

- ✓ Develop your skills
- ✓ Improve your reading, writing and number skills
- ✓ Get a free video or DVD



Information on
**adult skills
and learning**

department for
education and skills

AT A GLANCE



It's never too late to learn

- Improve your reading, writing and number skills and you will find many daily tasks at home and work much easier.
- Free courses are available across the country.
- Courses let you learn at your own pace.
- Learning as an adult is not like going to school.
- Meet new people as you learn.
- A free video or DVD will tell you more.

Did you know?

There are thousands of free courses in reading, writing and working with numbers all over the country. To find out about courses in your area, call learndirect on 0800 100 900.

Worried that your reading, writing and number skills are holding you back?

Have you ever wished you had better reading, writing or number skills? If so, you're not alone. Many people from all walks of life find everyday tasks at home and work difficult because they struggle with reading and using numbers. Lacking confidence in these areas can really hold people back.

The good news is that it's never too late to learn, and there are lots of free courses that take place across the country to get you started. This booklet will help you to:

- understand why it's worth improving your skills**
- practise your skills now**
- discover what learning opportunities are available to you**
- order a free DVD or video to find out more**
- get more information and advice**

Learndirect advisers are friendly, understanding and used to talking to people who want to improve their skills. Over 300,000 people have already taken advantage of what they have to offer.

Why bother to learn more?

If you didn't enjoy school, you may feel that taking a course is not for you. But if you find some daily tasks difficult – like helping your children with their homework, checking your change in shops, or filling in forms – improving your reading and number skills could make your life much easier.

It doesn't matter what age you are or where you live, a wide range of courses are available all over the country. Many are aimed specifically at people who want to brush up on their word and number skills. Look out for courses in:

- literacy (reading and writing)
- numeracy (working with numbers)
- life skills (communication and problem-solving)
- work-based skills (skills learnt in the workplace)
- English as a second language.

Free materials and courses

A free DVD or video is available for anyone who wants to know more about improving their skills. Call the **learnirect** advice line on **0800 100 900** to order a copy or to find out about free courses in your area.

Learn where you want, when you want

Courses are flexible to suit your needs and are available:

- at different times of the day
- at colleges, learning centres and community centres
- in informal groups
- sometimes online.

Online fact sheets, worksheets, quizzes and games can help you improve your skills. Check out the Skillswise section on www.bbc.co.uk/skillswise

Not sure if learning is right for you?

You may be nervous about going back into learning. You're not alone. Most people feel the same when they start something new.

You'll be pleased to hear that learning as an adult is different from going to school. Classes are usually smaller and you can expect more one-to-one attention. Learning as an adult is also flexible and you'll meet other people in the same situation as you. You'll also get exactly the type of help you need – without having to go over the things you can already do.



An extensive range of online 'tasters' are available. These let you try a course to see if it's what you are looking for, without having to commit to doing the whole thing.

Skills for Life tasters

Skills for Life tasters from learndirect will help you improve your reading, writing and number skills. You can work through them online as well as in a workbook or with a video or DVD. Below are some examples:

- **Going up – English for beginners:** This course is aimed at people whose first language is not English.
- **Living Room:** This game is designed to help you practise your reading and writing skills.
- **Number Tasters:** These help with basic number skills.
- **Skills City:** Practise your reading and writing with this course.
- **The English Game:** This course is aimed at people whose first language is not English, people who would like to practise English in everyday situations.
- **The Numbers Game:** This helps you brush up your number skills in a lively and entertaining way.

Are your skills as good as they could be?

Put yourself to the test

Practise your skills by trying these questions:

1 Which of these words is spelt wrong?

- a) quickley
- b) identity
- c) gradually
- d) ideal

2 The best word to replace 'potential' is?

- a) possible
- b) proven
- c) probable
- d) developing

3 Which of these spellings is correct?

- a) acommodation
- b) accomodation
- c) accommodation
- d) acommadation

4 The label on a large bottle of juice states 'Dilute 1 part juice to 3 parts water.' How much water must be added to 2 litres of juice?

- a) 0.5 litre
- b) 1.5 litres
- c) 6 litres
- d) 8 litres

5 A television set costs £300. The price is reduced by 25% in a sale. What is the sale price of the television?

- a) £75
- b) £225
- c) £275
- d) £375

6 A gas bill shows that 1720 units of gas have been used. Each unit costs 1.5p. How much does the gas cost?

- a) £2.58
- b) £25.80
- c) £258
- d) £2580

How did you do?

Answers: 1 (a), 2 (a), 3 (c), 4 (c), 5 (b), 6 (b)

If you'd like to try more questions like these, ask to do the National Tests when you call **learndirect** on **0800 100 900**.

Just make a start

When you have chosen one of the free courses in your area, remember that it won't be like going back to school.

You will meet people from all ages and backgrounds. The setting is informal and tutors are on hand to give you support and encouragement. They can help you decide what you are good at and what you might need to improve. You can work at your own pace, in groups or on your own. Many of the exercises can be done online. And you can choose how long you spend brushing up your skills – starting from just an hour a week.



Your tutor will be able to help you if you want to gain a national qualification in English or maths, or move on to further learning.

Julie's experience

Julie Wigmore from Northumberland tells us her experience of improving her skills and gaining a nationally recognised qualification.

'Going into adult education was the best thing I've done. I didn't do very well at school, so it gave me the chance to improve on the education I already had.'

'At first I thought it would be just like school – teachers telling us what to do and how long we had to do it in – but it wasn't like that. The tutors are a lot more helpful and they don't put you under any pressure to get your work finished.'

'Adult learning has given me new hope that one day I will have the job I want, and not have to take a job I don't want due to my lack of qualifications.'

Want to find out more?

If you would like to know more about adult learning, call learndirect on

 **0800 100 900** or check out these websites:

www.learndirect.co.uk

www.direct.gov.uk

www.bbc.co.uk/skillswise

www.parentscentre.gov.uk/adultlearning

Can't get onto the internet at home?

Visit your local library which will have computers and internet access.

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