

COLA Language Learning Materials and COLA e-Learning Platform Guide for Teachers/Trainers

Access to the e-learning platform: www.construction-language-learning.eu
with the language versions English, French, German, Dutch and Spanish.

Project Aims

The globalised European construction industry is staffed with the high number of migrant workers who, in many cases, lack language skills of the host country, in particular work-related ones.

The Construction-related Language Learning Project (COLA), co-financed by the European Union in the frame of its Lifelong-Learning Programme, was established with the objective of improving the language skills of migrant workers in the European construction sector, by developing learning materials and instructions for teachers/trainers/mentors and end-users tailored to the specific needs of low-skilled migrant construction workers.

The successful use of the learning materials should ultimately help improve the migrant workers' ability to communicate with colleagues and supervisors on construction sites and with people in their social environment in the language spoken in the country where they work or want to work in the future. Better language skills will help to improve not only employment and career prospects of the migrant workers but also enhance their social integration.

Learning materials

The learning materials comprise 20 lessons. For each topic a video, supportive text-based learning materials, assessment exercises (after each third learning unit) and a glossary were produced in the five languages of the six project partners: English (UK), French (FR), German (DE/AT), Dutch (NE), and Spanish (ES).

3 videos

The learning materials encompass three major themes addressed in three videos:

- Video 1: construction-specific language (9 topics/learning units)
- Video 2: language learning in the field of health protection and safety on construction sites (6 topics/learning units)
- Video 3: social interaction: communication in everyday life and at the work place (5 topics/learning units)

Supportive learning materials

They include

- **Exercises:** Preparatory work/exercises before watching the video; exercises regarding the general and detailed comprehension of the video; pronunciation exercises; language work (after watching the video)
- **Assessment exercises (grammar and vocabulary check):** one or two quizzes and some basic reading and writing exercises are provided after each three units for videos 1 and 2 and at the end of the units 3 and 5 of video 3.
- **Glossary**
- **Video scripts**

The materials are available on the e-learning platform (videos/supportive learning materials, assessment exercises; video scripts). They can also be used in form of a "tool-box" to be downloaded and stored on a DVD.

You find an overview on the structure and contents (including the specific language functions/grammar and vocabulary areas) assigned to each of the 20 topics (learning units) of the three videos by clicking on "Table of topics and themes" in the bottom right corner of the English platform home page

Context of Delivery

The materials were developed considering possible different learning environments for the end-users:

- Formal instruction:** in periods of longer-term or seasonal unemployment due to adverse weather conditions for construction work, the COLA learning materials can be used in formal teaching and learning classroom environments, in language training courses offered by the national Employment Agencies/other public institutions or by non governmental Organisations (NGOs) for people with a migrant background.
- Informal instruction:** in periods of 'normal' employment, the learning environment has to be adapted to the specific working place conditions. As construction work is hard and demanding, the major problem is how to motivate migrants to engage in language learning in such conditions. This could be achieved with the help of colleagues from the same language community having sufficient host country language skills. Such migrant workers often act as 'liaison officers' between the supervisors and the migrant workforce. In such scenarios, individuals may function as *mentors* for host country language training on construction sites or in a learning environment close to the working place - for instance in premises made available by the company. Another learning environment close to the working place could be that of lessons to be provided in container-like class rooms operating on big construction sites with a larger number of workers.
- A mixture of both learning environments** is that of learning on practice-oriented training sites of multi-company training centres. These centres offer training services to apprentices and construction workers interested in further education and training throughout the whole year, in many cases with the financial support of the Employment Agencies, other public bodies or non-governmental organizations – such as associations of migrant communities or

Organisations supporting the social integration of migrants - on the local, regional or national level and/or the European Social Fund.

- d) **Self learning:** the learning materials available on the e-learning platform can also be used for self-learning/learning in groups for users with digital skills. Self-learners without digital skills and/or without the necessary IT equipment can use the learning materials in a printed version and with the help of a DVD-reader.
- e) **Use as complementary learning materials:** The learning materials can also be used as complementary materials in a language course of a more general nature. Materials were designed having in mind the language syllabus and communicative skills at A1/A2 level of the *Common European Framework of References for Languages* (CEFR) (Council of Europe, 2013) –

Rationale

Language level: the materials aim at helping learners develop a level of communicative and linguistic competence that will enable them to work on the construction industry within the quality standards and the health and safety parameters established by the rules and regulations in their European host countries as well as become functional members of their local communities.

The language functions, notions and communicative tasks, as well as the grammatical areas addressed in the materials, are based on the language specifications for level A1/A2 of the CEFR for English and adopted by the *Cambridge English: Key English Text* (University of Cambridge, ESOL Examinations, 2012).

The grammar and vocabulary content was then adapted to the context of the construction industry, taking into consideration regional diversity and specific features of the different official languages of the partner countries.

The video 1 materials start on a very elementary A1 level, both in terms of grammar and vocabulary areas. Videos 2 and 3 learning materials are designed progressively on the upper elementary level (level A1-A2) /lower intermediate level (level A2).

The Common European Framework describes what a learner is supposed to be able to do in reading, listening, speaking and writing at each level. By taking into account the specific topics of the three videos and the accompanying learning materials, the learning objectives can be described as follows:

A 1 level: The learner can understand and use very basic expressions and very basic sentences used a) on construction sites,

b) in the field of health and safety in the workplace and also in his/her private everyday life. The learner can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about professional and personal details such as where and what he/she works, people he/she knows and things he/she has. Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help. Can understand basic (everyday) expressions, questions and instructions.

A 2 level: The learner can understand and use sentences and frequently used expressions related to the everyday life in his/her working place and in everyday life outside the work. e.g. basic professional and personal information, employment). The learner can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on professional and routine matters. He/she can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate professional and personal environment and matters in areas of immediate need.

Skills: great emphasis is placed on helping learners develop their listening, speaking and pronunciation skills. The decision of focussing on oral communication in detriment of the development of reading and writing skills was based on the needs analysis carried out among construction workers in the six partner countries in the initial phase of the project. Reading and writing skills are, nonetheless, catered for in the materials since the activities are all text-based and require from learners the ability to read in the target languages.

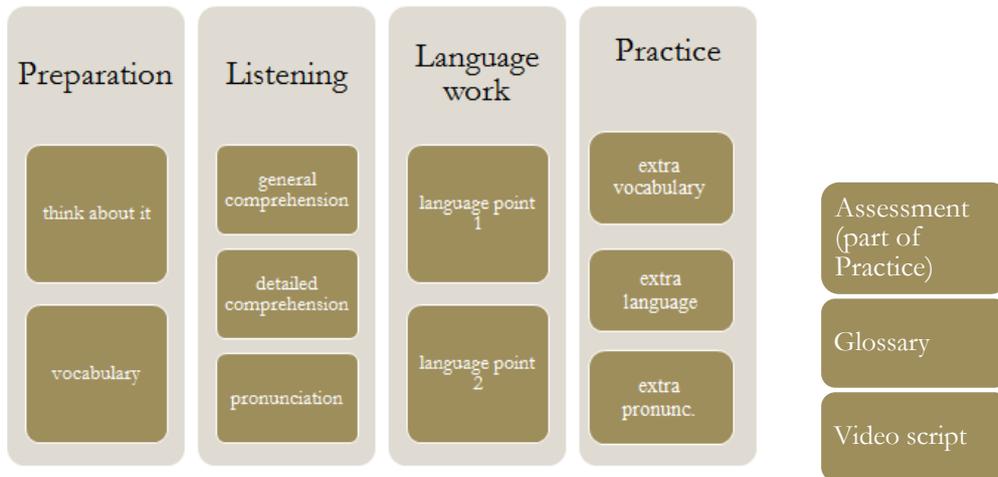
Independent learning: links for extra language work are also provided for learners who wish to do further independent study and expand their knowledge of grammar and their do extra practice in listening, reading and writing. The COLA Glossary was designed to help learners work independently to improve their construction-related vocabulary. Video scripts are also available to learners and can be the basis for extra independent listening and reading practice.

Use of complementary learning materials: The learning materials developed in the framework of the CoLa project have been conceived for a specific target group (construction worker with very limited language skills of the language of the country where they work or wish to work). The materials try to impart very basic language knowledge about construction activities, health and safety in the workplace, communication in the workplace and outside the working environment.

The CoLa learning materials, however cannot replace other learning materials aimed at broader target groups and focussing more on everyday life and communication not directly linked to the workplace but more on everyday life at the place of living (communication with neighbours/public administration/services like transportation, banking, shopping/leisure/education/doctors etc. Although video 3 deals also with social communication in a broader sense, it can be helpful for teachers/learners to use additional learning materials dealing with a variety of aspects of everyday life in more detail, also with regard to the grammar and vocabulary areas.

Design

Materials were developed using the short videos as main source of language input. Every unit, in all the three videos were designed using the same basic template. Units are divided into four main stages: *preparation*, *listening*, *language work* and *practice*. (The practice-stage includes assessment exercises (quizzes) after each third learning unit.) These four stages are followed by the glossary and the video script.



Preparation: this stages serves as a warm-up activity and contextualisation tool to help learners realise the main topics discussed in the unit. I also helps learners to remember previous known vocabulary, predict, elect and/or introduce vocabulary items that appear in the video recordings.

Listening: this is the main source of language input and learners are asked to listen for both in general and in detail. Learners should be encouraged to listen to the recordings as many times as necessary, especially in the pronunciation sub-stage, and repeat the words they listen until they feel confident they can understand and pronounce them appropriately.

Language work: this section comprises of tasks that cover the language points (grammar and vocabulary) dealt with in the unit.

Practice: this is the guided output phase where learners can extend their vocabulary, work on more specific pronunciation features and also do some extra language work.

Assessment (grammar and vocabulary check): The quizzes and the reading and writing exercises prompt learners to revise the language content and vocabulary of the previous units. There is an assessment after each third lesson. The assessment exercises may be taken in a more controlled testing environment or taken by learners independently. In formal instructional contexts these exercises may be used as revision tools before formal examinations are taken.

Glossary and video scripts: these are extra sources of input that learners may refer to when doing extra activities and doing some independent study.

Technical information

e-learning platform :

Each partner country has his dedicated e-learning platform. The access to these is shown on the right side of the cola website, by clicking on the target flag <http://www.construction-language-learning.eu/>

The home page consists of giving some information about the CoLa project, and how to navigate on the e-learning platform. On the English platform home page there is a link to a table that gives an overview of all the functions and vocabulary taught in each topic. On the home page are also links to the assessment quizzes, to the satisfaction survey, and to the paper versions of the quizzes.

The other thumbnails are the three major themes addressed in three videos:

- construction general,
- health & safety,
- interaction/communication.
-

Under these thumbnails, the learner will find 2 or 3 images representing the themes.

By clicking on an image, he/she will then find other images representing the final topics taught within the selected theme. Each topic has a common template, according to the sections of the language materials that have been designed.

1 > prepare the lesson



3 > do the language work



2 > watch the video ↓

4 > go to the next lesson



Clicking on "prepare the lesson" will open a web-quiz to warm-up and introduce vocabulary (see above section **preparation** for explanations). Once the quiz is completed, the learner sees its results (80% to pass), can review it with the correct answers, and print it out if needed. Once this is done, the learner then watches the topic-related embedded video.

The third action refers to the **language work** and the **practice** (see sections above for explanations). Clicking on the image will again open a web-quiz. Once completed, it is again possible to see the results (pass or fail), to review it with the correct answers, and to print it out. At the end of each third lesson there will be an assessment quiz and an additional reading/writing exercise to check the learning success of the last three lessons.

The last image will take the learners to the next lesson, where he/she will find the same template of the following topic.

The DVD version of the CoLa learning materials (CoLa language learning toolbox):

The DVD version can be used in a learning environment without access to the internet. The DVD consists of 20 folders, one for each topic, and the table gathering all the functions and vocabulary per topic. In each folder, there is a **preparation** quiz, a **video**, a **language work** quiz, a script of the video, and a glossary. The **assessment exercises** are found only in folders 3, 6, 9, 12, 15, 18 and 20.

All learning materials which are available on the e-learning platform and on the CoLa home page (videos/language work/practice/glossary/video scripts) can be downloaded to a PC and then be put on a DVD. The three videos can be downloaded from YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCVviU-CKWfOVCLyg69e7fsQ>

to a hard disk of a PC and from there they can be used either directly or being burnt on the DVD.

Language exercises and Assessments: <https://sites.google.com/site/colaeuproject/print>

Video scripts: <https://sites.google.com/site/colaeuproject/video-scripts>

Glossary: <http://www.construction-language-learning.eu/impressum/glossary/>

Overview Structure and content of the Learning materials (topics/language functions/Grammar and Vocabulary Areas/Assessment) put here: Cola video topics.xlsx

- 📁 1_construction general_the basics_working in teams
- 📁 2_construction general_the basics_planning your work
- 📁 3_construction general_the basics_after work
- 📁 4_construction general_infrastructure_foundations
- 📁 5_construction general_infrastructure_pillars & framework
- 📁 6_construction general_infrastructure_roofs & floors
- 📁 7_construction general_BrickworkFacilitiesFinishes_Walls
- 📁 8_construction general_BrickworkFacilitiesFinishes_facilities
- 📁 9_construction general_BrickworkFacilitiesFinishes_finishes
- 📁 10_heath & safety_the basics_signs & equipment
- 📁 11_heath & safety_the basics_machinery & tools
- 📁 12_heath & safety_the basics_physical & mental hazards
- 📁 13_heath & safety_workplace hazards_fire,electricity and noise
- 📁 14_heath & safety_workplace hazards_chemicals & radiation
- 📁 15_heath & safety_workplace hazards_emergencies
- 📁 16_socialisation_life in a new country_family & friends
- 📁 17_socialisation_life in a new country_everyday life
- 📁 18_socialisation_life in a new country_education & health
- 📁 19_socialisation_having a job_job searching
- 📁 20_socialisation_having a job_relationships at work
- 📄 quiz files to print out
- 📄 CoLa_Video topics.xlsx

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