

**Support Guide** for Teachers with EAL Learners  
Returning after an Extended School Closure

Version 1.0



English as an Additional Language

Support Guide for Teachers with EAL Learners Returning after an Extended  
School Closure

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## Introduction

As EAL learners return to school after lengthy absences, planning needs to include both social-emotional and academic learning. EAL learners bring strengths to their school experiences that teachers can leverage for both of these areas. Building and rebuilding new relationships with their peers and teachers is essential to their well-being and academic growth. Newcomer students have often already experienced difficult situations, such as leaving their homeland and moving to a country with a new culture and school system. The in-school suspension of classes as a result of COVID-19 has brought additional stresses that have reached all aspects of students' lives, affecting not only them but also their families, communities, and teachers.

With such a lengthy break from in-school classes, teachers need to be prepared for a spectrum of student experiences: the possible trauma, fear, grief, and loss the students may be feeling; fewer opportunities to socialize with classmates and friends; and a lack of routine and structure in their learning-at-home environment. They may also have had positive experiences, such as spending more time with their family, learning new skills and/or having online learning experiences in their first language, or experiencing different ways of doing everyday activities. No two experiences will have been the same.

When schools suddenly pivoted to remote learning, students learning EAL may have experienced additional learning challenges for various reasons. All distance learning was probably in their new language. EAL learners may not have had access to the individualized support and face-to-face interaction that are normal for in-class instruction and so important in learning a new language. Teachers may have provided online instruction, but through this period EAL students may have found contextual learning, making connections, and building one-on-one relationships to be difficult. Some EAL students and their families struggled with limited or no access to technology or Internet. If parents were learning English too, it may have been difficult for them to support their children in their learning at home. Remote learning presented challenges for young learners, who have not had time to develop the language, technology, and personal management skills needed for success. Older EAL learners were often challenged by the amount of content presented in a more decontextualized format of lecture, reading, and writing. For these students, remote learning became another roadblock, increasing feelings of disenfranchisement and disconnection. These factors, among others, may create fear, anxiety, and frustration for EAL learners.

## Friendly, Supportive, and Caring Environment

Students may be lonely as a result of isolation, worried about their future, and find going back to school to be challenging. In addition to academic loss, they may have lost motivation. Teachers will see a variety of emotional responses when students return to class, given that there are many types of stressors. Students will have had more time for fun and personal choice; however, they will also have experienced distress due to loneliness, loss of friends, and missing school. It is understandable that EAL students may be frustrated, anxious, fearful, and confused. EAL learners may be demonstrating some effects of trauma and may not understand or be able to express what they are experiencing. Research tells us that emotional well-being is very important to the education process. It enhances attention, learning, and memory. Students will need opportunities for emotional support in addition to academic learning. Support for mental health needs to be an ongoing part of the daily routine.

Teachers can transition EAL students back to school with social-emotional support, which can include

- implementing significant safety protocols in school to protect students, staff, families, and community members
- providing a welcoming and a safe environment, which helps students feel safe and allows for their feelings to be acknowledged and respected
- being patient and positive, and building connections
- teaching students words and strategies to describe what they may be feeling, as well as new words that emphasize positive feelings
- starting the day with a check-in, and making personal connections by giving a warm greeting as the EAL learners arrive in the room
- creating and nurturing kindness through words and notes of encouragement
- embedding daily mindfulness activities, such as breathing exercises, meditation techniques, reflection activities, etc.
- teaching EAL learners to manage conflict and solve problems
- having students work with assigned partners and intentional groupings to build community so they do not feel alone

- slowing down the pace of expected goals, and planning for positive structures in your environment that allow for talk time or expression of feelings through art, storytelling, kinesthetic movement, and metacognitive activities
- keeping lessons manageable and rigorous, allowing students to enhance their feelings of confidence and well-being through their own academic achievement
- encouraging EAL learners to use their home language for social and academic benefits

When teachers surround students with a friendly, supportive, and caring environment, they are responding to trauma, creating a growth mindset, and developing resilience.

## Programming for EAL Learners

Schools will use the [EAL Intake Process](#) documents (located on Maple) to determine the stage of English language acquisition for new EAL learners; for returning EAL students, schools will use the [EAL Framework](#). Using the EAL Framework, teachers will provide appropriate programming for English language learning along with subject-area content.

Programming for EAL learners is dependent on their stage of English language acquisition. If the student is in Stages 1 or 2 for Early Years or Stages 1, 2, or 3 in Middle and Senior Years, the subject-area curriculum will need to be significantly adjusted to accommodate for English language learning. Teachers will identify the language required to learn the concepts, topics, issues, and processes of their subject-area content and provide appropriate scaffolds. To effectively plan for EAL learners, big ideas and social and academic language need to be integrated.

## Challenges to Consider When Programming for EAL Learners

EAL learners struggle with both the English language and with the content taught in English. When learning from home, they face more challenges, such as

- they may have no or limited access to technology and/or the Internet
- they may not have sufficient technology literacy to engage with the lesson

- their parents may not have the knowledge or the skills to help them with their schoolwork
- they and their parents may be confused when schools send home massive print packages, and they may not be able to navigate through the language as well as the structure of the lessons
- they may not be able to enhance their social and academic language due to a lack of in-classroom connection with teachers and peers
- they may not understand how and what they need to accomplish for the lesson

## Identifying Big Ideas from a Lesson

Big ideas are rich language-enhancing tasks that focus on the central idea of a lesson, topic, or unit that requires students to use language to articulate understanding. For example, a big idea in science would be “multicellular organ systems enable organisms to survive and interact within their environment”; in social studies, a big idea would be “geography is the mother of all history.”

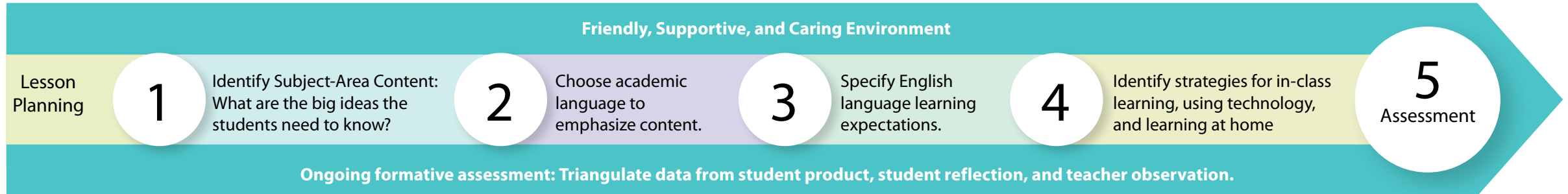
To develop a big idea from your lesson, topic, or concept,

- identify four or five main concepts that are key to the lesson
- summarize these concepts in one or two sentences
- outline the importance of these concepts for students
- determine the language demands of this big idea
- plan activities/strategies for in class and learning at home

## Alternatives to Worksheets

Although worksheets may be used occasionally, EAL students may not find them to be very exciting or challenging to complete. They may not have acquired sufficient language to understand the instructions or the concepts to engage with the worksheet. It may become more of a chore for students. Consider the following questions: What activities can activate thinking, language, and content? What experiential activity can replace the worksheet? Is there a way that learning activities can replace worksheets?

## Lesson Planning



1. Identify subject-area topic, concept, or process the class will be learning. For EAL learners, identify big ideas and required skills for this lesson, topic, or unit.
2. Choose the language that students will need to navigate through this topic. Consider visuals, videos, print materials, and/or graphic organizers when planning the lesson. Ensure activities are interactive and culturally responsive. Identify academic tasks that extend across curricular environments.
3. Specify language learning expectations and strategies for EAL students based on their stage of English language acquisition, as indicated in the charts on the following pages. Please refer to the [EAL Framework](#) for more detailed goals at various stages in all four domains.
4. Plan how the EAL students will be interacting with the content so they benefit from the subject area and become more proficient in using English. Identify strategies and activities that will enhance language and content learning.
  - a. Integrate the use of the student's home language. Literacy skills can transfer across languages.
  - b. Design appropriate experiential learning activities, such as reading and writing (e.g., correspondence) in home language as well as in English; use graphic organizers, games, projects, picture word inductive model (PWIM), sentence frames, Twitter responses (restricted to 280 letters, either as a tweet or on paper); watch videos (e.g., TedTalk, Khan Academy); create a PowerPoint presentation; make a photo story or flash cards; engage in reciprocal learning, where two students can connect at home or by phone; etc.
  - c. Plan for the possibility that EAL learners will continue their learning at home. Consider alternatives to using technology or the Internet.
5. Design formative and summative assessments of the language goals in conjunction with the subject-area content.

**Note:** On the following page is a sample blank EAL Lesson Plan Frame. For an electronic, fillable version of this form, visit [www.mapleforem.ca](http://www.mapleforem.ca).

# EAL Lesson Plan Frame

**Grade and Subject:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Lesson Topic:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Stage:** \_\_\_\_\_

Big Idea: Content-Area Goals	Academic Language	English Language Expectations	Strategies			Assessment
			<i>In Class</i>	<i>Learning at Home</i>	<i>Alternative to Technology</i>	
1.						
2.						
3.						

## Some Examples of EAL Stage 1 Learning Goals

Please see more complete and detailed list of EAL goals in the [EAL Framework](#)

Early Years	Middle Years	Senior Years
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognizes basic English discourse features (e.g., <i>and, on, with, in, beside</i>)</li> <li>• Understands main idea of simple sentences, questions, and interactions and responds appropriately</li> <li>• Mimics pronunciation of words and phrases, including intonation and stress patterns (e.g., raising intonation to phrase a question)</li> <li>• Expresses basic emotions, preferences, needs, and wants using single words or short phrases (e.g., “I sad/happy”, “I like yellow”, “washroom, please”, or asking for permission)</li> <li>• Knows and uses an emergent repertoire of environmental print and sight words</li> <li>• Recognizes and gains meaning from simple words and sentences, with extensive modelling and guidance, on familiar topics with visuals, repetition, and patterns</li> <li>• Writes simple words and sentences on familiar topics, with support</li> <li>• Writes brief personal responses to show level of understanding of a familiar topic (may be illustrated)</li> <li>• Recognizes and orders sequential elements of a story, process, or series of events, with visual support (e.g., places pictures in order of a simple story)</li> <li>• Knows a few basic words and facts related to Canadian geography</li> <li>• Checks copied written work for accuracy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognizes basic English discourse features (e.g., <i>and, so, on, with, next</i>)</li> <li>• Understands main idea of simple sentences, questions, and interactions, and responds appropriately</li> <li>• Mimics pronunciation of words and phrases, including intonation and stress patterns (e.g., raising intonation to phrase a question)</li> <li>• Expresses basic emotions, preferences, needs, and wants using single words or short phrases (e.g., “I sad/happy”, “I like yellow”, “washroom, please”, or asking for permission)</li> <li>• Recognizes and gains meaning from simple words and sentences, with extensive modelling and guidance, on familiar topics with visuals, repetition, and patterns</li> <li>• Knows and uses an emergent repertoire of words and phrases in familiar contexts</li> <li>• Writes simple words and sentences on familiar topics, with some independence, and authors meaningful chunks of language with modelling and support in familiar classroom contexts</li> <li>• Produces brief personal responses, which may include illustrations, to show their level of understanding of a familiar topic</li> <li>• Recognizes and orders sequential elements of a story, process, or series of events, with visual support (e.g., places pictures in order of a simple story)</li> <li>• Knows a few basic words and facts related to Canadian geography, Canada’s political system, or peoples of Canada</li> <li>• Seeks assistance and asks for repetition</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognizes familiar words and basic phrases when people speak clearly and slowly</li> <li>• Understands main idea of simple sentences, questions, and interactions and responds appropriately</li> <li>• Speaks in structured and familiar situations using words, phrases, and simple sentences</li> <li>• Expresses basic emotions, preferences, needs, and wants using single words or short phrases (e.g., “I sad/happy”, “I like yellow”, “washroom, please” or asking for permission)</li> <li>• Uses picture clues to gain understanding</li> <li>• Decodes and comprehends simple familiar words and short phrases</li> <li>• Writes simple words and sentences on familiar topics, with support</li> <li>• Writes brief personal responses that may include illustrations, to show level of understanding of a familiar topic</li> <li>• Copies essential information and benefits from scaffolds, such as cloze passages, word lists, and paragraph frames for longer texts</li> <li>• Knows a few basic words and facts related to Canadian geography, Canada’s political system, or peoples of Canada</li> <li>• Seeks assistance and asks for repetition</li> </ul>



# A Sample of Stage 1 Lesson Plan

**Grade and Subject:** Grade 4 Social Studies

**Lesson Topic:** Symbols and Monuments

**Stage:** 1

Big Idea: Content-Area Goals	Academic Language	English Language Expectations	Strategies			Assessment
			In Class	Learning at Home	Alternative to Technology	
1. Symbols, monuments, and important days	Anthem, flag, monument, statue, symbol, province, territory, holiday, celebration, flower, bird, animal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recognizes basic English discourse features, such as patterned sentences</li> <li>Demonstrates an emergent repertoire of words, and matches pictures to words</li> <li>Demonstrates understanding of the meaning of simple words, and names concrete objects</li> <li>Writes simple words and sentences</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use sentence frames</li> <li>Communicate in simple sentences</li> <li>Match pictures to words</li> <li>Use cloze passages</li> <li>Use <i>Kahoot!</i></li> <li>Develop picture dictionary</li> <li>Assign books to read</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use flash cards (digital or paper)</li> <li>Use electronic platforms such as <i>Kahoot!</i>, <i>Seesaw</i>, online books, <i>Quizizz</i>, etc.</li> <li>Draw, compare, and contrast Canadian symbols, flag, and anthem with ones from their home country</li> <li>Make a video or PowerPoint presentation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Practise pronunciation and spelling</li> <li>Caption paper copies of pictures</li> <li>Create posters and use art</li> <li>Read books</li> <li>Complete sentence frames</li> <li>Use graphic organizers</li> <li>Draw summary sketches to explain understanding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assess understanding of key words and concepts in a conversation or a non-verbal assessment (such as “show me”, “point to”, etc.)</li> <li>Communicates basic idea</li> <li>Writes simple sentences/ personal response</li> </ul>
2.						
3.						

## Some Examples of EAL Stage 2 Learning Goals

Please see more complete and detailed list of EAL goals in the [EAL Framework](#)

Early Years	Middle Years	Senior Years
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understands the gist of an oral or media presentation in structured situations</li> <li>• Responds to teachers and peers in common daily interactions, instructions, questions, warnings, and other requests (e.g., “slow down”, “move over, please”)</li> <li>• Knows and uses a developing repertoire of words and phrases for familiar classroom, academic, and social purposes</li> <li>• Produces, with guidance, a short oral presentation on a personal or familiar topic in a structured situation with visual aids (e.g., retelling a story or experience, show and tell)</li> <li>• Demonstrates fluency with a developing range of sight words, as well as specifically taught words and phrases</li> <li>• Reads and gains meaning from a series of connected sentences on familiar topics in an increasing range of text forms with structured supports and visual aids</li> <li>• Uses a developing range of basic mechanical features (e.g., capital letters, punctuation, list) with support</li> <li>• Produces a simple text of interrelated ideas on a familiar topic in a structured situation with guidance (e.g., completes sentence frames or a pattern book)</li> <li>• Connects background knowledge in home language with new vocabulary and concepts in English for academic and social purposes (e.g., uses math skills learned in L1 to solve word problems in English; creates and uses a personal dictionary)</li> <li>• Knows basic vocabulary and concepts related to Canadian geography and peoples of Canada, relevant to grade level</li> <li>• Uses familiar sentence patterns to form new sentences</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understands the gist of an oral or media presentation in structured situations</li> <li>• Responds to teachers and peers in common daily interactions, instructions, questions, warnings, and other requests (e.g., “slow down”, “move over, please”)</li> <li>• Produces simple statements and questions in spontaneous speech, expresses personal responses, and identifies emotions, requests, favourite people, places, or things</li> <li>• Presents, with guidance, a short oral presentation on a personal or familiar academic topic in a structured situation with visual aids (e.g., retelling a story or experience)</li> <li>• Knows and uses a developing range of sight words, as well as specifically taught words and phrases</li> <li>• Reads and gains meaning from a series of connected sentences on familiar topics in an increasing range of text forms with structured supports and visual aids</li> <li>• Uses a developing range of basic mechanical features (e.g., capital letters, word spacing, punctuation, list) with support</li> <li>• Produces a simple text of interrelated ideas on a familiar topic in structured situations with guidance (e.g., completes sentence or paragraph frames, pattern frames, or T-charts)</li> <li>• Connects background knowledge in home language with new vocabulary and concepts in English for academic and social purposes (e.g., uses math skills learned in L1 to solve word problems in English; creates and uses a personal dictionary)</li> <li>• Knows basic vocabulary and concepts related to Canadian geography, peoples of Canada, relevant to grade level</li> <li>• Takes notes, organizes and reviews notes, and checks copied work for accuracy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understands the gist of an oral or media presentation in structured situations</li> <li>• Understands simple and familiar conversations, questions, and statements when spoken slowly and clearly</li> <li>• Produces statements, questions, and comments in planned, routine, and spontaneous speech</li> <li>• Presents, with guidance, a short oral presentation on a personal or familiar academic topic with guidance and preparation aid</li> <li>• Achieves fluency with common sight words, as well as specifically taught words and phrases</li> <li>• Comprehends a range of simple familiar text passages (e.g., menu, table of contents, bus schedule, magazine, short story, non-fiction texts)</li> <li>• Composes using basic mechanical features of writing (e.g., capital letters, punctuation, indentation, bulleted list)</li> <li>• Understands and uses key taught vocabulary within subject area when introduced in a contextual manner</li> <li>• Knows basic vocabulary and concepts related to Canadian geography, peoples of Canada, and historical events, relevant to grade level</li> <li>• Takes notes from text and presentation; copies from a source (e.g., uses graphic organizer, two-column style)</li> </ul>

## A Sample of Stage 2 Lesson Plan

**Grade and Subject:** Grade 6 Science

**Lesson Topic:** Electrical Circuits

**Stage:** 2

Big Idea: Content-Area Goals	Academic Language	English Language Expectations	Strategies			Assessment
			In Class	Learning at Home	Alternative to Technology	
1. Electrical circuits provide a way of moving and transforming energy	Electricity, electrician, light bulb, resource, wires, light box, circuit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Knows and uses a developing range of sight words, as well as specifically taught words or phrases</li> <li>Connects background knowledge (home language is encouraged)</li> <li>Produces text of interrelated ideas, takes notes, and organizes and reviews notes for accuracy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transcribe oral and written sentences (with some errors)</li> <li>Follow instruction</li> <li>Use charts</li> <li>Use word walls</li> <li>Use graphic organizers</li> <li>Use diagrams and pictures</li> <li>Use think-pair-share</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Look up L1 equivalent to new vocabulary</li> <li>Create a dual language content-area word bank</li> <li>Transcribe notes from assigned YouTube/Khan Academy videos</li> <li>Use electronic platforms such as <i>Kahoot!</i>, <i>Seesaw</i>, online books, <i>Quizizz</i>, etc.</li> <li>Draw diagrams to represent content</li> <li>Work on a project designing a circuit board</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use handouts of diagrams and photographs of in-class activities</li> <li>Read and comprehend the gist of articles on this topic</li> <li>Write description using key vocabulary</li> <li>Sign book out of library to read and write about electrical systems</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Label diagram, with or without word bank</li> <li>Discuss observations related to content, vocabulary, and concepts using simple sentences</li> <li>Explain the role of Canada in innovation around electricity and energy</li> </ul>
2.						
3.						

## Some Examples of EAL Stage 3 Learning Goals

Please see more complete and detailed list of EAL goals in the [EAL Framework](#)

### Middle Years

- Understands longer and more complex interactions in familiar settings with ease
- Recognizes and interprets new idiomatic expressions
- Understands and uses a developing repertoire of words and phrases in a variety of new classroom, academic, and social contexts
- Produces a short prepared or spontaneous oral presentation on a personal or researched topic with visual aids or electronic media
- Comprehends main idea and gives some details of a portion of a narrative and factual text with preparation and support
- Recognizes basic discourse features with some consistency and awareness of meaning (e.g., *because*, *however*, *if-then*, and other cue words for cause-effect relationships, and prepositions of time and place)
- Uses the basic mechanics of writing consistently and correctly with limited support, and is beginning to develop some awareness of more sophisticated features (e.g., colons, semi-colons, parentheses, and ellipses)
- Authors text containing a series of interrelated ideas dealing with a familiar personal or academic topic, fiction or non-fiction, near age-/grade-appropriate, with support (e.g., uses a template to write a book)
- Demonstrates understanding of cohesion and coherence, and produces texts of two or three paragraphs, using discourse features and common patterns (e.g., cause and effect, beginning-middle-end, time sequencing, steps in a procedure)
- Recognizes the value of other perspectives, languages, and cultures to enhance learning, and recognizes and explains the value of diversity and similarities in the classroom, school, or local community
- Asks for clarification; asks for confirmation

### Senior Years

- Understands longer and more complex interactions in familiar settings with ease
- Understands the main points and states some details of a short oral presentation, discussion, or multimedia presentation
- Understands and uses a developing repertoire of words and phrases in a variety of new classroom, academic, and social contexts
- Performs prepared academic presentations with visual aids (e.g., role playing, drama, pictures, realia, or multimedia)
- Recognizes and understands basic mechanics, discourse, and text features within text
- Comprehends the main idea and gives some details of a portion of a narrative and factual text, with visual aids to support abstract ideas
- Produces text containing a series of interrelated ideas with support (e.g., use a template to report on a science experiment, email, recipes, two-three column note taking)
- Uses the basic mechanics of writing consistently and correctly with limited support, and is beginning to develop some awareness of more sophisticated features (e.g., punctuation, bold face, events in a sequence or a series)
- Completes basic academic tasks independently
- Demonstrates recognition and respect for diverse perspectives, and checks for agreement and understanding in a group
- Acts on a lack of understanding by asking for clarification or confirmation and consulting resources for support

## A Sample of Stage 3 Lesson Plan

**Grade and Subject:** Grade 11 History

**Lesson Topic:** First Peoples of Canada

**Stage:** 3

Big Idea: Content-Area Goals	Academic Language	English Language Expectations	Strategies			Assessment
			In Class	Learning at Home	Alternative to Technology	
1. Who were the First Peoples?	First People, First Nation, nation, Inineu, Anishinabek, Dakota, Inuit, Dene, archeology, evidence, Métis, traditions, Indigenous, colonization, citizenship, spirituality, Confederation, government, self-government, settlement, culture, clan, patriarchy, matriarchy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understands and uses a developing repertoire of words in the main idea of a presentation</li> <li>Produces extended text (with support)</li> <li>Recognizes and respects diverse perspectives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Watch videos</li> <li>Use three-column note taking</li> <li>Do a comparative analysis of provided media text</li> <li>Produce text or a timeline containing a series of interrelated ideas on First Peoples of Canada</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct guided research and note-taking</li> <li>Create a presentation</li> <li>Visit a virtual museum to gain more insight into Canada's First Peoples</li> <li>Use electronic platforms such as <i>Kahoot!</i>, <i>Seesaw</i>, online books, <i>Quizizz</i>, etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide original sources, make notes, and highlight emergent vocabulary</li> <li>Write a letter with an addressed envelope to an Elder or Louis Riel</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Compare and contrast graphic organizer</li> <li>Develop an annotated timeline of important events</li> </ul>
2.						
3.						

**Note:** The examples of EAL learning goals and sample lesson plans included in this document are targeted towards early stage EAL learners. While the social-emotional recommendations can be used for English language learners across all stages, the academic programming suggestions mainly target students in Stages 1 and 2 in the Early Years and Stages 1, 2, and 3 in the Middle and Senior Years, as language loss and language acquisition delay due to prolonged disruption of school can be more pronounced for these stages. Considering students in Stage 3 in the Early Years, Stage 4 in the Middle Years, and Stages 4 and 5 in the Senior Years are becoming more proficient in using English, classroom adjustments to academic programming may be required.

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