

KS3-4

EAL

English as an additional
language

EAL
TOOLKIT



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Introduction

EAL (English as an additional language) students are those who are learning the English language but already speak one or more other languages, although not necessarily fluently. It is crucial to recognise that students learning English as an additional language are not a homogeneous group; they come from diverse regions and backgrounds. Learners will be at different stages of English language acquisition (from complete beginner to advanced bilingual), but even those at the same stage of English language acquisition will have different needs.

What proportion of students have English as an additional language?

EAL students can be found in classrooms around the country. The document [Schools, pupils and their characteristics](#) published by the government on 9 June 2022 reports that in 2021/22 19.5% of pupils were recorded as having a first language known or believed to be other than English, up from 2020/21. If we look more closely at state-funded secondary schools, the percentage of students with EAL was 17.5%. Given such significant figures, understanding the needs of students learning the national language is absolutely essential.

How long does it take students to master English?

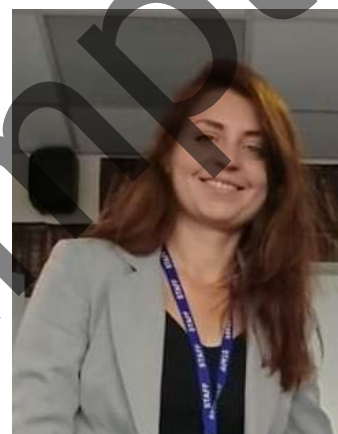
There is no unequivocal answer regarding how long it takes to learn the English language (see research by Feyisa Demie, '[English as an additional language pupils: how long does it take to acquire English fluency?](#)', *Language and Education*, vol.27, issue 1, 2013). Depending on their existing level of proficiency in English, and their general knowledge and abilities, all new arrivals joining KS3 and KS4 classrooms and preparing for their GCSE examinations will have three main barriers to face: the language barrier itself, curricular catch-up assignments and learning the current lesson content. Their future successes will be built on their efforts, skills and personal circumstances. Nevertheless, using appropriate teaching methods and resources will be essential to overcoming those barriers, to motivating students and to enhancing their learning. In some curricular subjects, such as geography, science and maths, EAL learners will need challenging subject content but simple language; in others, such as history and English literature, they will also require simpler subject content. As was noted in a report by The Bell Foundation, 'Attainment is also affected by arrival time' ([Educational outcomes of children with English as an additional language](#), Jo Hutchinson, February 2018), so it is a significant priority for secondary school teachers to ensure that they have developed a range of teaching strategies to work with EAL students joining their classes at various points throughout the year.

How can this pack help?

This KS3 and KS4 teaching pack is designed to introduce a variety of ways to support EAL students at secondary school. After discussing the challenges that EAL students may encounter, it recommends practical strategies for mainstream subject teachers and teaching assistants. As well as offering general advice on EAL support, it takes into account three key elements of language learning: vocabulary, oracy and literacy. For each of these components, a range of strategies and ideas are introduced, and printable classroom resources are included.

About the author

This EAL teaching pack was written for Teachit by Anna Czebiolko, who began her EAL career as a language support assistant but decided to develop her knowledge by training to teach. Since starting to work with EAL learners in 2009, she has worked with children in every year group from nursery to sixth form. Today, Anna is head of EAL in a secondary school in North Yorkshire. Previously, she coordinated the EAL provision for seven years in a large secondary academy in Leeds. She is always willing to try innovative methods with her students and to share her knowledge with teachers and other practitioners.



The challenges facing EAL learners

Students with EAL experience many challenges during their learning. New arrivals in particular may struggle with cultural differences and the language barrier. They need to develop their understanding of the national curriculum and adapt to the new education system. They may struggle with the curriculum gap and the unknown academic content. A lack of language for social purposes may lead to social isolation. If classroom routines differ from those familiar to the newly arrived student, they may lead to confusion or, in some cases, exclusion. Because of differences in school starting age or because of personal circumstances, some new students may have missed the experience of attending school or may have been in school for only a short period of time. The language of learning may be too challenging for learners and very different from social language.

These other challenges should be considered:

Personal challenges

- Personal circumstances – some students may have gone through traumatic past experiences, or they may be living with adults who are experiencing emotional difficulties. The pain of divided families or family problems may have had a

Introducing survival vocabulary (tier 1 words)

Tier 1 words are basic, everyday words that are part of the vocabulary of many young people. These are words that are used daily in conversation, and most of them are learned by listening to family, peers and teachers using them in their conversation. These words are very important for English language learners, who may be unfamiliar with them.

Examples of tier 1 words include *clock, baby, happy, family, big and small*.

Classroom strategies and activity ideas

Flashcards

Flashcards are sets of small, single- or double-sided cards used to learn and revise facts, keywords and vocabulary. [See the tier 1 vocabulary flashcards on pp.24–26](#) (Everyday objects, Animals, People, Emotions and feelings, Places, Food). Here are some ideas for how to use them:

Translation and retrieval practice

Students can write the translation of each word on the back and then use the cards to test their vocabulary recall, from English to their first language initially, and then from their first language to English.

Sorting

Flashcards can be used for sorting activities. For example, students could sort the people words on p.25 into 'male/man', 'female/woman', and 'male or female/man or woman', or the emotions and feelings into 'positive/good' and 'negative/bad'.

What is missing?

This game can be played in students' families or with their language buddies. The student is presented with three to six flashcards to remember. Ask them to close their eyes while their partner takes away one of the cards. The student has to identify the missing card.






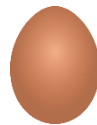

















Word mats

Word mats are ideal scaffolding for writing and speaking tasks as they can help learners to describe something effectively, possibly using words that they have never tried to use before. They are also useful for presenting alternative words and the

Printable resources

Phonics mats

Phase 2 sound mat

<p>a</p>  <p>ant</p>	<p>b</p>  <p>bat</p>	<p>c</p>  <p>cat</p>	<p>ck</p>  <p>luck</p>
<p>d</p>  <p>duck</p>	<p>e</p>  <p>egg</p>	<p>f</p>  <p>fun</p>	<p>ff</p>  <p>puff</p>
<p>g</p>  <p>bag</p>	<p>h</p>  <p>hip</p>	<p>i</p>  <p>ink</p>	<p>k</p>  <p>kit</p>
<p>l</p>  <p>leg</p>	<p>ll</p>  <p>bell</p>	<p>m</p>  <p>man</p>	<p>n</p>  <p>bin</p>
<p>o</p>  <p>dog</p>	<p>p</p>  <p>pen</p>	<p>r</p>  <p>run</p>	<p>s</p>  <p>sad</p>
<p>ss</p>  <p>boss</p>	<p>t</p>  <p>tin</p>	<p>u</p>  <p>sun</p>	

Improving general academic vocabulary and literacy (tier 2 words)

Examples of tier 2 words include *obvious*, *complex*, *establish* and *verify*. They are words that learners are likely to come across in a variety of contexts and across all subjects, but that are not used much in everyday conversation. As Beck, McKeown and Kucan (2002) say, these words 'are not the most basic or common ways of expressing ideas, but they are familiar to mature language users as ordinary as opposed to specialised language'.

Classroom strategies and activity ideas

Visual stimuli

Visual support such as flashcards, word mats and labelling activities can be used for teaching vocabulary in books/texts before reading or listening and for providing useful vocabulary before writing or speaking.

Tier 2 word mats available on Teachit:

- Word class learning mat (KS3/KS4)
www.teachit.co.uk/resources/english/word-class-learning-mat
- Connectives writing placemat (KS3/KS4)
www.teachit.co.uk/resources/english/connectives-writing-placemat
- Punctuation writing placemat (KS3/KS4)
www.teachit.co.uk/resources/english/punctuation-writing-placemat
- SpaG mat (KS3/KS4/KS5)
www.teachit.co.uk/resources/english/spag-mat

The use of synonyms

EAL students can be exposed to multiple tier 2 words by identifying synonyms (words with a similar meaning) and antonyms (words with an opposite meaning) for those words. Students can be asked to list, for example, 10 synonyms and then use them in their writing. Specific word mats that include lists of synonyms can be also a useful aid in the classroom. The use of synonyms may be specifically fruitful when students recognise cognates (words that are the same) in their home language. Using synonyms can also open discussions about meaning of words and address any potential misconceptions.

Printable resources

Tenses table

Tense	Affirmative	Negative	Question
Present simple	I live in London.	I don't live in London.	Do you live in London?
Present continuous	I am living in London at the moment.	I am not living in London at the moment.	Are you living in London at the moment?
Present perfect	I have lived in London for a long time.	I haven't lived in London for a long time.	Have you lived in London for a long time?
Present perfect continuous	I have been living in London for a long time.	I haven't been living in London for a long time.	Have you been living in London for a long time?
Past simple	I lived in London when I was a child.	I didn't live in London when I was a child.	Did you live in London when you were a child?
Past continuous	I was living in London when the Queen died.	I wasn't living in London when the Queen died.	Were you living in London when the Queen died?
Past perfect	I had visited London before I moved here.	I hadn't visited London before I moved here.	Had you visited London before you moved here?
Past perfect continuous	I had been living in London for a long time before I went to Spain.	I hadn't been living in London for a long time before I went to Spain.	Had you been living in London for a long time before you went to Spain?
Future simple	I will live in London for ever.	I won't live in London for ever.	Will you live in London for ever?
Future continuous	I will (still) be living in London when I'm 18.	I won't (still) be living in London when I'm 18.	Will you (still) be living in London when you're 18?
Future perfect	By the end of February, I will have lived in London for more than three years.	By the end of February, I won't have lived in London for more than three years.	By the end of February, how long will you have lived in London?
Future perfect continuous	By the end of February, I will have been living in London for more than three years.	By the end of February, I won't have been living in London for more than three years.	By the end of February, how long will you have been living in London?

Improving subject-specific vocabulary and literacy (tier 3 words)

Tier 3 words are subject-specific terms used within a particular field. This is the language of scientists, mathematicians, historians and geographers. For maths, they include words like *multiplication*, while science lessons might require learners to understand *photosynthesis*. Often, these words are integral to teaching content for specific subjects.

Classroom strategies and activity ideas

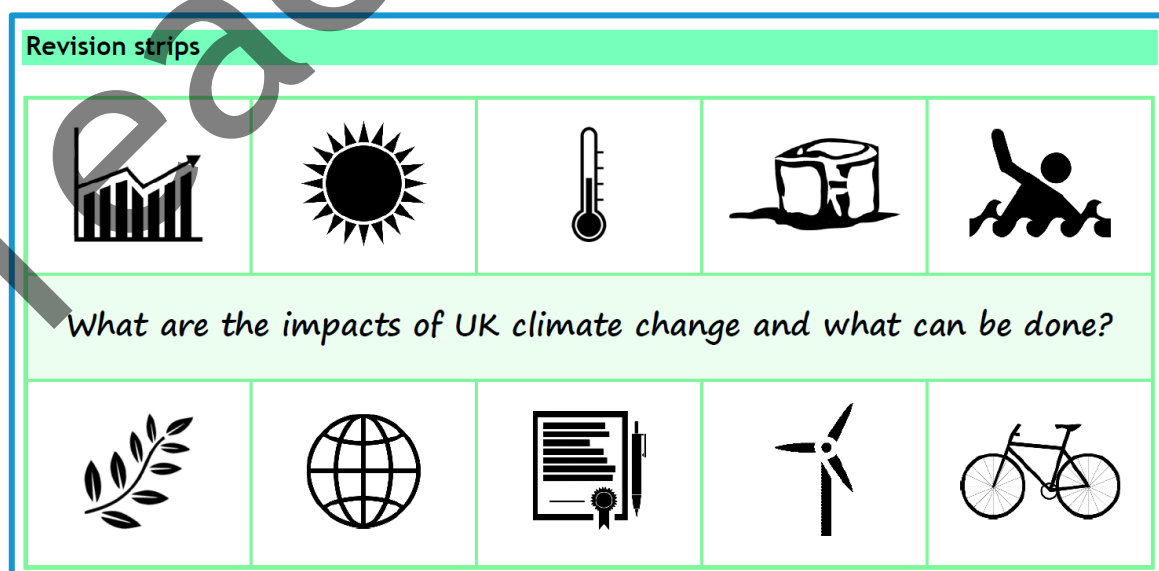
Visual stimuli

As with tier 2 words, visual support such as flashcards, word mats and labelling activities can be used for teaching vocabulary in books or texts before reading or listening, and for providing useful vocabulary before writing or speaking.

Dual coding

Dual coding involves using different types of stimulus to help learners encode information in their brains more effectively, enabling it to be more easily retrieved later on. In the classroom, the main two types of stimulus that are used are visual and verbal. For many students, it is easier to remember a word's meaning by making a quick sketch that connects the word to something personally meaningful to the student.

See Teachit's [Take 10 collection](#) for geography resources that use dual coding:



Source: www.teachit.co.uk/resources/geography/take-10-uk-climate-change

Improving listening and speaking skills (oracy)

Classroom strategies and activity ideas

Providing a range of opportunities to listen, including different speakers, accents, aural media and kinds of spoken language is essential for developing students' listening and speaking skills. Asking students to listen for a clearly defined purpose helps them to focus on specific parts of the spoken text and can provide opportunities for them to verbalise their language, meaning the most effective learning takes place.

Speaking prompts

Although EAL students' social language may be well developed, speaking frames are useful at any level to scaffold academic language.

Here is an example Teachit resource to scaffold debating expressions:

Debating expressions		
In my opinion...	Are you for or against...?	Nevertheless...
Well, I feel that...	Do you think we should...?	Yes, but remember that...
I strongly believe...	Do you think [the Government] should...?	That may be so but...
There's no doubt that...	What do you mean by that?	That isn't the point.
I suppose that...	I'll need time to think about that...	Come off it!
Well, if you ask me...	That's a very interesting question, because...	You may have a point but...
For example...	I'm beginning to think it would be a good thing...	I'm not so sure about that.
Well, firstly...	Well, it depends on what you mean.	Do you really think so?!
Furthermore...	Don't you think...?	I disagree entirely.
In addition...	That's a difficult question to answer, because...	Come on!
On the other hand...	Precisely. I would say the same because...	I think...

Source: www.teachit.co.uk/resources/elt/debating-expressions

Further support

Glossary

Acronyms

- BICS** = Basic interpersonal communication skills
Simple vocabulary and grammar structures for everyday life (tier 1 words).
- CALP** = Cognitive academic language proficiency
Language for studying in general and for specific subjects (tier 2 and tier 3 words).
- EAL** = English as an additional language
Used in the UK with reference to school-age children/students who live in the UK and whose first language is not English.
The term encompasses students who are fully bilingual and all those at different stages of learning English. EAL students may be:
- newly arrived from a foreign country and school
 - newly arrived from a foreign country but an English-speaking school
 - born abroad, but moved to England at some point earlier in their childhood
 - born in the UK, but in a family where the main language is not English.
- EAP** = English for academic purposes
English for studying at university level. Includes tier 2 vocabulary (English for general academic purposes) and tier 3 vocabulary (English for specific academic purposes).
- EFL** = English as a foreign language
Used mostly in the UK with reference to people of any age who are learning English for their studies, jobs or general interest but who do not live in an English-speaking country.
- ELLs** = English language learners
Used in the USA to refer to school-age children/students whose first language is not English – the US term for EAL student.
- ESL** = English as a second language
Used in the USA and internationally with reference to people of any age who are learning English for their studies, jobs or general interest but who usually do not live in an English-speaking country.