

Study Skills General

Organisation

- Make sure you keep all your work in a file, properly dated. Divide your General English study from your Academic/Exam Prep Study if necessary.
- Organise it by subject and use plenty of colourful images and dividers.
- Look back at your grammar and vocabulary notes from time to time to check you're remembering rules, common collocations, idioms, etc. Keep your file 'fresh' and free from clutter and worksheets or notes you no longer need.
- Remember to use colourful highlighting pens for your notes as they can be a useful aid to memory and make difficult grammar tasks and revision more pleasant to do!
- Buy a recommended (English-English) Learner's Dictionary adapted to your level.
- Learn the phonemic system of symbols for pronunciation so that you understand how the dictionary word is pronounced.
- Make sure you know ALL the parts of speech (noun, verb, adjective, adverbs, prepositions, linking words etc) and punctuation marks.
- Invest in a good Grammar book adapted to your level with exercises and answers.

Skills and Tips for Class

Language practice:

If possible, avoid sitting beside someone of the same nationality as you.

Talk to your classmates in English (at all times) and ask them questions about their weekend, themselves (where appropriate), what they are planning for the weekend, for holidays, for the future. Get used to starting conversations and using different question forms. Correct your own errors. Ask for advice on or help with a language point and share your own tips/knowledge etc.

You should try to be aware of grammar mistakes you make and ones you make repeatedly. REVISE this grammar as soon as you can! Check you are using the past and future tenses, modal verbs and conditionals correctly, verb patterns and prepositions correctly.

Outside of class

Learning a language takes time. It needs commitment but for all of us it is easier to spend time on something if we enjoy it. This could be:

- Reading a particular webpage, Facebook page or Twitter account that interests you, for example about sports, celebrities, fashion, art, travel, news or politics. If reading is difficult, try Simple English Wikipedia.
- Listening to songs with English subtitles, on YouTube for example.
- Watching videoclips, programmes or films with English subtitles e.g. on YouTube.
- Writing reviews or comments online
- Reading a graded reader or other book
- Writing dialogue with an online AI chatbot

Skills for Self-study

Re-assess your self-study practice and study area:

Are you studying for long enough or for too long without a break?

Are you keeping to a strict routine? If not, why not?

Is your studying area quiet, comfortable, spacious and light enough? Could you do some practice with a friend?

Practice your grammar and writing skills for 1.5 hours a day + 1 – 1.5 hrs solid reading and listening a day by yourself. Homework is **additional** to this!

Try to consolidate what you have learnt in class. The grammar and writing tasks will be getting more sophisticated so give yourself TIME to complete homework tasks! You may need to look at your notes or grammar guidebook again for more complex use of the passive, or different relative clauses, or different types of conditional...

Follow up your class note-taking – be clear and concise and use diagrams like star charts, spidergrams, flow diagrams, underlining and highlighting words with coloured pens.

Practise making up true sentences using new language, linking words, simple relative clauses. Personalise examples in as many different tenses and 'voices' as possible (use active AND passive forms).

Practise spoken English whenever and wherever you can, using words and phrases you have recently learnt. Read short texts aloud and record yourself! Ask a friend to listen. Do they understand you?

Practise giving instructions on how to do complicated things in sequence.

Practise repeating pronunciation of words using a recommended electronic dictionary.