

WORLD CULTURES & EDUCATION
ESL 202 · ILLUSTRATED LEARNING EDITION



Ali in DETROIT

علي في ديترويت

Everyday English. Cultural understanding.
A new city. A world of conversations.



REAL DETROIT & DEARBORN · 30 EVERYDAY ENCOUNTERS

الإنجليزية للحياة اليومية والوعي الثقافي للقادمين الجدد

Dr. Wagih Elgohary · Dr. E

Meet Ali Algohary. Your story is your own.

شخصيتنا الرئيسية هي علي الجوهرري. نقدم هذا الكتاب إلى علي، وإلى كل قادم عربي جديد يحتاج إلى لغة تساعد في حياته اليومية. علي شخصية تتعلم معها كيف نسأل ونفهم ونختار بثقة، دون أن نتخلى عن لغتنا أو ثقافتنا. تختلف تجارب المهاجرين والعائلات، ولا تختزلهم حكاية واحدة.

This course serves Arabic-speaking newcomers, travelers and families who need practical English in the United States. Detroit is the setting; the communication skills travel with you.

What you will do

Ask for help, confirm costs, explain needs, handle misunderstandings, respect boundaries and take part in community life. Lessons begin with short exchanges and move toward independent action.

Level and study plan

Designed for developing beginners through early intermediate learners, with support. ESL 202 is a WCE course identifier, not a claim of college credit or a standardized proficiency rating. Suggested plan: 10 weeks, three lessons weekly, about 30–45 minutes each plus optional field practice.

Five steps for each lesson

1. Notice the situation. 2. Read or hear the dialogue. 3. Switch roles. 4. Change one detail and solve the new problem. 5. Complete the task and reflect.

Cultural awareness without stereotypes

There is no single American personality or Arab experience. Norms vary by person, place and institution. Observe, ask, confirm and adapt. Clear boundaries, consent and respectful curiosity work across many settings.

الوعي الثقافي ليس حفظ أحكام عن الناس، بل ملاحظة الموقف والسؤال واحترام الاختلاف. هدفنا أن تفهم الخيارات المتاحة وأن تعبر عن احتياجاتك باحترام.

Using the online course

The online course includes 30 downloadable American English MP3 dialogues with male, female and child voices as appropriate. Tap each lesson's audio player to listen. MP3 playback does not require an installed device voice. Optional device reading is also available using U.S. English voices only. All voices are synthesized, not recordings of actors. The PDF contains the full teaching content, plus a visual field notebook with real Detroit and Dearborn photographs. Human voice recordings and authentic environmental audio are not included in this edition.

About these scenarios

All dialogues, characters, prices, sample addresses and practice documents are fictional teaching examples. Real services may use different words and procedures. Do not provide personal information or make a purchase merely to complete a task. Observe or simulate when needed.

30 encounters, one growing skill set

- 01 · A suitcase is missing حقيبة لم تصل —
- 02 · Finding the right ride اختيار وسيلة الانتقال —
- 03 · Checking in at a hotel تسجيل الوصول إلى الفندق —
- 04 · Meeting a neighbor التعارف مع الجيران —
- 05 · Shopping for groceries شراء احتياجات المنزل —
- 06 · Ordering food that fits your needs طلب طعام يناسب احتياجاتك —
- 07 · Understanding the restaurant bill فهم حساب المطعم —
- 08 · Asking for directions السؤال عن الطريق —
- 09 · Taking the bus ركوب الحافلة —
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- 16 · Asking for emergency help طلب المساعدة في الطوارئ —
- 17 · Viewing an apartment معاينة شقة —
- 18 · Reporting a repair الإبلاغ عن عطل —
- 19 · Opening a bank account فتح حساب مصرفي —
- 20 · Meeting your child's teacher مقابلة معلم ابنك —
- 21 · Joining an English class الالتحاق بصف الإنجليزية —
- 22 · The first day at work اليوم الأول في العمل —
- 23 · Workplace small talk حديث قصير في العمل —
- 24 · Accepting or declining an invitation قبول دعوة أو الاعتذار عنها —
- 25 · Respecting differences and boundaries احترام الاختلاف والحدود الشخصية —
- 26 · A day at a museum or cinema زيارة متحف أو سينما —
- 27 · Renting a car استئجار سيارة —
- 28 · Asking questions before buying a car أسئلة قبل شراء سيارة —
- 29 · Pets, children and shared spaces الحيوانات والأطفال والأماكن المشتركة —
- 30 · Repairing a misunderstanding توضيح سوء الفهم —

A suitcase is missing

حقيبة لم تصل

I can: Report a missing item and confirm contact details.

Airport agent: Can I see your baggage tag?

Ali: Yes. My suitcase did not arrive.

Airport agent: What does it look like?

Ali: It is a large blue suitcase with a yellow ribbon.

Airport agent: What address should we use for delivery?

Ali: May I give you my hotel address? Could I have a reference number?

بطاقة الأمتعة؛ حقيبة؛ رقم البلاغ

Notice the culture · افهم الموقف

For checked baggage, begin with the airline baggage service. A personal item lost elsewhere may use a different lost-property process. Ask which office handles your case.

ابدأ بوصف واضح، واطلب رقم البلاغ. لا تفترض أن كل المفقودات تتبع المكتب نفسه.

Your real-life task · نشاط عملي

Use an imaginary baggage tag. Describe color, size and one identifying feature; write the reference number you hear.

Change the situation · ماذا لو؟

Agent asks for an address you cannot remember. Ask to check your booking.

Language tip: Could I have...? = polite request, not a question about physical ability.

Check: Why does Ali ask for a reference number?

Finding the right ride

اختيار وسيلة الانتقال

I can: Confirm a ride before entering.

Ali: Are you my driver?

Driver: What name is the booking under?

Ali: Ali Algohary. Let me check the car details.

Driver: Where are you going?

Ali: This hotel. Is this the correct pickup area?

Driver: Yes. Please put on your seat belt.

حجز! مكان الركوب؛ حزام الأمان

Notice the culture · افهم الموقف

Check the driver and vehicle details in your booking. A friendly person offering a ride is not proof that they are your booked driver. Use the designated pickup area.

تحقق من بيانات السيارة والسائق، ولا تعتمد على تشابه الأسماء فقط.

Your real-life task · نشاط عملي

Compare two fictional booking cards and choose the matching vehicle. Say the destination without announcing your room number.

Change the situation · ماذا لو؟

The license plate does not match. Say: I will check with the service first.

Language tip: Is this...? checks identity; Where is...? asks about location.

Check: What information should match?

Checking in at a hotel

تسجيل الوصول إلى الفندق

I can: Ask about the full cost and checkout.

Receptionist: Welcome. Do you have a reservation?

Ali: Yes, under Ali Algohary.

Receptionist: May I see your ID and payment card?

Ali: Of course. Is there a deposit or temporary hold?

Receptionist: Let me explain the charges.

Ali: Thank you. What time is checkout?

حجز؛ مبلغ تأمين؛ مغادرة

Notice the culture · افهم الموقف

A temporary card hold and a final charge are different. Ask the amount and release process instead of assuming every hotel uses the same policy.

اسأل عن الحجز المؤقت على البطاقة وموعد المغادرة، واطلب توضيح أي رسوم.

Your real-life task · نشاط عملي

Read a fictional booking: room \$120, parking \$15, tax listed separately. Ask what the final total includes.

Change the situation · ماذا لو؟

Your room is noisy. Request a quieter room without blaming the receptionist.

Language tip: I have a reservation; I would like a quieter room.

Check: Does a hold always mean a final charge?

Meeting a neighbor

التعارف مع الجيران

I can: Introduce yourself and ask a shared-space question.

Neighbor: Hi! I am Maya. I live next door.

Ali: Nice to meet you. I am Ali.

Maya: How is your move going?

Ali: Pretty well, thanks. Where do we put the recycling?

Maya: The blue bins are behind the building.

Ali: Thanks. Is there a quiet-hours policy?

جار؛ إعادة التدوير؛ ساعات الهدوء

Notice the culture · افهم الموقف

Friendly greetings do not automatically create an invitation to enter a home. Let closeness develop. Ask before taking a photo, touching possessions or visiting unexpectedly.

الود في التحية لا يعني دعوة مفتوحة إلى المنزل. احترم الخصوصية واسأل قبل الزيارة.

Your real-life task · نشاط عملي

Introduce yourself in 20 seconds. Ask one practical question without asking about salary, religion or immigration status.

Change the situation · ماذا لو؟

You are asked a personal question. Say: I prefer to keep that private.

Language tip: I live next door: present simple for a continuing situation.

Check: Must Ali answer every personal question?

Shopping for groceries

شراء احتياجات المنزل

I can: Find an item and compare labels.

Ali: Excuse me. Where can I find rice?

Clerk: Aisle six, on the left.

Ali: Is this price for one bag or two?

Clerk: One bag. The smaller bags have a different offer.

Ali: Where can I check the ingredients?

Clerk: On the back of the package.

ممر؛ مكونات؛ سعر الوحدة

Notice the culture · افهم الموقف

Package size, unit price and sale conditions can differ. Read the label rather than judging value from a large SALE sign. Ask before opening a package.

قارن سعر الوحدة وحجم العبوة وشروط العرض، لا حجم لافتة التخفيض فقط.

Your real-life task · نشاط عملي

Use two mock rice labels: 2 lb for \$4 and 5 lb for \$8. Find the lower price per pound.

Change the situation · ماذا لو؟

The shelf label and checkout price differ. Ask the cashier to check.

Language tip: Where can I find...? / Is this price for...?

Check: Which rice has the lower unit price?

Ordering food that fits your needs

طلب طعام يناسب احتياجاتك

I can: Ask specific ingredient questions.

Server: Are you ready to order?

Ali: Almost. Is the chicken halal-certified?

Server: I am not sure. I can check.

Ali: Thank you. Does the sauce contain alcohol?

Server: I will ask the kitchen.

Ali: If you cannot confirm, what vegetarian options do you have?

حلال معتمد؛ صلصة؛ نباتي

Notice the culture · افهم الموقف

Do not assume a restaurant is halal because of its cuisine or the owner's background. Vegetarian food can still contain ingredients you avoid. State an allergy separately from a preference.

لا تفترض أن نوع المطبخ يضمن الحلال. وضع احتياجاتك واسأل عن المكونات، واذكر الحساسية بوضوح إن وجدت.

Your real-life task · نشاط عملي

Build an order with one dietary question, one drink and one confirmation. Partner may say: I am not sure.

Change the situation · ماذا لو؟

A guest has a food allergy. Practice asking staff for ingredient information without promising safety.

Language tip: Does it contain...? Use does with singular it.

Check: What should staff do if unsure?

Understanding the restaurant bill

فهم حساب المطعم

I can: Check a bill and ask about service charges.

Ali: Could we have separate checks, please?

Server: Certainly. Here is yours.

Ali: Is a service charge already included?

Server: Yes. It is listed here.

Ali: Thank you. Could you explain this extra item?

Server: Let me check that for you.

فاتورة منفصلة؛ رسوم خدمة؛ إكرامية

Notice the culture · افهم الموقف

Tipping customs vary by service and setting. Read the bill for a service charge or gratuity; ask if unsure. A suggested tip display is not an explanation of every charge.

اقرأ الحساب قبل إضافة الإكرامية، واسأل عن رسوم الخدمة أو أي بند غير واضح.

Your real-life task · نشاط عملي

Use a practice bill: food \$24, tax \$2, service charge \$4. Find the listed total, then ask what the service charge covers.

Change the situation · ماذا لو؟

Friends prefer one bill. Agree on a split before paying.

Language tip: Could we have...? is a polite plural request.

Check: What is the listed total?

Asking for directions

السؤال عن الطريق

I can: Clarify directions before moving.

Ali: Excuse me. How do I get to the library?

Passerby: Go straight for two blocks, then turn left.

Ali: Left at the next street or the second street?

Passerby: The second street.

Ali: Is there a marked crossing?

Passerby: Yes, at the traffic light.

مرجع سكني؛ انعطف؛ ممر مشاة

Notice the culture · افهم الموقف

Someone may be friendly and still not know the route. Confirm the destination and use a map when needed. Cross at appropriate crossings and follow signals.

طلب التأكيد مهارة وليس إحراجاً. قد يخطئ الشخص المتعاون في معرفة المكان.

Your real-life task · نشاط عملي

Draw a four-block map with a library and crossing. Partner gives directions; trace them and repeat the key turn.

Change the situation · ماذا لو؟

You did not understand blocks. Ask: Could you show me on the map?

Language tip: Imperatives: go, turn, cross. Add please when appropriate.

Check: Which street does Ali turn at?

Taking the bus

ركوب الحافلة

I can: Confirm route, payment and stop.

Ali: Does this bus go toward downtown?

Driver: Yes. Where do you need to get off?

Ali: Near the library. How do I pay?

Driver: Please check the fare information here.

Ali: Do I need to request my stop?

Driver: Yes. Use the stop signal before your stop.

اتجاه؛ أجرة؛ إشارة التوقف

Notice the culture · افهم الموقف

Detroit-area services include different transit operators. Confirm the operator, route, direction and current payment method; do not assume one ticket or schedule fits all trips.

تحقق من شركة النقل والاتجاه وطريقة الدفع، وخطط لرحلة العودة أيضاً.

Your real-life task · نشاط عملي

Plan a fictional trip with an outbound and return route. Ask what happens if a connection is missed.

Change the situation · ماذا لو؟

Bus is crowded. Ask: Is this seat available? Keep priority seating accessible.

Language tip: Does this bus go...? not Does this bus goes...?

Check: What four trip details should you check?

Joining the library

التسجيل في المكتبة

I can: Ask about eligibility and learning activities.

Ali: I would like to get a library card.

Librarian: Do you live in Detroit?

Ali: I have just moved here. What documents do you need?

Librarian: Let us check which card you qualify for.

Ali: Are there English conversation groups?

Librarian: We can look at the current program calendar.

بطاقة مكتبة؛ إثبات عنوان؛ مجموعة محادثة

Notice the culture · افهم الموقف

Card eligibility and borrowing privileges depend on the library's current rules. Libraries can also be places for learning and community activities, not only silent reading.

اسأل عن شروط البطاقة والبرامج المتاحة؛ لا تفترض أن جميع الخدمات أو البطاقات لها الشروط نفسها.

Your real-life task · نشاط عملي

Use the official library page to identify one program and write a question about registration.

Change the situation · ماذا لو؟

You have no proof of address yet. Ask what alternatives are accepted.

Language tip: I would like to... is useful for a service request.

Check: Should Ali assume he qualifies for every card?

Buying a phone plan

اختيار خدمة الهاتف

I can: Compare total cost and conditions.

Salesperson: Do you want a prepaid or monthly plan?

Ali: Could you explain the difference?

Salesperson: This plan renews every month.

Ali: What is the total after fees?

Salesperson: Let me show you the breakdown.

Ali: Can I cancel, and is the phone locked?

دفع مقدم؛ تجديد تلقائي؛ جهاز مقيد بشبكة

Notice the culture · افهم الموقف

A low advertised price may have conditions. Ask about fees, renewal, data limits and device compatibility before agreeing. Do not share account codes with unsolicited callers.

اطلب التكلفة الكاملة وشروط التجديد والإلغاء. لا تشارك رموز الدخول مع متصل مجهول.

Your real-life task · نشاط عملي

Compare fictional plans: \$25 plus \$5 fees for 5 GB; \$35 including fees for 10 GB. Explain which suits your own usage.

Change the situation · ماذا لو؟

Seller asks you to decide immediately. Say: I need time to read the terms.

Language tip: How much...? for price; How many...? for countable items.

Check: What matters besides the advertised price?

Returning an item

إرجاع سلعة

I can: Explain a return and request an outcome.

Ali: I would like to return this jacket.

Clerk: Do you have the receipt?

Ali: Yes. It is too small.

Clerk: Would you like a refund or an exchange?

Ali: A refund, if the policy allows it.

Clerk: Let me check the purchase date.

إيصال؛ استرداد؛ استبدال

Notice the culture · افهم الموقف

Return windows and exceptions vary. Keep receipts and check conditions before purchase. A calm description of the problem helps staff identify the available options.

احتفظ بالإيصال واقرأ سياسة الإرجاع. اشرح المشكلة وحدد الحل الذي تفضله.

Your real-life task · نشاط عملي

Read a fictional policy: unused items within 14 days with receipt. Decide whether a purchase from 10 days ago qualifies.

Change the situation · ماذا لو؟

No receipt. Ask whether another proof of purchase is accepted.

Language tip: Too small means smaller than needed; very small only describes size.

Check: Does the unused 10-day-old item qualify?

Making an appointment

حجز موعد

I can: Confirm date, time and cancellation process.

Receptionist: What day works for you?

Ali: Tuesday afternoon, if possible.

Receptionist: We have June ninth at two thirty.

Ali: June ninth at 2:30 p.m., correct?

Receptionist: Correct. Please arrive a little early.

Ali: How do I reschedule if I need to?

موعد؛ إعادة جدولة؛ بعد الظهر

Notice the culture · افهم الموقف

Numeric dates can be ambiguous across countries. Say the month aloud and confirm a.m. or p.m. Check cancellation rules rather than assuming missed appointments have no consequences.

اذكر اسم الشهر وأكد صباحاً أو مساءً. اسأل عن طريقة تغيير الموعد.

Your real-life task · نشاط عملي

Partner dictates June 9 at 2:30 p.m. Write it in words, then repeat it without relying on 6/9.

Change the situation · ماذا لو؟

You will be late. Call with an honest estimated arrival time and ask what to do.

Language tip: At 2:30; on Tuesday; in June.

Check: Why repeat the month in words?

At the pharmacy

في الصيدلية

I can: Ask the right professional to explain instructions.

Ali: I am here to pick up a prescription.

Technician: What is your name and date of birth?

Ali: Ali Algohary. May I write my date of birth?

Technician: Of course. Do you have questions for the pharmacist?

Ali: Yes. Could the pharmacist explain the label?

Technician: Please wait here.

وصفة طبية؛ صيدلي؛ ملصق التعليمات

Notice the culture · افهم الموقف

Personal information may be used to confirm identity. Ask for a more private conversation if needed. Use the pharmacist for medicine questions; this lesson does not teach dosing.

اطلب شرح التعليمات من الصيدلي ومكاناً أكثر خصوصية عند الحاجة.

Your real-life task · نشاط عملي

Practice spelling a fictional name and asking: Could you explain when and how I should take this? Do not use a real medicine.

Change the situation · ماذا لو؟

The label is unclear. Ask for clarification before using it.

Language tip: Could you explain...? / Could you write that down?

Check: Who should explain medicine instructions?

Talking with a clinician

التحدث مع مقدم الرعاية

I can: Describe symptoms and request language help.

Clinician: What brings you in today?

Ali: My shoulder has been hurting for three days.

Clinician: What makes it better or worse?

Ali: It is worse when I lift my arm.

Clinician: Do you need an interpreter?

Ali: Yes, an Arabic interpreter would help.

عرض مرضي؛ ألم؛ مترجم شفهي

Notice the culture · افهم الموقف

Clear timing and concrete descriptions help communication. You can ask for an interpreter rather than relying on a child to explain sensitive information. Ask the clinic about availability and arrangements.

حدد مكان الألم ومدته وما يزيده. اطلب مترجماً عند الحاجة بدلاً من تحميل طفل مسؤولية الشرح.

Your real-life task · نشاط عملي

With a fictional symptom card, state location, start time and effect on daily life. Ask one follow-up question.

Change the situation · ماذا لو؟

You did not understand the plan. Say: Let me repeat what I understood.

Language tip: For three days describes duration; since Monday gives a starting point.

Check: What three symptom details does Ali give?

Asking for emergency help

طلب المساعدة في الطوارئ

I can: Practice location-first emergency language.

Dispatcher: 911. What is the address of the emergency?

Ali: We are at 125 Example Street, Detroit.

Dispatcher: What happened?

Ali: A person collapsed. Please send help.

Dispatcher: What is your callback number?

Ali: My number is 313-555-0147. I need an Arabic interpreter, please.

عنوان الطوارئ؛ انهار؛ رقم معاودة الاتصال

Notice the culture · افهم الموقف

This is a role-play only: never call 911 to practice. For a real emergency, give the location, explain what happened and follow the dispatcher's instructions. Do not hang up until told.

هذا تدريب تمثيلي فقط، ولا تتصل بالطوارئ للتجربة. في الطوارئ الحقيقية اذكر الموقع واتبع تعليمات متلقي البلاغ.

Your real-life task · نشاط عملي

Use a paper phone and fictional address. Say location, event and callback number. Partner reads the dispatcher role without simulating treatment.

Change the situation · ماذا لو؟

You know the intersection but not the address. State the intersection and nearby landmark.

Language tip: At + address; near + landmark.

Check: Should you call 911 to rehearse?

Viewing an apartment

معاينة شقة

I can: Ask about costs and written conditions.

Ali: What is included in the monthly rent?

Manager: Water is included. Electricity is separate.

Ali: What are the deposit and application fees?

Manager: They are listed here.

Ali: May I read the lease before signing?

Manager: Yes. Take a copy to review.

إيجار؛ عقد؛ مرافق

Notice the culture · افهم الموقف

Rental customs and requirements differ. Ask for written terms and document the apartment's condition with permission. A spoken promise is easier to misunderstand than a clear written agreement.

اطلب الشروط مكتوبة واقرأها قبل التوقيع. اسأل عن المرافق والوديعة والرسوم.

Your real-life task · نشاط عملي

Use a mock listing: rent \$900, water included, electricity extra, deposit \$900. Identify known upfront costs and missing information.

Change the situation · ماذا لو؟

A promised repair is missing from the paperwork. Ask to have it written down.

Language tip: Included / separate; before + -ing: before signing.

Check: Which utility is separate?

Reporting a repair

الإبلاغ عن عطل

I can: Describe a household problem precisely.

Ali: Hello. The kitchen sink is leaking.

Maintenance: When did it start?

Ali: This morning. There is water under the cabinet.

Maintenance: Can we arrange a visit?

Ali: Yes. Please confirm the time and entry arrangements.

Maintenance: We will send you a confirmation.

تسرب؛ صيانة؛ خزانة

Notice the culture · افهم الموقف

Follow the building's reporting process and keep a record. Entry and repair arrangements should be confirmed; do not assume a casual conversation has created a maintenance request.

قدم بلاغاً واضحاً واحتفظ بتأكيده، وحدد ترتيبات الدخول ووقت الزيارة.

Your real-life task · نشاط عملي

Write a three-sentence request with location, problem and start time. Include a way to contact you.

Change the situation · ماذا لو؟

No response. Ask politely for an update and quote your request number.

Language tip: There is water; there are two leaks.

Check: What details help maintenance?

Opening a bank account

فتح حساب مصرفي

I can: Ask about documents and ongoing costs.

Ali: I would like to ask about a checking account.

Banker: What features do you need?

Ali: A debit card and online access. What are the fees?

Banker: Let us review the account information.

Ali: Which documents do you accept?

Banker: We can check the requirements for your situation.

حساب جار؛ بطاقة خصم؛ رسوم شهرية

Notice the culture · افهم الموقف

A debit card and a credit card work differently. Ask how the account handles fees and insufficient funds. Requirements vary; do not assume the same documents work at every bank.

ميز بين بطاقة الخصم والائتمان، واسأل عن الرسوم والمستندات المقبولة.

Your real-life task · نشاط عملي

Compare two mock accounts: \$0 monthly fee with conditions versus \$8 without those conditions. Ask what happens when a condition is missed.

Change the situation · ماذا لو؟

An unexpected caller asks for a login code. End the call and contact the bank through a verified channel.

Language tip: Which documents...? asks someone to identify accepted options.

Check: Are debit and credit cards identical?

Meeting your child's teacher

مقابلة معلم ابنك

I can: Discuss strengths and learning needs respectfully.

Teacher: How is Lina settling in?

Ali: She likes art, but she is quiet in English.

Teacher: What language does she use at home?

Ali: Arabic. How can we support her learning?

Teacher: Let us discuss a plan together.

Ali: Could we arrange an interpreter for our next meeting?

معلم؛ تقدم دراسي؛ دعم لغوي

Notice the culture · افهم الموقف

Home language is an asset. Ask how the school communicates and schedules meetings. A quiet student may be learning or adjusting; avoid equating quietness with lack of ability.

لغة البيت مصدر قوة. ناقش نقاط قوة الطفل واحتياجاته دون اعتبار الهدوء دليلاً على ضعف القدرة.

Your real-life task · نشاط عملي

Role-play a meeting: share one strength, one concern and one question. Agree on a follow-up date.

Change the situation · ماذا لو؟

A school message is unclear. Request a plain-language explanation.

Language tip: How can we support...? invites collaboration.

Check: What strength does Ali mention?

Joining an English class

الالتحاق بصف الإنجليزية

I can: Choose learning goals and ask about course details.

Advisor: What would you like to improve?

Ali: Speaking at work and understanding phone calls.

Advisor: Would mornings or evenings work better?

Ali: Evenings. Is there a placement activity?

Advisor: Yes. It helps us find a suitable class.

Ali: What materials and fees should I plan for?

تحديد مستوى؛ جدول؛ مواد دراسية

Notice the culture · افهم الموقف

Placement is intended to identify a useful starting point. Ask about workload, attendance, technology and support rather than choosing only by a course number.

اختبار تحديد المستوى وسيلة لاختيار البداية المناسبة. اسأل عن الواجبات والحضور والدعم.

Your real-life task · نشاط عملي

Record a 30-second introduction with two personal learning goals and a realistic study schedule.

Change the situation · ماذا لو؟

Class requires an online account. Ask for help signing in without sharing your password.

Language tip: I want to improve + noun or -ing form.

Check: What are Ali's two goals?

The first day at work

اليوم الأول في العمل

I can: Clarify instructions and responsibility.

Supervisor: Welcome, Ali. Here is today's schedule.

Ali: Thank you. Who should I ask if I am unsure?

Supervisor: You can ask me or Jordan.

Ali: Could you show me the task once?

Supervisor: Of course.

Ali: Let me repeat the steps to make sure I understood.

مشرف؛ مهمة؛ خطوات

Notice the culture · افهم الموقف

Workplaces differ in formality, breaks and communication. Observe, ask and confirm expectations. Asking for instruction is often more useful than pretending to understand.

اسأل عن التوقعات وطريقة طلب المساعدة. أعد الخطوات للتأكد بدلاً من التظاهر بالفهم.

Your real-life task · نشاط عملي

Partner gives three nonhazardous filing steps. Repeat them in order using first, next and finally.

Change the situation · ماذا لو؟

Two people give conflicting instructions. Ask who should confirm the priority.

Language tip: Let me + base verb: let me check, let me repeat.

Check: What can Ali do after a demonstration?

Workplace small talk

حديث قصير في العمل

I can: Keep a friendly conversation without overreading it.

Coworker: How was your weekend?

Ali: Good, thanks. I visited the riverfront. How about yours?

Coworker: I stayed home and watched a game.

Ali: Sounds relaxing.

Coworker: We should get coffee sometime.

Ali: I would like that. Let me know when you have a day in mind.

زميل؛ نهاية الأسبوع؛ اقتراح غير محدد

Notice the culture · افهم الموقف

Some invitations are friendly possibilities rather than fixed plans. A concrete time makes the arrangement clearer. Avoid assuming beliefs, nationality or interests from someone's name or appearance.

الاقتراح الودي قد لا يكون موعداً مؤكداً. لا تستنتج خلفية الشخص أو معتقده من اسمه أو مظهره.

Your real-life task · نشاط عملي

Have a one-minute chat about a shared neutral topic. Finish politely when the other person returns to work.

Change the situation · ماذا لو؟

You do not follow sports. Say: I do not know much about it. What do you enjoy about it?

Language tip: How about yours? avoids repeating the full question.

Check: Is coffee already scheduled?

Accepting or declining an invitation

قبول دعوة أو الاعتذار عنها

I can: Clarify a social invitation and respond.

Maya: Would you like to come for dinner on Saturday?

Ali: Thank you. What time?

Maya: Around six. Do you have any dietary needs?

Ali: I eat halal and avoid alcohol. May I bring a dish?

Maya: That would be lovely.

Ali: Please send me the address. I will confirm by tomorrow.

دعوة؛ تأكيد الحضور؛ طبق للمشاركة

Notice the culture · افهم الموقف

Ask about timing, food and whether bringing something is welcome. You may decline kindly without a detailed personal explanation. Do not pressure a guest to accept food or drink.

وضح الموعد واحتياجات الطعام، واحترم اعتذار الآخرين دون إلحاح.

Your real-life task · نشاط عملي

Accept one invitation and decline another: Thank you for inviting me. I cannot make it this time.

Change the situation · ماذا لو؟

Host offers a drink you avoid. Say: No, thank you. Water would be great.

Language tip: Would you like to...? invites; I would like to... expresses preference.

Check: What should Ali still confirm?

Respecting differences and boundaries

احترام الاختلاف والحدود الشخصية

I can: Ask rather than assume; accept a boundary.

Ali: It is nice to meet you. How do you pronounce your name?

Colleague: It is Nia.

Ali: Nia. Did I say that correctly?

Nia: Yes, thank you.

Ali: May I take a photo of our group?

Nia: I would rather not be in the photo.

Ali: Of course. Thank you for telling me.

نطق الاسم؛ موافقة؛ خصوصية

Notice the culture · افهم الموقف

People differ in greetings, touch, religion, disability, family structure and identity. Ask respectfully when relevant, accept the answer and avoid making one person represent an entire community.

الاختلاف داخل المجتمع الواحد كبير. اسأل باحترام عندما يلزم، وتقبل الرفض ولا تطلب من فرد تمثيل جماعة كاملة.

Your real-life task · نشاط عملي

Practice a greeting without assuming a handshake. Ask permission for a photo and respond respectfully to no.

Change the situation · ماذا لو؟

You used the wrong name. Correct it briefly and continue without making the person comfort you.

Language tip: May I...? asks permission; you can answer No, thank you.

Check: How should Ali respond to Nia's refusal?

A day at a museum or cinema

زيارة متحف أو سينما

I can: Plan a leisure visit and check rules.

Ali: Are these tickets for today?

Clerk: Yes. Which time would you like?

Ali: The afternoon session. Is there an accessible entrance?

Clerk: Yes. It is marked on this map.

Ali: Are photography and outside food allowed?

Clerk: Please check the visitor rules here.

تذكرة؛ مدخل ميسر؛ قواعد الزيارة

Notice the culture · افهم الموقف

Photography, seating, food and accessibility arrangements vary by venue. Ask before recording people or artworks. Keep conversation and phone volume appropriate to the space.

تحقق من قواعد التصوير والطعام وإتاحة المكان، ولا تصور الآخرين دون موافقتهم.

Your real-life task · نشاط عملي

Choose a fictional museum or cinema visit. Ask about time, total price, access and one visitor rule.

Change the situation · ماذا لو؟

You booked the wrong day. Ask whether changing the ticket is possible.

Language tip: Allowed = permitted; available = obtainable.

Check: Does available mean the same as allowed?

Renting a car

استئجار سيارة

I can: Ask about conditions before accepting extras.

Agent: What type of car did you reserve?

Ali: A compact car. What is the full price?

Agent: Here is the itemized estimate.

Ali: What are the deposit, fuel and return conditions?

Agent: Let us go through them.

Ali: Please explain any optional charges before I decide.

وديعة؛ وقود؛ رسوم اختيارية

Notice the culture · افهم الموقف

Rental age, license, payment and coverage rules vary. Check your own eligibility and coverage rather than accepting assumptions. Record existing damage through the rental company's process.

راجع الأهلية والتغطية وشروط الوقود والإعادة، وميز الرسوم الاختيارية من الأساسية.

Your real-life task · نشاط عملي

Use a mock estimate with base price, taxes, optional add-on and deposit. Identify which amount is a hold and which is a charge.

Change the situation · ماذا لو؟

Car has a scratch. Ask the agent to document it before departure.

Language tip: Before I decide: present simple after before for future meaning.

Check: Should Ali accept every optional charge automatically?

Asking questions before buying a car

أسئلة قبل شراء سيارة

I can: Request independent information and a written total.

Seller: Would you like to see the car?

Ali: Yes. May I have the vehicle history information?

Seller: Here is what I have.

Ali: Can an independent mechanic inspect it?

Seller: We can discuss arrangements.

Ali: Please put the total price and all promised repairs in writing.

فحص مستقل؛ سجل المركبة؛ سعر نهائي

Notice the culture · افهم الموقف

A monthly payment does not describe the entire cost. Ask about total price, financing terms and written promises. This activity practices questions; it does not establish a vehicle's condition or legal rights.

لا تحكم على التكلفة من القسط وحده. اطلب الفحص المستقل والسعر والشروط والوعود مكتوبة.

Your real-life task · نشاط عملي

Compare fictional offers with the same \$250 monthly payment but different durations. List the missing information needed before choosing.

Change the situation · ماذا لو؟

Seller resists an inspection. Practice pausing the decision without arguing.

Language tip: May I have...? requests an item; Can a mechanic...? asks about an arrangement.

Check: Does a low monthly payment prove a low total cost?

Pets, children and shared spaces

الحيوانات والأطفال والأماكن المشتركة

I can: Ask permission and respond calmly to boundaries.

Child: Can I pet your dog?

Owner: Please ask your parent first. He is shy.

Ali: Thank you for asking. Let us give him space.

Child: Why is that dog barking?

Ali: We do not know. We can step back.

Owner: Thank you. Please do not feed him.

يرت على حيوان؛ ينبح؛ مساحة شخصية

Notice the culture · افهم الموقف

Some people love animals; others fear them or have allergies. Ask before approaching or feeding a pet. Do not distract a working service animal. Children can practice permission language with an adult.

قد يحب البعض الحيوانات وقد يخاف منها آخرون. اسأل قبل الاقتراب أو الإطعام واحترم الحاجة إلى مساحة.

Your real-life task · نشاط عملي

Use a toy animal to rehearse: May I pet your dog? Accept no. Optional sound task: identify a bark, then choose a calm response.

Change the situation · ماذا لو؟

Someone is uncomfortable near an animal. Offer more space without ridicule.

Language tip: Can I...? is common permission language; please do not + base verb sets a limit.

Check: Should the child feed the dog?

Repairing a misunderstanding

توضيح سوء الفهم

I can: Clarify, confirm and choose confidently.

Clerk: Would you like a bag?

Ali: Sorry, I thought you said back. Could you repeat that?

Clerk: A bag for your shopping.

Ali: Oh, a bag. Yes, please. Is there a charge?

Clerk: This one has a small charge.

Ali: Thank you. I will use my own bag instead.

أعد من فضلك؛ فهمت خطأ؛ حقيبة تسوق

Notice the culture · افهم الموقف

Successful communication is not perfect pronunciation. A repair phrase, written number or quick confirmation can prevent a larger problem. Treat accents and mistakes with patience, including your own.

نجاح التواصل لا يتطلب نطقاً مثالياً. اطلب الإعادة أو التأكيد، وتعامل مع الأخطاء واللكنات بصبر.

Your real-life task · نشاط عملي

Role-play a checkout misunderstanding. Use three strategies: request repetition, confirm meaning and state your choice.

Change the situation · ماذا لو؟

You understand the words but not the policy. Say: Could you explain what that means for me?

Language tip: I thought you said... introduces a past misunderstanding politely.

Check: What makes Ali's final response effective?

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

Suggested answers · إجابات مقترحة

01. To follow up on the report.
02. The driver and vehicle details in your booking.
03. No. Ask the hotel to explain it.
04. No. He can set a polite boundary.
05. The 5 lb bag: \$1.60 per pound.
06. Check rather than guess.
07. \$30 before any additional amount you choose.
08. The second street.
09. Operator, route, direction and payment.
10. No. He should ask which card fits his situation.
11. Fees, renewal, data limits and compatibility.
12. Yes, under this fictional policy with a receipt.
13. To avoid numeric-date confusion.
14. The pharmacist or prescribing clinician.
15. Location, duration and what makes it worse.
16. No. Rehearse with a paper phone only.
17. Electricity.
18. Location, problem, start time and contact details.
19. No. Ask how each works before choosing.
20. Lina likes art.
21. Speaking at work and understanding phone calls.
22. Repeat the steps and confirm understanding.
23. No. A day and time have not been agreed.
24. His attendance and the address.
25. Accept it without pressure.
26. No. They answer different questions.
27. No. He should understand it and choose.
28. No. Duration and other costs matter.
29. No. The owner asked them not to.
30. He clarifies the charge and states his choice clearly.

When the conversation gets difficult

Could you say that more slowly, please?

هل يمكنك التحدث ببطء أكثر من فضلك؟

Could you write that down?

هل يمكنك كتابة ذلك؟

Let me repeat what I understood.

دعني أكرر ما فهمته.

What does that mean in this situation?

ماذا يعني ذلك في هذا الموقف؟

Is that included, or is it extra?

هل هذا مشمول أم بتكلفة إضافية؟

I would like an Arabic interpreter, please.

أود الاستعانة بمترجم للغة العربية من فضلك.

I prefer not to share that information.

أفضل عدم مشاركة هذه المعلومات.

Thank you, but I cannot make it this time.

شكراً، لكن لا يمكنني الحضور هذه المرة.

How do you pronounce your name?

كيف تنطق اسمك؟

I need time to read this before I decide.

أحتاج إلى وقت لقراءة هذا قبل اتخاذ القرار.

Numbers, spelling and sound

Practice thirteen / thirty, fourteen / forty, fifteen / fifty. Ask: Did you say thirteen or thirty?

Spell names letter by letter; give a familiar word for a letter when needed. Never pretend that a guess is confirmation.

In quick conversation, "How is it going?" can sound like "How's it going?" Learn to recognize contractions while keeping your own speech clear. Your goal is understanding, not erasing your accent.

A week of everyday missions

Day 1: Read a public sign. Explain what action it asks for.

Day 2: Compare two grocery labels without buying anything.

Day 3: Plan a trip with the current transit map, including the return.

Day 4: Find a library activity and draft one registration question.

Day 5: Rehearse an appointment call using a fictional name.

Day 6: Practice an invitation with a partner, including a gracious refusal.

Day 7: Repeat a situation that was difficult and describe your improvement.

يمكن تنفيذ الأنشطة بالملاحظة أو المحاكاة. لا تصور الموظفين أو تسجل أصواتهم دون إذن، ولا تجمع بيانات خاصة من الغرباء.

Reflection after each mission

What did I notice? What did I assume? What question helped? What will I try next time? Write a short answer in Arabic or English.

Final performance task: Ali's first independent day

Work in pairs. Plan a bus trip, ask about a library program, order food with a dietary question, read a sample bill, and resolve one misunderstanding. Change at least one detail in each scene. Switch roles.

Simple assessment rubric

Score each area 0-2: task completed; message understandable; question or confirmation used; respectful cultural choice. 0 = not yet, 1 = with support, 2 = independently. Total: 8. A score helps select the next practice; it is not a standardized language rating.

Teacher and family guidance

Read once slowly and once at a comfortable natural pace. Allow pauses and repair. Rotate roles across genders without assigning jobs or behavior by stereotype. Children can practice greetings and permission with an adult; adults retain responsibility for medical, financial and emergency matters. Give feedback on meaning before correcting small grammar errors.

Detroit, Dearborn and your own neighborhood

Use these prompts to discover local life through evidence rather than assumptions. Detroit and Dearborn are separate municipalities; check which city a service or address belongs to.

Observe, ask, compare

Explore a library calendar, a museum's visitor page, a transit map and a community event listing. What languages, histories and forms of art appear? Whose voices are represented? What would you ask before attending?

Learn about African American history, Arab American experiences and other communities through institutions and people who choose to share their stories. Do not ask a stranger to explain an entire culture. A respectful opening is: Is there a place you recommend where I could learn more?

ديترويت وديربورن ليستا اسماً واحداً لمكان واحد. تحقق من المدينة المختصة بالخدمة، وتعرف إلى تاريخ المجتمعات من مصادرها دون اختزالها في الطعام أو اللهجة أو المظهر.

Official starting points · checked October 15, 2026

Detroit Metro Airport baggage guidance: contact the airline for checked baggage assistance.
metroairport.com/dtw/services-amenities/baggage

Detroit Public Library: check card eligibility and current programs.
detroitpubliclibrary.org/library-cards
detroitpubliclibrary.org

SMART: review route planning and riding instructions for the service you use.
smartbus.org/How-to-Ride/How-to-Ride-the-Bus
smartbus.org/How-to-Ride/How-to-Find-Your-Route

National 911 Program: emergency call preparation and dispatcher questions.
911.gov/calling-911

These sources support procedural context in lessons 1, 9, 10 and 16. The dialogues are original teaching scripts, not transcripts, quotations or official service instructions. Fees, schedules and eligibility may change; consult the current provider page before acting.

See Detroit. Start a conversation.

ديترويت: شاهد المكان وابدأ الحوار



Detroit skyline at sunset, viewed from Windsor

أفق ديترويت عند الغروب كما يظهر من وندسور

Try it: Describe the river, skyline and warm colors. Explain the difference between the city in a photograph and the place where the photographer stood.

Cultural awareness: A view across a river does not establish that two places share one city or country. Ask for the exact address when making travel plans.

Detroit, Michigan; photographed from Windsor, Canada · Photo: Michael Tighe, September 26, 2015 · Public domain. Source and rights: photo credits.



Jefferson Branch, Detroit Public Library

فرع جيفرسون من مكتبة ديترويت العامة

Try it: Read the building sign. Practice asking which services and conversation activities are available at this branch.

Cultural awareness: A photograph shows a place at one moment. Check the current branch page before a visit; do not infer opening hours from this picture.

Detroit, Michigan · Photo: Nyttend, December 10, 2015 · Public domain. Source and rights: photo credits.

Explore Dearborn with curiosity.

ديربورن: تعلم من المكان واسأل باحترام



Dearborn skyline

مشهد حقيقي لمدينة ديربورن

Try it: Find roads, parking areas, buildings and trees. Ask: Which city is this address in? Does this bus go to Dearborn?

Cultural awareness: Detroit and Dearborn are distinct cities. A familiar language or shop sign does not tell you every resident's identity or beliefs.

Dearborn, Michigan · Photo: WMrapids, August 30, 2022 · Public domain. Source and rights: photo credits.



The President locomotive at the Henry Ford Museum

قاطرة ذا بريزيدنت في متحف هنري فورد بديربورن

Try it: Describe the wheels and colors. Rehearse asking about tickets, access and photography before a museum visit.

Cultural awareness: An exhibit is a place to observe and ask questions. Check the museum's current visitor rules before touching or photographing anything.

Dearborn, Michigan · Photo: DTParker1000, July 2, 2024 · Public domain. Source and rights: photo credits.

Detroit in a different light.

ديترويت في ضوء مختلف



Detroit skyline from Belle Isle

مشهد ديترويت من بيل آيل

Try it: Compare the daylight photograph with the sunset cover. Use: In this picture I can see... The light looks... I would ask...

Cultural awareness: Choose a public meeting point by name and confirm how to get home. Respect other visitors and keep shared paths clear.

Detroit, Michigan · Photo: TheWxResearcher; crop uploaded by H-eros-mus-tri-se, September 7, 2025 · Public domain. Source and rights: photo credits.



Photo credits and sources

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Detroit skyline at sunset, viewed from Windsor

Photographer: Michael Tighe · Taken: September 26, 2015

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Jefferson Branch, Detroit Public Library

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Dearborn skyline

Photographer: WMrapids · Taken: August 30, 2022

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The President locomotive at the Henry Ford Museum

Photographer: DTParker1000 · Taken: July 2, 2024

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Source: Wikimedia Commons file page

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Detroit skyline from Belle Isle

Photographer: TheWxResearcher; crop uploaded by H-eros-mus-tri-se · Taken: September 7, 2025

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LANGUAGE OPENS A CONVERSATION

A question.
A connection.
A new beginning.

سؤال واضح، وتواصل محترم، وبداية أكثر ثقة.

Ali in Detroit brings everyday English and cultural understanding together through thirty short encounters. Read, rehearse, ask, adapt—and make the next conversation your own.

About the author

Dr. Wagih Elgohary holds doctoral degrees in Organization & Management and Instructional Leadership, with a background in fine arts, language education and intercultural learning. His work connects practical communication, creativity and cultural understanding.

About WCE

World Cultures & Education develops learning resources that bring language, art and everyday cultural encounters into conversation.

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Expanded newcomer edition · ESL 202