

# VOLUNTEER PACKAGE

Created with financial assistance from the Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement Supérieur

# GETTING STARTED

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Thank you for choosing to volunteer with the Yamaska Literacy Council. This is a quick start guide for tutors. You'll learn more about our organization, the tutoring process, and find answers to questions you might have.

## TUTOR TRAINING

The tutor training workshop is the entry point to your tutoring journey. It's a full day workshop where you will learn tools and tips for tutoring adults with low literacy skills. We will contact you with the date of the next workshop.



# THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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WELCOME TO THE YAMASKA LITERACY COUNCIL!



As a volunteer, you can make a difference in the life of another person. Low literacy poses barriers to people in our communities, whether it's finding or keeping a job, helping a child with homework, connecting with family through social media, or navigating healthcare. In Quebec, 1 in 5 adults faces serious difficulty with daily tasks that many of us take for granted due to low literacy.

Volunteers are the cornerstone of our organization, and valued for their role in building stronger communities through improved literacy. YLC volunteers possess rich and diverse skills and experience. At YLC, we are committed to supporting you in the volunteer role(s) you choose to embark upon – tutor, trainer, director, etc.

We welcome you to join us on a challenging and rewarding journey to enrich lives through literacy.

Sincerely,

Wendy Seys  
Executive Director

NOW I CAN GO AROUND THE WORLD IN A BOOK. I  
TRAVEL SO MUCH IN BOOKS, & EVERY TIME I DO, I  
THINK OF FREDA [TUTOR].  
–TRUDI, STUDENT

# ABOUT Us

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WE'RE A NOT-FOR-PROFIT ORGANIZATION DEDICATED TO IMPROVING THE LITERACY SKILLS OF ADULTS

## MISSION

We enrich lives through literacy.

We are part of a global movement to address literacy challenges through volunteer action. That means reaching out to the community, and increasing public awareness about literacy issues and solutions.

## GOALS

1. To identify and respond to evolving literacy needs of adults in Brome-Missisquoi
2. To help English-speaking adults and older youth improve their literacy skills in order to reach their goals
3. To provide training and support to literacy volunteers
4. To increase public awareness of literacy issues and solutions

## PROGRAMS & SERVICES

Our volunteer tutors provide free one-on-one tutoring to youth and adults with low literacy skills. We provide training and support to tutors to prepare them for the task.

We also deliver a variety of community-based programming, including a prison literacy program, family literacy initiatives and popular education workshops.



# JOB BRIEF

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You'll be tutoring an adult in reading, writing, numeracy and/or other essential skills. Below is an outline of what the YLC expects from a tutor.

## RESPONSIBILITIES

- Commit to volunteer for 1 year (if possible)
- **Respect student confidentiality**
- Prepare lessons to meet the individual needs and interests of the student
- Meet regularly and punctually with your student (summer excepted)
- Set goals with the student and evaluate progress towards them
- Keep accurate records of hours tutored and student progress
- Complete quarterly written reports on the form supplied, and remit to the YLC office
- Inform the YLC Student-Tutor Coordinator if there are any problems with the student-tutor match, or if the tutoring terminates
- Participate in the Peer Mentoring Program (highly recommended)

## BENEFITS OF VOLUNTEERING

- Give back to the community
- Make a difference in student's life
- Gain new skills & experience
- Meet new people
- Feel valued & part of a team



# THE TUTORING ROAD MAP

## TUTORING IN **7** STEPS

Thank you for deciding to volunteer as a tutor. **We're here to support you every step of the way.** It may take some time to match you with a student but you can **refer to this roadmap to guide you along your journey.**



### 1. ATTEND TUTOR TRAINING

A one-day workshop where you'll learn best practises & tips: By the end of this session, you'll be able to create a learning plan with your student, prepare for your lessons, & track progress over time.



### 2. GET MATCHED

The Student-Tutor Coordinator will contact you when a student is available. You & the student will establish a meeting place, time & frequency.



### 3. CREATE A LEARNING PLAN

Ask the student about their goals. You'll create learning objectives to help them be successful.



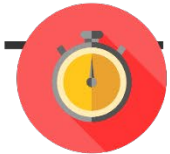
### 4. CREATE LESSON PLANS

Use the learning objectives in the student's learning plan to guide you. Be sure to consult the recommended materials provided by the Student-Tutor Coordinator (suggested to suit the student's reading level).



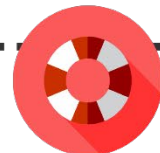
### 5. TRACK PROGRESS

Assess the student's confidence level & see if they have met their learning objectives.



### 6. TRACK TUTORING HOURS

Track your hours & send them to the Student-Tutor Coordinator quarterly.







### 7. GET SUPPORT

Support is on-going & there are many resources available to you. Attend tutor chat workshops, participate in the tutor mentorship program, & contact the Student-Tutor Coordinator anytime. We're here to help.

# WHAT IS LITERACY?

Literacy is understanding, evaluating, using and engaging with written texts to participate in society, to achieve one's goals, and to develop one's knowledge and potential.<sup>1</sup> Below, you'll find an overview of the different literacy levels used by the Canadian government to describe abilities.

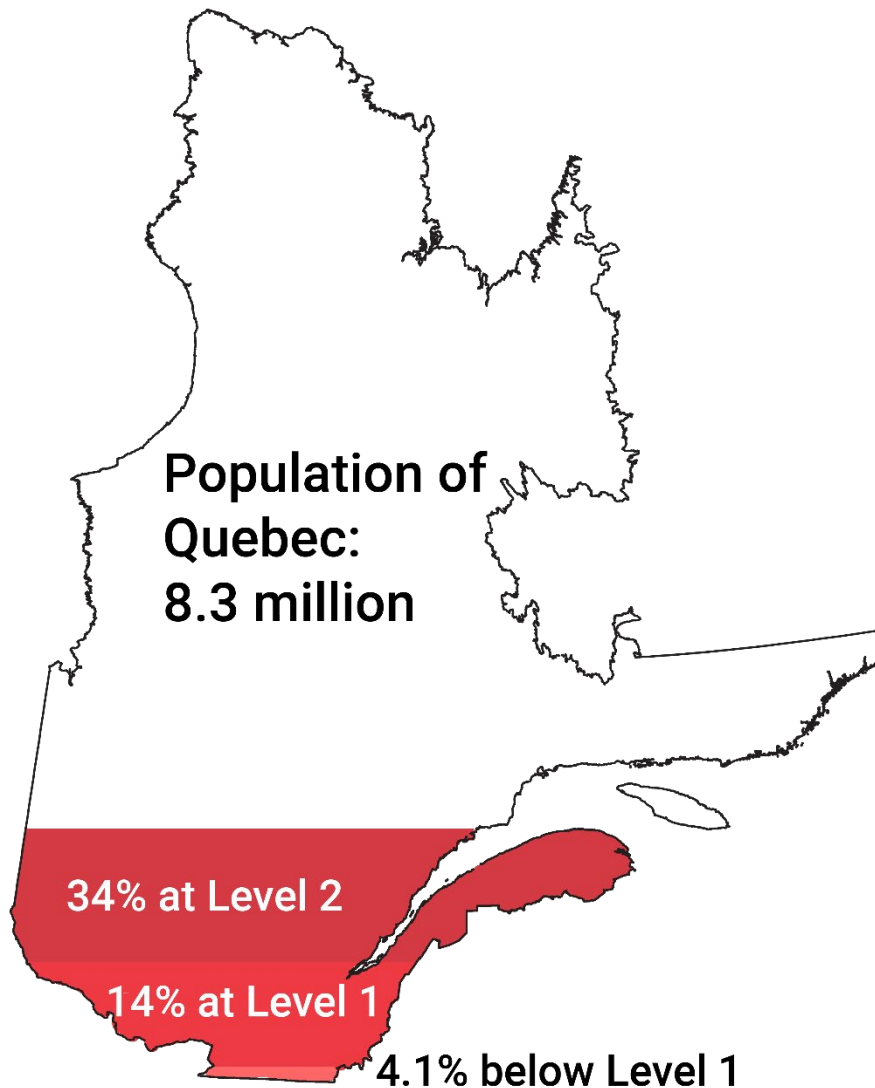
## LITERACY LEVELS

LEVEL	WHAT THE STUDENT CAN DO	EXAMPLE
<1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Read brief texts on familiar topics</li> </ul>	 <p><b>ΓΑΥΤΙΟΞ</b>          ΧΑΞΙΞΗ: ΔΑΞΗΞΟΥΞ ΓΑΞ          ΙΞ ΖΟΫΞΑ ΧΘΞΞ ΤΘΙΞ          ΠΫΘΑΥΓΤ ΙΞ ΜΙΞΕΔ ΧΙΤΘ ΑΓΙΑ</p>
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Read shorter digital or print texts that contain little competing information</li> </ul>	 <p><b>CAUTION</b>          WAR NING: DAN GER OUS GAS          IS FOR MED WHEN THIS          PRO DUCT IS MIX ED WITH ACID</p>
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Navigate within digital texts to access and identify information from various parts of a document</li> </ul>	 <p><b>CAUTION</b>          WARNING: DANGEROUS GAS          IS FORMED WHEN THIS          PRODUCT IS MIXED WITH ACID</p>
3-5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Perform multi-step operations &amp; select relevant data from competing information to formulate appropriate inferences</li> </ul>	 <p><b>CAUTION</b>          WARNING: DANGEROUS GAS          IS FORMED WHEN THIS          PRODUCT IS MIXED WITH ACID</p>

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.oecd.org/skills/piaac/>

# LITERACY IS MORE THAN WORDS. IT'S A TOOL THAT HELPS US NAVIGATE OUR LIVES.

Literacy involves more than reading and writing. It empowers people in their day to day lives. It is more than a skill, it's a human right. That's our approach.



Most of YLC's students have literacy skills between level 1 and below, and level 2. In Quebec, 218 000 adults are below Level 1, 1 797 800 are at Level 1, and 1 839 700 are at Level 2.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.stat.gouv.qc.ca/docs-hmi/statistiques/education/alphabetisation-litteratie/peica.pdf>



# VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

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Tutoring isn't the only way to get involved. You can volunteer in many ways.

## **TUTOR**

Our tutors help adults acquire reading, writing, numeracy and other life skills to attain their full potential

## **TRAINER**

Train new volunteer tutors. Their duties include preparation for and delivery of basic literacy tutor workshops.

## **DIRECTOR**

The Board of Directors oversees governance. It is responsible for ensuring that YLC fulfills its mandate. Duties include attending regular board meetings, participating on a committee, and championing the work of YLC.

## **EVENTS & OUTREACH**

Some volunteers come out to our community events to help set up our station, talk about the YLC's services, and raise awareness about literacy.

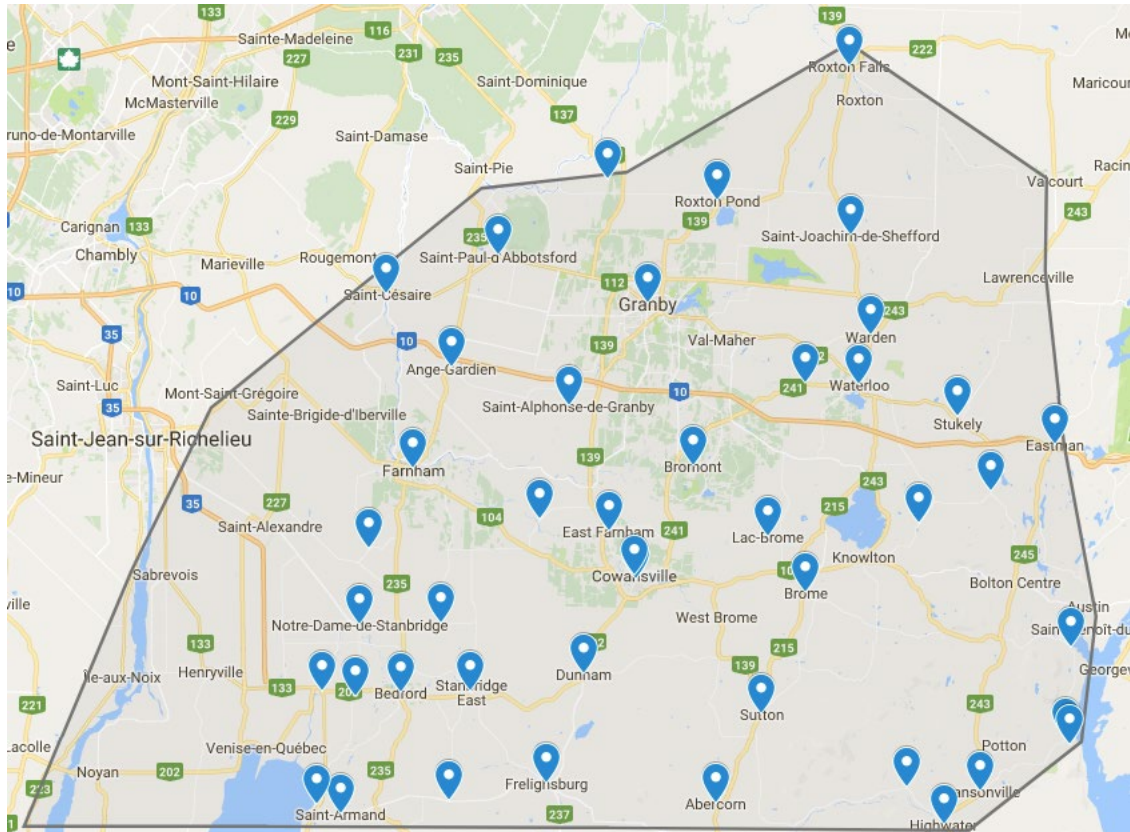
YOU CAN HOLD MORE THAN ONE VOLUNTEER POSITION  
AT ONCE OR JUST COME OUT TO AN EVENT WHEN YOU  
HAVE THE TIME.



# THE COMMUNITY

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The YLC serves the Brome-Missisquoi and Haute Yamaska regions of the Eastern Townships. Click the map for an interactive version or visit <https://goo.gl/DuWBVg>



OUR COMMUNITY KEEPS GROWING

# FAQs & BEST PRACTICES

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## HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE SOMEONE TO LEARN TO READ AND WRITE?

Very few students cannot read or write at all. Literacy skills fall along a continuum: Levels 1(low) to 5(high). Many factors affect a student's ability to learn to read and write:

- Time
- Motivation
- Ability
- Other commitments
- Health
- Goals (short-term, long-term)

## IS THERE A "TYPICAL" STUDENT?

There is no typical student. They range from teens to seniors. Some are employed. Some have completed elementary school, while others have completed high school. Some are in adult education, and need extra one-on-one support to succeed. Some students have learning differences or disabilities.

## HOW CAN I HELP BUILD MY STUDENT'S SELF-CONFIDENCE?

Low self-confidence is common for many literacy students. Past failures may contribute to poor self-image, sensitivity to criticism and fear of error.

You can provide support and encouragement. Trust and open communication will help pave the way for change.

Be patient. As your student practices new skills and applies them in real-life situations, confidence and self-esteem often increase.

## WHAT CAN I SAY TO MOTIVATE MY STUDENT?

Be sincere when you comment on your student's work. Be specific, so that your student knows exactly what they have achieved.

Discuss and list the things your student has already successfully accomplished in their everyday life. The best way to boost confidence is to document progress and acknowledge success. Make the steps small so that there is lots of to celebrate. Encourage your student to keep past work in a portfolio so that they can refer to it and use it to measure progress.

## HOW DO I ENCOURAGE MY STUDENT TO TAKE A MORE ACTIVE ROLE IN THEIR LEARNING?

Some students are hesitant to voice their ideas and opinions. Some may let the tutor make all the decisions about the tutoring sessions. It may be due to lack of confidence, or fear of making a mistake.

## YOU CAN ENCOURAGE ACTIVE PARTICIPATION IN THE LEARNING PROCESS:

- Guide and facilitate, don't direct
- Involve your student in goal setting and planning

- Ask for feedback on how they think the sessions are going
- Involve them in reflecting on their learning
- Ask your student to bring their own materials
- Let your student help plan the tutoring sessions

### WHAT DO I DO IF I RUN OUT OF TEACHING IDEAS?

This can happen. Talk to your mentor and/or the Student-Tutor Coordinator. They can offer suggestions and useful resources in YLC's library. Also, check out the Tutor Toolbox for ideas.

You may choose to let your student practise some of the skills they have learned with you: go to the bank, mall, grocery store or library.

### I DON'T FEEL AS IF WE ARE GETTING ANYWHERE. WHAT DO I DO NEXT?

If you feel your student is not making progress, try to find other ways to present the concepts. Consider your student's learning style, and preferred learning environment.

Have an open conversation, but put the responsibility on yourself: "I don't seem to have found the right way to teach this yet. Do you have any suggestions?"

### WHAT IF I DON'T GET ALONG WITH MY STUDENT?

This is uncommon, but important to address. Use it as a teaching opportunity. It can be a learning

experience for you and your student. How you handle disagreements can encourage your student to adopt some of your strategies. This may help them with some life skills issues.

### SUGGESTIONS FOR RESOLVING DISAGREEMENTS:

- State the problem from your perspective
- Focus on the issue or behaviour, not the person
- Use "I" statements: "I'm not happy when you...."
- Acknowledge the significance of the other person's comments
- Respect other points of view

### WHAT DO I DO IF MY STUDENT ASKS FOR ADVICE ON PERSONAL PROBLEMS?

Let your student know if they are asking you to do things you are not comfortable with. Define your role to help your student understand the boundaries, and to know what issues are outside the scope of tutoring. **If you are unsure, contact YLC's Student-Tutor Coordinator.**

Adapted from *Creating Learning Partners*  
*Literacy Alberta*

