

Resources to Help You Practice English

Developed by [English Language Services](#), Illinois Tech

This page contains links to English language websites to help you practice speaking, listening, reading, pronunciation, and grammar. We have also listed several sites that we like around the topics of life in the US and life in Chicago.

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Speaking

[SPEAK conversation sessions at Illinois Tech](#)

This is an in-person event. Every week during the university “lunch hour,” meet with international and domestic students and English language instructors to practice your spoken English. Lunch is provided! See our [website](#) for more details.

[Toastmasters International](#)

Tips and resources to help with public speaking and giving presentations, including mini-courses, podcasts, and videos to develop your public speaking skills.

[Bank of English conversational phrases](#)

The University of Michigan developed this extensive list of phrases commonly used in discussion. Also includes audio for pronunciation

[English Central](#)

Large collection of videos featuring native English speakers and tools for pronunciation practice. Also offers Interactive exercises and quizzes that reinforce vocabulary, comprehension, and speaking skills

[BBC Learning English](#)

The BBC has a large collection of audio and video lessons, interactive exercises, quizzes, and language tips. Go to “courses” and scroll down. There are also free short courses to practice specific skills in speaking.

[Speak Confident English](#)

Many videos with useful speaking tips (pronunciation / vocabulary / functions)

Vocabulary

[Quizlet](#)

This site helps you create flashcards to practice new vocabulary. You can also add images and access shared lists of vocabulary from other users.

[BBC Learning English – Learning Vocabulary](#)

The BBC has a section dedicated to building spoken language vocabulary – more of a focus on idioms and phrases

[English Central](#)

Good videos and activities to building vocabulary skills

[Business English Pod](#)

Many useful podcasts with focus on building vocabulary

[English Language Listening Library Online](#)

Listening sites with audio and video for different levels. Includes transcripts and vocabulary quizzes

Pronunciation

[English Central](#)

Wide variety of short videos with pronunciation exercises

[Rachel's English](#)

YouTube channel with a wide selection of pronunciation and conversational videos

Listening

[Business English Pod](#)

Hundreds of authentic business conversations, lessons, and quizzes

[English Language Listening Library Online](#)

Listening sites with audio and video for different levels. Includes transcripts and vocabulary quizzes

[ESL Bits](#)

Different audiobooks and audio stories in English together with their transcriptions. All the audio materials are available for listening online (no downloading option).

[BBC Learning English](#)

Audio and video lessons, interactive exercises, quizzes, and language tips. Go under "courses" and scroll down. Many lessons have video and comprehension questions to improve listening skills.

[ESL Videos](#)

Short videos with questions to test comprehension

Other Listening sites:

[Stitcher](#)

A variety of news and entertainment podcasts

[Voice of America Learning English](#)

Voice of America news podcasts, and videos on several topics. Includes audio at slower speeds and transcripts to follow along as you listen.

[Scientific American](#)

Several news' podcasts and videos on scientific topics

[National Public Radio](#)

Several podcasts on many topics such as business, politics, contemporary topics, and issues.

[MIT OpenCourseWare \(OCW\)](#)

Academic lectures from MIT courses to practice academic listening skills

[Check, Please Chicago](#)

A local show about Chicago restaurants and food

[Story Corps](#)

A collection of stories on several cultural topics including justice, love, military, and parenthood

[The Kids Should See This](#)

Interesting short videos on current subjects in science and technology

[The Daily Podcast](#)

New York Times podcast that is released daily on a current event. Short podcasts of 20-30 minutes

[ESL Lab](#)

Many different listening activities with pre-listening exercises, comprehension questions, and post-listening tasks

[My Unsung Hero](#)

Short (~5 min) stories about people helping each other

Reading

[ELC Study Zone](#)

Short readings sorted by level, followed by comprehension quizzes

[ESL bits](#)

Selection of audiobooks and novellas to read online

[Scientific American](#)

Science and engineering related articles from a popular magazine

[JSTOR Daily](#)

Articles attempting to enlighten the current events in our world from various standpoints

[Reader's Digest](#)

Hundreds of short news stories to choose from

[Rong Chang](#)

A variety of links to essays, short stories, mini novels, and dictation practice organized by level

[Short Story Guide](#)

A collection of short stories to choose from

[The Conversation](#)

A variety of news and academic articles for the general public

Writing

[UEFAP \(Using English for Academic Purposes\)](#)

This website gives students the chance to practice all the basics of academic writing online. Click on the yellow "Exercises" tab on the left to access topics.

[Purdue Online Writing Lab Grammar Exercises](#)

A collection of grammar exercises to help students practice grammar skills

[Write & Improve](#)

Practice grammar, vocabulary, and general writing skills independently, anywhere and at any time, without the physical presence of a teacher. You submit your writing and the tool gives you feedback and advice on your writing.

[Academic Phrasebank](#)

A list of useful phrases for academic writing

[Writing Guides](#) (University of Michigan collection)

[Writing Guides and Tools](#) (George Mason University collection)

[Writing Tips and Tools](#) (University of North Carolina collection)

Other Writing sites:

[Purdue Online Writing Lab](#)

Purdue University Writing Center website that includes information on academic writing and citation

[Zotero](#)

A tool to help you collect, cite, and store research. Online tutorial available [here!](#)

[Longman English Dictionary](#)

Online dictionary that includes grammatical information, examples, and pronunciation

[Merriam Webster's Thesaurus](#)

Online thesaurus which includes synonyms, antonyms, related words, and phrases

[Merriam Webster Learner's Dictionary](#)

Online dictionary that includes the most popular words, as well as vocabulary quizzes

[Wordnik](#)

Dictionary site that also includes how the word is being used right now on Twitter and other social media sites

Grammar

[Road to Grammar](#)

Site with explanations and quizzes on a wide variety of English grammar points

[Grammar Bytes](#)

Grammar practice with many different grammatical errors

[Rong Chang - English Grammar](#)

Several links to grammar exercises and tips

[Purdue Online Writing Lab Grammar Exercises](#)

A collection of grammar exercises to help students practice grammar skills

[English 4U](#)

A collection of grammar exercises organized by skill and topic

[Englisch Hilfen](#)

A collection of grammar exercises (and explanations!)

Learning about American Culture

News:

[Vox](#)

[Slate](#)

[CNN](#)

[CNN 10](#) (10 min news videos for students)

[New York Times](#)

To access your free [New York Times](#) subscription through Illinois Tech's Galvin Library, follow [this link](#) to the library website.

English Language Services Resources, updated June 2023

Life in the U.S.:

[Useful guide to living in the U.S.](#)

[Guide to cultural differences in the U.S.](#)

Exploring Chicago

These sites give up-to-date information on what is happening in and around Chicago:

[Chicago Metromix](#)

[Chicago Reader](#)

[Timeout Chicago](#)

[Welcome to Chicago](#)

[Chicago Magazine](#)

Other Resources:

[Chicago Eater](#)

A local magazine with different up-to-date current events and topics mostly about Chicago

[Check, Please Chicago](#)

A popular TV show on which local people review and discuss restaurants in the city

[Yelp](#)

Local restaurant news and ratings as well as ideas of places to dine in the city

[Chicago Tribune](#)

Chicago's largest daily newspaper

[Chicago Sun-Times](#)

A daily Chicago newspaper