

Intensive & Semi-Intensive English Programs

The Intensive English Program is structured to accelerate learning through maximum time in the classroom and features that help the student reach his/her goals sooner. The Semi-Intensive Program offers the same level of quality English instruction with some limited features. It is structured so the student attends classes in the morning only.

► Curriculum Description

The ELS Language Centers Intensive and Semi-Intensive English Programs *consist of 12 instructional levels*. Each level requires four weeks to complete. The most elementary level is designated as Level 101, and the most advanced level is Level 112. Below is a comparison of study expectations (by level category completion) for Intensive versus Semi-Intensive English Programs.

At the conclusion of the:	Semi-Intensive Program (20 lessons per week) Students can...	Intensive English Program (30 lessons per week) Students can meet the Semi-Intensive program goals, <u>and</u> ...
Beginning Levels (Level 101-103)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand and respond to simple questions and directions from a native speaker. Participate in brief conversations with emphasis placed on survival English skills. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand a variety of simplified articles and stories. Guess the meaning of basic vocabulary from written context. Communicate ideas in a simple paragraph with revisions.
Intermediate Levels (Level 104-106)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand most questions and statements at normal speaking speed. Sustain a conversation with a native speaker about familiar topics. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand near-authentic readings on a variety of topics with some difficulty. Communicate most ideas clearly in writing on a variety of familiar topics. Effectively write a multiple-paragraph essay and/or business memo with some revisions.
Advanced Levels (Level 107 - 109)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use the language with sufficient accuracy and fluency to speak effectively on formal and informal social, academic and professional topics. Understand most conversations with little difficulty. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand and summarize most readings targeted at native English speakers. Understand lectures on familiar topics with little difficulty and take notes. Communicate ideas clearly in writing on a variety of social, professional, and academic topics. Students can successfully write a brief business report. Are ready to enter many community colleges and career schools, many of which accept Intensive Level 109 completion in place of a standardized test of English proficiency such as TOEFL® or IELTS®.
Masters Levels (Level 110-112)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate verbally with near-native fluency. Understand and use a wide range of idiomatic speech. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete an extended research paper project. Conduct business in English using standard writing and speaking formats. Are ready to enter 4-year college & university programs, many of which accept Intensive Level 112 completion in place of a standardized test of English proficiency such as TOEFL® or IELTS®.

Sample Class Schedule (Center Offering 4 Core Ability Groupings)

	Beginning Levels (101-103)	Intermediate Levels (104-106)	Advanced Levels (107-109)	Masters Levels (110-112)
Period 1 - 50 mins 8:30 - 9:20	Reading & Writing*	Structure & Speaking Practice*	Language Technology Center*	Language Studies*
Period 2 - 50 mins 9:30 - 10:20	Structure & Speaking Practice*	Structure & Speaking Practice*	Reading & Writing*	Language Studies*
Period 3 - 50 mins 10:30 - 11:20	Structure & Speaking Practice*	Language Technology Center*	Structure & Speaking Practice*	Language Technology Center*
Period 4 - 50 mins 11:30 - 12:20	Language Technology Center*	Reading & Writing*	Structure & Speaking Practice*	Reading & Writing*
12:20 - 1:30	Lunch (Semi-Intensive student day ends)			
Period 5 - 55 mins (Mon – Thurs) 1:30-2:25	Conversation	American Idioms**	TOEFL Prep**	TOEFL Prep**
Period 6 - 60 mins (Mon – Thurs) 2:35-3:35	Vocabulary	American Film**	Current Events**	Research Skills**

* Core Classes. Exact period schedule may vary by location or session. For example, some locations may offer the Structure & Speaking Practice class in different periods other than those shown in the sample schedule above.

** Sample Skills Enhancement Class. Exact schedule, including Skills Enhancement Classes offered, may vary by location. On Fridays, four lessons are scheduled in the morning only to allow for free afternoons at all Intensive & Semi-Intensive English Program locations. Note: The TOEFL Prep elective is only a 1 class option, which cannot be guaranteed. For more intensive TOEFL Preparation choose the official Preparation for TOEFL® iBT program.

Student Course Level Placement - A student's level is determined through placement testing done soon after arrival. The placement test is made up of three parts: an oral interview, a writing sample, and a multiple-choice exam that tests listening, grammar and vocabulary.

Pre-Arrival Test (PAT)

Students may also choose to take the ELS "PAT" (Pre-Arrival Test) before coming to the U.S. Selected ELS agents administer the test on-line in their offices for a small fee, paid by credit card. The test includes grammar, listening, speaking and writing components. The results place students into low beginning, beginning, low-intermediate, intermediate, low advanced, and advanced categories. Students placing into the low advanced and advanced categories qualify for advanced levels such as the Complete Prep Program for the TOEFL® iBT. However, they will still have the "live" testing on arrival to confirm results and determine a specific level of proficiency.

If a student studies three or more sessions in a program of 30 hours of more per week (intensive, Complete Prep for TOEFL® iBT, or Fast Track), the PAT fee of \$35 is counted as a credit toward the fourth session.

Class Size and Combined Levels - While class size depends on the number of students enrolled at each level, all classes have a maximum limit. *The maximum for Structure/Speaking Practice and Beginning Conversation classes is 15 students. We keep these classes small because it is especially important that students have many opportunities to speak.*

The maximum number of students in Reading and Writing classes is 15, in Skills Enhancement classes, the maximum number of students is 20. In these classes, students will be doing more work on their own or in small groups, so class size is not as critical. In the Language Technology Center (LTC), where students work independently, class size depends on the capacity of the lab. For example, if there is space for 25 students, the maximum number of students will be 25. Remember that many classes are smaller than the maximums. The average class size for Structure/Speaking Practice is 13, while Reading and Writing and Skills Enhancement classes average 17 students.

Two or three levels are sometimes combined, especially when there are only a few students in a level. For example, a group of Level 104 students may be combined with a group of 105 students. On the other hand, we limit the number of combined classes and we rarely combine more than three levels except in the Language Technology Center (LTC), where students work on their own. When there are students of different levels in class, students' individual needs will be met. All of our teachers are experienced at teaching mixed-level classes, and they are able to evaluate all students at their true proficiency levels.

Textbooks - In Levels 101-109, ELS-branded texts are used in Structure/Speaking Practice and Reading/Writing classes. These texts include works from respected authors in the ESL field today. The content has been tailored exclusively by and for ELS to fit our curriculum and methodology. In addition to these proprietary ELS texts, which students may keep upon completion of the level, students also have access to class sets for use during the course. All materials support the communicative approach used at ELS Language Centers.

In the highly advanced Masters Levels (110-112), students use commercial materials proven to develop the listening, note taking and reading skills of students at a native-speaker level. They also use college-level composition texts and prepare to create American-style research papers.

Language Technology Center Lab - Leading technology plays an important role in our students' English language studies. As an alternative to the limited traditional audio-only language lab, the ELS Language Centers Language Technology Centers (LTC) provide students with the opportunity to work with:

- Desktop computers with flat-screen monitors
- Full capacity for playing CD and DVD-based programs
- A wide variety of language learning software, from general English to popular songs
- Internet access (in LTC or on campus)

In the LTC, students work through goals outlined in an Individualized Learning Plan. These goals are developed from results of placement testing and teacher recommendation. In the LTC a teacher monitors their progress on these goals and is available at all times to provide support.

“Bonus” Class Sessions - These free sessions allow the student to practice English in our Language Technology Centers twice each week. These sessions are conveniently scheduled at the end of the Intensive Program class day (after class Period 6). Students may use Bonus Lab for:

- Pronunciation practice
- Test review
- Vocabulary and spelling practice
- Word processing of research papers
- Opportunities to complete goals of the Individualized Learning Plan

Evaluation - At the end of each 4-week session, students are evaluated for advancement to the next level based on their mastery of level objectives. Criteria used for this evaluation include but are not limited to:

- Demonstration of skills during class
- Quizzes and tests
- Homework assignments
- Standardized Level Tests (final examinations)

Attendance Policy - Because ELS Language Centers would like students to derive the maximum benefit from their English courses, students are expected to attend classes full time. Regular attendance is also a requirement monitored by government immigration authorities. A student with a total of 18 unexcused absences in the Intensive English Program (30 lessons per week) or 12 unexcused absences in the Semi-Intensive English Program (20 lessons per week) may fail the current level. If a student begins to accumulate excessive absences, he/she will be counseled by the Academic Director and encouraged to participate fully.

► **Methodology and Individual Class Descriptions**

Over the past two decades, there have been some important changes in the way people learn a language. These changes have led to the development of an approach called “communicative language teaching” (CLT). CLT is an approach based on a set of related principles that are widely accepted among language teachers today.

CLT places importance on the needs of learners as they use the language rather than on the study of grammar and other linguistic forms (syntax, spelling patterns, etc.). Grammar is still taught in the communicative classroom; however, CLT pays less attention to language knowledge (being able to recite a rule) than language use (being able to put together a correct sentence that fits the context).

The change in emphasis from the language itself to the needs of the language learner has led to more flexibility in the syllabus and a greater focus on language tasks. Tasks are activities in which learners use the language to achieve a particular purpose. For example, the goal of one group of students may be to work in hotels where there are many English-speaking guests. For these students an appropriate activity would be to role-play a situation between a hotel desk clerk and a visitor wishing to book a room. While not all language tasks can be so directly related to student needs, the CLT classroom gives students the opportunity to use the language in realistic situations.

Communicative methodology draws a clear distinction between fluency and accuracy. Activities are designed to improve fluency (e.g. free discussion and writing daily in a journal), allowing students to practice the language; correct form is less important. Therefore, when students are working on fluency-based activities, teachers rarely interrupt to make

corrections. On the other hand, when the purpose of an exercise is to improve accuracy—for example, to teach students to use a new grammar structure—it is appropriate for the teacher to correct their mistakes.

Finally, CLT measures success in terms of whether or not students have learned certain well-defined skills. According to teachers who follow this approach, successful language learners are those who are able to a) use the language to achieve their goals, b) understand the difference between the forms they have learned and the functions that they perform, and c) use feedback to improve their knowledge.

In summary, a communicative language program is one in which goals are individualized and relate to learners' needs, learning activities (tasks) take place within realistic contexts, and attention is paid to fluency.

Structure/Speaking Practice - This class incorporates listening, speaking, vocabulary and grammar to give students opportunities to practice language in meaningful situations. The focus is on using the language rather than memorizing rules. This class meets two class periods per day.

Conversation - The purpose of this class is to build fluency. In Conversation, students have the opportunity to talk about many different subjects and learn a great deal of vocabulary. Dating, smoking in public places, parent-child relations, and ethical questions on the job are typical of the topics discussed. Emphasis is placed on exploring the “functions” of the English language (making polite requests, registering a complaint, asking for information, etc.).

Reading/Writing - This class focuses on improving reading comprehension and reading speed while practicing skills such as skimming, scanning, drawing inferences and conclusions, and summarizing an article. A variety of writing tasks, often tied to the readings, helps students practice and reinforce skills learned in the Structure/Speaking Practice class.

All students take one hour of Reading/Writing in the morning. In the afternoon, advanced and masters students who plan to enter American colleges and universities will take a second class with a reading/writing emphasis. Afternoon (Intensive) students may then choose from any number of other classes for skills enhancement to complete their sixth hour.

Language Technology Center Lab - This class is supervised by a teacher who monitors the Individualized Learning Plan for each student. The plan uses a variety of media and programming choices to develop English skills in areas such as listening comprehension, vocabulary development, use of idioms, and reinforcement of grammar lessons learned in the SSP classes. Students are guided through program selections appropriate to their level. The lab teacher takes student preferences into account in monitoring Learning Plans, including recommendations from teachers in other classes.

Technology-supported English learning complements the live classroom. This is, it reinforces the skills taught in classrooms, and also allows the student to learn at his or her own pace. The Language Technology Centers (LTCs) provide our students with state-of-the-art English-learning technology with new computers for every student in the class, with 17” flat screen monitors, and teacher consoles with reporting and scoring capabilities. Coupled with the impressive hardware is new, ELS-branded software that provides students with dynamic and engaging English-learning programs. These will include engaging and colorful general story-based programs; grammar-skill programs; pronunciation CDs; and opportunities to learn popular American hit songs. Screens are also embedded with materials for business English and TOEFL® Preparation.

Skills Enhancement Classes

ELS Language Centers offers afternoon Skills Enhancement courses to students in the Intermediate and Advanced levels of the Intensive English program when at least ten (10) students register for a particular course. Skills Enhancement classes are offered at all of our locations in the USA, although course choices may vary by location and session. Lists of sample of courses that may be offered include:

Advanced Vocabulary
American Film
American Idioms
Business English elective*
Current Events
Grammar Review
Here's Hollywood (Santa Monica)

Listening & Note Taking
Pronunciation
Public Speaking
San Antonio Live! (San Antonio)
San Francisco English in Action (San Francisco)
U.S. Culture
and others...

* Note: Students interested in intensive iBT TOEFL Preparation or Business English should consider selecting one of our designated locations offering these more focused courses. Please find more information on these courses later in this section.