

ACTIVITIES TO DO ON YOUR OWN

ESOL
Stage 2



CONTENTS

This resource contains different tasks you can do on your own to help improve your English skills.

There are tasks for:	Page
Listening	4
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For each task you can complete a 'Task Reflection Sheet' to write what you thought about it, what was easy and what was hard.

There are 10 texts to read with different activities. For each text, you can complete the reading log so you have a record of your reading. You can also complete a reading log page for other reading you do.

You can keep a viewing log for what you watch and a listening log to record new words you hear.

If you are not sure what to do, ask your tutor or somebody else who can help you.

TASK REFLECTION SHEET

How did you like this task?

(Circle one)



Liked it a lot



Liked it



It was ok



Didn't like it much



Didn't like it at all

Why/why not?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

How easy was it?

(Circle one)



Easy



Quite easy



Ok



Quite hard



Hard

If you found it hard/quite hard,

- what do you need to practise?
- how could your tutor help?

Make some notes below

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

LISTENING

I. Make a listening glossary

Make your own glossary of new and interesting words that you hear.

Find out the meaning and check the spelling in a dictionary.

Make a new page for different sections.

You can include:

- new words you hear spoken around you
- words from TV programmes or radio broadcasts
- words from films you watch
- words and phrases from songs you listen to
- words from podcasts.

Listening log

Interesting Words		
New word	What does it mean?	Where did you hear this word?

2. Keep a viewing journal

Keep a journal of what you watch and listen to on TV, your computer and in films.

You can include:

- the date you watched it
- the title of the film or programme
- what the film or programme was about
- descriptions of the characters or people
- a description of what happened
- your own review of what you watched.

Viewing log

Date:	Title:
What was it about?	
Who was in it?	
What happened?	
What did you like?	
What didn't you like?	

3. What's in the news?

Listen to or watch the news at least once a week. Make a note of the most interesting news items or summarise what you see/hear in your journal.

Items might include:

- sport
- politics
- famous people
- special events
- extreme weather
- environmental issues

News log

News Topic
What was it about?
News Topic
What was it about?
News Topic
What was it about?

SPEAKING

You can keep a notebook or make a note on your phone of what you say or find out. You can use your notes in class or for your own writing. You can record your own speaking to practise good pronunciation.

1. Any questions?

- Design and carry out a survey on something that is important to you, e.g. local area, facilities for young people, healthy food, sport.
- Make up games and quizzes in English. Start by playing 20 Questions with your fellow learners or other friends.

2. Say what you think

Have a discussion with people about what you think about:

- a sport
- a film or TV programme
- life in the UK
- an event
- an important issue.

Remember to be positive and polite, even when you don't agree!

Record your views on your phone.

3. Have a conversation

Have a conversation when you are with fellow learners or other friends. For example:

- recommend a programme to watch on TV
- watch a film or TV programme and say what you like or dislike about it
- talk about the food you cook or eat
- play a board game or cards
- talk about a sports match.

WRITING

I. Keep a journal

Keep a journal - weekly or daily - including what you did and what you thought.

Write the date and decide what you want to include. For example:

- what you did
- what you thought about it
- people you have spoken to
- problems and how you resolved them
- what went well
- what you want to do better
- something that made you feel happy or sad
- anything unusual that happened.

Writing journal

Date:	What are you writing about? Example: Learning a new song
What did you do, what are you thinking, or how do you feel?	

2. Be creative

Make up your own writing from your imagination. Share what you write with friends, fellow learners, family.

- Write a Haiku. “Haiku” is a traditional form of Japanese poetry. Haiku poems consist of 3 lines. The first and last lines of a Haiku have 5 syllables and the middle line has 7 syllables. The lines rarely rhyme. It can be about anything you want – you can choose a theme and write more than one.

Look at the example:



- Write a longer poem expressing thoughts and feelings.
- Write a short story for adults or for children. You could:
 - adapt a story from your home country
 - research some English stories first
 - base the story on something you have seen, done, or heard.

3. Write what you see

- Describe what you see around you in the box below. You could include these words or phrases in a poem or a story.

Write what you see:

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Write captions for pictures you like. Make an album of pictures and captions.

- Create a storyboard for something you have seen or read – or for your own story.
- Write a note, email or letter home to a friend about what you have seen.

4. Play a game

- Make up quizzes, crosswords and word games. You can start with a word search for somebody else to do. Base it on a theme and find some long words to include.

Make a word search

Example – Colours

Two words have been found for you. Can you find the rest?

a	r	e	o	y	b	l	a	c	k	c	e	u	p	a	y
g	e	a	w	n	s	k	o	u	g	h	g	p	a	u	o
f	d	k	p	c	t	q	d	h	o	m	s	i	d	t	l
y	h	j	u	w	b	n	s	j	a	b	f	n	h	l	w
f	e	k	r	l	s	a	j	b	d	r	c	k	a	e	g
r	s	d	p	r	j	i	f	l	i	t	p	k	s	b	i
d	w	d	l	u	e	k	i	u	n	c	f	s	m	w	f
y	f	j	e	m	g	r	e	e	n	b	k	i	e	p	e
h	h	d	i	n	m	y	g	w	l	m	b	g	a	o	m
e	y	e	l	l	o	w	f	a	n	h	i	p	c	c	j
g	p	a	o	b	w	u	c	l	o	r	a	n	g	e	d

Words:

Red

Yellow

✓ Pink

Green

✓ Orange

Purple

Blue

Black

Now make your own word search

Words:

READING

For any reading you do – don't forget to complete the reading log!

Practise reading out loud and record yourself to improve your pronunciation.

I. Practise your dictionary skills

- Make a note of words that you come across which you don't understand. Write them down and look up the meaning in a dictionary or online dictionary. Find out the meaning in your own language to help you. Think about how you could use the new words in your own speaking and writing.

Using a dictionary

Word:	
Where did you see this word?	What does it mean?
Word:	
Where did you see this word?	What does it mean?
Word:	
Where did you see this word?	What does it mean?

2. Read for enjoyment

- Find a short story and add it to your reading log.
- Find a simple poem and say why you like it. Use the way the poem is set out to write your own poem in your own words.

3. Read for information


- Find articles about things that interest you.
- Use information you find in information texts to create posters.
- Follow the instructions you find to make or do things.

4. Work with texts

- There are 10 texts in this resource - see page 15
Choose one you like.
Read the text and do the activities that go with it.
Read the text or parts of the text out loud and record yourself.
Fill in the reading log.

Carry on with the others!

- Choose a text of your own from a book, a newspaper, a magazine or online.
Read it and fill in the reading log.
Share the texts you find with other people – you could make up some questions to go with them. You could make up some activities to go with the texts.

Date completed:	
Title of text:	
What is this text? (e.g. email, advert, letter, webpage, blog, poster, leaflet)	
What is this text for? (e.g.it tells you how to do something; it is a warning; it gives you advice)	
Key words Use a dictionary if you don't know what a word means. Write down these words and what they mean.	
Key information What is the text telling you? Note the main points in bullets. • • •	
How easy did you find it to read this text? (Circle one)	
	
If you found it hard/quite hard, - what do you need to practise? - how could your tutor help?	
Make some notes below.	

READING TEXTS

There are 10 texts to read with different activities:	Page
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TECH TALK

Operating System This is the software that supports a computer or phone's basic functions such as memory and gives access to devices including hard drives and keyboards. Plus, it manages all the other programs on the computer.

Authentication The process of verifying the identity and legitimacy of a person, object or system.

Wi-Fi Allows computers, smart phones or other devices to connect wirelessly to the internet.

Firewall System to protect your home computers from security risks on the internet such as hackers and computer viruses.

Router Device used to connect computers to the internet.

FaceTime (Mac), Skype Video calls made via the internet from your phone, tablet or computer to someone else's device.

USB The connection used to plug in devices such as digital cameras, printers, scanners, and external hard drives to your computer.

ATM An automatic teller machine. A self-serve electronic banking outlet that allows customers to complete basic transactions.

Bluetooth Wireless technology for exchanging data over short distances.

Smartphone A mobile phone that acts like a mini- computer. They usually have touch screens, internet access and an operating system capable of running downloaded apps.

App A self-contained program or piece of software designed to fulfil a particular purpose.

Virus A piece of programming code designed to damage your computer.

Search Engine For example, Google. A program used to search the internet.

Blog A website or web page written in an informal or conversational style, usually by an individual.

YouTube A video-sharing website.

Text adapted from womeninprison.co.uk Winter 2015

Activities

Ia

Highlight or underline the technical words you have heard of.

Ib

Make a list of technical terms in your own language plus the English translation.

Ic

Write a similar guide that gives the meaning of specialist words on a different theme. For example:

- Sports Talk
- Fashion Talk
- Film Talk.

A guide to	
Specialist word	Meaning

TEXT 2

GET CYCLING!

Hundreds of people, young and old, were inspired by the 2014 Tour de France cycle race in Britain to take to their bicycles.

Cycling is the ideal activity for everybody. Apart from the initial cost of the bikes, it is a cheap and fun way to get some exercise and to get around, whether for work or pleasure. However, don't forget to check your bike regularly and keep it roadworthy and of course always wear a helmet! Unlike travelling by car or public transport, when you ride a bike you can feel the sun on your face and the wind in your hair. Of course, another advantage is that cycling is environmentally friendly because it does not pollute the atmosphere.

Cycling in town

Many people say they are put off cycling because they don't like the idea of cycling in traffic, but many cyclists use busy roads every day without any problems. Once you know the basics of road cycling, you can start to enjoy these journeys and roads don't have to be a dangerous place to cycle.

Tips for cycling safely around town

- Make sure motorists can see you and ride in a position where you can see and be seen;
- Make eye contact with other road users, especially at junctions, then you know they've seen you;
- Use lights and consider wearing bright or reflective clothing, especially in towns, at night and in bad weather.

Cycle training

If you are new to cycling or haven't cycled for a while, build up gradually towards longer distance rides. If you want to really improve and make sure you can cycle safely wherever you choose, why not consider cycle training to help you get there faster? It will help you develop skills and increase your confidence to tackle busier routes. To enquire about local courses, phone the National Cycle Training Helpline on 0844 736 8460/84.

Activities

2a

Highlight or underline in different colours:

- the words you know
- the words you can guess
- the words you need to find out.

2b

Write a short article to encourage people to take up a pastime, sport or activity you are interested in.

- Say what you like about it
- Give some tips about how to get started
- Say why you would recommend it.

TEXT 3

HOME

Thoughts and poems about what “home” means to them, by women in several of Britain’s female prisons

Home is wherever my children and family are.

Home to me is safety. I know as soon as I see my mum and my mum’s home, nothing or nobody can hurt me.

Thinking of being at home reminds me of happy memories. When I am alone, I feel my children around me. I can hear them calling me mummy. Outside in the back garden, my children are playing on the swing, singing, dancing and their dad is also with them. I am laughing because of their antics. My husband often used to buy a bunch of flowers for me.

I miss my home a lot. I love my home and I have never been anywhere else for as long a time, except prison. My home is very bright, colourful, neat and clean. On sunny days, the bright sun comes through into the conservatory. My home gets lighter.

I cook some special food for my family when my husband has a day off and the children have school holidays. We watch TV, even though my home is noisy, there is a lot of love. Home is my life and breath. Home means being near family- that family connection.

Text adapted from womeninprison.co.uk

Activities

3a

What is “**home**” for you? Write down your thoughts about what “**home**” means to you. You can write it in your journal.

3b

Talk with your fellow learners or friends and ask them what “**home**” means to them. You could make a big poster with everybody’s ideas.

TEXT 4

LITTER

An American comedian said that Britain is “like a trash can” and has a rubbish-dropping problem, saying it’s the ‘worst in the world’. Was he joking, or do you agree?

I am not sure the problem is the worst in the world, but it seems to be acceptable to some people to drop litter on the streets. The fact that there are not enough litter bins is another story! **Rana, London**

Fifty years ago, when I was a child, an old man swept the streets and cut the grass in our village every week. It now gets an annual clean-up visit from a lorry that sweeps the gutters... unless there are cars parked there. **Ron, Hertford**

I live in Essex and the litter problem is huge. All major roads seem to have grass verges littered with endless plastic bags and food wrapping. It’s hideous. **Anya, Essex**

It’s not pleasant, but at least we have litter bins and street cleaning services, however inadequate they may be. We need a society where littering is frowned upon. People should believe that they absolutely should not litter and stop being so selfish and inconsiderate. Bin it, NOT drop it! **Lucia, Cardiff.**

I always try and find a litter bin – a bit of an issue in some places I visit – but would never drop rubbish if I cannot find one. If everyone else did the same thing, Britain would look much tidier. **Ali, Leeds**

Why should we worry about dropping litter? Councils pay people to pick it up, so we may as well keep them in a job. Ok, it may not look tidy, but the council workers just need to work harder. **Maya, Nottingham.**

Activities

4a

Highlight or underline in different colours:

- the words you know
- the words you can guess
- the words you need to find out.

4b

Think of an issue that affects you e.g. fast food, facilities for young people, problems in your local area, the environment.

Ask other people what they think.

Write down their views to produce an article like this one.

TEXT 5



COACHES4U

RELY ON US TO GET YOU FROM A TO B



Cheap Coach Travel from York To London

Treat yourself to a visit to London with Coaches4U this winter and feel the lively atmosphere of the UK's most famous city. Our great winter deals mean you can book a cheap coach to London with ease. You will then have more cash in your pocket to spend on a West End Show, seeing the sights or shopping.

Explore London with Coaches4U

Seats cost as little as £10 + 50p booking fee. There's never been a better time to travel from York to London by coach. Simply use our easy online search to view the timetables and book cheap tickets. There is so much to do in London. Visit the Tower of London or see Big Ben. You can get a bird's eye view of the city from the London Eye.

Book a cheap coach to London

As well as low prices, you'll also be able to enjoy free on-board Wi-Fi on our London routes. You also have a 20kg luggage allowance.

Activities

5a

Highlight or underline all the benefits of using Coaches4U.

5b

There is lots to do in London. Do some research and plan a trip to London or another city.

- Decide where you will go
- Plan how you will travel
- Make a list of what you will see
- Work out where you will stay.

TEXT 6

A STRONG BLACK WOMAN

by Llatoya-Jade

I'm a strong black woman that's who I am,
Don't have a need to depend on no man.
Independent that is me.

I speak my own mind that's the best way to be.
Don't try & be me, find your own style & grace.
Don't mistake my kindness for weakness &
don't take me for no fool.

I'll just sit back & make you think
everything is cool, ain't got no time
for silly games especially liars,
I'm all about conquering my dream,
aspirations & desires.

There is no need be hating on me
unless you can explain why.
If not, in the words of Anne Robinson,
"You are the Weakest Link. Goodbye".



Illustration by Michala

Text adapted from womeninprison.co.uk Winter 2015

Activities

6a

Write your own poem in a similar style. Carry on from the first line:

I am that's who I am

TEXT 7

BAKED BANANAS

Here's what you will need:

50 grams of butter
3 tablespoons of soft brown sugar
2 tablespoons lemon juice
½ teaspoon cinnamon
4 bananas.

Serves 4



First put the butter, sugar and lemon juice in a shallow dish.

Then place in a pre-heated moderate oven at 180 degrees centigrade for a few minutes until the butter has melted.

Cut the bananas into large pieces. Arrange them in the dish and turn them to coat with the sauce. Cover the dish and return to the oven for 30 minutes.

Serve piping hot with single cream.

Activities

7a

Highlight or underline in different colours, all the quantities, temperatures and times.

7b

Draw a diagram or flowchart to show what has to be done to make this recipe.

Flow chart

Add more steps if you need them.

STEP 1

STEP 2

STEP 3

7c

Write some recipes of your own. Ask others if they have any good recipes. Research some recipes online. Make a recipe book.

TEXT 8

AESOP'S FABLES

What are fables?

Fables are short stories with a moral or message which can be used to teach a lesson. The theme and characters appeal to children and the stories are often funny.

The Fox and the Crow

A Fox once saw a Crow fly off with a piece of cheese in its beak and settle on a branch of a tree.

"That's for me, as I am a Fox," said Master Reynard, and he walked up to the foot of the tree.

"Good-day, Mistress Crow," he cried. *"How well you are looking to-day: how glossy your feathers; how bright your eye. Your voice must be finer than of other birds, just as your figure is; let me hear but one song from you that I may greet you as the Queen of Birds."*

The Crow lifted up her head and began to caw her best, but the moment she opened her mouth the piece of cheese fell to the ground, only to be snapped up by Master Fox.

"That will do," said he. *"That was all I wanted. In exchange for your cheese I will give you a piece of advice for the future. Do not trust flatterers"*

The Hare and the Tortoise

The Hare was once boasting of his speed before the other animals.

"I have never yet been beaten," said he, *"when I put forth my full speed. I challenge any one here to race with me."*

The Tortoise said quietly, *"I accept your challenge."*

"That is a good joke," said the Hare; *"I could dance round you all the way."*

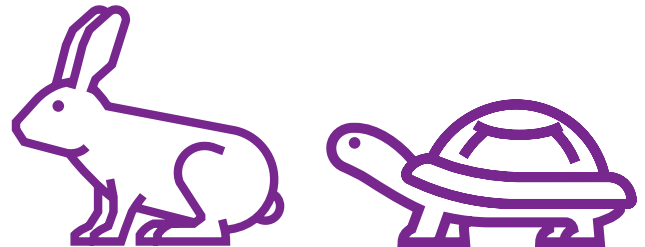
"Keep your boasting till you've beaten," answered the Tortoise. *"Shall we race?"*

So a course was fixed and a start was made.

The Hare darted almost out of sight at once, but soon stopped and, to show his contempt for the Tortoise, lay down to have a nap.

The Tortoise plodded on and plodded on, and when the Hare awoke from his nap, he saw the Tortoise just near the winning-post and could not run up in time to save the race.

Then said the Tortoise: *"Plodding wins the race."*



Text adapted from www.taleswithmorals.com

Activities

- 8a
- How well do you know your verbs?
- Highlight or underline all the verbs in the present tense in one colour and all the verbs in the past in a different colour.

8b

Illustrate the two fables to show what happened. Make it a cartoon if you like.

8c

Research and find some more fables. What is the message of each fable? Use the table below to record what you read.

Title of fable	Message or moral
The Hare and the Tortoise	Sometimes you can win by going slowly but steadily.

8d

Write your own fable or story for children. You could use a story from your home country.

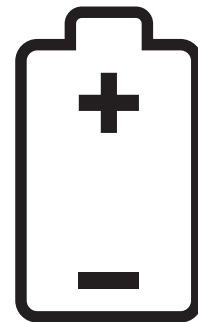
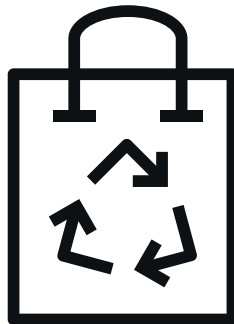
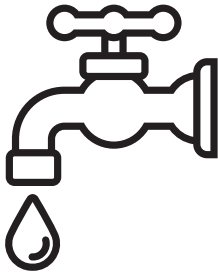
TEXT 9

WE MUST ALL DO OUR SHARE TO SUPPORT OUR ENVIRONMENT

Water in plastic bottles, food packaging, plastic bags, batteries, sheets of paper from the printer – don't just throw them away. Our dustbins are overflowing!

In 40 years, the amount of rubbish we produce has doubled. However, we can easily reduce that. Here are some tips:

- Drink water from the tap rather than water in a plastic bottle
- Go shopping with your own bags
- Avoid small portions of food – one big pot of yoghurt is the same as 4 small pots of yoghurt and it's cheaper!
- Take your used batteries, old phones and ink cartridges to be recycled
- Re-use paper for notes, lists, children's drawing paper
- Don't waste food – use your leftovers
- Recycle magazines and newspapers
- Even clothes and textiles can be recycled or donated to a charity shop



Activities

9a

Highlight all the items that can be reused or recycled in the text.

9b

Research some other environmental issues that interest you.

9c

Make a list of what you will do and what could be done at your college or place of work to be more environmentally friendly.

TEXT 10

IT SOLUTIONS

Office Assistant needed – Suitable for first job applicants

We are looking for an efficient person to work as an assistant in our office team. We are a small company supporting schools, colleges and people at home with the IT problems. We help our customers to select the best software and carry out computer repairs at excellent prices.

We are based in Ealing with easy access to the whole of London.
Office hours are Monday to Friday, 8:30 – 5:00.

Duties

- Supporting the team
- Booking visits to schools and colleges
- Checking orders for software etc.

Skills

- Good teamwork skills
- Computer skills
- Good telephone manner

To apply please email your CV to the manager of IT Solutions:
manager@its.com

Activities

10a

Write a short summary of what this company does.

10b

List the key skills and duties and tick all those which apply to you.

10c

Write your CV giving your personal details, education, qualifications, experience, skills etc.

NOTES

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