

Curriculum Overview

READING

Reading instruction includes exposure to a wide range of texts, vocabulary building, reading strategies, and critical thinking. Students are expected to demonstrate reading comprehension in a variety of ways, both orally and in writing. At upper levels, reading and writing are taught together so that students learn to respond critically and write from texts. In levels 1-4, students work on building foundational vocabulary from the General Service List, a list of 2,000 English words that are frequently used in written text. In level 5, the Academic Word List (AWL) is introduced. Students also practice dictionary skills at each level. All students engage in extensive reading to reinforce vocabulary and promote reading speed.

WRITING

Students do a variety of writing assignments, formal and informal, including free-writing, journaling, reading logs, note-taking, etc. in all their classes. During focused writing instruction, students work on sentence structure and well-developed paragraphs and essays. Different types of rhetorical organization are emphasized at different levels. Students are introduced to the writing process at the earliest levels, and all major writing assignments require students to write multiple drafts, collaborate and participate in peer review. At intermediate levels, students begin to respond to and write from texts while at upper levels, students also learn to conduct research, with special classes in library research starting at the intermediate levels.

GRAMMAR

We cannot cover the entirety of English grammar in our courses, but we try to present the forms and structures that we believe will be the most helpful to our students. We introduce most of the major structures within the first five levels and present some of the finer points in the two upper levels, with an emphasis on the relationship between form and meaning.

LISTENING/SPEAKING

In the listening/speaking classes, students learn strategies for listening and communicating inside and outside the classroom. At lower levels, students learn to participate in informal conversations on personal topics and current events, gaining fluency and confidence. They give informal, informational presentations or demonstrations. At intermediate levels, students turn to more academic skills, including comprehending academic lectures and note-taking. At upper levels, students focus on public speaking and formal presentations while continuing to develop aural comprehension and note-taking skills. At all levels, students aim for accuracy in pronunciation and grammar.

MODULES

Each session, we offer five to six different elective classes. These classes allow students to learn English while focusing on a particular content area (e.g., American film, literature, drama, TOEFL preparation) or language skill (e.g., pronunciation, spelling & vocabulary).