

Learning English

The Basics: Learning English

Introduction for the Trainer

Key Content

During this session, participants will learn about the importance of learning English as they are looking for work, applying for assistance, and participating in community life during their first few months in the United States. They will also learn about their rights to interpreter services in places such as hospitals and courts of law.

Main Messages

Learning English will help refugees adjust more quickly to life in the United States. Learning a new language takes time, and it is important to continue looking for a job, applying for assistance, and participating in community life while learning English. Trainers should convey to participants the importance of not putting off important tasks, such as looking for a job, until after they have learned English. Refugees should also know that they have a right to interpreter services in places such as hospitals, courts, and schools.



20 minutes

Objectives

Participants will be able to do the following:

- ▶ Identify learning English as important to their adjustment in the United States
- ▶ State the need to work and take care of other resettlement tasks while they are studying English
- ▶ Describe their right to interpreter services

Key English Vocabulary

- ▶ *enroll*
- ▶ *interpreter*
- ▶ *teacher*
- ▶ *I want to learn English.*

Materials

- Basics of Learning English Signs (included)
- Flipchart paper, markers, and tape
- Basics of Learning English Cards (included)

Session Preparation

Hang the Basics of Learning English Signs on the wall in front of the training space, evenly spaced, with 2 to 4 feet between each sign (depending on how much room there is).

Prepare the Basics of Learning English Cards by cutting along the dotted lines. Prepare enough cards (choosing the most important issues) so that there is one per participant.

Trainer’s Introduction of Session to Participants

During this session we will talk about the importance of learning English to your adjustment in the United States. Learning a new language takes time, however, so you should still look for a job, enroll in public services, and make use of community and educational services while you are learning English.

While you are learning English, you have the right to interpreter services when you go to places like schools, hospitals, and courts. When talking to law enforcement officials, you also have the right to an interpreter. Your resettlement agency can help you access interpreter services.

Introductory Exercise

Conduct a “think-pair-share” exercise by asking participants to think about some of the ways learning English can help their resettlement and adjustment process in the United States. Ask participants to share their thoughts about this with a partner.

Bring the full group together and ask for highlights from the partner discussions. Record responses on flipchart paper.

Briefly review the key English vocabulary for this plan by saying the first word aloud in English. Participants say the word to a partner, and then all together as a group. Continue in the same way with the rest of the words and the sentence. Throughout the session, emphasize the words as they come up and use the sentence whenever there is an opportunity. If there is time (8 to 10 minutes), use the unit vocabulary found at the end of this unit to help participants better understand key English vocabulary words.

Activity

Introduce the Basics of Learning English Signs to participants.

Give each participant one of the Basics of Learning English Cards. Participants look at the picture on their card and decide if this is something that can be done *before* learning English, *while* learning English, or *after* having learned English. Participants tape their Basics of Learning English Card under the appropriate Basics of Learning English Sign in front of the training space.

Then ask participants to sit down facing the front of the training space. Review the cards and where they should be placed, moving cards if necessary. The trainer should note that most tasks can be done *while participants are learning English* and should be placed under the sign, “While I am learning

English.” Discuss the cards about interpreter services with participants and talk about when and how participants can access that assistance. Remind participants that their case worker/manager can help them access an interpreter.

Debrief the session using the questions below.

Debriefing Questions

- ▶ How can learning English help you in the United States?
- ▶ When do you have a right to interpreter services? How can you request interpretation assistance?
- ▶ What other things can you do while you are learning English?
- ▶ Why do you think it is important to take care of other tasks while also learning English?

Working With Individuals or Very Small Groups

When working with an individual or a small group of participants, start the session by asking for some ways that learning English can help the resettlement and adjustment process in the United States. Record these on flipchart paper. Select fewer of the Basics of Learning English Cards, choosing those that are relevant to the participant. Show one Basics of Learning English Card to the participant. Ask which of the Basics of Learning English Signs it should be placed under. Discuss the participant’s response and place it under the right sign. Continue with the next card in the same way.

Variations and Considerations

If needed, use translated versions of the Basics of Learning English Signs and/or the Basics of Learning English Cards.

When working with a larger group of participants, make duplicates of the Basics of Learning English Cards so that there is one per participant.

Basics of Learning English Signs



Before I learn English



While I am learning English



After I learn English

Basics of Learning English Cards



Accept a job



Access community services



Access public benefits



Attend doctor's appointments



Attend orientation sessions



Do volunteer work



Enroll in school



Enroll my children in school



Help my children with their homework



Look for a job



Meet my children's teachers



Meet my neighbors



Participate in community life



Request an interpreter



Use an interpreter



Use public transportation