



LITERACY
VOLUNTEERS
OF KENT COUNTY

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FEBRUARY 2025



THIS ISSUE

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VOA Learning English

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RESOURCE SPOTLIGHT

Voice of America's
Learning English
(*Online Resource*)

Learning English is VOA's multimedia source of news and information for millions of English learners worldwide.

Learning English began as Special English, which Voice of America launched in 1959. Special English newscasts and features were a primary fixture of VOA's international shortwave broadcasts for more than half a century. In 2014, their line of products was expanded to include more English teaching materials, and the service became known as Learning English.

Learn about the Beginner Level, Intermediate Level, and Advanced Level material on their website.

learningenglish.voanews.com

Programs are also broadcast on radio and satellite TV and posted on YouTube, Facebook and Twitter.

4 BIG LEARNINGS FROM YEARS 1-2 AT SIMPLIFY LANGUAGE - LEE SHAINIS

In my trainings, participants practice making communication as clear and brief as possible, while maintaining a positive tone and without "dumbing down".

We also have bigger conversations about the impact of simplifying. I appreciate the many people who shared their personal experiences to build awareness for me and others around big 4 topics:

1. **POWER.** Language is power. It can keep some people in power, while their audiences are confused, uninformed, and disengaged. Their language exclusion is intentional, and it makes their life easier. Most of us exclude people unknowingly and unintentionally, and we want to do better.
2. **PERMISSION.** People appreciate permission to communicate simply. People are tired of expectations to sound extra smart or to write more than they need to. Being simple is being confident and inclusive, not ignorant. I also learned more about my privilege, and how race, gender, accent, and other factors impact expectations of us. As a white male, I don't need to sound super educated to belong in certain groups. Others experience different expectations and judgments because of how they look or sound. This can add complexity around permission to be simple.
3. **SHOCK.** People are surprised at how much they learn from training and how difficult it is to simplify their communication. Simplifying requires unlearning lifelong habits, which isn't easy! They don't recognize they have a problem until I share examples of what good simplifying looks like, and then give them their own communication to practice with.
4. **SHIFTING RESPONSIBILITY.** If you don't understand me, it's your fault and there's something wrong with you. That's how responsibility around communication exists today. I believe that responsibility should shift. If you don't understand me, there's something I need to do differently. The responsibility should shift from "Do you understand?" to "How can I?".

I'll share tips and explore these topics and many others in future newsletters, about once a week. If you want to get my updates in your inbox, you can subscribe at simplifylanguage.com

coventrylibrary.org/lvkc



ANNOUNCEMENTS

TUTOR SURVEY

In our efforts to continue building a stronger literacy community and program, please take 15 minutes of your time to complete our survey. Your feedback is extremely valuable to LVKC, and we want to hear your tutoring experience. The survey will help us assess the effectiveness of our tutoring program, identify areas for improvement, and provide better support and training to our Tutors in the future.

Survey: coventrylibrary.org/lvkc-tutors-survey

As a reminder, please hit the submit button when you have finished the survey and wait until you see the message "Thanks so much for giving us feedback!" before closing the browser. We would appreciate your efforts to complete the survey by **February 21, 2025**.

Thank you for your continued support. Please contact lvkc@coventrylibrary.org for any questions and technical issues.

TUTOR TRAINING WORKSHOP

LVKC's Spring 2025 Tutor Training Workshop is scheduled for March 10, 17 and 25, 2025 with a follow-up on April 21, 2025 in the Literacy Room at the Coventry Town Hall Annex (1675 Flat River Rd, Coventry, RI).

If you or someone you know may be interested in becoming a volunteer tutor, please fill out the tutor application at coventrylibrary.org/tutors

CONVERSATION CLASS

Let's Talk Conversation Class is a small-group ELL (ESL) program designed to primarily serve those ELL students, 18 or older, who are currently participating in one-on-one tutoring, or those awaiting a tutor. This conversational, task-oriented program helps students maximize their English speaking skills and is free to participants.

Let's Talk English Conversation Group is a great way to:

- Learn about American Culture
- Practice English Speaking Skills
- Make Friends
- Ask Questions

Tuesday mornings from 10:00 - 11:30 AM
East Greenwich Free Library (82 Peirce St., East Greenwich, RI 02818)

Virtual Online - Zoom Meeting (link provided after sign up):
Wednesday Nights from 7:00 - 8:30 PM

Sign up on our website at: coventrylibrary.org/lets-talk

coventrylibrary.org/lvkc

DONATE ONLINE

Donate to LVKC through PayPal or start a Fundraiser by sharing your story and sharing it on social media. Find the donate link on our Donate webpage. coventrylibrary.org/lvkc_donate

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