

# 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. You will move through Canadian Language Benchmark (CLB) levels and will get an official language certificate when you progress.

### Language Assessment and Referral Services (CLARS):

YMCA Immigrant Services provides a Canadian language benchmark **placement assessment** and **referral** to English language learning programs. To book an appointment email [intake@ytr.ymca.ca](mailto:intake@ytr.ymca.ca) or call: Kitchener: 519-579-9622  
Cambridge: 519-621-1621  
[www.ymcacambridgekw.ca/en/immigrant-services/Language-Assessment.asp](http://www.ymcacambridgekw.ca/en/immigrant-services/Language-Assessment.asp)

Language assessors may also suggest informal language learning options.

### English Language Learning Programs:

Classes range from Literacy Level (little literacy in their mother tongue language) to CLB 8. Classes help students with English needed for daily life. Formal classes are **free** if you qualify.

Formal classes include:

- **LINC:** Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada for permanent residents (refugees, landed immigrants). Bus cards and/or childminding may be available. Not available to temporary residents or Canadian citizens.
- **ESL:** English as a Second Language includes permanent residents and also Canadian citizens and refugee claimants. (Visitors also accepted with additional fees.)
- **OSLT:** Occupation Specific Language Training in business, health sciences, human services, and technology for permanent residents (refugees, landed immigrants).

### There are options for daytime, evening, and weekend English classes.

Some classes below include childminding during class time (some take infants from 6 months of age). Some classes target specific learners (e.g. seniors) or specific purposes (e.g. IELTS preparation, citizenship test preparation, computer learning).

#### Conestoga College:

LINC classes for learners with no English up to CLB 8. Classes are at Kitchener, Waterloo and Cambridge sites.  
[www.conestogac.on.ca/interdisciplinary-studies/linc](http://www.conestogac.on.ca/interdisciplinary-studies/linc)  
(See <https://www.conestogac.on.ca/interdisciplinary-studies/oslt> about OSLT options.)

#### St Louis Adult Learning Centre:

LINC & ESL classes for learners with no English up to CLB 8. Classes are at: Kitchener (Main, St. Mary's, Highland, Forest Hill, Christ the King), Waterloo (Emmanuel) and Cambridge (St. Benedict's) sites. Some options for temporary workers or non-permanent residents.  
[stlouis.wcdsb.ca/programsandcourses/english-language](http://stlouis.wcdsb.ca/programsandcourses/english-language)

#### English at First:

LINC classes for learners with no English up to CLB level 4. Classes are at Waterloo (First United Church) site. [englishatfirst.com](http://englishatfirst.com)

### LINC Online Home-Study Classes:

Learn English from home at your own pace. Contact YMCA Language Assessment Centre to see if you qualify:  
<https://www.linchomestudy.ca/Online>

Formal tuition-based academic learning is available through:

- Conestoga College English Language Studies program ([www.conestogac.on.ca/fulltime/general-arts-and-science-english-language-studies](http://www.conestogac.on.ca/fulltime/general-arts-and-science-english-language-studies))
- Renison College English Language Institute ([www.uwaterloo.ca/english-language-institute](http://www.uwaterloo.ca/english-language-institute)).

Tuition fees apply.

## Informal Learning Options

Many informal English learning options are available. These programs don't provide Canadian language benchmark (CLB) level changes or language certificate for citizenship.

### Conversation Circles:

Drop-in and practice English with a smaller group of people. These sessions are run by YMCA, Kitchener Public Library, the Idea Exchange library in Cambridge and other community groups. Some groups are particularly for women, students, or other specific learners.

Conversation Circle lists:

- Kitchener-Waterloo (17 locations) [www.kpl.org/esl](http://www.kpl.org/esl)
- Cambridge (7 locations) <https://ideaexchange.org/about/idea/conversation-circles>

### 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 who want to improve conversational English skills for everyday life (1-2hrs/wk). Open to all except those on temporary visas and those who became citizens more than 3 years ago. [www.kwmc.on.ca/english-skills](http://www.kwmc.on.ca/english-skills)

**Reception House** matches Government-Assisted Refugees who cannot access formal classes with volunteers to learn English in their home or neighbourhood. [receptionhouse.ca/eo](http://receptionhouse.ca/eo)

Some neighbourhood community centres may have English language learning opportunities (e.g. [Victoria Hills](#) in Kitchener or [Greenway Chaplin](#) in Cambridge)

### Workplace Language Learning:

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

### Post Secondary Language Learning:

Some universities/colleges may have programs for international student learners.

### Online Self-Directed Learning:

FREE online learning to practice English skills:  
[eslcorner.settlement.org](http://eslcorner.settlement.org)  
[www.5minuteenglish.com](http://www.5minuteenglish.com)  
[www.manythings.org](http://www.manythings.org)  
[www.languageguide.org/english](http://www.languageguide.org/english)  
[www.englishaccentcoach.com](http://www.englishaccentcoach.com)  
[www.esl-lab.com](http://www.esl-lab.com)  
[www.clb-osa.ca](http://www.clb-osa.ca)  
[esl.culips.com](http://esl.culips.com)  
[continuingstudies.uvic.ca/elc/studyzone](http://continuingstudies.uvic.ca/elc/studyzone)  
[www.lexutor.ca/ra\\_read/graded](http://www.lexutor.ca/ra_read/graded)  
[www.lexutor.ca/conc/gram](http://www.lexutor.ca/conc/gram)

For more information about language learning visit: Immigration Waterloo Region at [www.immigrationwaterlooregion.ca/learnEnglish](http://www.immigrationwaterlooregion.ca/learnEnglish) or the YMCA Language Assessment Centre at [www.ymcacambridgekw.ca/en/immigrant-services/Language-Assessment.asp](http://www.ymcacambridgekw.ca/en/immigrant-services/Language-Assessment.asp)

Find out more about the above programs. Contact: KW Multicultural Centre (KWMC) [volunteer@kwmulticultural.ca](mailto:volunteer@kwmulticultural.ca) or 519-208-9581; YMCA [newcomers@ytr.ymca.ca](mailto:newcomers@ytr.ymca.ca) or 519-579-9622 (KW) or 519-621-1621 (Camb); Reception House [info@receptionhouse.ca](mailto:info@receptionhouse.ca) or 519-743-0445; Conestoga College [linc@conestogac.on.ca](mailto:linc@conestogac.on.ca) or 519-886-3300; St Louis [stlouis@wcdsb.ca](mailto:stlouis@wcdsb.ca) or 519-745-1201 x280/401; English at First [EnglishatFirst@bellnet.ca](mailto: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](http://www.immigrationwaterlooregion.ca/IP)