

Course
ENG-5103-3
English, Research and Persuasion

English Language Arts



Introduction

In our rapidly changing world, the ability to do effective research is essential. In order to manage everyday concerns such as whether to use a particular product, undergo a medical procedure, invest in stocks or change computer systems, we need to gather information from a wide variety of sources such as Web sites, blogs, media reports, surveys, encyclopedias and specialized journals. It is by conducting careful research that we develop informed viewpoints on subjects of every kind. Later, we may even assemble our research data to persuade others to endorse our viewpoints. In any case, we need to know how to interpret, evaluate, synthesize and organize the different kinds of data we have gathered. Otherwise, we will be unable to fully utilize or share our research findings.

In this 75-hour course, the last 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 research papers, reports, commentaries, argumentative essays and formal debates. Although all of these texts contain elements of the Informative genre, whose social function is to provide a reliable and neutral account of events, situations or natural/social/cultural phenomena, they may all contain explanatory, narrative, persuasive 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 the above texts. By the end of the course, adult learners will be able to apply this knowledge when they write research papers and present oral reports on a research topic. They will also be able to apply this knowledge when they write argumentative essays or participate in formal oral debates.

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, Research and Persuasion* 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

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	
Production	

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 Multimedia/production
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, Research and Persuasion*, 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 → Subject-Specific Competencies ↓	Uses information	Solves problems	Exercises critical judgment	Uses creativity	Adopts effective work methods	Uses ICT	Cooperates with others	Achieves his/her potential	Communicates appropriately
Uses language/talk to communicate and to learn	■		■		■	■			■
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.

Textual Elements

- ✓ audience and communication context
- ✓ coherence, cohesion and conciseness
- ✓ consistency or logical presentation of ideas
- ✓ emotional/intellectual appeal of text
- ✓ facts and statistics; opinions and expert opinions
- ✓ layout of research papers (according to the conventions of a recognized formal style guide, such as APA or MLA)
- ✓ main and supporting ideas
- ✓ methods of organization (e.g. analogy, cause/effect, chronological order, comparison/contrast, example, explanation, listing of ideas)
- ✓ objectivity and bias (e.g. use of selective omission, stereotypes, generalizations)
- ✓ paragraphing (introductory, body and concluding paragraphs for essays and research papers)
- ✓ relevant vs. irrelevant details
- ✓ social function(s) of text
- ✓ sufficient vs. insufficient development of main ideas
- ✓ textual features of argumentative essays: title and five-paragraph structure
textual features of research papers: title page, table of contents, main sections, headings and subheadings, footnotes, bibliography, thesis statements and topic sentences

Linguistic Elements

- ✓ abbreviations or acronyms
- ✓ agreement (of person, subject and verb, verb tenses, pronoun and antecedent)
- ✓ appositive phrases
- ✓ body language (gestures/movements/facial expressions/eye contact)
- ✓ capitalization and punctuation (commas, colons, semicolons, quotation marks, ellipsis, end punctuation)
- ✓ common sentence errors (e.g. fragments, run-on sentences, misplaced modifiers, phrases and clauses)
- ✓ commonly confused or misspelled words
- ✓ language (neutral, connotative, figurative)
- ✓ language devices (e.g. euphemism, hyperbole, sarcasm, repetition, metaphor)
- ✓ language functions (contextualizing, summarizing, rephrasing, paraphrasing)
- ✓ language tone and register (style/level of language suitable to the context)
- ✓ oral communication features (voice tone, speed, volume, emphasis, enunciation, pronunciation)
- ✓ 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 may explore the sociolinguistic aspect of culture by considering the social conventions that govern content in different sorts of information-based texts. By examining various reports, for example, adult learners discover that reports contain language that is neutral, formal and concise. Furthermore, adult learners discover that these texts are expected to provide factual information, which means that reporters must avoid using evaluative words unless the evidence presented is highly conclusive. For example, a reporter may describe a political decision as “disastrous” only when he/she has included a sufficient number of factual details to justify this conclusion. In short, the general public expects a reporter to include only objective and reliable information, i.e. to avoid including any personal feelings or opinions for the purposes of exaggeration or dramatic effect.

If the public wishes to know the personal, as opposed to the professional, viewpoints of those who are disseminating information, they read the opinions of experts in blogs, newspapers and magazines and view or listen to commentaries or debates online and on television and radio. By exploring these particular texts, which may provide a blend of information, persuasion and argumentation, adult learners discover that, while it is conventional for their authors to use connotative or emotional language and other rhetorical strategies, there are still fairly strict social guidelines concerning the formality required. If their authors slip into an overly informal tone or style, this weakens the impact of the message and may even alienate the audience. This is particularly true of a formal debate text.

By considering how the differences in formality, tone and content are connected to the role the above texts play in our society, adult learners become aware of how social conventions govern the language used.

Alternatively, teachers may decide to focus on the aesthetic or the sociological 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

Seeking is associated with the communication purposes of locating, gathering, extracting and sorting information from a variety of sources such as radio and TV commentaries, debates, media reports, information-based Web sites, and so on. **Imparting** is associated with the communication purposes of understanding, synthesizing and sharing information by participating in various informal discussions and presenting formal oral reports.

Developing is associated with the communication purpose of formulating a point of view on a subject based on relevant factual information culled from a variety of sources. **Supporting** is associated with the communication purposes of explaining and defending this point of view in texts such as formal argumentative essays, debates and research papers.

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 ↓					
Uses language/talk to communicate and to learn				■	
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. critical comparison of different representations of reality or events)

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

Posting the Results of Your Research on a Web Site

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

One of your friends has been operating a tattoo parlour for a few years. You find tattooing fascinating and often go in to watch him work. You've also started asking him a lot of questions about the techniques he uses, and you've visited a few other parlours in Québec and questioned some other tattoo artists. In addition, you've done some reading on the Internet and elsewhere about tattooing techniques that are being developed in other parts of North America. You also did a search on a well-known Web site but discovered that it contains very little information about some of the new tattooing techniques you find so interesting. As a result, you decide to share your own research findings with others by posting your information.

End-of-Course Outcomes

In this course, adult learners are required to:

Discuss and analyze

- **reports and commentaries** (e.g. radio, TV, newspapers, magazines, online)
- **an argumentative essay and a formal oral debate**
- **a formal research paper**

When adult learners discuss and analyze reports and commentaries of various kinds, they focus on the social function(s), target audience(s) and communication conventions of these types of texts and adopt a suitable reading stance (for print texts). They examine the language style used in both text types. In the case of reports, they identify the use of neutral and concise language. In the case of commentaries, they identify the use of neutral and connotative language. They understand that while both reports and commentaries may contain facts, statistics, explanations and expert opinions, reports are factual in nature while commentaries are essentially persuasive and thus more likely to contain bias. Adult learners discuss whether the author/speaker of a selected text has omitted important facts that run counter to his/her opinion and if so, they understand that this selective omission is a sign of bias; they also identify any stereotypes and generalizations as signs of bias. In short, adult learners identify the persuasive, informative and explanatory elements that are in these texts and demonstrate the ability to differentiate between reliable and unreliable information. They assess the balance between the facts/statistics and opinions in the texts and the credibility and relevance of the information provided. In addition, they analyze the way the content in reports and commentaries is organized or presented. They identify the main ideas in the selected reports and commentaries and evaluate the supporting details provided.

In addition, when adult learners listen to a TV or radio report or commentary, they identify the voice tone of the speaker. They compare the neutrality of tone characteristic of an oral report with the more emotional or expressive tone characteristic of an oral commentary. In the latter case, they identify any changes in voice tone as well as changes in speed, volume and emphasis, and appraise how these changes impact the message.

When adult learners discuss and analyze a formal argumentative essay and a formal oral debate, they focus on the social function(s), target audience(s) and communication conventions of these texts. They evaluate the formal tone and language style in each text as well as any connotative language used. They discuss the relevance of the supporting details provided for the arguments advanced and examine the way the details are tied together by transition words such as *first*, *second*, *most importantly*, *last*, and so on. They assess the relevance and completeness of the arguments/evidence provided and each text's overall persuasiveness. In the case of a formal argumentative essay, adult learners identify the required content in the introductory, body and concluding paragraphs. They also describe the placement and formulation of the thesis statement and its role in the essay. They discuss the topic sentences that introduce the body paragraphs as well as the role of these topic sentences and their relevance to the thesis statement. In the case of the formal oral debate text, adult learners discuss the role of the debate resolution, the role of the chairperson and the formal procedure followed by the debaters. They identify the number of arguments presented by the speakers on the affirmative and negative sides.

When adult learners discuss and analyze a formal research paper, which observes the conventions of a recognized formal style guide such as APA or MLA, they identify its social function(s), target audience and communication conventions. Adult learners adopt a suitable reading stance. They identify the paper's use of formal, neutral and concise language. They note that *I* and *you* are avoided as well as colloquial language. They discuss the infrequent use of connotative language and the reason for it. They identify the type of information the paper includes, such as facts, statistics and expert opinions, and they distinguish between primary and secondary sources. They identify the research paper's required components, content and standard placement order: the title page, the table of contents, the introduction, the body, the conclusion, and the bibliography or list of references. Adult learners discuss the title of the paper and its suitability. They identify the placement and formulation of headings and subheadings. They discuss the role and placement of footnotes and identify the format used. They examine the quotations included, identify the type of information contained, and discuss how the quotations are identified and inserted in the text. They explain the formulation of a thesis statement, its location in the text and its specific role. They also discuss the role of the introduction and conclusion in the research paper. They analyze the way the author contextualizes the research topic in the introduction, and how he/she rephrases and summarizes the paper's main points in the conclusion. Adult learners note that the introduction and conclusion are integrated in the main text and do not appear on a separate page. In addition, they discuss the different forms of plagiarism, the importance of avoiding plagiarism and the different ways to do so.

Produce

- **a formal argumentative essay or a formal debate**

If adult learners choose to write an argumentative essay, they use a standard five-paragraph construction. They provide a suitable title for their essay. They begin with an introductory paragraph that introduces the topic of their essay and hooks the reader by including some interesting information that leads naturally to their thesis statement, the final sentence of the paragraph. The thesis statement summarizes their position for or against a given issue. The three body paragraphs that follow the thesis statement each develop a separate supporting point or argument. The body paragraphs begin with topic sentences containing clear controlling ideas. The topic sentences are supported in turn through the use of facts, statistics, examples, explanations, anecdotes, common sense and logic. Adult learners may also use methods of organization such as example, analogy, listing of ideas and so on. In the concluding paragraph of the essay, adult learners rephrase and summarize all three main points and connect them to the thesis statement.

Alternatively, if adult learners choose to deliver their arguments as a formal oral debate text, they omit the introductory paragraph and proceed directly to the statement of the resolution. They state which side of the resolution they are supporting (affirmative or negative). They then present their two or three arguments and develop each of their arguments by using facts, statistics, examples, explanations, anecdotes, common sense and logic. Their conclusion may be expressed in a sentence or two.

When delivering the debate text, adult learners use rhetorical strategies such as varying their tone of voice and using facial expressions, gestures, word emphasis, pauses, silences, and repetition to make the text more convincing or impressive. Although adult learners employ a fairly formal tone and style in both the argumentative essay and debate text, they may also use the following: hyperbole, irony, sarcasm, connotative language or inoffensive colloquial language, and humorous analogies/examples/observations/euphemisms/personal anecdotes.

Text length for the argumentative essay: 500-600 words, excluding prepositions and articles

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

Text length for the formal debate: 2-3 minutes per speaker

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

Produce

- a research paper

When adult learners write a research paper, they begin by selecting a suitable research topic in collaboration with their teacher. They gather and examine factual information on this topic from a variety of sources such as encyclopedias; documentaries; media or expert reports; surveys and polls; scientific, newspaper and magazine articles; Web sites; medical journals or dictionaries; interviews; first-person interviews and accounts. Adult learners then select the focus areas of their paper and divide these into three to five main sections, which are given suitable headings. These main headings appear in the centre of the page in larger lettering than the text proper. Basically, adult learners organize their paper according to the conventions of a recognized formal style guide, such as APA or MLA. The paper contains a title page followed by a table of contents. The paper contains a short introduction in which adult learners contextualize their topic and state their thesis (usually at the end of the introduction). The introduction is directly followed by the first main section of the paper. Each main section develops one or two central points through the use of facts/statistics/expert opinions and methods of organization such as comparison/contrast, example, analogy, listing of ideas and so on. The main sections are presented in a logical order, and the information they contain is organized. In other words, each paragraph ideally begins with a topic sentence and includes a sufficient number of relevant supporting details. The paper ends with a conclusion (usually one paragraph) that rephrases and summarizes the main points developed. This conclusion follows the last section of the paper. Main headings are used for both the introduction and conclusion. The list of references or bibliography, which identifies all the sources used, follows the conclusion but is placed on a separate page. Adult learners use a variety of reliable sources and acknowledge these sources. They provide required footnotes for all their research information and employ an acceptable footnote format. They may include some direct quotations from experts in their paper and identify the experts' names and credentials. They put all other information into their own words.

Text length: 1100 to 1300 words, excluding prepositions and articles, quotations, headings, footnotes, the table of contents and the bibliography

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

Present orally

- a report on a research topic

When adult learners deliver a formal oral presentation on their research topic, they develop one or two subtopics and provide sufficient information for each. To complement the text, they include at least one visual device (e.g. map, video clip or montage, electronic or digital presentation, live demonstration, true/false quiz, diagram, chart, prop, poster, picture, photo, drawing). They begin by introducing themselves, their task and their research topic, and then present the subtopics they have chosen to develop. They do not read their text but they may use brief notes.

They organize their ideas and incorporate some of the following: facts, statistics, expert opinions, examples, analogies, explanations, connotative and neutral language, rhetorical questions and repetition. Adult learners also use formal language overall and some oral communication devices such as gestures, movements, facial expressions, varied voice tone, speed, volume and expression. They demonstrate audience awareness by explaining/defining any unfamiliar terms/objects, providing any necessary background information and presenting their report in a way that appeals to their audience on an emotional and/or intellectual level. At the end of their presentation, they answer questions from the audience knowledgeably.

Text length: 6-8 minutes, excluding question period

Communication context: familiar or 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, discussions and rehearsing 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 argumentative texts, research papers and oral research reports, 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
Uses language/talk to communicate and to learn (C1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective communication of ideas • Effective communication for learning • Appropriate use of language conventions
Reads and listens to written, spoken and media texts (C2)	<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
Produces texts for personal and social purposes (C3)	<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)