

**EDUCATION & TRAINING
FOUNDATION**

ESOL FOR REFUGEES: RESOURCES FOR NEW ARRIVALS



SCREENING TOOL

Contents

ESOL screening guidance for non-specialists	3
Screening interview questions	10
Reading and writing tasks	14
Screening record	18

ESOL screening guidance for non-specialists

Project background

In 2019/20, Learning and Work Institute and Learning Unlimited were commissioned by the Education and Training Foundation and the Home Office to develop new resources to help ESOL practitioners better meet the early integration needs of refugees who are New to ESOL (i.e. working below Entry Level 1). The resources developed consist of:

- 12 units of teaching and learning materials, based around a simple dialogue in a relevant early integration scenario, each intended to support around six hours of delivery
- Guidance to support practitioners with the approaches underpinning the resources, linking to earlier practitioner resources and guidance on working with New to ESOL learners
- A screening tool, to help identify learners who are New to ESOL, and who may benefit from additional early integration language support
- Learner profiles, illustrating the early integration needs and longer-term learning and work aspirations of refugees.

Development of the materials was informed by extensive sector engagement, including:

- telephone interviews and informal engagement (e.g. at relevant sector events) with ESOL providers, refugee resettlement agencies, stakeholders and practitioners
- face-to-face interviews with refugee ESOL learners and consultation with the Yorkshire and the Humber Refugee Advisory Group
- sector testing and piloting of draft materials by ESOL practitioners working with refugee learners New to ESOL and at Entry Level 1.

All of these 'ESOL for refugees' resources are free to download from the Excellence Gateway:

<https://esol.excellencegateway.org.uk/esol-refugees>.

Introduction

The screening pack consists of:

- Interview questions
- Reading and writing tasks
- Record sheet

This guidance has been written for non-ESOL specialists who wish **to identify what kind of ESOL provision might be most suitable for adult refugees who speak little or no English**. Some may be at the very beginning stages of learning English and/or may or may not be able to read and write in English. Others may have good literacy and digital skills, be able to use a computer and translation apps.

If you need further help with screening, please consult an ESOL specialist. These materials could also be used as part of a provider's ESOL initial assessment procedure.

What is ESOL?

ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) is the term used in the UK for English language provision for people who do not have English as their first language and who are learning English as adults. ESOL provision is for people living and working in the UK.

What is 'screening' in an ESOL context?

Screening is a preliminary stage in identifying whether an adult has a language or literacy learning need. It also provides an opportunity to find out what digital skills the individual has, e.g. what they use their mobile phone for, and if they can use a tablet or computer.

If a need is identified, the individual should be referred to an ESOL provider for an Initial Assessment (IA) – a more detailed assessment of their speaking, listening, reading and writing skills, carried out by an ESOL specialist. IA identifies the person's ESOL level in each skill so they can be referred to an ESOL programme at the right level.

Who are refugee ESOL learners?

Adult refugees with ESOL needs (sometimes called second language learners or bilingual learners) may come from a range of backgrounds and countries and some may have lived in one or more other countries before coming to the UK. Many speak more than one other language. Some refugees are highly educated, with professional qualifications and experience, whereas others have never worked and have suffered a disrupted education due to war and unrest. Some may have physical or mental health issues as a result of their experiences.

You may also meet asylum seekers who are in the process of applying for refugee status. The range of backgrounds, educational experiences and needs may be very similar to that of settled refugees.

To give you an idea of refugees' backgrounds, please see the *ESOL for Refugees* learner profiles which accompany this resource.

What type of provision would be best?

There are many different kinds of ESOL provision in the UK, both formal and informal, and the possibilities vary from place to place. For instance, in Leeds there is an ESOL hub which provides a 'one-stop shop' website and information about ESOL courses in the area. The Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (VPRS) employs ESOL regional co-ordinators who have mapped local ESOL provision and can advise on suitable courses. From time to time, other ESOL courses may be set up locally, depending on specific government initiatives and short-term projects such as those funded by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). You are likely to find the majority of formal ESOL courses at large FE Colleges, training providers and adult education centres, and informal provision such as a mixed community class at a local church or mosque run by a voluntary organisation.

Some projects provide befrienders and volunteers to support learners. For example, City of Sanctuary UK is a movement which aims to build a culture of hospitality for those seeking sanctuary in the UK. It supports a network of groups in towns and cities such as Sheffield, Leicester, Bradford, Coventry, Bristol and Swansea.

In addition, for independent, well-educated learners – those who are highly-motivated and have good digital skills – there are many websites and YouTube videos which can help them to learn English. Some learners have found that watching films in English has also helped them to improve their language.

Which ESOL provision will be best for a refugee learner who may know little or no English?

It is important to have up-to-date information about what kind of ESOL provision is available in your area, any eligibility criteria, and which courses have vacancies. Choosing the best course for the learner will also depend on their individual circumstances. It could be:

- a formal 'Pre-entry' ESOL course at a local FE college, Adult Education Centre or training provider
- an informal mixed level ESOL community class (local authority or voluntary sector)
- a family learning class
- an informal course or conversation club set up by a voluntary sector provider e.g. projects such as Talk English, Creative English, and community groups, churches, mosques, etc.
- a volunteer ESOL teacher/supporter or befriender
- self-access resources, e.g. <https://esol.britishcouncil.org/content/learners>

In order to identify the most suitable provision for the learner, you will need to consider factors such as:

- the learner's level of motivation, commitment and availability
- their level of language and literacy, including digital literacy
- the learner's gender (e.g. single-sex class required)
- travel requirements (distance and transport, including costs)
- childcare requirements (creche or childminder, including costs)
- health and other issues which may affect attendance, e.g. appointments with lawyers, housing officers, etc.
- whether funders have criteria which affect placement, e.g. jobseeker, visa status
- affordability, especially if there are course or exam fees.

It may be helpful to speak to the learner's case worker or, if appropriate, a family member to find out more about their personal circumstances, to help identify the best ESOL provision for them.

What are the ESOL levels?

The national standards for literacy, numeracy and ESOL consist of five levels:

- Entry level 1 (E1)
- Entry level 2 (E2)
- Entry level 3 (E3)
- Level 1 (L1)
- Level 2 (L2)

For more information about the terminology, standards and levels, see the Adult ESOL Core Curriculum <https://www.excellencegateway.org.uk/content/etf1194>

The journey through each ESOL can be described as emerging, consolidating or established:

Emerging = the learner shows little or no evidence of having skills in this area

Consolidating = the learner has some skills in this area, but they are not yet secure.

Established = the learner does not appear to have any problems with skills in this area.

(from *Tutor Instruction Manual, ESOL Diagnostic Assessment Materials, Skills for Life* strategy <https://esol.excellencegateway.org.uk/content/etf2387>)

What is Entry level 1 ESOL?

New to ESOL – often referred to as ‘Pre-entry’ – is the very earliest stage of Entry level 1 ESOL. These **new, beginner learners** are just starting to learn English and may not know any words at all in English or maybe just a few. They may not be able to read or write at all in English, or in their own language, or maybe they can just read or write a few letters or a few common words. Some adults may be able to read and write a little in another script but are learning the Roman script for the first time.

Many refugees may never have been to school or may have had interrupted education due to war or conflict. This makes it very difficult for them to access or benefit from an ESOL Entry 1 course as they do not have enough language, literacy and/or study skills to cope with the curriculum and achieve a qualification.

At **Entry level 1** ESOL, adults may have had some formal learning in their country of origin and may have learned a little English, including reading and writing at a basic level. However, they struggle to understand English spoken at natural speed and find it very difficult to express themselves. They may be able to understand and give some very basic information about themselves, read their name and address and write some basic personal information or a few short, simple sentences.

How can I identify if someone is ‘New to ESOL’ or ‘ESOL Entry level 1’?

Assessing an adult’s language/literacy level is not an easy task for a non-ESOL specialist. Look through the **Learner Profiles** to get an idea of the kinds of learners you might meet at this level. The Screening interview questions should also help you as there are descriptions of the type of language and literacy expected at each level, and examples of typical responses.

So, by asking a few simple questions and observing responses you can immediately get a sense of whether someone understands any English at all. Then by using simple reading and writing tasks, you can get a good idea of whether someone has literacy skills in English or not.

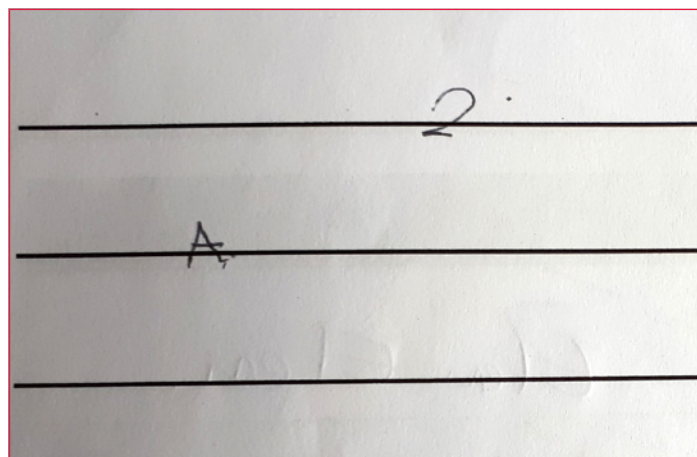
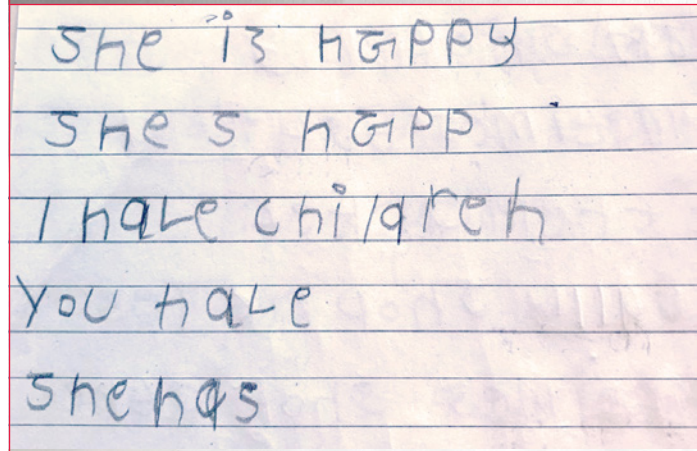
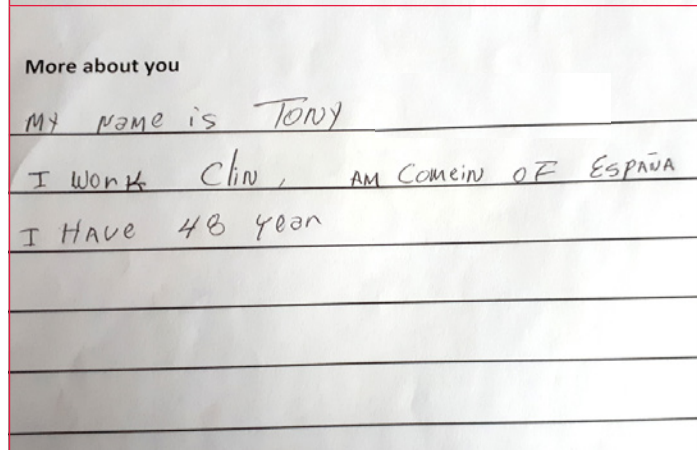
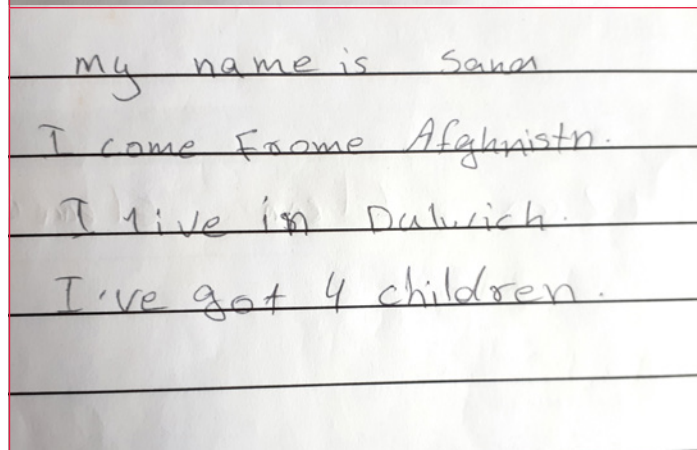
How do I use the screening tool?

1. Familiarise yourself with the questions and tasks before starting the interview.
2. Introduce yourself and explain that you are going to ask some questions, and then ask the interviewee to read and write a little, to find out about their levels in English.
3. Use the **Interview questions** and **Reading and writing tasks**. Follow the guidance (pages 10-13) and work through the questions and tasks one at a time, listening carefully to the individual's responses and observing how they cope. Note responses on the **Record sheet**.
4. See writing exemplars below for an indication of the levels and sub-divided levels: **New to ESOL, Emerging, Consolidating, Established**.
5. If the individual doesn't appear to understand a question straight away and/or doesn't reply, or replies with a wrong answer, repeat the question more slowly and **wait** for them to answer. If you have repeated the question and the individual still doesn't appear to understand, try re-phrasing the question. For example, 'Where do you live?' could be re-phrased as 'What's your address?'
6. As soon as it is clear that the interviewee is a new, beginner ESOL learner in a particular skill, it is important to stop the questions for that skill and move on to the next stage of the screening process. Persisting when it is clear someone doesn't understand, or is totally unable to do the task, could be very demoralising and embarrassing.
7. Record the screening assessment outcome on the **Record sheet** and add further notes, including digital literacy, if applicable.
8. If in doubt, ask an ESOL specialist or refer the individual for a full Initial Assessment.

Useful communication strategies

- Be aware of people's different cultural backgrounds. For example, handshaking between men and women in Muslim culture is not customary. Nodding doesn't always mean 'Yes' (in some cultures it means 'No'!)
- Sometimes individuals can give a false impression of their abilities – shyness, anxiety and worry may limit how much someone is prepared to respond and say in a new and unfamiliar situation. Try to put people at ease as far as possible and to try to create a friendly, non-threatening atmosphere.
- Speak clearly (and slow down your speech a little if you usually speak very quickly). Use short, simple sentences and avoid very informal language or slang.
- Use yourself as an example, e.g. *My name's xx, what's your name?*
- Listen carefully – s/he may be saying the right word but pronouncing it wrongly. If you don't understand, ask him/her to repeat it or write down the word.
- If the adult is used to hearing a different accent, this could cause a problem in understanding.
- Be sensitive to how frustrating it can be to try to communicate with someone in a different language! Imagine how you would feel if you were working in another country and couldn't speak the language or read or write in the script.
- 'Do you understand?', 'Is that OK?', 'Is that clear?' are not always good questions for checking someone has understood: (i) s/he may think she has understood when in fact she hasn't, or (ii) s/he doesn't want to cause offence so says 'Yes' to be polite.

Examples of ESOL Entry 1 writing levels: New, Emerging, Consolidating, Established

	<p>Beginner learner (New to ESOL)</p> <p>This person wanted to write:</p> <p><i>I have 2 children. My name is Amina.</i></p> <p>This person is a new reader writer and is still learning how to form letters and numbers and write on the line. They are unable to write or copy words.</p>
	<p>New learner (Emerging Entry 1)</p> <p>This person can write or copy a few words and very short sentences. She is still learning the formation of some letters and to write on the line.</p>
<p>More about you</p> 	<p>Entry level 1 ESOL (Consolidating Entry 1)</p> <p>This person can write a few very short simple sentences on the line. She uses capital letters and full stops correctly and writes on the line. Although there are mistakes, the reader can understand.</p>
	<p>Entry level 1 ESOL (Established Entry 1)</p> <p>This person can write short simple sentences on a familiar topic.</p>

At New to ESOL level (with basic literacy needs)

At this level, a learner has very limited or no English. They may (or may not) be able to say their name or understand and reply to a very simple question. For example, the learner

- may have no or very limited literacy in any language
- may not be able to understand basic information, notices and instructions
- may not be able to write their name and say/write their address
- may have no knowledge of the Roman alphabet and numbers
- may be unfamiliar with the names and sounds of letters of the alphabet
- may be unable to form letters and numbers, or write on the line with spacing between words
- may be able to copy some words and numbers in English
- may be unfamiliar with learning environments and language related to learning

At ESOL Entry Level 1 (Adult ESOL Core Curriculum)**Speaking and listening**

At this level, a learner is expected to understand simple requests, instructions and information and speak to communicate basic information on familiar topics. For example, the learner

- can exchange greetings and answer simple questions,
- can say very simple sentences but these are often ungrammatical, e.g. 'I long time live London', 'I get bus come here', 'I want job'
- can talk about home, family and daily routine to a limited extent, e.g. 'I'm married, I have two children', 'she 6 years, she has black hair', 'I work cleaner'
- can talk about jobs and job-search to a limited extent, e.g. 'I was teacher in my country', '

Reading and writing

At this level, a learner is expected to be able to read some common, familiar words and the alphabet, and read and write a short text. For example, the learner

- can read a simple text on a familiar topic, e.g. 'My name is Amina. I come from Somalia.'
- can recognise a limited number of words, signs and symbols, e.g. Stop. Closed. No smoking.
- can recognise and understand the function of punctuation (full stops and capital letters)
- tries to decode simple, regular words, e.g. uses phonics to sound out s – a – t = sat
- can identify the letters of the alphabet (upper and lower case)
- can form the letters of the alphabet (upper and lower case)
- can write familiar words and a simple sentence, with full stop and capital letter
- can use phonics to help spell key words
- can use spelling strategies to help spell key words

Screening interview questions

Section 1: Background information and SPEAKING AND LISTENING (ESOL Entry Level 1)

Prompt questions		New to ESOL	Emerging	Consolidating	Established
1	What's your name?	Doesn't seem to understand question / doesn't reply.	Can say name.	Can say name clearly.	Can say name clearly and confidently.
2	Can you spell your name?	Doesn't seem to understand question / doesn't reply.	Cannot spell name aloud or can just say a few letters with support from interviewer.	Can spell name aloud – possibly with support e.g. pointing at letters on alphabet chart.	Can spell name aloud without support.
3	Where are you from?	Doesn't seem to understand question / doesn't reply.	May give single word answer with support from interviewer, e.g. point to self, gesture and say, <i>I'm from England</i> – <i>You ... ?</i> repeating the question.	Understands question and gives one-word answer.	Understands question, possibly answers in a sentence, e.g. <i>I'm from ...</i> <i>I come from ...</i>
4	Do you have a mobile phone? <i>Follow up:</i> What do you use it for?	Answers 'Yes' or 'No' but cannot say anything more.	Answers 'No' or 'Yes' and says one or two words, e.g. <i>phone ... speak ...</i>	Says 'Yes' and gives a short answer, e.g. <i>I speak my friend.</i>	Understands questions and gives fuller answer, e.g. <i>Yes, I speak my friend, I send text, I use app for translate ...</i>
5	Where do you live? (or, What's your address?)	Doesn't seem to understand question / doesn't reply. <i>Do not ask any further questions as it is clear the person is new to ESOL.</i>	May not understand question or may give single word answer with support from interviewer, e.g. interviewer points to self and says, <i>I live in London.</i>	Understands question and gives a very short answer, e.g. <i>I live Birmingham.</i>	Gives a full answer, including postcode.

6	How long have you been in the UK?		May give single word answer with support from interviewer (point to a calendar), e.g. <i>You – here in UK ... 2 weeks? 3 months?</i>	Understands question and gives a very short answer, e.g. 6 weeks	Understands question, possibly answers in a sentence, e.g. <i>I been here 3 months.</i>
7	Did you have a job in your country? <i>Follow up:</i> What did you do?		May not understand question or may answer with support from interviewer, e.g. say, <i>In (name of country), you...job?</i>	Understands question and gives a very short answer.	Gives a full answer, including information about job/previous job.
8	Did you go to school in your country?	Many refugees have never attended school or had interrupted schooling due to war and conflict.	May answer with support from interviewer, e.g. say, <i>In (name of country), you ... school?</i>	Understands question and gives a very short answer, e.g. Yes, I go school (two years)	Understands question and gives fuller answer, e.g. <i>Yes, I go school for 10 years or I finish school ... 18 years.</i>
9	Do you have an email address? <i>Follow up:</i> When do you use email?	Doesn't seem to understand question/ doesn't reply/shakes head.	May give single word answer with support from interviewer e.g. <i>No / Yes</i>	Understands question and gives a short answer, e.g. Yes, email my language	Understands questions and gives fuller answer, e.g. <i>Yes, I email for job, for school ... my children.</i>
10	Can you use a computer or laptop? <i>Follow up:</i> What do you use it for?	Doesn't seem to understand question/ doesn't reply/shakes head.	May give single word answer with support from interviewer e.g. <i>No / Yes, Skype</i>	Understands question and gives a very short answer, e.g. No / Yes, I ... Youtube	Understands questions and gives fuller answer, e.g. <i>Yes, I look Youtube, I Skype my friend</i>

Background information: In order to find out about the learner's personal circumstances and preferences for learning, you may need to ask their caseworker or an interpreter.

Section 2: READING (ESOL Entry Level 1)

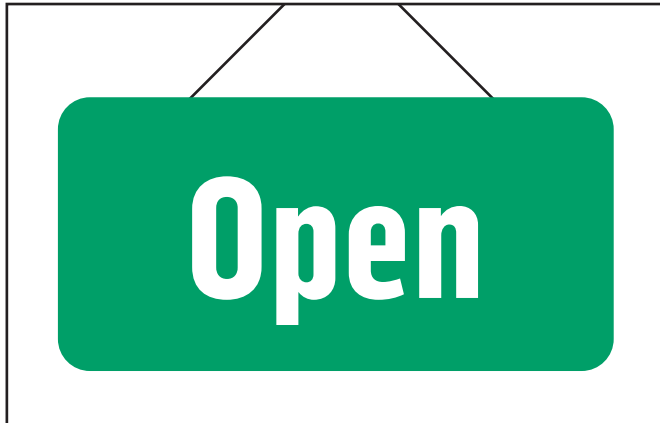
Prompt questions		New to ESOL	Emerging	Consolidating	Established
11	Task 1 – Social sight vocabulary and symbols Point to each and ask: What's this?	Doesn't reply/understand question.	May recognise 1 or 2 words or signs.	Can read and understand 2 or 3 words and signs.	Can read all words and signs without difficulty.
12	Text 2 – Alphabet sheet a) Do you know the alphabet in English? b) Do you know the sounds of any of the letters?	Doesn't reply/understand question. a) May recognise one or two letters. b) May know the sounds of one or two letters.	a) Very hesitant and unsure about letters of the alphabet – may recognise a few. b) Knows the sounds of some of the letters.	a) Can say and recognise most of the letters of the alphabet. b) Knows the sounds of most of the letters.	a) Can say all the letters of the alphabet. b) Knows the sounds of the letters.
13	Task 3 – Form Can you read this?	Cover all sections of the form apart from the word 'name'. Unable to read the word 'name'. Do not ask them to do any further reading as it is clear the person is new to ESOL.	If 'name' is read, uncover 'address' section May be able to read the words <i>name</i> and <i>address</i> .	If 'name' and 'address' are read, uncover the rest of the form Can read and understand most of form – may read very slowly, hesitantly and may make mistakes.	Can read and understand all sections on the form with little or no difficulty.
14	Task 4 – Reading text Ask them to read the text aloud.		May be able to read a few words in the text. Ask one question, e.g. <i>What is her name?</i>	Can read and understand one or more sentences – may read very slowly, hesitantly and may make mistakes.	Can read it fairly well and understands the text with little or no difficulty.

Section 3 – WRITING (ESOL Entry Level 1)

Prompt questions		New to ESOL	Emerging	Consolidating	Established
15	<p>Task 3 – Form</p> <p>Can you write, please? (<i>point to line, prompt if necessary</i>)</p> <p>See writing examples</p>	<p>Show form with all sections covered apart from the word 'name'.</p> <p>Can't write name at all/ doesn't understand question.</p> <p>Do not ask prospective learner to do any further writing as it is clear they are new to ESOL.</p>	<p>Show form with all sections covered apart from the word 'name'.</p> <p>Writes name, possibly by copying it.</p> <p>If 'name' is written, uncover 'address' section.</p> <p>Can write some letters in their name/address but not all of them. Letters not formed properly – mixture of upper and lower case.</p> <p>May not write on the line.</p>	<p>If 'name' and 'address' are written, uncover the rest of the form.</p> <p>Writes name and address – possibly very slowly and with difficulty – and can write a few words independently in the 'About me' section.</p>	<p>Can write name without a problem.</p> <p>Writes name and address fluently, using upper and lower case correctly.</p> <p>Writes a few sentences independently in the 'About me' section.</p>

Reading and writing tasks

Task 1: Social sight words and signs



www.freepik.com

Task 2: Alphabet

a

b

c

d

e

f

g

h

i

j

k

l

m

n

o

p

q

r

s

t

u

v

w

x

y

z

Adapted from the Family Skills toolkit: <http://www.learningunlimited.co/projects/family-skills/family-skills-toolkit>

Task 3: Form

Name

Address

Date of birth

Phone number



Email @

More about you

Task 4: Text

My name is Saira.

I live in London.

I live in a flat.

I want to learn English.

Screening record

Screening record

Name of interviewee	
Name of interviewer	
Date	

N.B. Please use this record sheet with the screening guidance, interview questions and reading and writing tasks.

RECORD SHEET: Tick ✓ the most applicable box for each prompt/task. There is space for additional notes under each section. You may need to gather background information from a caseworker or an interpreter.

Section 1: Background information and SPEAKING AND LISTENING

		New to ESOL	Entry 1 Emerging	Entry 1 Consolidating	Entry 1 Established
1	What's your name?				
2	Can you spell your name?				
3	Where are you from?				
4.	Do you have a mobile phone? What do you use it for?				
5	Where do you live? (or, What's your address?)				
6	How long have you been in the UK?				
7	Did you have a job in your country? What did you do?				
8	Did you go to school in your country?				
9	Do you have an email address? When do you use email?				
10	Can you use a computer/laptop? What do you use it for?				

NOTES: Background information/SPEAKING AND LISTENING

(Include ability to use mobile phone, email and computers)

Section 2: Reading

		New to ESOL	Entry 1 Emerging	Entry 1 Consolidating	Entry 1 Established
11	Task 1 – Social sight vocabulary How many signs can they read?				
12	Text 2 – Alphabet sheet a) Can they read and say all the letters. b) Do they know the sounds of the letters?				
13	Task 3 – Form Can they read the words on the form?				
14	Task 4 – Reading text Can they read the text?				
NOTES: READING (Include observations on types and length of text learner can read, e.g. social sight, alphabet, whole words. etc.)					

Section 3: Writing

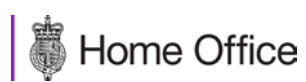
		New to ESOL	Entry 1 Emerging	Entry 1 Consolidating	Entry 1 Established
15	Task 3 - Form Can they write?				
NOTES: WRITING (Include observations on letter formation, handwriting, spelling, etc. and attach a copy of the writing)					

Recommendations and follow up action

(e.g. referral to local ESOL provider or informal learning opportunities)

Action:

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