use self-evaluation checklists or participate in feedback discussions to appraise how clearly they conveyed their ideas in their short stories and critical literary essays, as well as to appraise how effectively they used various learning and communication strategies. Learners may use the same type of evaluation tools to reflect on what they learned as a result of discussing and creating these texts.

Evaluation Criteria for the Competencies Targeted by the Course

Competencies	Evaluation Criteria
<p>Reads and listens to written, spoken and media texts (C2)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coherent construction of meaning from texts • Demonstration of understanding contextual connections • Thorough comprehension of structures and features of texts • Critical interpretation of texts
<p>Produces texts for personal and social purposes (C3)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective organization of texts to communicate • Appropriate adaptation of language for audience and purpose • Appropriate use of structures, features, codes and conventions of texts • Correct application of language conventions (usage and mechanics)

