

Listen to a teacher and student discussing writing a learner contract.

Optional exercise (The answers are at the bottom of the page).

1. The student is used to having a learner contract.
 2. The student found the work he did last year very interesting.
 3. The student estimates his level at Intermediate.
 4. The teacher agrees with the student's estimation of his level.
 5. The student is studying business.
 6. The two objectives that will be put on this student's contract are about using the telephone and writing emails.
 7. The student will be working with an American company next semester.
 8. The student can only spend an hour on his English this week because of another assignment.
 9. The teacher says she will keep the learner contract with her.
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Teacher: OK. So have you got a piece of paper and a pen? You'll need to take lots of notes before typing up your final learner contract.

Student: Yes.

Teacher: Right, I want to explain a few things to you first before you decide what your objectives are for the course. Then we'll check the contract to make sure the deadlines you've set for achieving your objectives are realistic. Don't forget to bring it in each week as we'll use it at the beginning of each lesson to help us decide what to concentrate on, and then at the end so you can choose what homework you want to do.

Student: It sounds like lots of work to me.

Teacher: Yes, well it is in the beginning because you probably aren't used to being so responsible for your own learning. But you'll see after a few of lessons that you'll be much more motivated because you'll see that what we do in class is relevant to your own needs. Haven't you ever thought that your teacher was teaching you something only because it's in the textbook?

Student: Yes, that's true. I was only interested in half the things we learnt last year.

Teacher: Well maybe you'll be more interested this year when you understand *why* you are doing something and how it's relevant to *what you* want to learn.

Student: Maybe! So what exactly do I write on my learner contract?

Teacher: Well it depends first on your level. It's no good a beginner student saying he wants to be bilingual at the end of a three week course! What would you say *your* level of English is? Elementary, Intermediate, Advanced?

Student: I don't know! I'm not a teacher!

Teacher: I know that but just think a little about how much you know already. Do you think you could be bilingual by the end of the semester?

Student: No!

Teacher: OK then. So think again about your level.

Student: I'm maybe an intermediate.

Teacher: Yes, I think you're right. You're also a business student so you could concentrate your objectives around gaining confidence talking on the telephone with a non-native speaker, or learning formula used in professional emails for example.

Student: OK. I can use those as my first two objectives!

Teacher: Yes but are they really what *you* want and need to work on?

Student: Yes, my internship next semester is with a Spanish/French company but they all speak in English.

Teacher: Right well that's a good start then. How quickly do you think you can learn how to write emails?

Student: Well, I could do that for next week.

Teacher: Really! How much time can you study English this week?

Student: Well, only an hour because I've got an essay to write for my management class.

Teacher: In that case I think you should be much more realistic with your target deadlines. Have a think about how much study time you have each week first.

Answers: 1 F, 2 F, 3 T, 4 T, 5 T, 6 T, 7 F, 8 T, 9 F