

Preface

Overview

Every day more and more non-native speakers of English enter the construction trades in the United States. They are employed by contracting companies to work as general laborers, landscapers, painters and plumbers. Many of them are hired at the entry level but, unfortunately, most of them remain there due to their lack of communication skills in English, especially in the area of construction and landscaping. Although general English can be acquired in the adult ESOL classes offered at local programs, most classes do not offer lessons that directly incorporate the vocabulary and knowledge base specific to jobs related to the contracting business. The curriculum *Building Basics: ESOL Toolkit for General Construction, Landscaping, Painting and Plumbing* was created by the Virginia Adult Learning Resource Center to address this urgent need. The project was funded by the English Literacy/Civics Education Program administered locally by the Office of Adult Education and Literacy of the Virginia Department of Education.

Who is it for?

Building Basics is intended to be used with adult ESOL students in publicly-funded or community-based programs who have expressed a need and desire to learn English in the context of some of the building trades. These lessons may also be used in instructional settings within the workplace, e.g., contracting or landscaping companies. It has been written for teaching students with English language proficiency levels corresponding to the three lowest National Reporting System levels: Beginning Literacy, Low Beginning, and High Beginning. Each lesson has activities that can be used with multiple levels of proficiency within one classroom, although some lessons are more complex than others. The level of language difficulty is usually marked in the Facilitator Guide for each lesson.

How is it organized?

The curriculum is organized into four modules, e.g., General Construction; and each module has four to five lessons. Each of these lessons has three components: Facilitator Guide, Facilitator Materials, and Student Handouts.

The *Facilitator Guide* contains step-by-step instructions for implementing each lesson. The lesson sections follow the recommended format of an ESOL lesson: Warm-up/Review, Introduction, Presentation, Practice, Application/Extension. There are a few assessment activities included, but it is recommended that teachers incorporate informal assessment practices while students are applying the new language and skills in the practice and application activities.

At the beginning of each lesson you will also see sections that summarize the learning objectives, recommended length of lesson, materials needed for lesson implementation, and target vocabulary. Within these sections are various actions/activities and the corresponding materials are listed along with them. These sections are indicated by the following icons:



Building Plan / Blue Prints / Specs = Objectives, competencies and length of lesson



Tools = Materials needed and target vocabulary



Laying the Foundation = either warm-up or presentation



Building on the Foundation = Practice activities



Finishing Work = Application or extension activities

The *Facilitator Materials* contain copies of all the worksheets, transparencies, drawings, cartoons, handouts, etc., that the teacher will need to implement the lesson. These are organized according to the order they are needed in the session, and the place they will be used is indicated in the Materials column in the Facilitator Guide.

The *Student Handouts* contain all of the information and activity sheets that students need to participate in the lesson and can take with them when they leave. These are also organized according to the order in which they will be used. A copy of the handouts should be made for each student.

We are grateful to the people on the team that worked diligently and tirelessly to produce this instructional guide for helping non-native speakers of English in the construction trades to get a little bit closer to fulfilling their dreams in this new land of opportunity.

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Cheryl Fuentes, Content writer

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