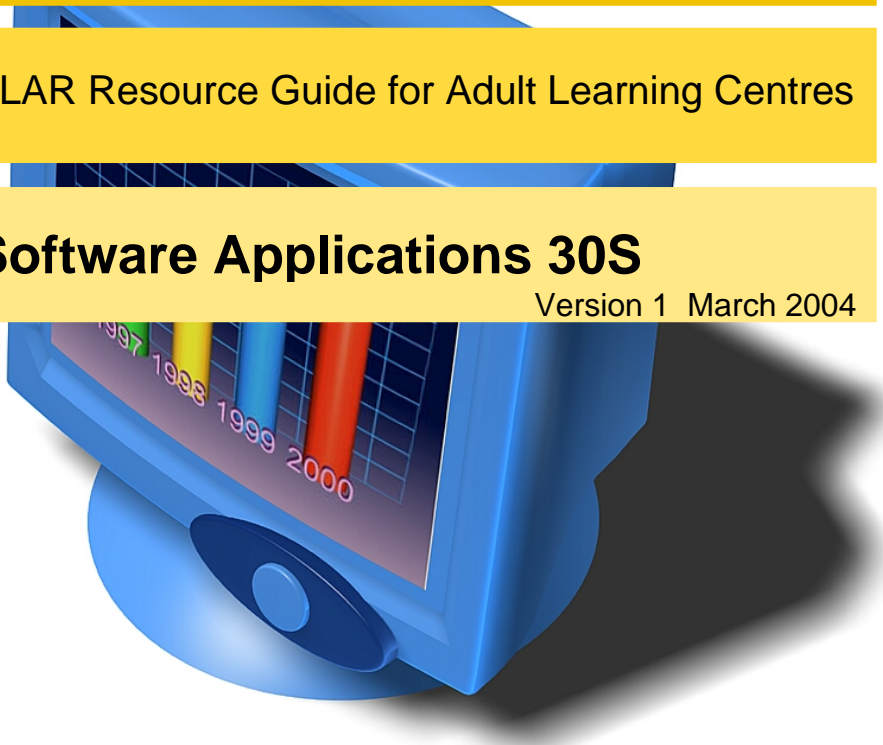# PLAR

Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR)

PLAR Resource Guide for Adult Learning Centres

Software Applications 30S

Version 1 March 2004

PLAR Skills
Assessment
Learning
Knowledge
recognition
prior
Change
Skills
Prior
Change Learning
Assessment
Learning
Prior
knowledge
Change
skills recognition
Knowledge
prior
Learning
Assessment
recognition
Skills
PLAR

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INTRODUCTION

Software Applications 30S is an entry-level course for students who want to develop a working knowledge of fundamental Software Applications using a Windows platform.

Upon completion of the Software Applications Course 30S, students will have achieved a basic understanding of how computer programs work.

Topics covered are:
- using an operating system (including file management)
- using the Internet
- managing e-mail
- creating documents with a word processor
- spreadsheet
- database
- presentation program

If you have sufficient skills in these areas, you may be able to obtain full or partial credit for this course through Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR).

The document contains the general course learning outcomes for Software Applications 30S, along with a self-assessment checklist of all of the specific learning outcomes covered in the course. After completing the checklist you will be able to determine if you have enough prior learning to go through the PLAR process for this course.

The PLAR process for Software Applications 30S is outlined in this document. By completing the PLAR process in its entirety and achieving the minimum standard, you could receive credit for Software Applications 30S without taking the course.

After completing the Software Applications 30S course, students will be able to:

1. **Explain how a computer functions**
    1.1.   Identify the physical components of a computer
    1.2.   Discuss computer processing and storage
    1.3.   Explain an operating system
        1.3.1.   Define an operating system
        1.3.2.   Explain the need for a operating system
        1.3.3.   List several specific operating systems
        1.3.4.   Describe ways to load the operating system
    1.4.   Differentiate between an operating system and application programs
    1.5.   Recognize the benefits of computers for personal and business use

2. **Describe the importance of a computer network**
    2.1.   Explain the topography of a network
    2.2.   Label a diagram of a network
    2.3.   Login in and out of a network

3. **Manipulate a computer operating system**
    3.1.   Start and shut down a computer
    3.2.   Identify parts of the desktop
    3.3.   Manage a program window
        3.3.1.   Open a program
        3.3.2.   Name the parts of a program window
        3.3.3.   Move and change the size of a window
        3.3.4.   Select program options with menus and dialog boxes
        3.3.5.   Close a program

4. **Create a file management system**
    4.1.   Define file management terms
    4.2.   Create folders and subfolders
    4.3.   Display the contents of a disk
    4.4.   Describe various file properties
    4.5.   Manage data files: move, copy, delete

5   Manage email software

5.1   Define terms related to e-mail operations

5.2   Create and send a new mail message

5.3   Retrieve and store e-mails

5.4   Open a mail message

5.5   Attach a file to a new message

5.6   Create folders to manage e-mail messages

5.7   Delete email messages (and empty trash)

5.8   Create and insert names in an address book

6.   Explain Internet history

7.   Locate and retrieve information from the Internet

7.1   Open Internet sites using addresses

7.2   Manage temporary Internet files and cookies

7.3   Add and delete sites to favourites/bookmarks

7.4   Set a home page

8.   Search the Internet for information

8.1   Copy and save pictures

8.2   Insert text and pictures from the Internet into Word and Excel

8.3   Transfer files from the Internet to the hard drive

9.   Create and modify documents created using application software

9.1   Explain the purposes of a:

9.1.1   word processor

9.1.2   spreadsheet

9.1.3   database

9.1.4   presentation program

9.2   Define concepts/terms unique to different software applications

9.3   Control the setup and views of each program window

9.3.1   Add/remove toolbars

9.3.2   Change views/zoom

9.4   Edit text

9.4.1   Add and delete text

9.4.2   Move and copy text

9.5   Create new files using application templates

9.6   Save, open, and close application files

    9.6.1   Manage read-only files

9.7   Format documents

    9.7.1   Apply standard font attributes

    9.7.2   Change paragraph properties

9.8   Modify page setup

    9.8.1   Change paper size and orientation

    9.8.2   Adjust document margins

    9.8.3   Create headers and footers

9.9   Print documents using different program options

10.   Explain software integration

10.1   State advantages and needs of integration

10.2   Integrate a spreadsheet selection with a word-processing document using copy and paste

10.3   Link a spreadsheet with a word processing document as an object

Course Resources

The following is a list of possible resources used in this course.

References

DDC series: "Learning . . . . . Assorted Titles**.** Prentice Hall Publishers. www.ddcpub.com

Shelly Cashman series . . . Assorted Titles. Thomson Course Technology. www.scsite.com

New Perspectives on . . . Assorted Titles**.** Course Technology, Thomson Learning, 2002. www.course.com

A Guide to . . . Assorted Titles**.** Lawrenceville Press, Pennington, NJ, 2000. www.lawrencevillepress.com

Assorted titles including the IDG series**,** and "Dummies" books. Wiley Publishers. www.wiley.ca

Teach Yourself Visually . . . Series, Assorted Titles. J.W. Wiley Publishers. www.wiley.ca

Reference Web sites:

Microsoft
www.microsoft.com

Government of Canada - Internet Guide
http://www.cio-dpi.gc.ca/ig-gi/links/links-liens_e.asp?format=print

General computer knowledge
www.about.com

Course: Software Applications
Course Number: 30S

Self - Assessment Checklist

The checklist indicates all of the learning outcomes covered in the Software Applications
30S course. Use it to measure your abilities in the different areas and uncover weak areas.
If you have:

125 or more ✓	93-124 ✓	Less than 93 ✓
You have a good chance of succeeding in the PLAR process	You could proceed with the challenge process after self study to improve in weak areas	Take the Computer Application 30S course. It is unlikely that you would be successful in the PLAR process.

Your adult learning center may give you PLA recognition for individual sections of the Software
Applications course. Ask the PLAR advisor if this is an option.

PLAR Challenge Assessment Process

Once you have completed the self-assessment and decide that you are ready to challenge
Software Applications 30S course or individual units, go on to the Assessment section. The
Assessment section outlines different assessment procedures that you might go through in
order to receive recognition for this course (or a unit) through the PLAR process.

NOTE: Individual adult learning centers may have additional requirements. Speak to the PLAR
advisor for more information.

Self- Assessment Checklist

Check the box to show whether you can perform the function.

Computer Services				Total possible number of checkmarks is 38
	Function	**Yes ✔**	**No ✔**	**Comments**
1	Define and give examples of input and output			
2	Describe the function of the CPU or microprocessor			
3	Identify and explain internal and external storage media			
4	Compare RAM and ROM			
5	Explain the set-up of a network			
6	Explain the process of signing on and off a network			
7	Discuss the impact of computers on everyday life			
8	Differentiate between operating system software and application software			
9	Compare and contrast My Computer and Windows Explorer			
10	Change the view and arrangement of file icons			
11	Create folders and subfolders			
12	Move, copy and delete files using mouse and menu options			
13	Select multiple files and groups of files			
14	Rename files and folders			
15	Change the properties of a read-only file			
16	Format a diskette			
17	Explain file name standards (Windows or Mac)			
18	Identify typical file extensions and icons			
19	Explain how to use the Recycle Bin			
20	Demonstrate how to use the mouse (left and right buttons, scroll button; single click, double click)			
21	Customize the desktop (arrange icons, create shortcuts)			

Computer Services continued

	Function	Yes ✔	No ✔	Comments
22	Discuss current issues in computer ethics			
23	Identify the parts of a program window			
24	Activate program menus or shortcut keys			
25	Explain different menu conventions (check mark, ellipsis, triangular arrow, greyed-out options, keyboard shortcut, double arrow)			
26	Move a window			
27	Size a window			
28	Explain the purpose of the minimize and maximize/restore buttons			
29	Close a window			
30	Identify and explain parts of the desktop (icons, task bar, start button)			
31	Manipulate dialog box features: option button, text box, check box, drop-down list, what's this button, Cancel (close) button			
32	Access the Help menu and online help			
33	Run system tools: scan disk, defrag			
34	Search for folders or files			
35	Troubleshoot simple hardware problems			
36	Choose an appropriate system			
37	Define computer viruses and the problems they can cause			
38	Explain how to prevent or remove viruses			

Total possible number of checkmarks is 38.

Total number of **Yes** checkmarks from your self-assessment = _____.

SELF - ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

Word Processing Software				Total possible number of checkmarks is 21
	Function	**Yes** ✓	**No** ✓	**Comments**
1	Manage the word processing window			
2	Identify parts of the word processing screen			
3	Create and save a new file			
4	Open an existing document			
5	Select text in a document			
6	Rename a document			
7	Change screen views and zoom options			
8	Insert and delete text			
9	Move or copy text within a document and to other documents using menus, shortcut keys or mouse			
10	Demonstrate font formatting (size, style, bold, italics, underline, colour)			
11	Apply paragraph formatting (alignment, indents, line spacing, bullets/numbering,)			
12	Insert symbols			
13	Change page set up options (margins, header/footer, orientation)			
14	Insert pictures from ClipArt Gallery or other sources			
15	Manipulate pictures (move, change size, wrap borders, contrast, brightness)			
16	Create and edit columnar lists using tabs or tables			
17	Repeat font or paragraph features using the Format Painter button			
18	Insert page breaks			
19	Demonstrate editing using a variety of tools (spelling and grammar check, find, replace)			
20	Print documents			
21	Create a variety of mailable documents			

Total possible number of checkmarks is 21.

Total number of **Yes** checkmarks from your self-assessment = _____.

SELF - ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

Presentation Software			Total possible number of checkmarks is 25
Function	**Yes** ✓	**No** ✓	**Comments**
1 Manage the presentation window			
2 Plan and create a presentation using a blank layout			
3 Open and save a presentation file			
4 Insert new slides			
5 Apply different slide layouts			
6 Promote and demote text			
7 Explain the differences between outline, notes, slide show and normal view			
8 Insert or edit text in Outline and Slide views			
9 Move text on a slide (in outline or slide view)			
10 Change the order of, or delete slides			
11 Insert pictures on slides (ClipArt and From File)			
12 Create and format a text box			
13 Create and change the appearance of drawing objects (move, copy, size, rotate, add text)			
14 Insert and format WordArt			
15 Change slide background features			
16 Apply a design template			
17 Change font styles			
18 Apply animation features to text or objects			
19 Access and edit the slide master			
20 Apply slide timings			
21 Apply slide transitions			
22 Orally present a slide show to a group			
23 Print slides in a variety of formats			

SELF - ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

Presentation Software continued

	Function	Yes ✔	No ✔	Comments
24	Print audience handouts and speaker notes			
25	Start a slide show on any slide			

Total possible number of checkmarks is 25.

Total number of **Yes** checkmarks from your self-assessment = _____.

Spreadsheets

Spreadsheets				Total possible number of checkmarks is 26
	Function	Yes ✔	No ✔	Comments
1	Manage the spreadsheet window			
2	Create and save a new spreadsheet			
3	Open an existing document			
4	Input and edit data			
5	Select range(s) using the mouse or keyboard			
6	Create and name a range			
7	Insert a range name in a formula			
8	Work with series (AutoFill)			
9	Modify row and column size			
10	Insert and delete columns and rows			
11	Hide and unhide columns and rows			
12	Move or copy data using menus, shortcut keys or mouse			
13	Change font attributes			
14	Apply number styles (comma, currency, percent)			

Spreadsheets continued

	Function	Yes ✓	No ✓	Comments
15	Apply cell borders and shading			
16	Modify alignment of cell content			
17	Merge cells			
18	Rotate text and change indents			
19	Enter formulas to perform basic calculations			
20	Create formulas using simple functions: SUM, AVERAGE, COUNT, MIN, MAX			
21	Differentiate between absolute, relative and mixed cell references			
22	Create charts using the Chart Wizard			
23	Modify charts			
24	Preview and print charts			
25	Change page set-up (margins, headers/footers, alignment)			
26	Print entire pages or selected ranges			

Total possible number of checkmarks is 26.

Total number of **Yes** checkmarks from your self-assessment = _____.

Database

Database				Total possible number of checkmarks is 23
	Function	Yes ✓	No ✓	Comments
1	Explain purposes of databases			
2	Create a new database			
3	Open an existing database			
4	Define database terms			

SELF - ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

Database continued

	Function	Yes ✓	No ✓	Comments
5	Create a table in design view			
6	Add/delete records			
7	Sort records			
8	Find a record			
9	Apply and remove filters (filter by form and filter by selection)			
10	Print a table in datasheet view			
11	Customize field properties			
12	Establish and print relationships			
13	Create a query using the wizard			
14	Create and edit queries in design view			
15	Specify criteria in a query			
16	Create a delete query			
17	Prepare reports using the wizard			
18	Create a form using the wizard			
19	Insert a calculated field in a report			
20	Add objects to a report or form using the Control Toolbox			
21	Move and resize a control			
22	Preview and print a report			
23	Apply an autoformat to a form or report			

Total possible number of checkmarks is 23.

Total number of **Yes** checkmarks from your self-assessment = _____.

SELF - ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

Internet/E-mail

Internet/E-mail				Total possible number of checkmarks is 20
	Function	**Yes** ✓	**No** ✓	**Comments**
1	Create and send e-mail			
2	Retrieve and store e-mails			
3	Attach a file to a mail message			
4	Create folders to manage e-mail messages			
5	Delete email messages (and empty trash)			
6	Create and insert names in an address book			
7	Define Internet terms			
8	Manage the parts of a browser window			
9	Identify the parts of a URL			
10	Use the address bar			
11	Look for information on the Internet using search engines and directories			
12	Copy information from the Internet into a Word or Excel document			
13	Save and insert a picture from the Internet into a document			
14	Create, use and manage bookmarks/favourites			
15	Explain the history of internet			
16	Define internet terms			
17	Determine reliability of web resources			
18	Explain the process of downloading programs			
19	Practice netiquette			
20	Select an ISP			

Total possible number of checkmarks is 20.

Total number of **Yes** checkmarks from your self-assessment = _____.

Integration

Integration			Total possible number of checkmarks is 3
Function	**Yes** ✓	**No** ✓	**Comments**
1	State the advantages of integration			
2	Integrate a spreadsheet range into a word processing document			
3	Link a spreadsheet with a word processing document			

Total possible number of checkmarks is 3.

Total number of **Yes** checkmarks from your self-assessment = _____.

Suggested Course of Action

Enter your total checkmarks from each assessment below.

Computer Systems   _____

Word Processing Software   _____

Presentation Software   _____

Spreadsheets   _____

Database   _____

Internet/E-mail   _____

Integration   _____

           Total   _____

> Total possible number of checkmarks is **156.**
>
> **Discuss your results with an Adult Learning Centre PLAR Advisor.**

125 or more ✓	**93-124** ✓	**Less than 93** ✓
You have a good chance of succeeding in the PLAR process	You could proceed with the challenge process after self study to improve in weak areas	Take the Computer Application 30S course. It is unlikely that you would be successful in the PLAR process.

If you feel that your current skills and knowledge match or exceed what is being taught in the Software Applications 30S course, you can move ahead with the PLAR process. The PLAR process can consist of any of the following methods of evaluating your knowledge of all or specific units of the course. These are examples of some of the assessment tools that can be used by PLAR assessors; individual learning centers may use other evaluation methods.

Case Studies (examples)

- organize a file management system
- create a document given general guidelines
- prepare and deliver a topic using a presentation package
- design a database

Task Specific Assignments

- open various software files and make changes
- edit or format a document given specific instructions
- create a database file including tables, queries and reports
- send an e-mail message, including options

Interview/Demonstration

- bring samples of work (E.G. letters, tables, reports, spreadsheets) and discuss setup, formatting, etc.
- explain how to manipulate program screen

Reflections on Samples

- reflections include thoughts and feelings about your computer skills and accomplishments.
- sample reflection questions can include:
  - → What have you produced?
  - → What new skills did you learn in producing your work?
  - → What new knowledge have you gained?
  - → What was the most difficult part of completing the work?
  - → Why do you think it was difficult or easy for you?
  - → What was the most satisfying thing that happened?

Tests

- Multiple choice or short answer (See next page; correct answers are bolded)

These are examples of possible test questions. The bold text indicates a correct answer.

Sample Test

A fast way to add up a column of numbers is to click in the cell below the numbers and then:

    a. Click Subtotals on the Data menu.
    b. View the sum in the formula bar.
    c. Click the AutoSum button on the Standard toolbar, then press ENTER.

How should you print a selected area of a worksheet, if you'll want to print a different area next time?
    a. On the File menu, point to Print Area, and then click Set Print Area.
    b. On the File menu, click Print, and then click Selection under Print what.
    c. On the View menu, click Custom Views, then click Add.

What's a quick way to extend two numbers to a longer sequence, for instance 1 through 20?

    a. Select both cells, and then drag the fill handle over the range you want, for instance 18 more rows.
    b. Select the range you want, including both cells, point to Fill on the Edit menu, and then click Down.
    c. Copy the second cell, click in the cell below it, on the Standard toolbar click the down arrow on the Paste button, and then click Paste Special.

How do you change column width to fit the contents?

    a. Single-click the boundary to the left of the column heading.
    b. Double-click the boundary to the right of the column heading.
    c. Press ALT and single-click anywhere in the column.

Suppose you have columns of data that span more than one printed page. How can you automatically print the column headings on each page?

    a. Click Page Setup on the File menu, click the Sheet tab, and enter the row that contains these column headings under Print titles.
    b. Click Page Setup on the File menu, click the Page tab, click the Options button, then enter your choices.
    c. Click Page Setup on the File menu, click the Sheet tab, and make a selection under the Print heading.

Sample Test continued

Your document is five pages long. How can you number the upper-right corner of each page so that it says "Page 1 of 5," "Page 2 of 5," and so on, whenever it's printed?

a. **On the View menu, click Header and Footer, and then click the Align Right button on the Formatting toolbar. On the Header and Footer toolbar, click the Insert AutoText button, and then click Page X of Y.**
b. On the File menu, click Page Setup, click the Layout tab, and then under Headers and footers, click Different odd and even.
c. On the Format menu, click Bullets and Numbering, then click the Numbered tab and assign numbers to the preferred location on your pages.

If you've just formatted some text so that it stands out, how can you quickly copy that formatting to use on other text?

a. Click anywhere in the formatted text, double-click the Formatting toolbar boxes showing the font name and size, then click where you want the same format, and start to type.
b. Select the formatted text. On the Format menu, click Reveal Formatting. Do the same in the other text to learn what you need to change.
c. **Select the formatted text. On the Standard toolbar, click the Format Painter button, select the other text, then release the mouse button.**

THE NEXT STEP

Now that you are confident in proceeding with the challenge process for Software Applications 30S, it is time to apply for and complete the challenge assessment.

1 Complete an application at your adult learning center.

2 After your application has been processed, you will be contacted with the date and time available for you to complete your PLAR assessment.

3 Once you have committed to that date, you are responsible for completing your evaluation/testing.

4 You will receive written notification of your PLAR results.