**Functional Skills English Level 2 course**

Welcome to your Functional Skills English course. This handout is intended to give you a general overview of the year and the things you will cover.

**Online studying**

We are in a unique situation, having to study online (via Zoom) for at least the first term. This means that things will look and feel different to how it would be in the classroom. Zoom is not the most effective way of learning – it’s tiring, it’s hard to work in small groups and to converse in a big group. So we will keep our time on it short. Therefore the first, and most important thing, is that you will need to do independent study online **before** each class. To do this, you will need to use ACL Gateway (aclgateway.islington.gov.uk).

I plan to arrange the lesson time as follows:

* First 30 minutes – Zoom room open for you to catch up on your independent study or ask questions about the preparation for the lesson
* Approximately one hour on Zoom as a group – reviewing, practising and applying the skills you have learned before the lesson. **Please note** the review time will be brief and **will not** be a substitute for doing the online learning.
* Homework and preparation for the next lesson – I suggest you allow about 1 hour for this. You may want to do it straight after our lesson time or at another time that is convenient for you.

**Course structure**

The autumn term generally consists of induction, diagnostic assessments and skills checks. We then move onto reading skills, followed by writing skills in the spring term. Throughout the terms we will be practising speaking and listening, and building vocabulary. In the summer term we will focus more specifically on speaking and listening, and on final assessments. Of course, this is all subject to change due to Covid-19.

**Functional Skills English**

The qualification you will be working towards is Functional Skills English. Although the majority of students will be working towards full Functional Skills English qualifications, there may be some students who are working towards different qualifications and at different levels. Your tutor will discuss this with you individually to ensure you know what you are doing. The qualifications are accredited by City and Guilds. The assessment criteria are outlined on the final page of this overview.

**You are strongly encouraged to read widely**. **You will not pass Functional Skills English if you are not aware of community or topical issues, and if you do not know the vocabulary associated with them**. Functional Skills exams test your ability to read and write but the contexts within which the tasks are set are wide ranging and might include buying a mobile phone, recycling, social media, applying for jobs, getting a passport, complaining about poor service, switching electricity supplier, fundraising for a local charity, getting a pet, contributing ideas on how to improve your community etc.

**Suggestions for reading:**

Islington Life magazine - the Council’s magazine on issues in the borough. If you don’t get one delivered, you can pick one up from a library or go online to <http://islingtonlife.london>

Life in the UK Test study guide – a useful book which explains a number of things about the UK including: UK society and population; how the country is governed; different types of housing; different services in/for the home e.g. water, Council tax, dealing with noisy neighbours; banking/finance; health; equal rights and discrimination.

Free newspapers e.g. Metro, Evening Standard, Islington Tribune – to stay up to date with national and local issues.

BBC website – not just for news but for its sections such as Lifestyle, Earth, Food.

**Suggestions for vocabulary development:**

Books: there are a number of vocabulary books in the library or to buy such as: Collins Easy Learning Vocabulary; English Vocabulary in Use

Websites: try: [enhancemyvocabulary.com/](http://enhancemyvocabulary.com/); [learnenglish.de](http://learnenglish.de)

**Suggestions for grammar development:**

Websites: try: [esol.britishcouncil.org](https://esol.britishcouncil.org/); [myenglishpages.com](https://www.myenglishpages.com/); [ego4u.com](https://www.ego4u.com/)

**Suggestions for improving your English conversation skills:**

Classes: Islington Centre for Refugees and Migrants is offering classes online. Contact: [islingtoncentre.co.uk](http://www.islingtoncentre.co.uk) or 020 7354 9946.

Websites: try: [oxfordonlineenglish.com](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5Cjrobi%5CGoogle%20Drive%5CFS%20course%20overviews%5Coxfordonlineenglish.com); [esol.britishcouncil.org](https://esol.britishcouncil.org/)

**Level 2 skill standards** - the table shows the key skills you will be tested on in the exams.

**Exams/assessments**

**Speaking and listening** – one formal discussion, one presentation and a discussion following a presentation – over a maximum of 30 minutes

**Reading** – a 60 minute exam

**Writing** – an 80 minute exam

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| **Level 2 Skill standard**  | **Coverage and range**  |
| **Speaking, listening and** **communication** Text: this should include extended narratives and information (information may be on technical, concrete or abstract topics), discussions, detailed explanations and presentations, all of varying lengths | 1. Identify relevant information from extended explanations or presentations 2. Follow narratives and lines of argument 3. Respond effectively to detailed or extended questions and feedback 4. Make requests and ask detailed and pertinent questions to obtain specific information in a range of contexts 5. Communicate information, ideas and opinions clearly and effectively, providing further detail and development if required 6. Express opinions and arguments and support them with relevant and persuasive evidence 7. Use language that is effective, accurate and appropriate to context and situation 8. Make relevant and constructive contributions to move discussion forward 9. Adapt contributions to discussions to suit audience, purpose and medium 10.Interject and redirect discussion using appropriate language and register |
| **Reading** Text: this should include a range of straightforward and complex texts on a range of topics and of varying lengths that instruct, describe, explain and persuade. | 11.Identify the different situations when the main points are sufficient and when it is important to have specific details 12.Compare information, ideas and opinions in different texts, including how they are conveyed 13.Identify implicit and inferred meaning in texts 14.Understand the relationship between textual features and devices, and how they can be used to shape meaning for different audiences and purposes 15.Use a range of reference materials and appropriate resources (e.g. glossaries, legends/keys) for different purposes, including to find the meanings of words in straightforward and complex sources 16.Understand organisational features and use them to locate relevant information in a range of straightforward and complex sources 17.Analyse texts, of different levels of complexity, recognising their use of vocabulary and identifying levels of formality and bias 18.Follow an argument, identifying different points of view and distinguishing fact from opinion 19.Identify different styles of writing and writer’s voice |
| **Writing** Text: this should include straightforward and complex texts such as articles, narratives, explanations and reports of varying lengths. | **Spelling, punctuation and grammar** 20.Punctuate writing correctly using a wide range of punctuation markers (e.g. colons, commas, inverted commas, apostrophes and quotation marks) 21.Use correct grammar (e.g. subject-verb agreement, consistent use of a range of tenses, definite and indefinite articles) and modality devices (e.g. to express probability or desirability) 22.Spell words used in work, study and daily life, including a range of specialist words **Writing composition** 23.Communicate information, ideas and opinions clearly, coherently and effectively 24.Write text of an appropriate level of detail and of appropriate length (including where this is specified) to meet the needs of purpose and audience 25.Organise writing for different purposes using appropriate format and structure (e.g. standard templates, paragraphs, bullet points, tables) 26.Convey clear meaning and establish cohesion using organisational markers effectively 27.Use different language and register (e.g. persuasive techniques, supporting evidence, specialist words), suited to audience and purpose. 28.Construct complex sentences consistently and accurately, using paragraphs where appropriate |