

Building a New Life in Ontario

A guide for newcomers

LEARNING ABOUT: IMPROVING YOUR LANGUAGE SKILL

As a newcomer to Ontario, you may have many questions. This guide will help you learn more about:

- Learning English and French
- Where you can study
- Special training for language skills at work
- Language training for college and university
- Getting language help for your children.

What languages are spoken in Canada?

Canada has two official languages, English and French. It is important that you have the skills to communicate in the language of your community, and the language used at work.

Before you arrive in Ontario...

There are many ways to improve your language skills before you arrive in Ontario. You can take language courses in your country. You can also take distance education courses. There are many web sites that can help you measure your language skills, improve your language skills, and decide what kind of language training you may need. Learn more by visiting the '[Learn English](#)' or the '[apprendre le français](#)' section of OntarioImmigration.ca.

Where can I find language classes for adults?

You can choose from many different full-time and part-time language classes in Ontario. Some classes, called 'adult non-credit language training' are provided by the province of Ontario. Other classes, called 'Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada' (LINC) are provided by the Government of Canada. Both kinds of classes are offered across Ontario by English and French school boards, and by community agencies. These classes can help you in many different ways:

- You can often choose beginner, intermediate, or advanced levels of training.
- There are general programs for speaking, listening, reading and writing.
- Some training programs help improve your business skills in special job areas like accounting, computers or communication.
- There are some ESL literacy classes available that can help you if you have little or no education from your home country.
- Classes are offered that help you prepare for language tests such as TOEFL to get into college or university.
- There are Citizenship and Language classes that help you learn about Canada and Ontario, and give you the information you need to pass the citizenship test

Language training classes are free. They may be available in your community during the day, at night, or on weekends. If you want to attend a class in a school board near you, contact your local school board. If you are interested in the LINC program, you will first need an evaluation of your language ability. This is done by a Language Assessment Centre. The Language Assessment Centre will then refer you to a program that is right for you.

What if I cannot go to a classroom?

If you are not able to go to a classroom, here are some other choices:

- Some websites can help you improve your language skills
- You can study at home and send your work to a teacher at Ontario's Independent Learning Centre (ILC). You can find the ILC at: www.ilc.org.
- LINC has a home study program that helps you improve your listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. You can study at home, and still have guidance from a teacher every week.

Where can I get language training for my job?

If you were trained in a specific trade or profession at home, you may be interested in building language skills that will help you at work. Here are two choices:

- Some bridge training programs offer language training for the workplace. You can learn about bridge training programs by visiting the '[Work in Your Profession](#)' section of OntarioImmigration.ca.
- Enhanced Language Training (ELT) helps you build your language skills for specific professions.

Can I get language training and continue my education?

If you are over the age of 21, there are special language courses that can help you finish high school. Some of these courses help you improve your language for everyday life, while others can help you with your studies in high school, or at college or university. If you have a high level of language skill, you may be able to take courses that will help you with business presentation and communication skills. There are also English Literacy Development courses that can help if you have difficulty reading and writing.

To be accepted into an Ontario college or university, you may be asked to take a language test. For example, many colleges and universities use the 'Test of English as a Foreign Language' (TOEFL), or the 'International English Language Testing System' (IELTS). Many universities and colleges in Ontario offer language training programs. Usually, you will be charged a fee for these courses.

Where can my children get language training?

Ontario's elementary and secondary schools offer special language training for children who:

- Do not speak English or French as their first language, or
- Who speak a variety of English or French that is different from the language used in Ontario schools.

Students who are learning English and attending elementary or secondary schools can get help from teachers who specialize in working with language learners. Students can also get help to develop language and literacy skills. Some Ontario school boards have newcomer reception centres. These centres can measure your child's language skills, and help you find a school that will provide the support they need.