

Recommended Study Materials

As a follow up to the list of materials suggested by the English department last week, we'd like to recommend some additional materials for those of you with advanced English skills. It's not an easy time to be a student, but the current situation does give you a great opportunity to try out different resources for yourself. Here are a few of our suggestions to point you in the right direction, but of course it's up to you to make the most of them. Be sure to use the time you have productively!

Reading

One of the most important things you can do to maintain and improve your English skills is to read a lot. Listening to audiobooks is also great and right now Audible Stories <https://stories.audible.com/> has a range of children's books and classics that you can listen to for free, including Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone (which if you haven't read yet, you really should. It's amazing!)

You can also find thousands of books that were published before 1924 for free on Project Gutenberg. Here is a link to the children's section <http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/bookshelf/20> by order of popularity, but you could also challenge yourself to some Shakespeare or Oscar Wilde. You can download the books in almost any format you can imagine to read on your phone or another device.

Another great thing that you can do is listen to the audiobook while reading the words. Research shows that this helps children to understand the meaning of the book more clearly and makes reading more fun. It also helps increase reading speed and fluency as you have to keep up with the audio. You can also change the speed of the audiobook to be faster or slower if you need to. Another thing it helps with is pronunciation. As spelling and pronunciation are often different in English, sometimes there are words that we have read over and over, but never said out loud. Listening while reading helps us learn to say those difficult words.

Here is a list of some classic books you may be interested in reading. They are all available for free from Project Gutenberg. Some of them even have free Audible Stories available so that you can listen while you read.

Free Books with free Audible Stories

Adventure

The Swiss Family Robinson

The Merry Adventures of Robin Hood

Robinson Crusoe

Fantasy

The Wonderful Wizard of Oz

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland

Through the Looking Glass

Animals

White Fang

The Call of the Wild

Black Beauty

The Jungle Book 1&2

Other free books you might like on the Gutenberg Project are:

Treasure Island

Peter Pan

A Christmas Carol

The Story of Doctor Dolittle

There are also lots of great modern stories on Audible Stories that you can just listen to.

The Harry Potter Series

Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone has already been mentioned above, but the whole Harry Potter series is highly recommended.

"It is our choices ... that show what we truly are, far more than our abilities."

- JK Rowling (author of the Harry Potter books.)

Guns, Germs and Steel by Jared Diamond is another book that is strongly recommended. It's currently only 350 yen on Kindle. According to amazon.com, it is artful, informative and delightful. It talks about the geographical and environmental factors that shaped the modern world.

Rick Riordan Books

Another great option if you want to improve your reading comprehension in an enjoyable way is to try the first books in the Percy Jackson series by Rick Riordan. The reader guides on his website contain background information on the mythology the books are based on and comprehension/discussion questions to encourage further thinking

Books:

The Lightning Thief

Sea of Monsters

The Titan's Curse

Reader's Guides:

http://rickriordan.com/resource_type/readers-guide-to-the-series/

E Reading Worksheets is a site that offers reading passages with comprehension questions based on the US common core guidelines, divided by grade level. It is likely to be especially useful for those who plan to take SAT/ACT. <https://www.ereadingworksheets.com/>

News

It is easy to become overwhelmed and anxious with the amount of news that there is available, especially right now when we can't go to school and see our friends. It is important to know what is happening in the world, but it is also important not to get too stressed out about it so it's a good idea to set a time limit for how long you spend watching or reading it each day.

The Washington Post and **New York Times** are reliable sources of information to keep you up to date with current events. They're a good source of more complex grammar styles, idiomatic expressions, and topic-specific vocabulary.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com>

<https://www.nytimes.com>

For news articles aimed at a young audience, **Newsround** from CBBC is great.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround>

For news videos, check out **CNN10**, a daily 10-minute news show that covers all the latest news for kids.

<https://edition.cnn.com/cnn10>

You can challenge your memory and understanding of the news with **KET's** weekly 15-minute quiz, and you can even share your opinion on the weekly topic afterwards.

<https://www.pbslearningmedia.org/collection/newsquiz/>

Breaking News English is a site for learners of English and provides lessons related to recent news stories from around the world. Each lesson contains a news article that you can read and/or listen to, followed by various activities based on the article. Although some of the activities are designed to be done in pairs or groups, you can easily skip those or adapt them for independent study. <https://breakingnewsenglish.com>

Learn About the World

Crash Course <https://thecrashcourse.com> (also on YouTube) has videos on all sorts of topics from world history, to economics to games. The creators are John and Hank Green. They are brother who are famous writers and YouTubers. Their videos are good listening practice because they talk very fast, but you can also turn on the subtitles. Their videos are very entertaining and can teach you a lot.

If you want to test your science knowledge or try an interesting experiment, head to **Science Kids** and take a look at their facts, experiments, projects and quizzes.

<https://www.sciencekids.co.nz>

For space buffs, **NASA Kids' Club** is a great place to start. It has plenty of information about past missions, space exploration and technology as well as interactive activities.

<https://www.nasa.gov/kidsclub/index.html>

National Geographic for Kids is for the explorer in you. It has information about all sorts of wild and weird creatures, the environment and inspiring people. You can read articles from the brightest scientists and explorers, see pictures from the best photographers and watch short videos from renowned filmmakers. As well as being a great way to learn about our planet, it's also a good place to learn English vocabulary and different grammar styles. It can be a useful resource if you need to do research too. <https://kids.nationalgeographic.com>

Kids Discover is a website for the curious. You can learn many things about science and history, and make some new discoveries. You can share the new information you gathered with your friends and maybe even have a scientific discussion. The site also provides differentiated reading levels. You can choose the difficulty according to your capability.

<https://online.kidsdiscover.com>

Scholastic Learn at Home has a range of interesting articles for you to read along with questions and writing tasks for you to have a go at. Materials are divided according to grade level, and simplified versions of the articles are also available.

<https://classroommagazines.scholastic.com/support/learnathome.html>

Time for Kids contains articles written in a way that children and teens can understand easily. The level of each article is included to make it easier for you to choose what is suited to your ability. You can also try the more advanced topics and see how you do. Not all the articles are free, but you get enough interesting topics that you can read without paying. It also has some teaching materials and quizzes that you can try. <https://www.timeforkids.com>

The contents in **Newsela** are categorized according to your interests and English level. They have a wide variety of topics from science to math, arts and more. The articles here are simplified and adapted from different news portals, reliable websites and texts. This website also teaches news literacy in a way that is enticing and exciting. Sign up is free, and for full access you just need to provide your e-mail address. <https://newsela.com>

Science News for Students contains articles for teenage readers on science-related subjects. Below the articles, you can find a glossary with explanations of STEM-related words that appear in the main text. Some articles also come with questions for you to answer and word-find puzzles with key vocabulary.

<https://www.sciencenewsforstudents.org>

School Subjects

If there is a school subject that you would like to learn about in English, check out the following websites:

PBS Learning Media <https://www.pbslearningmedia.org>

Khan Academy <https://www.khanacademy.org>

You can search them by subject and grade and find all sorts of helpful resources like videos, exercises and quizzes. If you are struggling to keep to a schedule, Khan Academy has a daily schedule you can follow with links to activities for each subject for each time slot. You do need to create a free account to use Khan Academy.

Seneca <https://www.senecalearning.com>

This site gives you free access to content on a wide range of school subjects and allows you to test yourself on what you have learned.

Writing

New York Times writing prompts for students

The New York Times offers prompts and ideas for short writing on many different topics. Choose a topic that interests you and test yourself by seeing if you can answer the prompt within 5-10 minutes.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/12/learning/over-1000-writing-prompts-for-students.html>

Vocabulary

Improve your vocabulary with **Vocabulary.com**. You can make your own vocabulary lists by copying in the article you want to learn the words from or choose an existing vocabulary list. Challenge yourself by hitting 'Practice' and choose the correct meaning for the word or try the 'Spelling Bee' and listen to the word and type in the correct spelling.

<https://www.vocabulary.com>