

FRCC ESL Self-Guided Placement Exam

Find your starting level for ESL courses at Front Range Community College

Complete each level in order. Read the sentences, read the short passage, and answer the questions without help or assistance. At the end of each section, reflect on how it went and follow the instructions to calculate your score. Most people finish in 10-15 minutes.

Course	Level Title	Before taking this level, what can I do?
Level 1	High-Beginner ESL	I can speak and write short phrases and sentences to communicate about familiar topics.
Level 2	Intermediate ESL	I can write a organized paragraph, participate in everyday conversations, read longer texts, and organize my ideas in written and verbal form.
Level 3	Advanced ESL	I can read higher-level readings, write complete 2-3 paragraph writings/essays, and explain myself in both work and academic environments.
ENG 0090	Developmental English (not an ESL course)	I grew up speaking English and/or have studied English for years. I need support to write 2–3-page essays for future academic studies or professional opportunities.

Start Placement Exam Here

This Self-Placement Tool will help you determine the appropriate English language learning level. Complete the activities in each level in order. Reflect how you feel, complete the Part C activity, and choose which level is best for you.

LEVEL CHECK 1 — High-Beginner (Level 1)

Part A: Read this short passage. Did you understand it?

Omar is from Somalia. He came to Colorado three years ago. He works at a hotel at night and studies at the community college in the mornings. Omar says the classes are difficult, but they are getting easier because he practices every day. He is studying English so he can enter an engineering program soon.

Part B: Answer these questions.

1. Where is Omar from?
2. Why does Omar study English?

Part C: Choose the answer that best describes your ability right now. Write each number down, then add the four numbers to get your score. Follow the instructions to find your approximate level.

Yes, easily = 3 | Usually = 2 | Sometimes = 1 | Not yet = 0

Can you do this in English?	Yes, easily (3)	Usually (2)	Sometimes (1)	Not yet (0)
Introduce yourself and explain your background	Yes, easily (3)	Usually (2)	Sometimes (1)	Not yet (0)
Tell someone your daily schedule	Yes, easily (3)	Usually (2)	Sometimes (1)	Not yet (0)
Ask for help at a store or office	Yes, easily (3)	Usually (2)	Sometimes (1)	Not yet (0)
Write a text message to a friend	Yes, easily (3)	Usually (2)	Sometimes (1)	Not yet (0)
My Part C total (add up your points):	_____ / 12			

Part C Score — High-Beginner (Level 1)

10 – 12	10 – 12 points: These tasks come easily. Move on to Level Check 2.
4 – 9	4 – 9 points: A good match. Register for a High-Beginner level.
0 – 3	0 – 3 points: This level may be too advanced right now. If you have questions, speak with the program director about your options: shane.saddisonbradford@frontrange.edu

LEVEL CHECK 2 — Intermediate (Level 2)

Part A: Read this passage. No dictionary.

In many US cities, community gardens give families a place to grow vegetables they cannot easily find in local stores. For some families, this is about more than just food. Growing familiar plants and vegetables connects them to memories and traditions from home.

These gardens also create chances for language learning. When neighbors share tools and spend time in the same space, conversations emerge naturally — no tests, no pressure. Researchers who study language learning say these kinds of low-stakes interactions are one of the best ways to acquire a new language. Someone participating in their neighborhood community garden could learn everyday conversational English that could benefit them at work or school.

Part B: Answer these questions.

1. Why do some families grow food in community gardens?
2. According to the passage, what makes community gardens good for language learning?

Part C: Choose the answer that best describes your ability right now. Write each number down, then add the four numbers to get your score. Follow the instructions to find your approximate level.

Yes, easily = 3 | Usually = 2 | Sometimes = 1 | Not yet = 0

Can you do this in English?	Yes, easily (3)	Usually (2)	Sometimes (1)	Not yet (0)
Explain a problem at work or school to someone	Yes, easily (3)	Usually (2)	Sometimes (1)	Not yet (0)
Follow a conversation between two native speakers	Yes, easily (3)	Usually (2)	Sometimes (1)	Not yet (0)
Read an article and understand the main idea	Yes, easily (3)	Usually (2)	Sometimes (1)	Not yet (0)
Write a professional email in English	Yes, easily (3)	Usually (2)	Sometimes (1)	Not yet (0)
My Part C total (add up your points):	_____ / 12			

Part C Score — Intermediate (Level 2)	
11– 12	11 – 12 points: If these tasks feel comfortable. Move on to Level Check 3.
8 – 10	8 – 10 points: Intermediate could be a good match. Register for an Intermediate level.
0 – 7	0 – 7 points: This level may be too advanced right now. Go back and confirm the High-Beginner Level 1 course.

LEVEL CHECK 3 — Advanced (Level 3)

Part A: Read this passage. Notice not just what it says, but how the argument is built.

In cities across the US, internationally trained professionals — surgeons, engineers, electricians — arrive with years of education and hands-on experience. Unfortunately, their credentials don't carry the same weight with US employers as employers in their home country.

Advocates argue that better credential recognition would address labor shortages and honor the real cost of skill underutilization, the experience of a trained professional forced into work far below their actual ability. Critics counter that credential standards exist for public safety reasons, and that not all foreign training programs meet the same benchmarks.

What often gets lost in this debate is the workers themselves. Their knowledge does not disappear at the border. What changes is whether that knowledge counts.

Part B: Answer these questions.

1. What is the main problem the passage describes?
2. What is one argument for better credential recognition?

Part C: Choose the answer that best describes your ability right now. Write each number down, then add the four numbers to get your score. Follow the instructions to find your approximate level.

Yes, easily = 3 | Usually = 2 | Sometimes = 1 | Not yet = 0

Can you do this in English?	Yes, easily (3)	Usually (2)	Sometimes (1)	Not yet (0)
Read a newspaper article and summarize the argument	Yes, easily (3)	Usually (2)	Sometimes (1)	Not yet (0)
Disagree with someone politely and explain your view	Yes, easily (3)	Usually (2)	Sometimes (1)	Not yet (0)
Understand most of a college lecture or presentation	Yes, easily (3)	Usually (2)	Sometimes (1)	Not yet (0)
Write a 2–3-page essay with a clear main idea paragraph and supporting detail paragraphs	Yes, easily (3)	Usually (2)	Sometimes (1)	Not yet (0)
My Part C total (add up your points):	_____ / 12			

Part C Score — Advanced (Level 3)	
12	12 points: If these tasks feel easy, you might be ready for a college-level English course .
10 – 11	10 – 11 points: Advanced ESL could good a match. Register for an Advanced section .

0 – 9	0 – 9 points: This level may be too advanced right now. Go back and confirm Intermediate Level 2 course.
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ENG 0090 — Developmental English (college-level English)

ENG 0090 is for students who have taken years of English courses and/or who grew up speaking English and needs writing support before entering a college-level composition course. If that describes you, you may want to speak with an academic advisor directly.

ENG 0090 may fit if...	ESL classes may fit better if...
- You speak English comfortably but struggle with formal writing. - English was your main school language growing up or in university. - You have never formally studied English as a second language.	- You learned English as an adult and/or in another country. - You think in your first language when writing formally. - Grammar from your first language shows up frequently in your English.

Not sure you belong in ESL classes? If interested in discussing your options, [please apply to Front Range Community College and schedule an academic advising appointment.](#)

Questions about the ESL program? Contact the Director of English Language Learning,
Shane Saddison-Bradford: shane.saddisonbradford@frontrange.edu