

Section 5: Finding Materials

With your learning mode chosen and your lesson planned, it is time to gather your materials!

In face-to-face tutoring, you were able to access materials from the LU Library, search for materials online and ask your learner to bring in real-life materials from home.

This can still happen, but during a period when the LU office is not accessible and you are not meeting your learner in person, getting materials and sharing them with your learner can be more challenging.

Do not despair! We have ideas for whatever scenario you face. Useful materials are everywhere!

Getting Materials from LU

We hope that the LU office and resource centre will stay open throughout these uncertain times. When we are open, you and your learner can borrow materials, have photocopies made and arrange to use a device and/or Wi-Fi on site.

Top Tip: Please check with the office before you visit. You may need to notify us of your visit and book an appointment if you want to meet with a specific member of the LU staff.

Before you visit, take some time to prepare what you need. If you are looking for materials from the library, please browse the online LU library catalogue first to help you choose an appropriate resource for your learner ahead of time.

The following guidelines tell you more about how to borrow resources from the library and arrange a visit to our centre.

[CLICK HERE](#) to search our LU library catalogue of resources

[CLICK HERE](#) to view guidelines on borrowing resources from the LU library

[CLICK HERE](#) to view guidelines on visiting the LU office and resource centre

Finding Materials at Home

It is always a good idea to tutor with materials that your learner has in their own home. These are items they use and read regularly and the vocabulary is particularly relevant.

If your learning mode is phone tutoring, you will also be sending your learner materials via email, snail mail, home delivery or LU pick-up.

But what if your learner does not have any digital devices to receive an email or a photo of some reading material? What if your materials are delayed at the post office or you cannot get out of the house to access the mailbox? And what if you cannot access the LU office to pick up materials?

In these circumstances, finding materials at home is a great option.

Top Tip: When tutoring by phone, find identical materials that you both have at home, so that you each have a copy of what you are reading together. This makes the session more effective and is a great way to discover things you have in common and to build rapport!

Here are some suggestions:

- Use government notices that come by mail (e.g. Covid-19 Self-care Guide)
- Use grocery flyers and food take-out flyers that come by mail
- Use bills like Bell or Hydro and read headings or segments that are at an appropriate reading level for your learner
- Find an old copy of the yellow pages - this is a rich resource with lots of potential for reading and creating word activities
- Get copies of a local newspaper and find words, headlines and passages at a proper reading level for your learner
- Use membership magazines like CAA or Costco Connection
- Calendars – practice months, days of the weeks, holidays
- Find food boxes or cans and read the labels – cereal boxes or milk cartons are great
- Scour your cleaning products to find ones that you both use and then read the labels
- Take a tour around your bathroom and find shampoos, deodorants or toothpaste that you have in common
- Raid your medicine cabinet for items (e.g. Tylenol bottles, Aspirin bottles, hydrogen peroxide)
- Find a board game that you both have and read the cards or instructions

- Share music you both like – read song titles or lyrics and create activities around them
- Netflix closed caption subtitles – pick a show you both love

Finding Materials Online

Finding good quality online materials that you and your learner can use during a remote learning session is important. LU has done some of the work for you by putting together a curated list of online resources and materials. You can find this list of resources by using these links or going to <https://literacyunlimited-resourcehub.ca/resources>:

- [Language Skills Resources](#)
- [Other Literacy Skills Resources](#)
- [Resources to Meet Specific Learner Goals](#)

You will find a PDF information sheet on the website for the resources that LU recommends.

Top Tip: On our online resource page, icons provide a quick way to highlight features of the resource – like device compatibility, LU Literacy Level, multisensory elements, suitability for English Language Learners (ELL), Canadian content and diverse content.

While you may be excited to try out a lot of the resources in these lists, LU recommends that you start with one (or two) and keep sessions simple to start with.

As you explore this list of online resources and materials, ask yourself:

- What are my learner’s goals and is this resource relevant?
- What literacy skills does my learner have and is this resource at the right level?
- What kind of literacy skills does my learner want to improve and is this resource helping to build those skills?
- Will my learner enjoy these materials and find them accessible?

If you find that there is nothing in this list for you and your learner, you may start to look online for other resources.

General Guidelines

Use these guidelines when looking for resources online:

- Seek web pages that have a clean layout and are easy to read – avoid pages that are cluttered with ads, pop-ups and other distractions

- Seek web pages that are straightforward to navigate – if you have to jump through a lot of hoops to get to the main activity, give it a miss
- If you have found a great resource that requires you and your learner to open an account, make sure it is a straightforward process – avoid stressing your learner (and yourself!) with too many log-in/set-up requirements
- Be aware when a flash player is required – it can be a security liability and you will also need a plugin, which means following extra steps to install it
- Look for resources that have multisensory elements (audio, relevant visuals, drag and drop, touchscreen or click actions)
- Look for resources that have Canadian and diverse content (although don't rule out excellent ones that do not)
- If you have found a great resource meant for kids, use your judgement to ensure that it would be appropriate for an adult learner
- Pay attention to the lock symbol in the search bar – this means the website is secure (also look for a shield icon, and the https:// at the start of the address)
- If the lock icon is not there, you can still use the site but do so with caution – if we are recommending a “not secure” resource site, it means we are comfortable that this is a reputable site (it just doesn't have the capacity to ensure security if you want to share personal details or credit card information and is more vulnerable to hackers)

Accommodating Learning Difficulties

In many ways, being online can be favourable for someone with a learning difficulty. Technology can provide a lot of helpful accommodations.

In addition to the general guidelines outlined above, consider the following when choosing resources or platforms for a learner with a learning difficulty:

1. Does this resource/platform offer any tools that will increase the accessibility of the material you will be working with?

For example, standard Word and Google Doc tools let your learner:

- Zoom in or magnify text so it is bigger and easier to read
- Double space text
- Change page colour (cream is easier to read for a dyslexic reader)
- Change style, colour and size of font
- Highlight words or phrases in various colours

2. Can your learner download and install higher tech tools to make the materials more accessible/learner-friendly?

For example, when reading online or using Word or Google Docs you can use:

- [OpenDyslexic Font](#) (free) or [Dyslexie Font](#) (paid) to use in a Word or Google Doc
- Text-to-speech tools to listen to computer-generated audio of all content or portions of content that your learner reads
- Line reading tools to help your learner keep their place while reading text
- Tools to change the colour of the web page to make it easier to read
- Highlighting tools to mark important content in reading passages
- Digital notepads to make notes about reading passages
- Dictionary or thesaurus tools to find definitions or synonyms for words quickly

3. Choose online resources that are well set up for learners with learning difficulties:

- Reading passages with accompanying audio content – ideally with human voice audio that can be played at varying speeds
- Activities with accompanying visuals (photographs or illustrations)
- Activities that include interaction with the screen
- Resources with a predictable layout and an uncluttered appearance
- Resources that are straightforward to navigate and do not require a lot of processes to access

Multisensory Approaches

LU has always stressed how important it is to use multisensory approaches in your tutoring activities. In your face-to-face sessions, you've incorporated visual and auditory activities and you've used manipulatives like letter and word tiles, phonics flip-books, flashcards and word sliders. You have played hands-on games with your learner and used white boards and flip charts to use big body movements while writing.

This will continue as you tutor remotely!

So how do you bring in a visual component while tutoring over the phone? And how do you incorporate tactile and kinesthetic elements from a distance? It is possible!

Here are a few suggestions that you can use to keep your sessions hands-on and allow your learner to experience learning through multiple pathways.

Remember that each of the resources in [LU's curated list](#) is coded with an icon that tells you which multisensory element is integrated in that resource.

Including a visual component:

- Choose reading materials with contextual photos, illustrations and graphic elements
- Use paper or electronic graphic organizers to help visualize main ideas or concepts in a text
- Adjust font size, bolding, colour or spacing on word documents to emphasize different parts of a text
- Highlight text in word documents using the highlighter tool
- Organize large blocks of text with colour cues
- Find materials with videos or animations that demonstrate a learning concept in a visual way
- Use written reminders via email or text to reinforce verbal instructions

Integrating an auditory component:

- Read aloud
- Spell words aloud
- Use a phonics approach
- Give oral instructions
- Have discussions with your learner
- Use audiobooks
- Find online resources that have accompanying audio with reading passages

Creating a tactile-kinesthetic component:

- Find online resources that allow drag and drop, clicking, swiping or touching a screen
- Brainstorm on a large surface like a whiteboard (use a window or a mirror with dry erase markers at home)
- Act out words or concepts over a video chat
- Trace letters on the screen or in the air
- Read and manipulate flashcards (help your learner make their own from index cards)
- Manipulate word or letter tiles (Scrabble, Boggle, etc.) that you have at home
- Use Play-Doh or modelling clay that you may have at home to form letters of the alphabet

LU Home Literacy Kits

To bring visual and tactile-kinesthetic tools to our learners' home learning environments, LU provides learners with individualized Home Literacy Kits that are available on request. The kits can be ordered online and then picked up, delivered or mailed. You and your learner can create your own customized kit by choosing from the following possible items:

- Pens, pencils, eraser
- Spiral-bound exercise book
- Highlighter pens
- Index cards
- Post-it notes
- Letter tiles
- Dry erase markers (to be used on white boards, windows or mirrors)
- Mini whiteboard
- Mini address book (to be used as word bank)
- Instructions and materials to make a word slide
- Special item – something your learner needs to participate in the session or to learn independently

[CLICK HERE](#) to order a Home Literacy Kit for Remote Learning for your learner. After submitting your order, please allow at least one week for us to respond to your request.

If you have any questions regarding the Home Literacy Kit for LU learners, please contact the LU Program Director.