

Introducing CALL

Computers can be used as effective tools in any ESL classroom. Whether you teach a LINC One or a LINC Five class, the use of computers can enhance learning and construction of knowledge. LINC computer labs are equipped with specialized programs for teaching English, a program for learning about Canada, and productivity software which enables users to do word processing, spreadsheets, and prepare computer presentations. All of these programs can be used to aid in the teaching of English. This guide focuses on using the LINC software and word processing as aids in ESL instruction. A summary of language outcomes for LINC Five is included to help you integrate computer tasks and language functions.

In order for the learners to benefit from the LINC software, they must first feel comfortable sitting at a computer, learn the basic start-up and shutdown procedures, and follow simple, routine instructions. It is best not to make any assumptions about the learners' computer skills. LINC learners are assessed according to their language levels only. Therefore, it is not unusual to find a LINC One learner with advanced computer skills and a LINC Five learner with none. Before exposing the learners to any software, we recommend that you introduce basic computer concepts, terminology, and the hands-on skills necessary to perform basic operations on a computer.

Suggested activities

We encourage you to read Before Using Software and the suggested activities in Basic Computer Lesson for previous LINC levels before reading this section. The following activities will help LINC Five learners master basic computer terminology.

- Learners are provided with a list of questions about basic computer concepts (as a follow-up to instructor's presentation). In groups, they discuss the questions and report back to class. If necessary, they can check answers by browsing on-line. The instructor hands out the answer sheet at the end of class.
Sample questions:
 - Describe what the mouse is used for. Can you work in Windows without using the mouse?
 - List the programs that are available on your computer.
 - Are there any disadvantages in working in a networked environment? Discuss them with your partner/group and list them.
 - Check the sample basic lesson on the LINC 4 & 5 Curriculum Guidelines website at http://alphaplus.ca/linc/computer_activity.htm
- Matching:** Instructor hands out computer newspapers or magazines. Learners scan the magazines/newspapers to find definitions for computer parts or peripherals.
- Hands-on:** Learners follow verbal instructions to perform specific tasks, e.g., check the functions of the cables at the back of your computer
- Completing sentences:** Learners finish incomplete sentences that describe computer tasks, e.g., To shut down the computer, ...
- Expert:** One group becomes the expert for the day. Learners make a list of three questions in groups and ask the expert. The expert provides answers to the questions.



Select experts a day or two before the activity so that they can prepare. Rotate the expert role so that everyone gets the opportunity. Make sure that your activities are supported by pictures as well as text

LINC Five Language Competencies

Level Outcomes¹

At the end of LINC Five, learners can discuss familiar topics relating to common daily needs in less predictable contexts. They use everyday vocabulary and a limited number of idioms in formal and informal conversations that are face to face and on the telephone. They are able to use a variety of structures; however, frequent grammar and pronunciation errors may impede communication. Discourse is reasonably fluent and of moderate length.

Learners are able to read and understand the general idea of 2-3 paragraph texts in prose and non-prose as well as authentic texts about familiar daily life topics. Use of a bilingual dictionary is still frequent though a greater tolerance for ambiguous words, phrases, and idioms is evident. They can scan charts and schedules to find specific, detailed information.

Learners can write information received orally and visually and take everyday messages over the phone. They can write short letters and notes. They are able to write reports of approximately 100 words about a relevant topic and convey ideas clearly using simple structures. Frequent errors in accuracy and awkward sounding phrases are still common. Learners can fill out forms of medium complexity.

Speaking/Listening

■ Instructions:

- Give and follow spoken directions and instructions using a sequence of steps in order.
- Social Interaction:
- Apologize and make excuses
- Express and respond to disappointment
- Accept offers (e.g., job offers)

■ Information:

- Relate a story about a familiar event
- Give information about own background (e.g., educational and employment)
- Describe personal characteristics and strengths
- Ask for, give and get information in person and on the telephone
- Express obligation, ability, inability, and certainty
- Explain what isn't/wasn't known
- Clarify meaning by paraphrasing and repeating

■ Getting Things Done:

- Give suggestions and advice and predict consequences

Reading

■ Instructional Texts:

- Understand a range of short authentic written instructions with pictures (e.g., assembly instructions)

¹ LINC 4 and 5 Curriculum Guidelines, 1999

5 • BASIC COMPUTER LESSON

- **Formatted Texts:**
 - Find specific information in authentic schedules, charts, and directories by scanning
- **Unformatted Texts:**
 - Understand the main ideas in authentic texts (such as newspapers) and general daily prose
- **Information Texts:**
 - Get specific information from public service announcements, news items, flyers, brochures, invitations, employment information, and ads

Writing

- **Reproduce Information:**
 - Write down information received in person or by telephone
- **Fill Out Forms:**
 - Fill out forms with personal and other information as required
- **Convey Formal Messages:**
 - Write appropriate notes with minimum required information (e.g., invitations).
 - Give directions in writing using proper sequence and accurate details
- **Express Complex Ideas:**
 - Write a brief report (100-150 words) about a personal or researched topic