



# United Nations

LANGUAGE AND  
COMMUNICATIONS  
PROGRAMME

## Online Language Learning in the Field



Language Learning Services Unit (LLSU)  
Language and Communications Programme (LCP)  
Last updated: March 2016

## Introduction

The Language and Communications Programme (LCP) launched the Language Learning Services Unit (LLSU) to provide learning managers and focal points throughout the Organization with various levels of language learning support from our proven results in the six official languages of the United Nations.

As part of our commitment to equal language learning opportunities, this information sheet includes e-learning solutions for each of the six official languages of the United Nations and will be updated regularly. Included are online solutions for both individual and group learning (i.e., virtual classrooms and/or digital collaboration). These solutions can be used for self-study or as learning materials in cases of in-person training. It should be noted that e-learning cannot replace face-to-face learning, but is a useful alternative to classroom-based learning.

The sections below present the salient information about each one of these products, including the required technical specifications, cost and payment options (market prices) and a brief description.

For more information on language learning resources, Learning Managers can refer to the document: [Language Learning Resources for the six Official Languages](#).

For more information on language learning programmes, Learning Managers should refer to the document: [Guidelines for Language Learning Programmes in Field Duty Stations](#).

## How to use this document?

This document is intended for learning managers, focal points, staff responsible for learning. It can be shared with consultants or language instructors, as well as with language learners.

It contains six effective online language learning solutions for staff members posted in remote or scattered duty stations, and who cannot easily participate in online, blended or face-to-face language course modalities.

This information sheet presents high quality comprehensive solutions in each language, suitable in most cases for all levels of proficiency and appropriate as a preparation for the LPE. We refer to the CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages), which is the standard of the UN Secretariat for language learning.

We thoroughly researched many providers for the six languages and decided to include when possible language learning solutions created, funded and offered by public educational institutions.

- The providers are acknowledged as authorities in second language acquisition research and instruction, by preference non-profit oriented.
- The products are flexible and adaptable to very different contexts (autonomous learning, self-paced or in a group, with a tutor if needed, longer or shorter periods of learning) wherever possible.
- Each learning solution has been created for one language, which means that the platform and the content presentation have been structured according to the characteristics of this specific language.

While waiting for the procurement process to be completed (anticipated by summer 2016), the individual market prices are listed here for reference.

Please do not hesitate to contact the LLSU for further information or to share your feedback about this document.

[llsu@un.org](mailto:llsu@un.org)

## ARABIC

### Arab Academy

Website: <http://www.arabacademy.com>



### Technical requirements

---

- PC Windows XP, MAC OSX or higher
- 2,4 GHZ Pentium 4 Processor or more
- 512 MB of RAM
- 56 Kbps or higher internet connection
- Sound Card, Speakers and Microphone (for speaking classes)
- Internet Explorer version 8 or above (for PC users), Mozilla Firefox 3.5 or above (for PC or MAC users)
- Flash Player 10 or above; Java virtual machine version 5.0 or above and Skype

More detailed information about requirements can be found at:

<http://www.arabacademy.com/technical>

- Offline Version. Not available.  
For printed workbooks after online registration, please contact the Arab Academy.
- Online Version. Website available in English.  
Skype for one-on-one speaking lessons.



### Cost

---

- Request a free lesson at <http://www.arabacademy.com/en/arabic-online/demo>
- Online version. Registration options
  - Monthly registration (USD 89/month)
  - Quarterly registration  
Including one-on-one speaking class (50 min) once a week (USD 69/month)
  - Semi-annual registration  
Including one-on-one speaking class (50 min) twice a week (USD 59/month)

Compare included features in each option under

<http://www.arabacademy.com/online-courses/plans-pricing/>

- Payment options: Credit card (recurring charge during the registration cycle chosen). Refunds possible. See terms of use under <http://www.arabacademy.com/terms>
- Live help (chat) on the website for administrative matters



## User options

---

- Starting option: One monthly registration for individual self-study.
- Learning options based on available time and learning needs:
  - ❖ Quarterly registration
  - ❖ Semi-annual registration



## Description

---

- Self-paced learning
- Language skills (Reading, Listening, Writing)
- Speaking practice: One-on-one interactions in quarterly or semi-annual registration
- Student board to interact with other students
- Language structure: Grammar and vocabulary exercises
- Vocabulary activities arranged thematically
- Activity type: Communicative and interactive activities (e.g. games, multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank, drag-and-drop activities)
- Real life contexts to develop language abilities
- Materials on grammar and morphology

All course features under <http://www.arabacademy.com/en/arabic-online/features>



## Language levels targeted

---

Before starting:

- Placement test in two steps:
  - ❖ Free multiple choice placement test under <http://www.arabacademy.com/free-test/>
- Choose one of the course tracks offered:
  - ❖ Modern Standard Arabic
  - ❖ Egyptian Colloquial Arabic

Total of 10 learning levels offered in Standard Arabic:

- Beginner level (approximately A1 and A2 CEFR levels)
- Intermediate level (approximately B1 CEFR levels)
- Advanced level (approximately B1+ and B2 CEFR levels)



## Evaluations/Certification options

---

- Final evaluation according to 3 components: online activities (40%), writing assignment (20%) and tests (40%).
- Certificate available upon completion of each learning level.
- Preparation for LPE: Yes, for students who have completed and passed a level 9 course.

## CHINESE

### Confucius Institute Online

Website: <http://www.chinesecio.com/>



### Technical requirements

---

- Operating system and versions: Windows 7 and above
- RAM Minimum required for Win 7
- Browsers: Chrome browser or similar
- Software requirements: Common Flash player, PDF reader
- Headset-microphone required for listening and recording activities

No offline version.



### Cost

---

- Free online classes (tutoring sessions).
- Instructors from Confucius Institutes around the world are volunteers and do not charge fees for tutoring.



### User options

---

- For self-study:
  - ❖ Online access to one course level.
- Customizable:
  - ❖ Main learning sequence, alternative learning paths.
- Classroom materials also available for teachers.



### Description

---

- Reading comprehension
- Listening comprehension
- Pronunciation activities
- Writing exercises (model to compare)
- Grammar and vocabulary exercises
- TV series and sketches
- Grammar tables
- Cultural information about all Chinese-speaking countries



## Language levels targeted

---

- Beginner
- Elementary
- Intermediate
- Advanced

All languages levels are aligned to the CEFR, from A1 to C1.



## Evaluations/Certification options

---

- There are no certificates provided to online students at the end of the course
- Courses in the intermediate level can prepare students for the Language Proficiency Examination (LPE)
- Other UN external Chinese Tests offered at different levels:
  - ❖ Chinese Proficiency Test
  - ❖ Chinese Speaking Test
  - ❖ Chinese Business Test



## ENGLISH

### EF English Live

**Website:** <http://englishlive.ef.com/en-us/>



## Technical requirements

- Internet connection: 56 kbps or faster Internet connection
- Processor speed: 500+ MHz, 512+ MB memory, 40MB free space (for the Virtual Classroom software)
- Audio components: Headset with microphone, or separate microphone and speakers
- Monitor resolution: at least 1024 x 768
- Operating system: Windows 2000 Professional (SP4) or above; Mac OS 10.5 or above.
- Web browser: Firefox 3.5, Internet Explorer 6.0 or higher (IE 7 or higher strongly recommended), Safari. Cookies and Java script must be enabled. Pop-up blockers should be disabled
- Plug-in: Adobe Flash plug-in (version 10.0 or higher). ActiveX control for the Automatic Speech Recognition tool. Free download available
- Adobe Connect for private or group classes
- App for Android and Apple tablets. Offline learning available for beginner levels
- Online version. Video-based courses.

More information at <http://englishlive.ef.com/en-us/help/>



## Cost

Prices can vary according to limited offers and different currencies. Private tailored live classes (40 minutes) can be separately booked.

- USD 69 dollars per month. Self-directed (online school) plus 15 group classes.
- Check regularly the special offers and trials.

More information: <http://englishlive.ef.com/en-us/study-plans-and-prices/>



## User options

- Self-study option
- Private online coaching available for an additional fee
- Group lessons online available
- English Live App for iPad and Android tablet



## Description

---

Content table: <http://bit.ly/1X8wm7S>

- General English courses (All levels)
- Travel English and English for professional purposes courses
- Personal study plan and progress report
- Video-based interactive lessons
- Listening comprehension exercises
- Reading exercises
- Grammar exercises
- Writing exercises
- Speaking practice
- Pronunciation practice
- TOEFL and TOEIC preparation courses
- Business English courses
- SPIN courses = Special Interest courses in many industries



## Language levels targeted

---

Before starting:

- Placement test
  - ❖ Free placement test upon registration under <http://englishlive.ef.com/en-us/lp/ot/english-level-test/>

Course information:

- Sixteen levels, from Beginner through Upper Advanced (CEFR A1-C1)
  - ❖ Comparison chart <http://bit.ly/1RaJ7yn>



## Evaluations/Certification options

---

Students earn a certification diploma from Hult Business School for every level they successfully complete.

## FRENCH

### Institut Français de Madrid

#### Website available in French and Spanish

<http://www.institutfrancais.es/madrid/oferta-de-cursos/cursos-on-line>

The online courses developed by the *Institut français de Madrid* have been adopted by several *Instituts français* and *Alliances françaises* worldwide.



### Technical requirements

---

- Internet connection, preferably high-speed ADSL
- Latest Adobe Flash plug-in
- Google Chrome, Microsoft Internet Explorer version 6 or higher, Firefox
- Headset with microphone or separate microphone and speakers
- Windows-compatible sound card
- HTML5 for tablets



### Cost

---

12-week tutor led online courses (available from October to February or from February to June)

- EUR 617 for one student, including one individual class (45') per week
- EUR 523 (per student) for two students, including one individual class (45') per week
- EUR 426 (per student) for a group (3 students) including one individual class (45') per week



### User options

---

- Online access to courses from A1 to B2 level
- Private online coaching including weekly pedagogical follow-ups and speaking practice
- Online forum facilitated by tutors



## Description

---

Courses are task-based and broken down into six units of two weeks each. Students follow the same five steps for each unit:

1. *Je découvre*. Familiarization with the task / presentation of language content and skills to be learned for the task
2. *J'ouvre l'œil et je tends l'oreille*. Listening and reading comprehension based on real-life audio, video and written documents
3. *J'observe et je pratique*. Grammar and vocabulary exercises, pronunciation practice
4. *J'agis et je réagis*. Oral and written interactions: (1) tutor provides topic and questions for discussion, (2) student reacts, speaking directly to their tutor and posting their answers on the forum, (3) tutor provides feedback and corrections.
5. *Je fais le point*. Self-assessment of the objectives presented in Step 1.

Recommended learning time: 8 to 10 hours a week.



## Language levels targeted

---

- On-line placement test followed by an oral interview to assess oral skills  
<http://www.institutfrancais.es/prueba-de-nivel/>
- General language courses (CEFR levels from A1 to B2)



## Evaluations/Certification options

---

- Final oral and written assessment (certificate provided upon completion and passing of each course)
- Preparation for LPE: B1 and B2-level courses are recommended

## RUSSIAN

### Language Metropolis. Self-Study Course

Website <http://www.languagemetropolis.com/>



## Technical requirements

---

- [www.languagemetropolis.com](http://www.languagemetropolis.com)
  - Windows and Mac supported
  - Browsers: Mozilla Firefox 2.0.0 or later
  - Internet Explorer 7.0, Google Chrome Version 33.0.1750.146
  - Bandwidth: 1 MB (ADSL) Minimum: 56 Kbps Modem;
  - RAM memory: 1024 MB
  - Sound card, graphic card (256 MB for Win)
  - Headset-microphone required
- No offline version
- Online use
  - ❖ Audio texts, simulations and static images
  - ❖ No video



## Cost

---

- [www.languagemetropolis.com](http://www.languagemetropolis.com)
  - ❖ CDN 39 for 24 month access - One-time payment
- Payment options: Online only, through [www.languagemetropolis.com](http://www.languagemetropolis.com)
  - ❖ PayPal
  - ❖ Credit card (Visa, MasterCard, American Express)



## User options

---

- Absolute beginners start with the self-study guide to learn the alphabet and the language basics in [www.russianforeveryone.com](http://www.russianforeveryone.com)
- The self-study guide is combined with the Language Metropolis learning journey to acquire vocabulary and get language practice in contextualized situations related to travelling.
- Intermediate learners can refresh basic Russian grammar and vocabulary skills at [learnrussian.rt.com](http://learnrussian.rt.com)



## Description

---

- Language in context: 44 scenes during a virtual trip to two Russian cities
- Opportunities for repeating words and dialogs in different communicative situations
- Opportunities for improving the listening comprehension
- A vocabulary practice and archiving system to measure progress
- Cultural information related to travelling scenarios
- Grammar information. Consult [www.russianforeveryone.com](http://www.russianforeveryone.com) for grammar training exercises
- Built-in dictionary, creatively done with colorful, playful and elegant elements



## Language levels targeted

---

- Learning levels: Beginner level (A1, A1+). Ideal for false beginners.



## Evaluations/Certification options

---

- The Language Metropolis learning journey and [www.russianforeveryone.com](http://www.russianforeveryone.com) developed by TLT Network Inc. and Prof. Julia Rotchina (University of Victoria, Canada).
- There is no LPE preparation.

## SPANISH

Ave Global. Instituto Cervantes

Website available only in Spanish at the present time

<http://ave.cervantes.es>



### Technical requirements

---

For both desktop and tablets

- Latest versions of Internet Explorer, Mozilla Firefox, Google Chrome, Safari
- IOS 6 and 7, Android 4.0 or more, IE 11 on Microsoft Surface, Kindle Fire
- Use of javascript codes and pop-up windows
- Sound card, graphic card, speakers or headset, microphone

Please check recommended equipment at

<http://ave.cervantes.es/AVEGlobal/requisitos-tecnicos.html>



### Cost

---

Free placement test. Estimate of level (A1 to C1). Course and topic recommendations

- <http://pruebadenivel.cervantes.es/exam.php?id=17>

Registration information:

- Go to <https://clic.cervantes.es/es/cursosaveglobal>
- Follow the directions you receive to complete your registration.
  - ❖ USD 75 one course, 30 hours learning, 90 day access
  - ❖ USD 20 one topic unit, 10 hours learning, 21 day access

Frequently asked questions: <http://cau.cervantes.es/kb/index.php> and online support at [http://cau.cervantes.es/?&lang=en\\_us](http://cau.cervantes.es/?&lang=en_us)



### User options

---

For self-access learners

- Take the placement test and register for one of the recommended three month long courses (30 learning hours)
- Take the placement test and register for one or more two week long topic units (10 learning hours)

For tutored courses

- We highly recommend to contact our partner at UNHQ, Instituto Cervantes New York, through e-mail to [classprogram@cervantes.es](mailto:classprogram@cervantes.es)
- You may contact your nearest Instituto Cervantes offering tutored courses. <https://clic.cervantes.es/en/cursos-tutorizados>



## Description

---

- Free course demonstration in English [http://ave.cervantes.es/guias/AVE/guia\\_en.htm](http://ave.cervantes.es/guias/AVE/guia_en.htm)
- Language skills: Reading, Listening, Writing, Speaking with self-recording.
- Pronunciation activities: Visualize, pronounce, record, compare.
- Grammar and vocabulary exercises in different activity types: Games, multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank, drag-and-drop activities.
- Audio and Video real life materials. Speakers of all varieties of Spanish.
- Cultural, historical and social information related to all Spanish speaking countries.
- Self-assessment (evaluation tests, answers to all exercises, written text models) and monitoring system for self-learners which shows progression.



## Language levels targeted

---

Before starting:

- Free placement test. Grammar and vocabulary, listening and reading skills. Course level (A1 to C1) and partial topic units recommendations <http://pruebadenivel.cervantes.es/exam.php?id=17>

16 courses. Courses from the A1 to the C1 level as described in the CEFR

- Check detailed levels and their courses offer at <http://bit.ly/1S5B4nK>
- Check the free course demonstration in English available at [http://ave.cervantes.es/guias/AVE/guia\\_en.htm](http://ave.cervantes.es/guias/AVE/guia_en.htm)



## Evaluations/Certification options

---

- Institutional reputation; Created by the Cervantes Institute, a public institution for the promotion and teaching of the Spanish language and cultures. Backed by a scientific advisory team of the Association of Spanish Language Academies.
- Monitoring system to record progress. Certificate of completion for each course.
- Levels A1-C1 (CERF level description)
- Preparation for LPE: The course B1.4 and above (B2 and C1 level courses) are useful.



Final checklist for learning managers and focal points:

- ❑ Consider IT facilities in your location.
- ❑ Consider the number of potential participants and respond the following questions.  
Is it worth hiring an instructor for a group for a certain period of time?  
Is it worth purchasing self-study licenses for individuals?
- ❑ Consider whether staff members could start with a self-study program and later add online coaching or classes using the same solution.
- ❑ Encourage potential students to test out the materials (trial version or demo).
- ❑ Consider increasing the learning effectiveness by hiring a local instructor or appointing a learning focal point to give support and regular follow-ups, as well as to help learners develop self-study strategies.
- ❑ Don't hesitate to contact the Language Learning Services Unit (LLSU) for support or for more information at [llsu@un.org](mailto:llsu@un.org).