

English Language Learning Options in Waterloo Region

Formal Learning Options

Everyone who wants to attend formal English classes needs to start with a Language Assessment. Formal English learning options provide a language certificate and allow learners to officially progress to more advanced Canadian Language Benchmark (CLB) levels.

Language Assessment and Referral Services (CLARS):

YMCA Immigrant Services provides official Canadian language benchmark assessments and referral to English learning programs. Appointments can be booked by calling: 519-579-9622 (Kitchener), and 519-621-1621 (Cambridge).

Language assessors may also suggest informal language learning options.

English Language Learning Programs:

Formal classes are free to eligible individuals. Formal classes include both:

- Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) for permanent residents (landed immigrants, newcomers and refugees) (not available for temporary residents or Canadian citizens)
- English as a Second Language (ESL) for Canadian citizens, refugee claimants as well as permanent residents (visitors also accepted with additional fees)

Classes are separated based on the English level of the learners from "literacy" (little literacy in their mother tongue language) to CLB level 1 to 8. Content is often learner-directed based on what the class members need to know and emphasizes the practical uses of language that learners would need to live and work. Transportation assistance may be available.

Daytime, Evening, and Weekend English Classes: Classes are available in the mornings, afternoons, evenings or weekends. Summer classes are also available. Some classes include child minding during the class time. Some classes are for specific groups (e.g. seniors) or for specific purposes (e.g. IELTS preparation, citizenship test preparation, computer learning).

Conestoga College: LINC classes for individuals with no English up to CLB level 8. Some classes have child-minding. Classes are located at their Kitchener, Waterloo and Cambridge sites.

St Louis Adult Learning Centre: ESL and LINC classes for individuals with no English up to CLB level 8. St Louis offers LINC classes with child-minding beginning at 6 months. Classes are offered at: St. Mary's and St. Francis campuses, as well as Forest Hill (Kitchener), Emmanuel (Waterloo) and St. Benedict's (Cambridge). Some options available for temporary workers or non-permanent residents.

English at First: LINC classes for individuals with no English up to CLB level 4 and classes specifically for seniors. Transportation assistance is available for those who qualify. Child-minding support is available. Located at First United Church (Waterloo).

Online Home-Study Classes:

Learn English at one's own pace and from home for free. Contact YMCA Language Assessment Centre for referral.

<https://www.linchomestudy.ca/Online>

Formal tuition-based academic learning is available through Renison College English Language Institute (www.uwaterloo.ca/english-language-institute) and Conestoga College English Language Studies program (www.conestogac.on.ca/fulltime/general-arts-and-science-english-language-studies). Tuition fees apply.

Informal Learning Options

Many informal English learning options are available. Informal learning options don't provide language benchmark changes or language certificates.

Conversation Circles:

Conversation circles are informal, drop-in opportunities to practice your English with a small group of people. They are run by YMCA, Kitchener Public Library, Waterloo Public Library, the Idea Exchange library in Cambridge, The Working Centre and other community groups. Some groups are particularly for women, students, or other specific groups.

For lists of conversation circles:

- Kitchener-Waterloo (~16 locations) www.kpl.org/esl
- Cambridge (~7 locations) <https://ideaexchange.org/about/idea/co>

Tutoring/Mentoring:

Tutoring/mentoring is offered by local organizations as an opportunity to learn in an informal one-on-one setting.

KWMC (Conversational English Program) matches volunteers with newcomers to Canada who want to improve their conversational English skills for everyday living (1-2hrs/wk) and is open to permanent residents, refugee claimants, convention refugees/protected persons, live-in caregivers, and those who received citizenship in the last 3 years. www.kwmc.on.ca/english-skills

Reception House matches Government-Assisted Refugees who are unable to access formal classes with volunteers to learn English in their home or neighbourhood receptionhouse.ca/eo

Workplace Language Learning:

Some employers may have opportunities for their employees to learn or practice English in the workplace.

Post Secondary Language Learning:

Some universities/colleges may have programs for international student learners who are enrolled at their institution.

Online Self-Directed Learning:

These websites provide free online learning activities for newcomers to practice their English language skills:

eslcorner.settlement.org
www.5minuteenglish.com
www.manythings.org
www.languageguide.org/english
www.englishaccentcoach.com
www.esl-lab.com
www.clb-osa.ca
www.esl.culips.com
www.anytimeesl.ca
www.myenglishonline.ca/for-learners/english-exercises

For more information about language learning options visit www.immigrationwaterlooregion.ca/learnEnglish or the YMCA Language Assessment Centre at <https://www.ymcacambridgekw.ca/en/immigrant-services/Language-Assessment.asp>

To find out more about the specific programs mentioned above contact: KW Multicultural Centre (KWMC) volunteer@kwmc-on.com or 519-208-9581; YMCA newcomers@ckwymca.ca or 519-579-9622 (KW) or 519-621-1621 (Camb); Reception House info@receptionhouse.ca or 519-743-0445; Conestoga College linc@conestogac.on.ca or 519-886-3300; St Louis stlouis@wcdsb.ca or 519-745-1201 x280; English at First EnglishatFirst@bellnet.ca or 519-571-0360.

The Immigration Partnership, with all organizations mentioned here and other community partners, developed this resource for organizations and staff that work with newcomers who want to improve their English. For more information contact the Immigration Partnership www.immigrationwaterlooregion.ca/IP.