

An illustration of a construction site. In the foreground, two construction workers wearing white hard hats, safety glasses, and red safety vests over blue shirts are looking at a large white blueprint. In the background, another worker in a white hard hat and red safety vest is standing on a concrete structure, talking on a mobile phone. A large blue crane arm is visible on the left side of the frame. The sky is a gradient of blue and yellow.

# CONSTRUCTION ESL

English as a Second Language

**Building Confidence on the Job Site with English Language Skills**

CREATED BY BRADLEY HARTMANN  
FOUNDER OF RED ANGLE, INC.



**RED ANGLE**

A NEW PERSPECTIVE ON LANGUAGE AND LEADERSHIP

# ESL

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**Created by Bradley Hartmann**

**Edited by Jenny Timoszyk**



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**To Edgar and Mayra,**

**For teaching me about  
culture, language, and family.**

**You taught me more than you'll ever know.**

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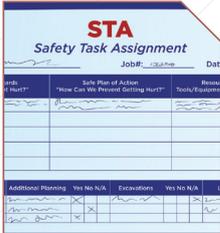
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STA Safety Task Assignment			
Job#	Job#	Date	
Subs. of Hurt?	Safe Plan of Action "How Can We Prevent Getting Hurt?"	Resour. Tools/Equipment	
Additional Planning	Yes No N/A	Excavations	Yes No N/A

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TIME CARD	
phone: _____	
e-mail: _____	
Vacation	Total

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## **INTRODUCTION** WHAT YOU MAY—AND MAY NOT—EXPECT

My experience becoming ESL (English as a Second Language) certified fell somewhere between a brief stint in prison and an extended stay in the Department of Motor Vehicles.

I was locked in a library auditorium for consecutive eight-hour days, pummeled repeatedly with rambling, mind-numbing monologues that were either obvious or unrealistic.

I found these gems particularly offensive:

1. Don't scream at your student.

*(That will not help motivate them, OK? Be nice.)*

2. Go to the zoo to teach the names of all the animals.

*(Don't confine your classroom to the indoors!)*

It was inhuman treatment.

However, the ESL administrators were not willfully causing great suffering. They were probably nice people.

At the end of the two days, I received a sheet of paper declaring I was now certified.

To do what exactly?

To volunteer hundreds of hours of my time helping someone else learn English. As I left the library that day, I pondered a trio of related thoughts.

### **1. What was the true cost of my attendance here?**

Having recently launched my business, Red Angle, Inc., I should have been doing other things. Namely, selling something to someone.

### **2. How much of that 16-hour snooze fest could be eliminated?**

If we removed all the obvious and inane stuff, how much time was needed for everything else? Could we prepare these ESL mentors-to-be in six hours? Four?

### **3. How many potentially willing ESL mentors were deterred by this 2-day certification?**

During my initial inquiry into the ESL program, I asked the program administrator how many people were on the waiting list. The answer? More than 400. The average wait time was nearly two years.

As a business owner whose company created language learning products and cultural intelligence training programs, this information disturbed me. As a citizen, I was disappointed

we weren't reaching more people who had raised their hand, asking for help. As an entrepreneur, I was motivated to find a better solution.

Shortly thereafter, I met Edgar and Mayra and my life changed. A married couple from Mexico, they were eager to learn. They didn't want to go to the zoo and learn animal names. They wanted to feel confident scheduling parent-teacher meetings, opening invoices in the mail, and visiting the doctor.

Our first goal was specific and simple: help Edgar and Mayra read a bed time story to their two daughters, ages six and three. Within a few months, we achieved that goal together. Never once did I consider screaming at them.

For two years, we met every Friday afternoon for 90 minutes. In each aspect of literacy—speaking, reading, and writing—Edgar and Mayra made significant strides.

At the conclusion of our last class, Mayra and Edgar thanked me profusely, yet I felt like I owed them more. I learned about culture, language learning, and the degree to which English skills can change lives.

Following a family meal together, we embraced in one last group hug. Their two daughters hugged my knees. The adults cried. (I know this is getting sappy, but stay with me here . . . )

If this was the result, I thought to myself, the 16-hour ESL certification process was worth it. But still . . .

Fast forward five years. A general contractor client mentions that several employees are in ESL programs . They are volunteering their time to help Spanish-speakers in the local community learn English.

I noted the irony.

My client was paying Red Angle to help their team bridge the language gap on the job to improve productivity and safety. English-speaking managers were enrolled in our *Construction Spanish* class. Spanish-speaking craft workers were enrolled in our *Construcción Inglés* class.

“What if,” I said, “we created a custom ESL program that enabled your English-speaking employees to help your Spanish-speaking employees on the job?”

My client looked at me, nodding approvingly.

“The content could focus on common construction scenarios,” I said, the intensity in my voice rising, “as well as critical home life situations. Language skills would improve. Teamwork and cultural understanding would also.”

“I like it. But . . .” my client hesitated. “How long will it take to get our English-speakers prepared?”

“Well,” I said. “I’ve got some ideas to improve that process.”

What you are reading now, my friend, is the improvement on that process.

I don’t want to oversell you on the benefits of becoming an ESL Mentor, but if you commit to helping a colleague learn English, it will change your life.

Maybe in a big way, as it did for me.  
Or maybe in small way.

Either way is fine.  
It’s a journey.  
Enjoy the ride.

Engaging in the ESL process—as a mentor or a student—is not easy. It is an exercise in humility, patience, and caring. It’s not for everyone. If you think the commitment is beyond your capacity to give at this moment, I won’t fault you one bit.

However, if you are ready to help someone learn a skill that can change their life, know the rewards come back full circle.

I trust you won’t yell at your student.

If you decide to go to the zoo, let me know how it went.

If you follow your instincts and focus on incremental progress, one small step at a time, you and your student will be successful.

We are here to help you both on your journey.  
Good luck. Let me know how I can help.

Bradley Hartmann  
President Red Angle, Inc.  
*bradley@redangleinc.com*

## BEGIN WITH THE END IN MIND STUDENT GOALS?

### PRE-LESSON EXERCISE

*To give you a better understanding of what your student wants to learn, have him/her complete the section below in their language of preference—English or Spanish. Review these goals during the next few weeks to ensure progress is being made.*

Write three goals you would like to achieve in this program:

*Escriba tres objetivos que le gustaría alcanzar en este programa:*

To do or say at home:

*Para hacer or decir en casa:*

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

To do or say at work:

*Para hacer or decir en el trabajo:*

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

## BEFORE WE START HOW MANY CAN YOU NAME?

### PRE-LESSON EXERCISE

To give you a better understanding of where your student is starting from, review how many of the nouns below he/she can correctly identify in English.



## LESSON ONE WHERE ARE YOU FROM?

### PRE-LESSON QUESTIONS

1. Are you and your family originally from the United States?
2. What countries have you visited?



It is Friday afternoon. Nicolas and Martín are cleaning up their work area before leaving. They begin talking about what they plan to do this weekend.

“My parents are coming to visit me and my family,” says Nicolas. “I am very excited.”

“Where do your parents live?” Martín asks.

“My parents live in San Antonio, but are originally from Guadalajara, Mexico. My parents moved to San Antonio after they got married. I was born there.”

I moved to Dallas when I turned 18 and I have been here ever since,” Nicolas says.

“I’m sure they will be very happy to see you,” Martín says.

“Do your parents live nearby?” Nicolas asks.

“No, my parents still live in Puerto Rico,” Martín replies. “I visit them when I can, but it is hard to be so far away.”

“Yes, I can understand. Our family enjoys being around each other,” Nicolas says.

“My sister-in-law lives in San Juan,” Nicolas says. “She likes living there. She says the people are very friendly.”

Nicolas and Martín share some stories about their childhood. They talk about where they grew up. They both agree that they had a lot of fun as kids.

---



## TRUE OR FALSE?

Circle **True** or **False** based on the story you read.

**True** **False**

1. Nicolas’s parents are coming to visit him.

**True** **False**

2. Nicolas’s parents live in San Francisco.

**True** **False**

3. Nicolas was 20 when he moved to Dallas.

**True** **False**

4. Martín’s parents live in Puerto Rico.

**True** **False**

5. Martín’s sister-in-law lives in San Juan.

**True** **False**

6. Nicolas’s sister-in-law does not like living in San Juan.

## COMPLETE THE SENTENCE

*Using the words in the boxes below, complete the sentences in the exercise.*

<b>excited</b>	<b>cleaning up</b>	<b>Guadalajara</b>	<b>kids</b>
<b>Friday</b>	<b>Puerto Rico</b>	<b>weekend</b>	<b>sister-in-law</b>

1. It is \_\_\_\_\_ afternoon.
2. Nicolas and Martín are \_\_\_\_\_ their work area before leaving. They begin talking about what they plan to do this \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Nicolas is very \_\_\_\_\_ because his parents are coming.
4. Nicolas's parents live in San Antonio, but are originally from \_\_\_\_\_.
5. Martín's parents still live in \_\_\_\_\_.
6. Nicolas's \_\_\_\_\_ lives in San Juan.
7. Martín and Nicolas both agree that they had a lot of fun as \_\_\_\_\_.



## WHERE ARE YOU FROM?

*Practice the conversation below with your partner.*

**Hi Laura, where are you from?**

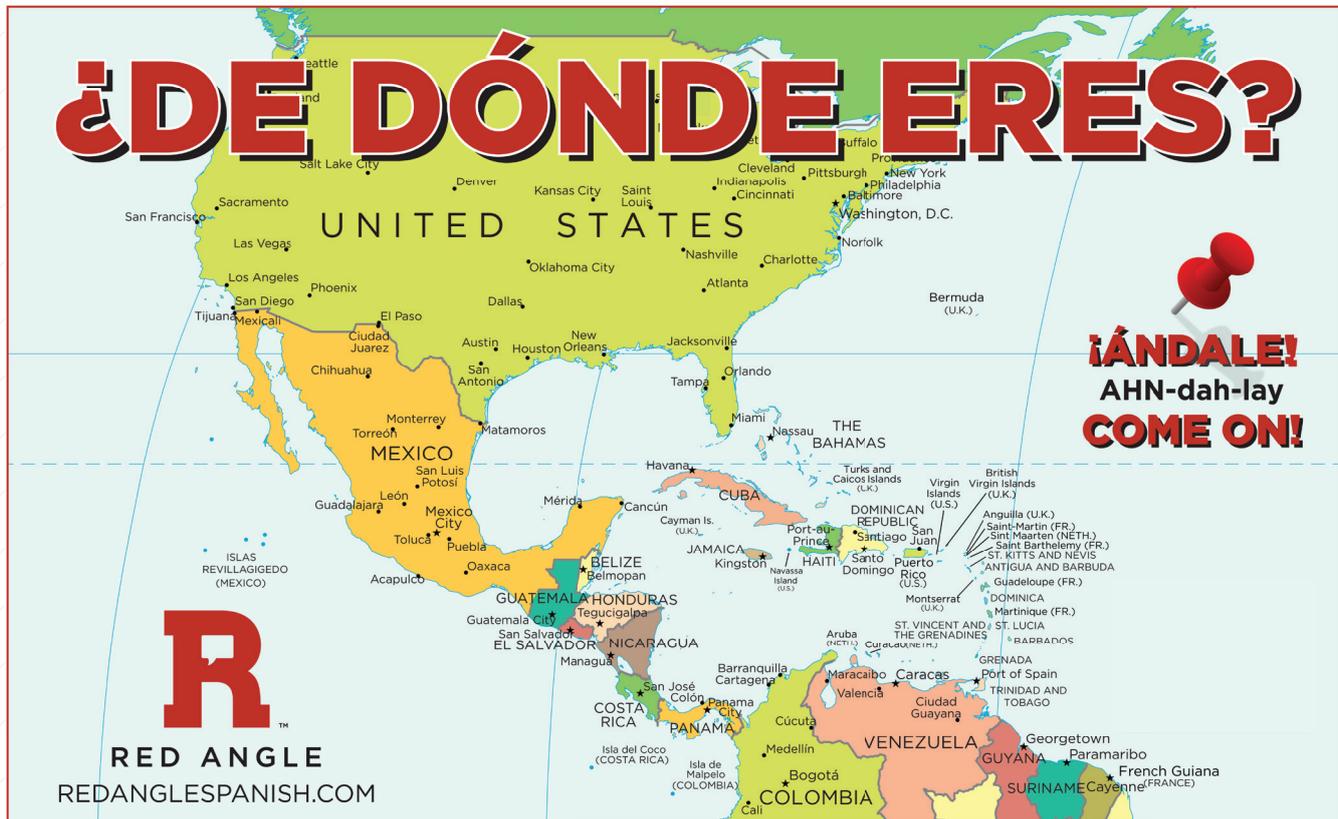
I was born in Houston, but my parents are from Mexico. How about you?

**I was born in Chile, but have lived in the United States for 15 years.**

**I am very happy here.**

That is great. I would love to visit Chile. I have heard it is beautiful there.

**Yes, it really is. I am excited to return this winter.**



¿De dónde eres? means Where are you from? Use the map above to show where you are from? Where is your student from?

## LESSON TWO GOING GROCERY SHOPPING

### PRE-LESSON QUESTIONS

1. Do you make a grocery list before you go shopping?
2. Do you take your kids grocery shopping with you? Do they enjoy going?



### MAKE A LIST

Write down the items you buy at the grocery store often.

1. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

6. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

7. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

8. \_\_\_\_\_

**HENRY'S  
FOODS**



## Super Savings This Weekend!

Henry's Foods will have great deals on all your favorite brands. Come and shop the wide selection of items marked 20%-50% off. We are open from 8am-10pm every day. We're located on the corner of El Toro Road and Lake Forest drive. Our address is 1209 El Toro Road, suite 200. We will see you this weekend!



### COMPLETE THE SENTENCE.

*Fill in the blank with the best answer.*

1. \_\_\_\_\_ will have great deals on all your favorite brands.

• **Hank's Foods**

• **Henry's Foods**

2. Items will be marked \_\_\_\_\_ off.

• **20%-50%**

• **20%-60%**

3. The store is open from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ every day.

• **8:00am to 12:00pm**

• **8:00am to 10:00pm**

4. The store is located on the corner of \_\_\_\_\_ Road and Lake Forest Drive.

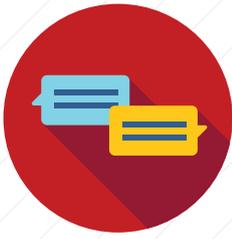
• **El Centro**

• **El Toro**

5. Their address is 1209 El Toro Road, suite \_\_\_\_\_.

• **200**

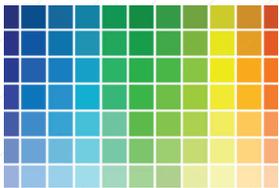
• **220**



## CONVERSATION TIME

*Discuss with a partner.*

1. Do you look for sales when you go grocery shopping?
  2. Which grocery stores are your favorite? Why?
- 



## WHAT COLOR IS IT?

*Fill in the blanks below with the appropriate color.*



## LESSON THREE *CONFUSION ON THE JOB*

### PRE-LESSON QUESTIONS

1. *What do you do when you're unsure about something your boss has asked you to do?*
2. *Who can you ask to clarify an instruction?*



Diego is carrying a roll of plans. He looks frustrated. He just returned from a meeting with the foreman. The foreman asked Diego and his crew to start a new project that involves a retaining wall.

Diego had trouble understanding the foreman's directions. The foreman always speaks very fast. Diego is not sure if he understands how to do the project correctly. Diego is worried he will make a mistake. Diego made a mistake last month because he didn't understand the foreman.

The foreman got angry. Diego doesn't want that to happen again.

Diego walks over to his friend John and shows him the plans.  
Diego wants to eliminate any confusion.

"John, have you ever built a wall like this?" Diego asks. John looks at the plans. "Yes, I have," John replies.

"Can you please help me understand what to do," Diego says,  
"I did not understand the foreman."

"Ok," John says. John tells Diego what to do and in what order.

Diego asks John a lot of questions. John is very patient.  
Diego now understands the project. Diego feels much better.

"Thank you for explaining this to me," Diego tells John.

Diego returns to his crew and gives them instructions about the retaining wall they need to build. Diego and his crew get to work.



**SPANISH**  
•TWIN•

**ENGLISH**

roll  
plan  
project  
correct  
eliminate  
confusion  
instructions

**SPANISH**

rollo  
plan  
proyecto  
correcto  
eliminar  
confusión  
instrucciones



## YES OR NO?

Check **Yes** or **No** based on the story you read.

YES      NO

\_\_\_\_\_

1. Diego is carrying a box of tools.

\_\_\_\_\_

2. He just returned from a meeting with a friend.

\_\_\_\_\_

3. The foreman always speaks very fast.

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Diego is worried he will make a mistake.

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Diego asks Josh if he has built a retaining wall.

\_\_\_\_\_

6. John says yes he has.

\_\_\_\_\_

7. John tells Diego what to do and in what order.

\_\_\_\_\_

8. Diego now understands the project.



## WHAT HAPPENED FIRST?

Review the story you read and then put these events in order using the numbers 1-5.

\_\_\_\_\_

John tells Diego what to do and in what order.

\_\_\_\_\_

Diego returns to his crew and gives them instructions about the retaining wall they need to build.

\_\_\_\_\_

Diego is carrying a roll of plans.

\_\_\_\_\_

Diego says, "Can you please help me understand what to do? I did not understand the foreman."

\_\_\_\_\_

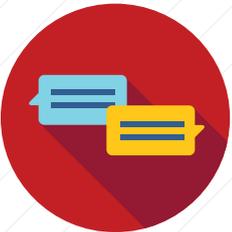
Diego walks over to his friend John and shows him the plans.



## SELECT THE WORD, SOLVE THE SENTENCE.

*Circle the correct word from the story.*

1. Diego is carrying a roll of (plans / plants).
2. The (friend / foreman) asked Diego and his crew to start a new project that involves a retaining wall.
3. Diego is (worried / wishing) he will make a mistake.
4. Diego meets with his friend John and (shows / shouts) him the plans.
5. Diego (answers / asks) John a lot of questions.
6. Diego and his (crowd / crew) get to work.



## CLEARING UP CONFUSION

*Practice the conversation below with your partner.*

**Jorge, do you know how we are supposed to build this wall?**

Yes, I do. Didn't you hear the instructions the foreman gave us?

**I heard the foreman speaking but I did not understand him. He speaks too fast. I cannot understand what he says.**

OK, let me explain it to you then.

**INTERESTED IN LEARNING JOB SITE SPANISH?**



10 MINUTES A DAY  
**FOR 6 WEEKS**  
RELEVANT, ENTERTAINING, AND BRIEF



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A NEW PERSPECTIVE ON LANGUAGE AND LEADERSHIP

## ***ABOUT RED ANGLE***

RED ANGLE'S PASSION IS CREATING long-term relationships with clients we admire by providing new perspectives to old problems, embracing technology to speed results, and delivering solutions that are relevant and easy to implement.

Visit us at **[www.redangleinc.com](http://www.redangleinc.com)**



## ***ABOUT BRADLEY HARTMANN***

BRADLEY HARTMANN, the founder and president, drives the Red Angle team. In his role as President, Hartmann works with the nation's largest contractors and construction retailers, helping them build trust with the Hispanic demographic to drive productivity, safety, retention and sales.

Hartmann is the author of six books and hosts Red Angle Radio, a podcast dedicated to sharing insights and ideas from leaders across the country within the construction industry.

Bradley's passion for bridging cultural and language gaps on the job has delivered a unique, entertaining, and memorable suite of tools to improve leadership performance and organizational culture.

Bradley has a degree in Spanish from the University of Illinois and lived in Guadalajara, México. He later earned his MBA with Distinction and teaches at Purdue and Oklahoma State University. He lives near Dallas, Texas with his wife and two sons.

# Tools to improve your English Skills on the Job Site and at Home

Want to help your Spanish-speaking colleagues learn English that is relevant to the construction site and their daily life? **Construction ESL: Building Confidence on the Job Site with English Language Skills** is an engaging workbook written for adult English learners working in the construction industry. This workbook is designed for English speakers to partner with Spanish speakers who want to learn English. Using stories that apply to the job site as well as home and family life, this workbook uses relevant material to teach English and enhance language retention. Each story is accompanied with exercises to check for comprehension, encourage critical thinking, increase vocabulary, and strengthen listening, speaking, and writing skills – building confidence in English language learners of all abilities.

## Here's How it Works:

- 1** ESL mentor watches a series of brief and engaging training videos to learn how to lead the Construction ESL program with their student.
- 2** ESL mentor leads the student through the exercises in the workbook to improve their English language capabilities.
- 3** Meeting weekly for a recommended 30-59 minutes per session, the workbook is completed and the student has learned relevant English language skills to be applied on the job and at home.



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