

PRIOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT

Camosun College recognizes that some people have acquired learning from their lives and work experiences that may be equivalent to college level learning. PLA is a process that determines whether previous learning matches what is expected in a course. If there is a match, the college awards credit for the course, which can count towards program completion.

PLA OPTION FOR ENGLISH 150

When you request prior learning assessment for English 150, you are saying, *“I already know and can do what is required to complete this course. I want College credit for my previously acquired knowledge and skills, instead of taking this course.”*

When assessing your prior learning, an English instructor, your Assessor, will ask, *“Has this person demonstrated that the level and content of his/her knowledge and skill is equal to what would be expected of learners who successfully complete English 150?”*

In other words, prior learning assessment recognizes that what you have learned through previous education and experience can be used towards credit in English 150. However, credit is not awarded just for experience, but for evidence of learning that has occurred as a result of that experience. It is not enough to say, *“My job involves a lot of writing, and I’ve written a lot of essays in the past.”* This would be a statement of your experience. What you need to provide is **evidence** of what you know and can do as a result of that experience.

This package will guide you through the process of getting credit for knowledge and skills equivalent to those obtained in English 150.

PLA PROCESS

Eligibility

You are eligible to participate in Prior Learning Assessment for English 150 if you

- have consulted with an English PLA Advisor, who will help you determine if you have enough evidence of prior learning to be eligible for PLA
- have obtained an Application for Prior Learning Assessment and have received an English PLA Advisor's signature on that application
- have formally registered for PLA and paid the appropriate fees

Fees

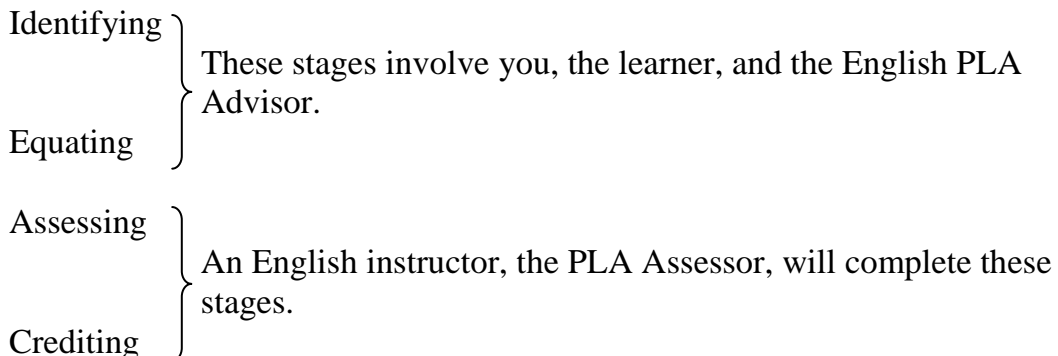
PLA fees are 50% of current tuition fee levels and are not refundable. If you do not achieve credit for English 150 via PLA, you may proceed to take English 150 in the next semester at the regular cost.

Grading

If your PLA Assessor determines that you have the knowledge and skills required, you will receive credit and a grade for English 150; this is exactly the same outcome as taking the course. Your records will not indicate that this grade was achieved through the PLA process. The grading system is described on page seven of this document.

Stages of the Process

The Prior Learning Assessment process for English 150 has four stages:



1. Identifying

The first stage identifies the knowledge and skills you have attained (through education, work, or other experiences) that may be equivalent to those acquired in an English 150 course.

2. Equating

As you identify what you know and can do, you will be equating these abilities to those required in the course. In other words, you will match your previous learning to the learning outcomes that the English department has identified as central to English 150. (Please see page six for a list of the learning outcomes for English 150.)

Your English PLA Advisor will be available to assist you in both identifying your learning and equating it to that which is required for credit in the course. The evidence of learning that you provide forms your learning portfolio—tangible proof of what you claim you know and can do. (Please see page four for a discussion of what might appear in a portfolio.)

Once you have accumulated and evaluated the material you will include in your learning portfolio, the English PLA Advisor will ask you to write a cover letter for the portfolio. This cover letter should explain the ways in which the material in your portfolio demonstrates the skills identified in the list of learning outcomes for English 150. The cover letter should be submitted with your portfolio.

3. Assessing

Once you have submitted your learning portfolio, your English PLA Advisor will review your material to see if it clearly reflects the required learning outcomes of English 150. Then, an English instructor who is an expert in the course content will assess the portfolio. At this point, the Assessor may request a brief interview to ask you questions about your portfolio or to ask you to respond to a reading.

4. Crediting

Your English PLA Assessor will make the decision to grant credit based on your learning claim. If you do receive credit, your Assessor will assign a grade based on the quality of your work. If you do not receive credit, you will be advised to enroll in an English 150 course. After a decision has been made, your PLA Advisor will contact you as quickly as possible so that you can make appropriate plans.

Preparing a Portfolio of Learning Evidence

What is a portfolio? It is a file, folder, or loose leaf binder of information that you have accumulated to reflect your past learning. Through your portfolio, you can provide the college with evidence of your learning that can be matched with the learning outcomes required in English 150.

What do you need to put in your portfolio? You are welcome to put anything into it that you think is relevant. Always refer to the list of learning outcomes for English 150 to be sure that you are providing evidence related to the skills identified there.

Listed below are some suggestions of ways in which you might provide evidence of knowledge and skills equivalent to English 150 requirements. These are suggestions only. You are not expected to do all of these, and you can provide evidence in other ways if you wish. There is not a single correct format for a Prior Learning Assessment portfolio. Your English PLA Advisor may help you to decide how to approach this task.

To address the learning outcomes for English 150, you can provide any of the following in your portfolio:

- documentation of success in non-credit or credit courses that involve writing, reading and research skills
- examples of experiences that contribute to your ability to communicate in writing (these could be academic, workplace, or personal experiences). You may describe your experiences and/or provide actual documents that support them
- examples of published writing that you have read, with a written statement from you that discusses the author's writing techniques and ideas
- examples of essays (marked or unmarked) that you have written for college/university level courses
- letters from others attesting to your writing, reading and research skills
- examples of research that you have done for academic, workplace or personal purposes
- examples of documentation of sources for research
- examples of personal writing
- examples of electronic correspondence and/or Web Site development
- a written statement to explain the process (steps) you use when writing an essay and/or research paper

Do you have any other creative ideas? If you can think of ways to provide your assessor with evidence of your learning related to English 150, feel free to discuss your ideas with your English PLA Advisor.

NOTE: The material in your portfolio must be legible. Typed or word processed material is preferred.

Preparing the Cover Letter for Your Portfolio

The cover letter for your portfolio introduces the Assessor to your work, demonstrates your ability to analyze your own writing, and demonstrates your understanding of the core learning outcomes for English 150. In the cover letter, the Assessor will expect you to explain the ways in which the evidence gathered in the portfolio demonstrates the skills identified in the learning outcomes for English 150.

You may find that a single piece of writing demonstrates your achievement of several learning outcomes at once or that other material is more specifically focused on one or two relevant skills. The organization of your cover letter is up to you. You may choose to address the learning outcomes systematically or you may choose to organize the letter around specific examples, discussing each one and the skills it exhibits.

Your English PLA Advisor will be available to review your cover letter before you submit your portfolio to the Assessor.

Preparing for the Oral Interview

Where the Assessor deems it necessary, he or she will schedule an oral interview. The purpose of this interview is to allow you to demonstrate your ability to analyze a reading and/or to clarify any questions your Assessor might have about the material in your portfolio.

If the assessor wants to evaluate your ability to analyze a reading, you will receive that reading a few days prior to the interview. In the interview, plan to demonstrate your knowledge of essay structure and your ability to read like a writer. The Assessor will expect you to be able to comment on the following: point of view, thesis, logic, order and development of ideas, purpose, audience, tone and style (e.g. wording, sentence structure, imagery, figurative language).

Also be prepared to discuss the contents of your portfolio if required by the Assessor.

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR ENGLISH 150

This course centres on organizing and expressing ideas in clear and effective written prose. Instruction and practice in writing college-level expository prose, based on appropriate models, form the core. Individual assignments range in length from 500 to 2500 words (course total of 4000-4500 words).

Several textbooks are used for this course; they are available in the Camosun College Library and the Camosun College Bookstore for your consultation.

Students receiving credit for English 150 demonstrate the following skills:

- **Write** expository prose for various purposes and audiences.
- **Develop** a mature writing process, which may include prewriting, planning, drafting, conferring, revising and editing/proofing.
- **Select** and use rhetorical patterns purposefully.
- **Write** correct, clear, cohesive, and effective English.
- **Vary** style purposefully through manipulating sentence rhythms, sentence variety, vocabulary and figurative language.
- **Read** mature expository and persuasive prose by student and professional writers.
- **Vary** their reading approach for different purposes such as research and criticism.
- **Analyze** expository prose by identifying controlling ideas, supporting ideas, dominant rhetorical pattern, tone and features of style.
- **Summarize** expository prose in their own words to reflect coherently the original's ideas, organization, and tone.
- **Research** topics for expository papers.
- **Use** a variety of sources, which may include personal knowledge, interview, print, and other media.
- **Choose** to summarize, paraphrase, or directly quote from sources.
- **Integrate** the results of research into expository papers.
- **Document** sources fully and ethically, according to specified bibliographic conventions.
- **Write** expository prose for various purposes and audiences

MARKING CRITERIA

Your Assessor will use the following criteria when evaluating your portfolio (and, where applicable, your oral interview) and assigning a grade for English 150:

Grade D or F:

- Content is inadequate; knowledge and skills do not reflect learning equivalent to the learning outcomes for English 150.

Grade C:

- Content minimally meets the requirements of the learning outcomes for English 150.
- Some of the outcomes for the course are minimally addressed or missing.
- Some information is sketchy and/or does not meet college standards for presentation.

Grade B:

- Content clearly meets the requirements of the learning outcomes for English 150.
- All of the outcomes are addressed adequately.
- Information is clear and well presented.

Grade A:

- Content completely meets and / or exceeds all the requirements for English 150.
- Presentation of information is clear and comprehensive.
- Material in the portfolio reflects excellence in writing, reading, and researching.

HOW TO GET STARTED

If you think you can demonstrate that you already have the skills taught in English 150 and would like to apply to receive credit for English 150 through Prior Learning Assessment, please contact the chair of the English Department PLA committee:

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