

# Learning English

## Unit Overview for the Trainer

This unit provides participants with an overview of learning English. It focuses on the following key points:

- ▶ Learning English is important for a refugee's successful adjustment in the United States. Refugees who know English are more able to take care of their own needs and find employment.
- ▶ Refugees who are able to work must find a job as soon as possible after they arrive in the United States. They will not be able to study English for a period of time before finding a job. They will need to do both—study and work—at the same time.
- ▶ Studying English in a classroom with an experienced teacher is a good way to learn English, but there are many other ways that refugees can learn English.
- ▶ Interpreter services are available at places like hospitals and courts for those who need them.

This unit includes three activity plans. The first provides an overview of the topic and contains the most important information. It is recommended that this activity be provided to all newly arrived refugees in reception and placement (R&P) orientation sessions. The rest of the activities may be covered if there is a need for them and enough time.

At the beginning of each activity plan in this unit is an introduction for the trainer which highlights the plan's key concepts and main messages.

The three plans are as follows:

- ▶ *The Basics: Learning English.* This session discusses the importance of learning English to a refugee's adjustment in the United States. Participants will learn that they should look for a job and do all of the things they need to do (such as apply for public assistance) while learning English. Participants will also learn that they have the right to interpreter services at places like hospitals and courts, and that their resettlement agency can help them access these services.
- ▶ *Ways to Learn English.* This session highlights some of the many ways to learn English. Participants will learn that they should try different methods, as available, to find what works best for them.
- ▶ *Benefits of Learning English.* During this session, participants will learn about the benefits of learning English and of attending English language classes.

The following chart shows which *R&P Orientation Objectives and Indicators* are included in each of the activity plans in this unit.

|         | Content Objective   | Learning Indicator   | Activity Plan  |
|---------|---|--|--|
| English | For both adults and children, learning English is critical to successful adjustment in the U.S. | Participants can list reasons why learning English is important for successful adjustment in the U.S.  | The Basics: Learning English<br>Benefits of Learning English |
|         |   | Participants can acknowledge that learning English is their responsibility   | Ways to Learn English  |
|         | Learning English will take time and the process may vary from person to person                  | Participants can acknowledge that they should not delay employment, enrolling in school, applying for assistance, or participating in community life until they have learned English                           | The Basics: Learning English                                 |
|         |   | Participants know their rights to interpretation services (e.g., in hospitals, schools, and courts)  | The Basics: Learning English                                 |
|         | There are a variety of ways to learn English  | Participants understand that they will be referred to free classes by the local resettlement agency, but these classes may have a waiting list and/or the schedule or location of the classes may not be ideal | Ways to Learn English  |
|         |   | Participants are aware of other types of ESL classes for which there may be a fee to participate   | Ways to Learn English  |
|         |   | Participants understand the importance of attending ESL consistently   | Ways to Learn English<br>Benefits of Learning English        |
|         |   | Participants can name additional ways that they can learn English outside of formal classes  | Ways to Learn English  |

|                            | Content Objective   | Learning Indicator  | Activity Plan                |
|----------------------------|---|---|------------------------------|
| <b>Employment</b>          | Early employment and job retention are essential to survival in the U.S., and must be the primary focus for all employable adults (men and women) | Participants can list positive consequences of early employment and negative consequences of delayed employment or lack of employment | Benefits of Learning English |
|                            | A crucial way of finding better paying jobs is learning how to speak English  | Participants can identify English language acquisition as a key to a better job   | Benefits of Learning English |
| <b>Cultural Adjustment</b> | There are some basic coping mechanisms to deal with the stressors of adjustment   | Participants can state that learning English will facilitate their adjustment to life in the U.S.                                     | Benefits of Learning English |

# Learning English

## The Basics: Learning English

### Introduction for the Trainer

#### Key Content

During this session, participants will learn about the importance of learning English as they are looking for work, applying for assistance, and participating in community life during their first few months in the United States. They will also learn about their rights to interpreter services in places such as hospitals and courts of law.

#### Main Messages

Learning English will help refugees adjust more quickly to life in the United States. Learning a new language takes time, and it is important to continue looking for a job, applying for assistance, and participating in community life while learning English. Trainers should convey to participants the importance of not putting off important tasks, such as looking for a job, until after they have learned English. Refugees should also know that they have a right to interpreter services in places such as hospitals, courts, and schools.



20 minutes

#### Objectives

Participants will be able to do the following:

- ▶ Identify learning English as important to their adjustment in the United States
- ▶ State the need to work and take care of other resettlement tasks while they are studying English
- ▶ Describe their right to interpreter services

#### Key English Vocabulary

- ▶ *enroll*
- ▶ *interpreter*
- ▶ *teacher*
- ▶ *I want to learn English.*

#### Materials

- Basics of Learning English Signs (included)
- Flipchart paper, markers, and tape
- Basics of Learning English Cards (included)

## Session Preparation

Hang the Basics of Learning English Signs on the wall in front of the training space, evenly spaced, with 2 to 4 feet between each sign (depending on how much room there is).

Prepare the Basics of Learning English Cards by cutting along the dotted lines. Prepare enough cards (choosing the most important issues) so that there is one per participant.

## Trainer's Introduction of Session to Participants

During this session we will talk about the importance of learning English to your adjustment in the United States. Learning a new language takes time, however, so you should still look for a job, enroll in public services, and make use of community and educational services while you are learning English.

While you are learning English, you have the right to interpreter services when you go to places like schools, hospitals, and courts. When talking to law enforcement officials, you also have the right to an interpreter. Your resettlement agency can help you access interpreter services.

## Introductory Exercise

Conduct a “think-pair-share” exercise by asking participants to think about some of the ways learning English can help their resettlement and adjustment process in the United States. Ask participants to share their thoughts about this with a partner.

Bring the full group together and ask for highlights from the partner discussions. Record responses on flipchart paper.

*Briefly review the key English vocabulary for this plan by saying the first word aloud in English. Participants say the word to a partner, and then all together as a group. Continue in the same way with the rest of the words and the sentence. Throughout the session, emphasize the words as they come up and use the sentence whenever there is an opportunity. If there is time (8 to 10 minutes), use the unit vocabulary found at the end of this unit to help participants better understand key English vocabulary words.*

## Activity

Introduce the Basics of Learning English Signs to participants.

Give each participant one of the Basics of Learning English Cards. Participants look at the picture on their card and decide if this is something that can be done *before* learning English, *while* learning English, or *after* having learned English. Participants tape their Basics of Learning English Card under the appropriate Basics of Learning English Sign in front of the training space.

Then ask participants to sit down facing the front of the training space. Review the cards and where they should be placed, moving cards if necessary. The trainer should note that most tasks can be done *while participants are learning English* and should be placed under the sign, “While I am learning

English.” Discuss the cards about interpreter services with participants and talk about when and how participants can access that assistance. Remind participants that their case worker/manager can help them access an interpreter.

Debrief the session using the questions below.

## Debriefing Questions

- ▶ How can learning English help you in the United States?
- ▶ When do you have a right to interpreter services? How can you request interpretation assistance?
- ▶ What other things can you do while you are learning English?
- ▶ Why do you think it is important to take care of other tasks while also learning English?

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## *Working With Individuals or Very Small Groups*

When working with an individual or a small group of participants, start the session by asking for some ways that learning English can help the resettlement and adjustment process in the United States. Record these on flipchart paper. Select fewer of the Basics of Learning English Cards, choosing those that are relevant to the participant. Show one Basics of Learning English Card to the participant. Ask which of the Basics of Learning English Signs it should be placed under. Discuss the participant’s response and place it under the right sign. Continue with the next card in the same way.

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## Variations and Considerations

If needed, use translated versions of the Basics of Learning English Signs and/or the Basics of Learning English Cards.

When working with a larger group of participants, make duplicates of the Basics of Learning English Cards so that there is one per participant.

Basics of Learning English Signs



*Before I learn English*



*While I am learning English*





*After I learn English*

# Basics of Learning English Cards



*Accept a job*



*Access community services*



*Access public benefits*



*Attend doctor's appointments*



*Attend orientation sessions*



*Do volunteer work*



*Enroll in school*



*Enroll my children in school*



*Help my children with their homework*



*Look for a job*



*Meet my children's teachers*



*Meet my neighbors*



*Participate in community life*



*Request an interpreter*



*Use an interpreter*



*Use public transportation*

# Learning English

## Ways to Learn English

### Introduction for the Trainer

#### Key Content

During this session, participants will learn about different ways to learn English.

#### Main Messages

There are many ways to learn English outside of a classroom, such as by talking with neighbors, listening to the radio, or watching television in English. Different people learn a new language in different ways, so it is important for participants to try different ways to learn a language to see what works best for them. Trainers should encourage participants to practice speaking or listening to English for a certain amount of time each day.



25 minutes

#### Objectives

Participants will be able to do the following:

- ▶ Discuss some ways to learn English
- ▶ Identify some ways they will try to learn English

#### Key English Vocabulary

- ▶ *attend*
- ▶ *practice*
- ▶ *television*
- ▶ *Speak English, please.*

#### Materials

- Learning English Pictures (included)
- Flipchart paper, markers, and tape
- Learning English Worksheets (included), 1 per participant
- Writing implements, 1 per participant

## Session Preparation

Hang the Learning English Pictures around the training space.

## Trainer's Introduction of Session to Participants

As you know, learning English will help ease your adjustment process in the United States. This will take time. There are many different ways to learn English. Often a combination of ways is most effective. During this session, we will identify some ways to learn English. You should try different things to find what works best for you.

## Introductory Exercise

Conduct a "think-pair-share" exercise by asking participants to think about some different ways to learn a new language. Ask participants to share their thoughts about this with a partner.

Bring the full group together and ask for highlights from the partner discussions. Record responses on flipchart paper.

*Briefly review the key English vocabulary for this plan by saying the first word aloud in English. Participants say the word to a partner, and then all together as a group. Continue in the same way with the rest of the words and the sentence. Throughout the session, emphasize the words as they come up and use the sentence whenever there is an opportunity. If there is time (8 to 10 minutes), use the unit vocabulary found at the end of this unit to help participants better understand key English vocabulary words.*

## Activity

Divide participants into groups of three to four people.

Groups walk around the training space together, looking at the Learning English Pictures, and thinking about whether they have ever used the methods shown in the picture when learning a language. Have them talk about whether the picture shown is something they could do in their own lives.

Distribute Learning English Worksheets and pens or pencils to each participant. Participants continue their discussion of ways to learn English. On their worksheet, participants circle three ways they will try to learn English.

When finished, debrief the session with participants using the questions below.

## Debriefing Questions

- ▶ Whose responsibility is it that you learn English?
- ▶ What are some ways to learn English?
- ▶ Why is it helpful to use different ways to learn English?
- ▶ What are some ways you will learn English?

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## *Working With Individuals or Very Small Groups*

When working with an individual or a small group of participants, lead the introductory exercise by asking participants, “What are some ways to learn a new language?” As the method in each picture is mentioned, place that picture on the table or the floor in front of the group (or participant). During the activity, distribute the Learning English Worksheets, pens, and pencils to participants. Review some ways of learning English that have not yet been discussed. Then ask participants to complete the worksheet. Debrief the session using the questions provided.

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## Variations and Considerations

If possible, group participants by language background during the activity so that they can communicate in a common language.

If needed, use translated versions of the Learning English Pictures and/or the Learning English Worksheet.

## Learning English Pictures



*Attending English language classes*





*Doing activities you enjoy with English speakers*



*Get involved at your child's school*



*Making Your Way: A Reception and Placement Orientation Curriculum*



*Having “English only” time at home each day*



*Joining (or creating) a group to practice English*



*Listening to the radio*



*Listening to your case worker/manager or teacher*



*Practicing English with friends or neighbors*







*Reading signs*



*Speaking English at work*

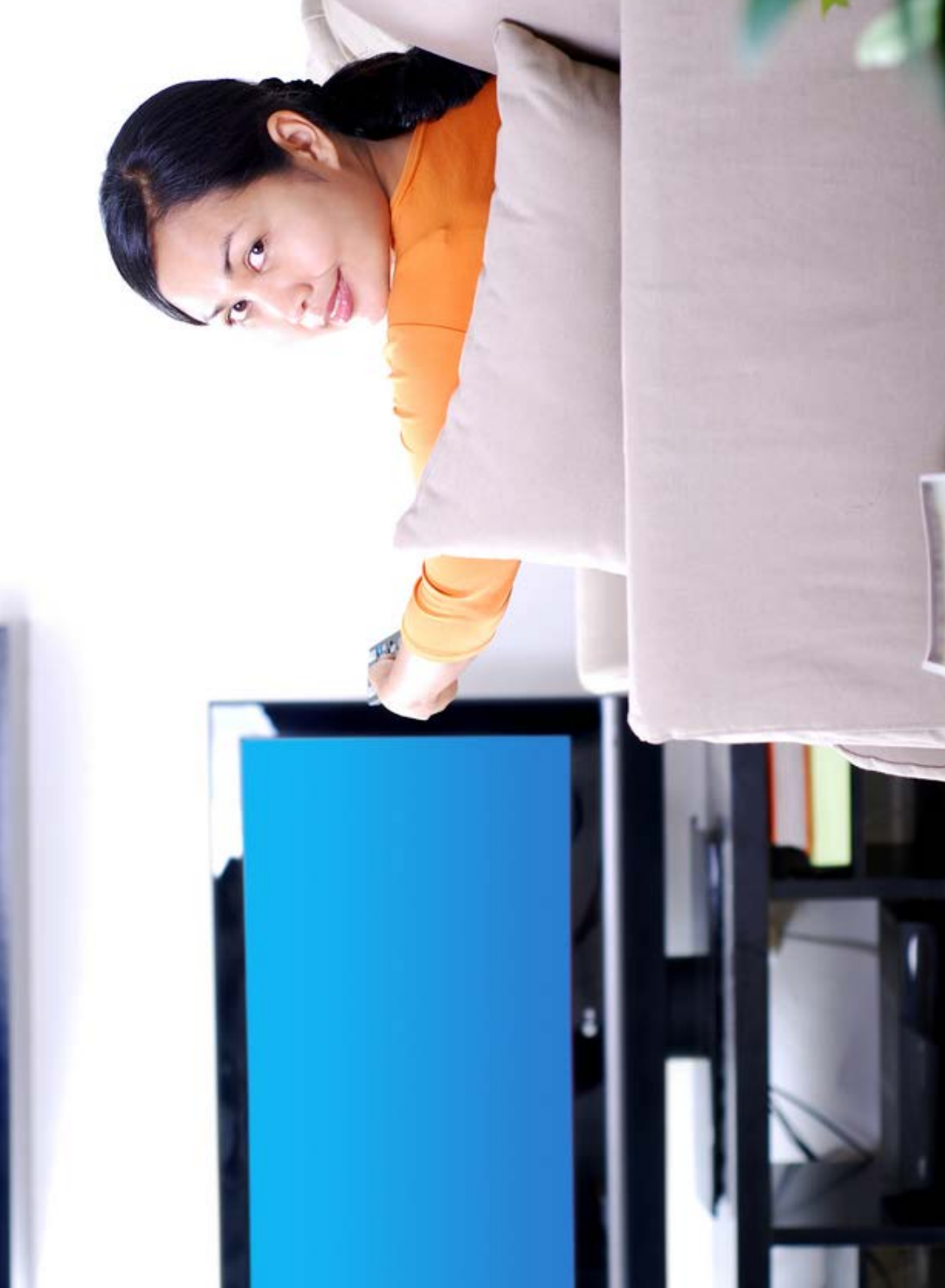


*Studying English books at home*



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*Talking with people in stores*



*Watching movies or television in English*

# Learning English Worksheet

Directions: Circle three ways you will try to learn English.



*Attending English language classes*



*Doing activities you enjoy with English speakers*



*Getting involved at your child's school*



*Having "English only" time at home each day*



*Joining (or creating) a group to practice English*



*Listening to the radio*



*Listening to your case worker/manager or teacher*



*Practicing English with friends or neighbors*



*Reading local newspapers*



*Reading signs*



*Speaking English at work*



*Speaking English at home*



*Talking with people in stores*



*Watching movies or television*

# Learning English

## Benefits of Learning English

### Introduction for the Trainer

#### Key Content

During this session, participants will learn about the importance of attending English classes.

#### Main Messages

Learning English is important for a refugee's successful adjustment in the United States. The local resettlement agency will refer refugees to English classes. People from all over the world take English class together in the United States. Although students may have very different backgrounds, they all want the same thing: to learn the language. Trainers should encourage participants to attend English classes regularly.



40 minutes

#### Objectives

Participants will be able to do the following:

- ▶ Describe why learning English in the United States is important
- ▶ Describe how attending English classes will be helpful to them

#### Key English Vocabulary

- ▶ *class*
- ▶ *speak*
- ▶ *understand*
- ▶ *I only know a little English.*

#### Materials

- Benefits of Learning English Questions (included)
- Benefits of Learning English Pictures (included), 1 set per group of 2-5
- Envelopes, 1 per group of 2-5
- Extra printer paper cut into quarters
- Writing implements, 1 per group of 2-5
- Tape

## Session Preparation

Determine the number of groups you will have for the activity. The number of groups should be divisible by three (e.g., with three, six, or nine members), with two to five people per group. You will need one envelope for each group. Depending on the number of groups, you will have three, six, nine, or more envelopes. Write (or cut out and glue or tape) one of the three Benefits of Learning English Questions on the back of each envelope. If you are using three envelopes, each question will appear once. If you are using six envelopes, each question will be written twice.

Prepare sets of Benefits of Learning English Pictures by cutting along the dotted lines and keeping sets together.

## Trainer's Introduction of Session to Participants

Learning English in the United States is very important. During this session, we will talk about why it is important and how learning English can help you in your life in the United States. We will also talk about why attending English language classes may help you learn English.

## Introductory Exercise

*Briefly review the key English vocabulary for this plan by saying the first word aloud in English. Participants say the word to a partner, and then all together as a group. Continue in the same way with the rest of the words and the sentence. Throughout the session, emphasize the words as they come up and use the sentence whenever there is an opportunity. If there is time (8 to 10 minutes), use the unit vocabulary found at the end of this unit to help participants better understand key English vocabulary words.*

## Activity

Divide participants into the number of groups (each with two to five people) that you chose during the session preparation.

Distribute a set of Benefits of Learning English Pictures, a labeled envelope, some extra quarter sheets of paper, and a pen or pencil to each group. Ask each group to elect a spokesperson.

Give groups 3 to 5 minutes to do the following: Groups read the question (or have it read to them by the trainer) and discuss possible answers. Groups choose pictures from the Benefits of Learning English Pictures as responses to the question. If groups come up with responses not shown by the pictures, they can write their own using the extra paper and the pens or pencils. Groups should try to have at least three responses for the question and place these responses inside the envelope. *[While giving the groups directions, the trainer should note that not all of the Benefits of Learning English Pictures are acceptable answers to the questions.]* When they finish, groups should keep the pictures they have not chosen to put in the envelope.

After 3 to 5 minutes, have each group pass their envelope to another group. Have the group repeat the process with their new question.



After responding to the third question, the group puts aside the pictures they have not chosen and removes the responses within the envelope. The group looks at all the responses and chooses the five best answers to the question. Group members put these responses in order of most to least important.

Bring the full group together. Ask the spokesperson from each group to tape the top responses to the wall and explain answers to the question.

If the card “Learning English will mean that I am not dependent upon my children for interpretation” was not addressed, bring it to the attention of participants. Note the importance of working with an interpreter rather than having children interpret for their parents.

When all groups have presented, debrief the session using the questions below.

### Debriefing Questions

- ▶ Why do you think it is important to learn English in the United States?
- ▶ Why it is important for you and your family to attend English classes?
- ▶ Why do you think it is beneficial to attend English classes even after you have a job?
- ▶ What is the most important thing you have learned during this session?

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### *Working With Individuals or Very Small Groups*

When working with an individual or a small group of participants, write the questions from the session preparation on index cards and place them in a box or a basket. Ask a participant to draw a card at random. Show participants the card, read the question aloud, and discuss it with participants. Debrief the session using the questions provided.

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### Variations and Considerations

When working with a larger group and if there is enough time, have small groups that are consolidating answers to the same questions work together to come up with the top five responses to the question.

If possible, ensure that a literate participant is in each group. If you are working with an interpreter, have her/him read the questions to a group that has no literate participants.

If possible, group participants by language background during the activity so that they can communicate in a common language.

If needed, use translated versions of the Benefits of Learning English Pictures.

Based on the experiences of refugees in your community, add or remove cards from the Benefits of Learning English Pictures.

## Benefits of Learning English Questions

*Why is it important to learn English in the United States?*

*Why is it important to attend English classes?*

*What are the benefits of attending English classes even after you have started a job?*

## Benefits of Learning English Pictures



*Attending English class regularly will help me learn English better and faster.*



*English is the most commonly used language in the United States.*



*English will help me with taking public transportation and shopping.*



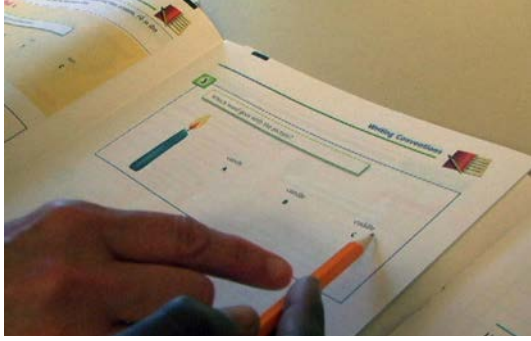
*I can communicate with my children's teachers in English.*



*I can learn English from an experienced teacher.*



*I can learn English while I am at work.*



*I can learn how to understand, speak, read, and write in English.*



*I can speak English with others who are learning the language, even if we don't speak the same first language.*



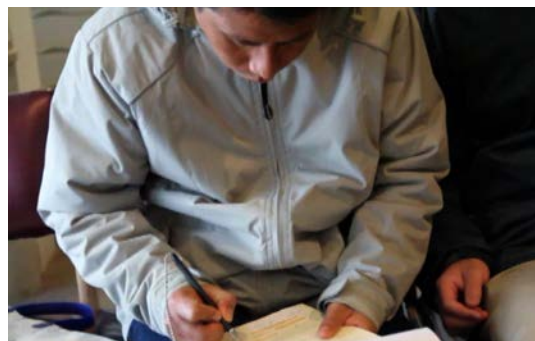
*I need to be able to talk to my co-workers.*



*I need to be able to talk to other people in my community.*



*Learning English is my responsibility.*



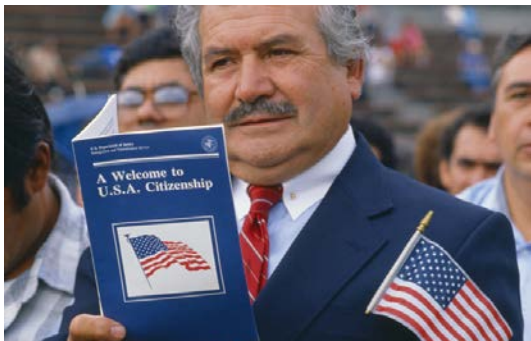
*Learning English will help me become independent.*



*Learning English will help me get a better job or earn a promotion.*



*Learning English will help me get a job.*



*Learning English will help me study for and pass the U.S. Citizenship test, so I can become a citizen of the United States.*



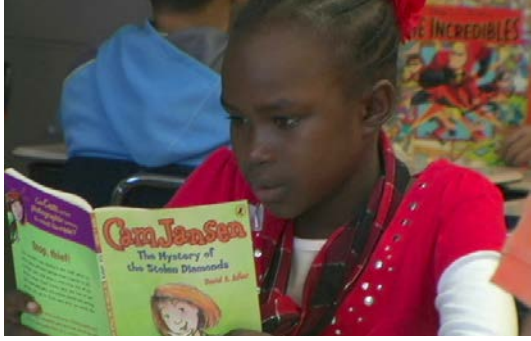
*Learning English will help my adjustment to my new community.*



*Learning English will mean that I am not dependent upon my children for interpretation.*



*Learning English will take time.*



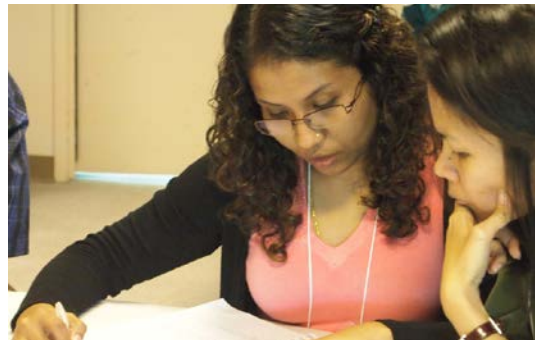
*My children will learn English quickly.*



*Practicing English regularly is very important.*



*Speaking English will allow me to make doctor's appointments and attend them without an interpreter.*



*There are many different ways to learn English.*

# Learning English

## Unit Vocabulary

The following lists key English vocabulary words related to this unit. The words are in alphabetical order.

*[The following paragraph consists of instructions for the trainer. If you choose to share the unit vocabulary with participants, we recommend removing the following paragraph.]*

Introduce words by using the definition and contextual sentence. Omit words that participants already know. A partner talk is meant to be a 2-minute exchange between participants and should include two to three terms that the participants easily understand. Encourage conversation and interaction, and focus on what participants already know about the word from its use during the session. Following the list of vocabulary words, there are two unit vocabulary worksheets for participants who would like to practice the words more.

| Vocabulary Word    | Definition  | Context   | Partner Talk  |
|--------------------|---|---|---|
| <i>attend</i>      | To be present at a place for an event or activity.  | Hawo <i>attends</i> English class on Tuesdays and Thursdays.                              | Do you <i>attend</i> English class? How many days a week do you or would you like to <i>attend</i> English class? |
| <i>class</i>       | A group of students who study together with a teacher. A <i>free class</i> means that there is no cost. | It is free to attend Ms. Zhu's English language <i>class</i> .                            | Have you studied English before in a <i>class</i> ? Tell me about the <i>class</i> .                              |
| <i>enroll</i>      | To put your name on an official list, usually to join a class or a group.                               | Durga <i>enrolled</i> in an English class at the community college near him.              | How can you <i>enroll</i> in an English class near you?   |
| <i>interpreter</i> | A person who translates orally from one language to another.  | When Dina visited the doctor, she brought an Arabic-speaking <i>interpreter</i> with her. | When is it okay for your children to <i>interpret</i> for you? When is it not okay?                               |

| Vocabulary Word                                  | Definition   | Context  | Partner Talk   |
|--|--|--|--|
| <i>learn</i>                                     | To get knowledge about something.  | You can <i>learn</i> by studying or by doing.  | How do you like to <i>learn</i> ?  |
| <i>listen</i>                                    | To pay attention to what you can hear.   | Children must <i>listen</i> to their parents.  | What music do you like to <i>listen</i> to?  |
| <i>to practice</i>                               | To repeat an activity many times in order to become good at it.                              | Roberto <i>practices</i> soccer every afternoon after school.                          | What are you good at doing? How often do you <i>practice</i> this activity?  |
| <i>read</i>                                      | To be able to understand the meaning of written words.                                       | Mahmoud can <i>read</i> Arabic and French, but he prefers to <i>read</i> in French.    | Do you like to <i>read</i> ? In what language do you prefer to <i>read</i> ? What kinds of things do you like to <i>read</i> ? |
| <i>speak</i>                                     | To say words aloud.  | Kalu <i>speaks</i> English very well.  | What languages can you <i>speak</i> ?  |
| <i>teacher</i>                                   | A person whose job is helping others learn.  | Michel and Celine like their English <i>teacher</i> very much.                         | What do you think makes a good <i>teacher</i> ? Lots of knowledge? Patience? What else?  |
| <i>television</i> (also shortened to <i>TV</i> ) | A piece of electronic equipment that receives sound and moving pictures that are sent to it. | Aliyah watches the news on <i>television</i> at 6:30 most evenings.                    | Do you or someone you know have a <i>television</i> ? What do you like to watch on <i>television</i> ?                         |
| <i>understand</i>                                | To know what something means.  | Do you <i>understand</i> what the teacher is saying?                                   | What are some things you can do to better <i>understand</i> English?   |
| <i>watch</i>                                     | To look at something and to follow it with your eyes.  | Some people find that <i>watching</i> and listening to TV can help them learn English. | Do you like to <i>watch</i> TV in English? Why or why not?   |



| Vocabulary Word | Definition   | Context   | Partner Talk   |
|-----------------|--|---|--|
| <i>write</i>    | To form letters, words, and sentences on paper with a pen or pencil, or to type them on a computer with the use of a keyboard. | Saw Tun and May Htoo are learning to <i>write</i> in English. | Why is it a good idea to learn to <i>write</i> in English? What do you need to be able to <i>write</i> in English? |

## Learning English Unit Vocabulary Worksheets

There are two unit vocabulary worksheets. Worksheet 1 is for beginning-level English language learners, and Worksheet 2 is for learners with more advanced English language skills.

The worksheets can be incorporated into an orientation session, or they can be given to participants to work on at home.

Learning English Unit Vocabulary Worksheet 1

Directions: Match the language skill to the body part you use the most when you practice that skill.

Words



*read*



*write*



*listen*



*speak*

Body Part



*ear*



*mouth*



*eyes*



*hands*

## Learning English Unit Vocabulary Worksheet 2

Directions: Use the clues to fill in the words in the puzzle below. The words are included in a word bank. The first one is done for you.

| Word Bank |          |         |             |
|-----------|----------|---------|-------------|
| attend    | class    | enroll  | interpreter |
| learn     | practice | teacher | understand  |

### Across ↔

(words that go from left to right):

- To put your name on an official list, usually to join a class
- To know what something means
- To repeat an activity many times
- To get knowledge about something
- A person whose job is helping others learn

### Down ↓

(words that go from top to bottom):

- A person who translates orally from one language to another
- To be present at a place for an event or an activity
- A group of students who study together with a teacher

