

# ESL on the Internet



## Student Handbook

Jamaica Plain Community Centers  
and  
English for New Bostonians

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Many thanks to  
Rosario Gomez-Dunn  
and  
Cathy Coleman

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## How is distance learning similar to a regular class?

The courses have lessons to teach you about English. There is work for you to complete and tests for you to take.

I will check your work 2 times every week. I will make suggestions about how to continue improving your English.

## How is distance learning different?

You study from any computer with Internet—at your home, at a friend or family’s home, at school, at the library, or anywhere. You make your own schedule for studying. It is very convenient for you! There is no book for the course. All your work is on a website.

You will not work with other students in a classroom. There are no class meetings. You study by yourself most of the time. (You can have a study partner if you want.)

You don’t see the teacher in person. You communicate by email, telephone, or webcam.

There may be problems with distractions where you study. You have to find solutions for these problems.

## Is distance learning for me?

Distance learning is good for some students. See if it is good for you.

I am good at organizing my time. When I need to do something, I am good at completing it and I don’t need someone to remind me.	Yes	No
I feel comfortable using computers. There are places I can go to use a computer with Internet (my home, a friend’s home, the library, or another place.)	Yes	No
I am comfortable studying alone. I do not need to sit with other students and a teacher to learn.	Yes	No
I feel comfortable reading instructions. I like to try to understand instructions, and then ask for help if I need it.	Yes	No
I feel comfortable asking the teacher for help when I need it.	Yes	No
I have 4 to 6 hours in my schedule every week to do class work.	Yes	No

Adapted from “Are Telecourses for Me?” PBS-Adult Learning Services, The Agenda, 1994 and Anywhere, Anytime Learning News, Spring 2006

**If you answered yes to most of these questions, then distance learning is for you!** If you answered no, please talk with your teacher to see if you can work together to make distance learning work for you.

## Who to contact

### **Diana Satin, Teacher**

Ways you can contact me:

- Email me at [d.satin@jpccalp.org](mailto:d.satin@jpccalp.org). I will check it every Monday and Thursday.
- Call me at 781.352.4540 (my home office) Monday through Thursday before 9:00 PM and Friday before 5:00 PM. I will check messages every day.

### **Franklin Peralta, Counselor:** (617) 635-5201 or [f.peralta@jpccalp.org](mailto:f.peralta@jpccalp.org)

Monday through Thursday

Franklin helps students with any personal problems and questions about jobs, family, health, or education.

### **Adult Learning Program office**

(617) 635-5201

Office hours: Monday through Thursday 9:30 AM -8:00 PM

## Extra English Practice

<http://www.quia.com/pages/alpefa.html>

This website has lots of websites for extra practice with reading, writing, listening, and speaking. There are also websites where you can learn about different topics.

**If you want to practice your conversation skills,** you can contact me to make an individual meeting to call me on the telephone. Don't be timid—just ask!

**Most contact will probably be by email and on the telephone.** For this reason, it is important for you to check for messages every week and tell your teacher if your contact information changes.

## Course descriptions

### Communicating at Work

Communicating at Work is for **intermediate** level students. It will help you improve your communication skills with supervisors, co-workers and customers.

#### Instructions:

1. Turn on your computer's speakers. The website has sound.
2. Go to the course website: <http://aca-boston.org/caw/>
3. In the top right corner, click Start Here to find out how to get the most from the course.
4. Then click the link under that to see a video about how to complete a lesson.
5. Click a lesson to begin.

### USALearns

USALearns has 3 levels: **beginner**, **intermediate**, and **high intermediate/low advanced**. You practice reading, writing, listening, speaking, vocabulary, and grammar. There are regular assignments and quizzes.

#### Instructions:

### Return to the course

1. Connect to the internet.



The screenshot shows a Windows Internet Explorer browser window displaying the U.S.A. Learns website. The address bar contains the URL <http://usalearns.org/class/>. A callout box with a black border and white background points to the address bar with the text: "2. In the browser address box, type **usalearns.org/class**". The website content includes a banner with the U.S.A. Learns logo and a picture of the Golden Gate Bridge. Below the banner, it says "Welcome to U.S.A. Learns!" and lists features: "A free site for adults to:" followed by a bulleted list: "Learn English", "Improve basic reading, writing, speaking and life skills", and "Work with their teacher or tutor". There are two buttons: "Register Now!" and "Sign In". A callout box with a black border and white background points to the "Sign In" button with the text: "3. Click **Sign In**".

4. Fill in the form. Use the same information as at the orientation.

U.S.A. Learns Sign In

Need to register for a class? Register now!

Are you already registered in a class? If yes, please enter your email and password to continue.

Email Address:

Password:

Sign In

[Forgot your password?](#)

U.S.A. Learns My Home

Welcome back, Cecil!

Class Name: JP Second English Course  
Teacher Name: Diana Satin

What do you want to do?

[Start with my next activity](#)

[Select a different topic in my course](#)

See all my classes Add a new class Change my email or password

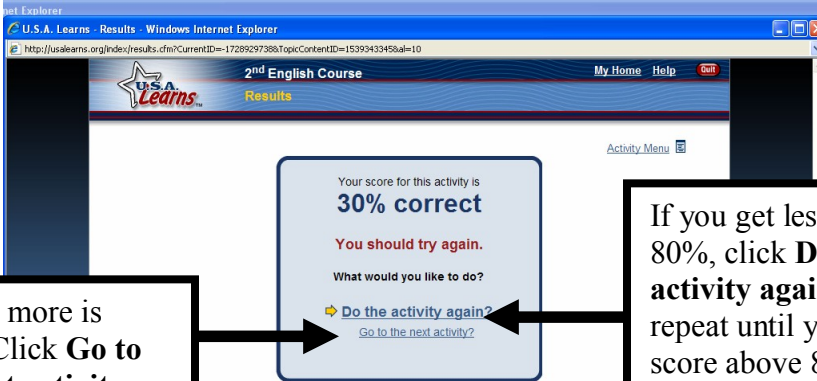
To continue your work from the place you stopped before, click here.

To go back to another part of the course, click here.

**Work completed, work you need to complete**

- White boxes mean you did not start the work yet.
- Blue boxes mean you completed the work.

## Required scores (percentages)



U.S.A. Learns - Results - Windows Internet Explorer  
http://usalearns.org/index/results.cfm?CurrentID=17289297388&TopicContentID=153934345&bal=10

2<sup>nd</sup> English Course  
My Home Help Quit

Results

Activity Menu

Your score for this activity is **30% correct**

You should try again.

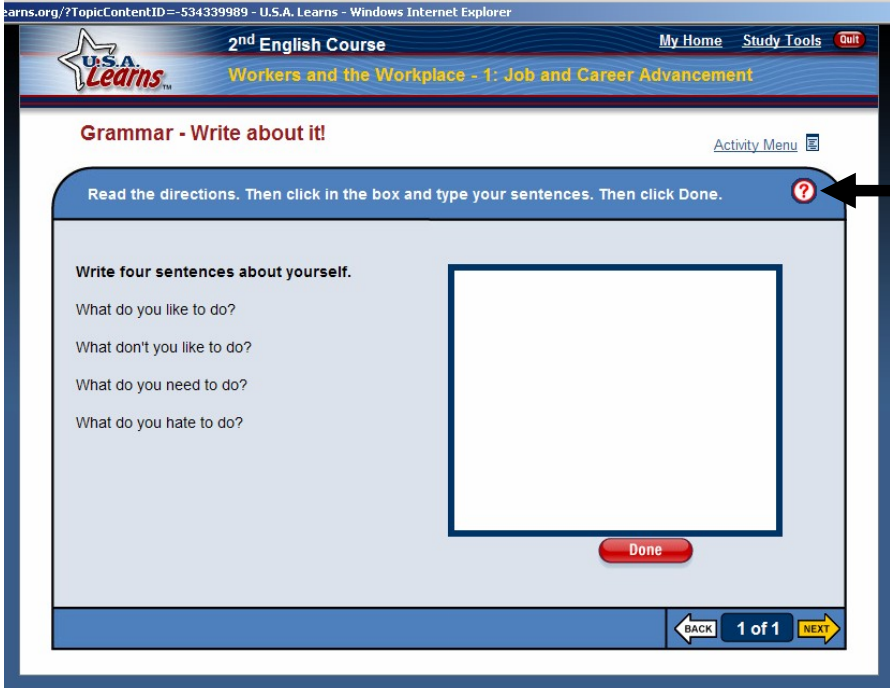
What would you like to do?

Do the activity again?  
Go to the next activity?

80% or more is good! Click **Go to the next activity**.

If you get less than 80%, click **Do the activity again**. You can repeat until you get a score above 80%. You are welcome to contact me for more help.

## How to do the activities



U.S.A. Learns - Windows Internet Explorer  
http://usalearns.org/?TopicContentID=534339989 - U.S.A. Learns - Windows Internet Explorer

2<sup>nd</sup> English Course  
My Home Study Tools Quit

Workers and the Workplace - 1: Job and Career Advancement

Grammar - Write about it!

Activity Menu

Read the directions. Then click in the box and type your sentences. Then click Done.

Write four sentences about yourself.

What do you like to do?  
What don't you like to do?  
What do you need to do?  
What do you hate to do?

Done

BACK 1 of 1 NEXT

If you need help on how to do the activity, click on ? at the top right.

## Write About It! corrections

After you complete a Write About It! activity, I will check your work. The next time you return to the course, check for a comment from me to you about corrections. Here is how:

1. After you log into the course, you will see this:

U.S.A. Learns My Home

Welcome back, Cecill!

Class Name: JP Second English Course  
Teacher Name: Diana Satin

2<sup>nd</sup> English Course

What do you want to do?

[Start with my next activity](#)

[Select a different topic in my course](#)

See all my classes   Add a new class   Change my email or password

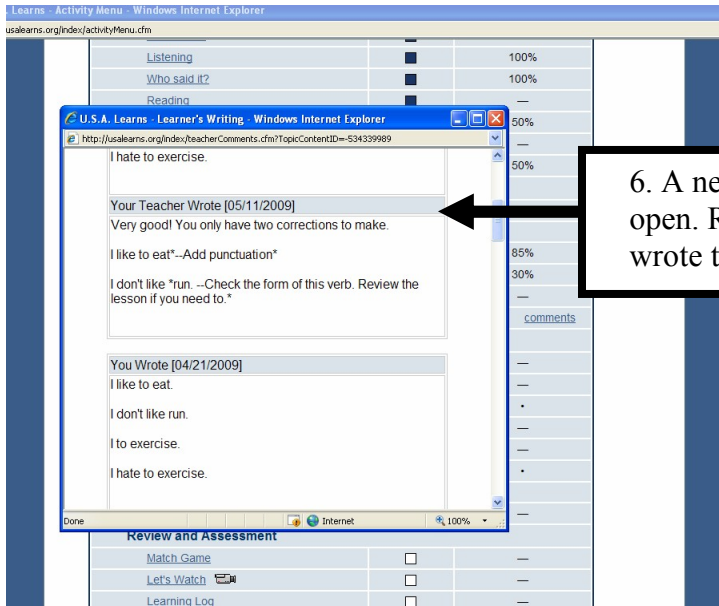
Click here so you can go back to the Write About It! activity you completed.

2. On the next page, click the topic the Write About It! activity is in.
3. On the page after, click the unit the writing activity is in.
4. Find the “Write about it” activity.

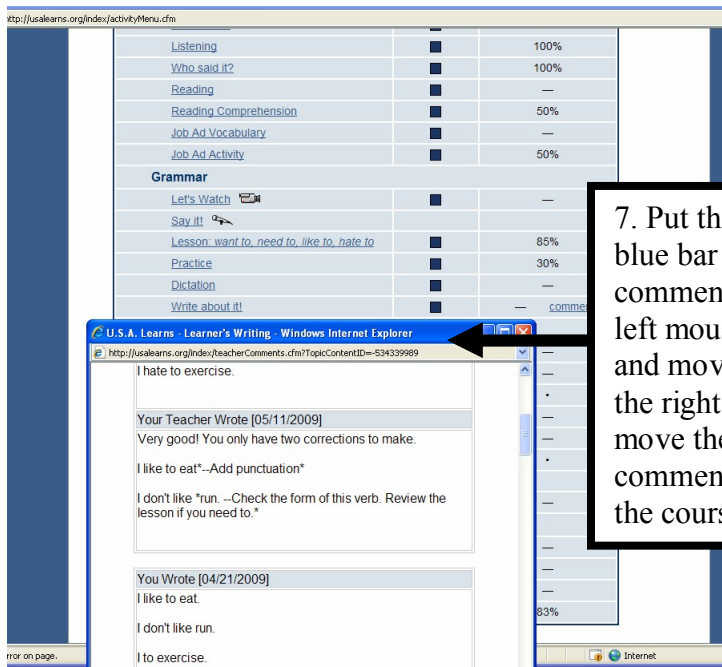
U.S.A. Learns - Activity Menu - Windows Internet Explorer

<a href="#">Listen for it!</a>	■	100%
<a href="#">Getting Ready</a>	■	—
<a href="#">Let's Watch</a>	■	—
<a href="#">Listening</a>	■	100%
<a href="#">Who said it?</a>	■	100%
<a href="#">Reading</a>	■	—
<a href="#">Reading Comprehension</a>	■	50%
<a href="#">Job Ad Vocabulary</a>	■	—
<a href="#">Job Ad Activity</a>	■	50%
<b>Grammar</b>		
<a href="#">Let's Watch</a>	■	—
<a href="#">Say it!</a>	■	—
<a href="#">Lesson: want to, need to, like to, hate to</a>	■	85%
<a href="#">Practice</a>	■	30%
<a href="#">Dictation</a>	■	—
<a href="#">Write about it!</a>	■	— <a href="#">comments</a>
<b>Making Choices</b>		
<a href="#">Getting Ready (A)</a>	■	—

5. Click comments.

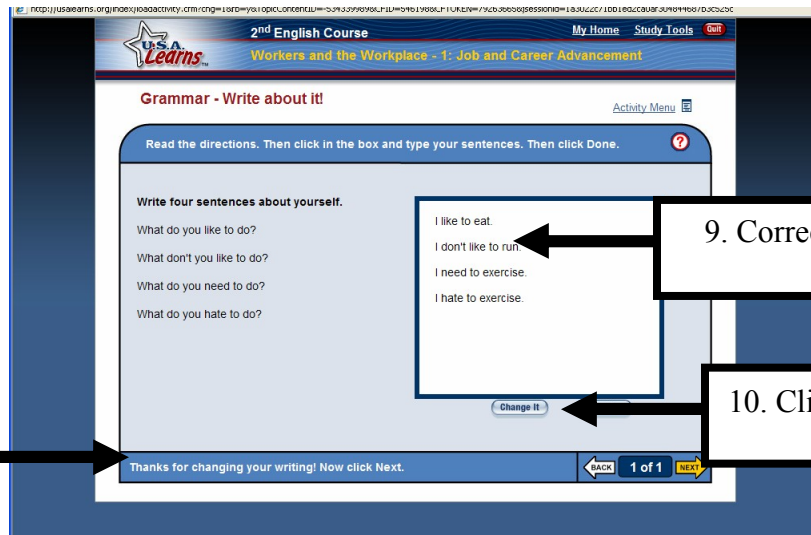


6. A new box will open. Read what I wrote to you.



7. Put the pointer on the blue bar at the top of the comment box. Keep the left mouse button down and move the mouse to the right. This will move the teacher comment so you can see the course activities.

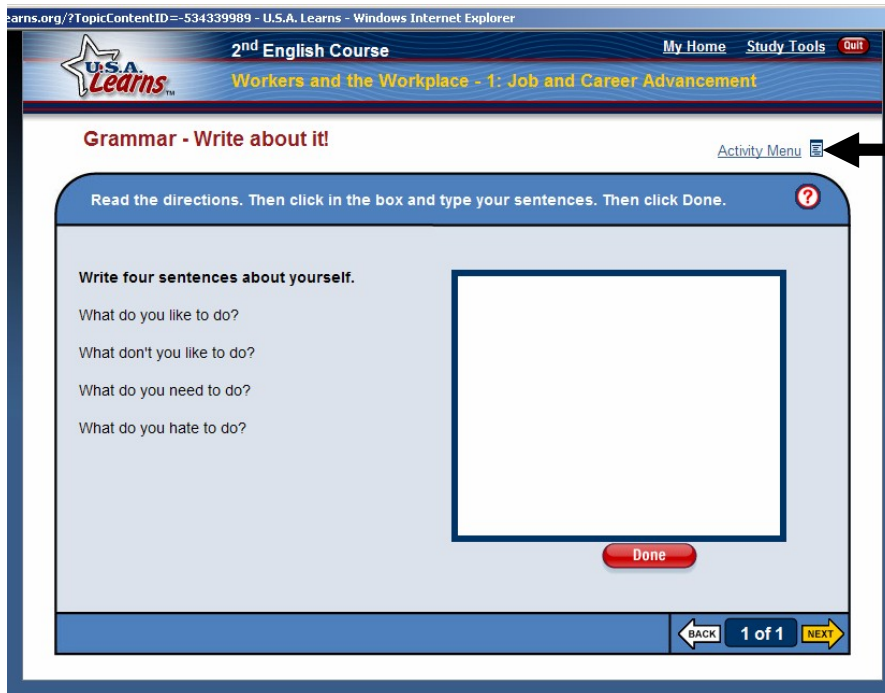
8. Next, click on the **Write About It!** activity.



9. Correct your work

10. Click **Change it.**

11. A message says your changes are saved.



12. To continue working in the course, click here until you find the place you stopped before.

## Reading Companion

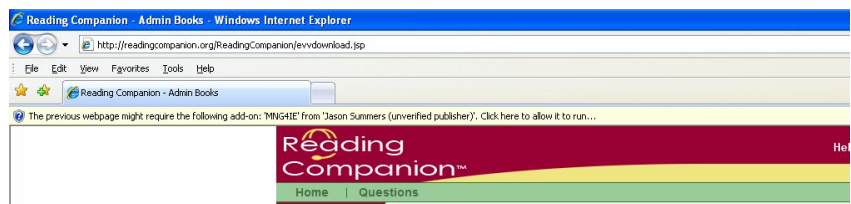
Reading Companion is for all student levels. This course helps you improve your pronunciation. You choose books on the course website and use your microphone to record yourself reading. I check your scores, tell you how you are doing, and give suggestions for improving more.

### Instructions:

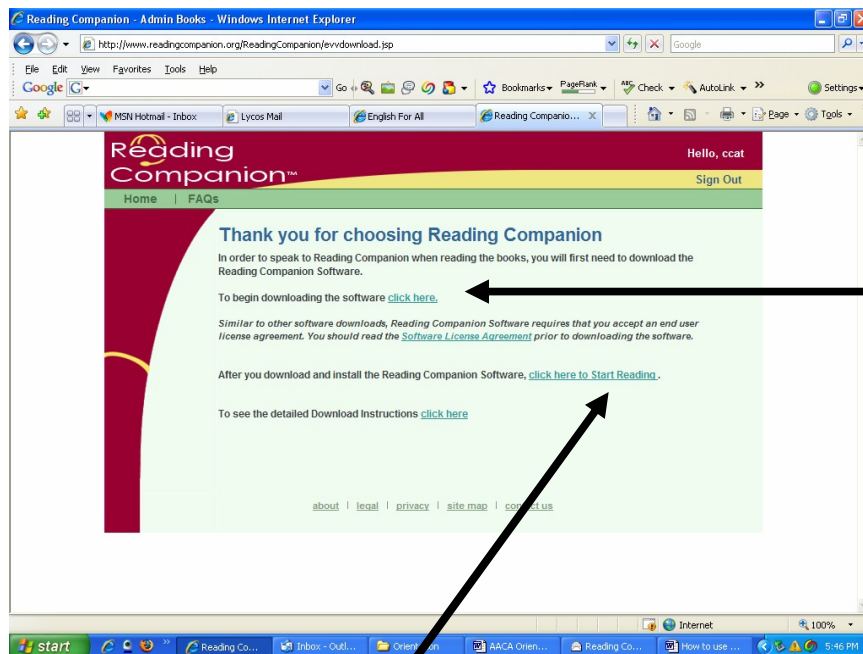
1. Make sure you have a microphone connected to your computer.
2. Open your Internet browser. (If you use Firefox, see special instructions on page 8.)  
In the address box, type in [www.readingcompanion.org](http://www.readingcompanion.org)
3. Your sign in name is your first name and your last name (no space between)
4. Your password is: **aaca**

You may see a message in yellow, like this. If you do, follow these instructions:

1. Click on the message.
2. A box will open. Click **Run Active X control**.
3. Another box will open. Click **Run**.



**The first time you use this**, you need to put a program on your computer so the Reading Companion will work on your computer. Follow these instructions:




1. Click here.
2. Then you will see a box. Click **Run**.

3. Then more boxes will open. Click **Run** or **Next**.

4. One box will give instructions to test your computer microphone and speakers. Follow the instructions.

5. After you do this one time, you don't do it again.

Then to begin, click here:


Click on any book from the book shelf. Click on the green arrow  to see more choices.

Topics include:

- Financial literacy
- Housing
- Job Search and Employment
- Narrative (stories)
- Probation (law)
- Test
- US Citizenship
- US Driving
- Vocabulary

Click on the red arrow  to see previous choices.

Listen carefully to the instructions.

When the voice says, “Click on me,” look for the  and click on it.

The computer will tell you what to do. Sometimes it will ask you to read certain words into your computer microphone. It will tell you how you are doing with your reading and pronunciation.

The control buttons:



**Exit**



**Hear a word**



**Repeat**



**Go back**

2 of 6



**Go forward**

Ask the teacher if you have any questions.

**Tell your teacher when you use this software.** Your teacher can then look at a report of your pronunciation and tell you what you are doing well and what you need to practice more. She can work with you to improve.

If you have Firefox Internet browser:

**Follow the instructions below to be sure your system is configured correctly.**

**Open Mozilla Firefox.**

**Type about:config in the address bar, press Enter.**

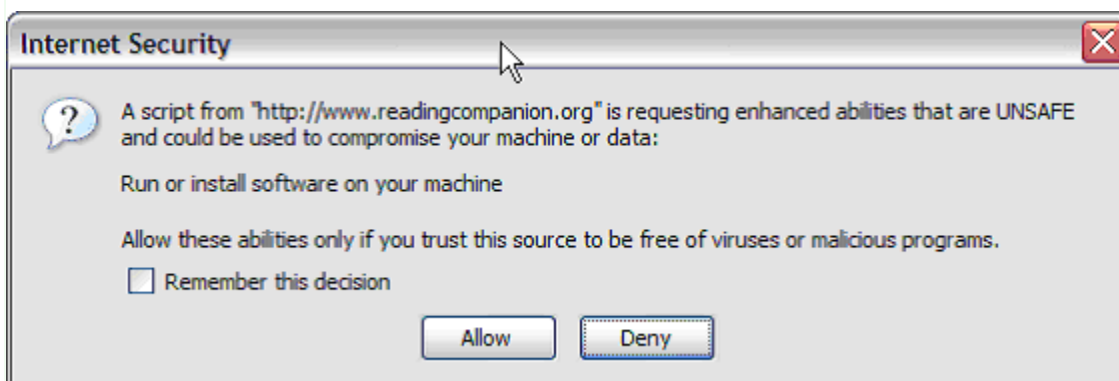
**Scroll down the list of information to find signed.applets.codebase\_principal\_support**

**Confirm that the Value (fourth column) is set to True. If it is not, double-click the entire line to change the Value from False to True.**

**Otherwise Firefox will display this:**



**Also make sure you check the checkbox "Remember this decision", when Firefox displays this message:**



**and click "Allow", otherwise you have to click "Allow" every time you access Reading Companion from Firefox.**

## Typical difficulties and what to do

**If you have any technical problem doing something with the course, try doing it again.** You can also try closing the Internet window and starting over. Usually this works.

### You can't get to the course?

Did you check the course web address and type it exactly the same?

Did you check the instructions for how to use the course?

Did you type your sign in and **password correctly** as when you filled the registration form?

### You can't hear the sounds?

Did you click directly on the location to play the sound? (You may have to click again.)

Do you have speakers on your computer? Are they plugged in? Are they on? Did you turn up the volume?

### You left the computer for a short time and when you came back you couldn't continue with the class?

Close the window (the X in the top right corner of the computer). Start the course again.

## Suggestions for studying

Distance learning courses are different from other courses, so it's important to do some things differently:

- You **make your schedule for time you will study each week**—the school does not make a class schedule for you. Write here when you will study:

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday

- **Tell friends and family your study schedule** so they do not disturb you.
- **Make a goal for each week** to progress through the course. Do something nice for yourself when you reach each goal—for example, when you finish 3 activities, go for a walk, eat something, or call a friend.
- **Work on the course every week.** A big reason students quit distance learning courses is because they don't do their work on a regular schedule. Then they feel like it is too difficult to continue with the course. If you can not work on the course for one week, please contact me in advance, so I don't think you disappeared. ☺
- **Practice what you study**—look for opportunities to use the English and skills in your life.

## Supports for you

- In the **orientation**, we will tell you about the course, and how to use the course website.
- As your teacher, I want you to **contact me for any reason about the course**. Examples:
  - to talk about how you are doing in the class
  - if you want extra ESL practice (for example grammar, writing, pronunciation, conversation, or anything else)
  - if you have problems using the course
  - to talk about any difficulties you are having with the class or your schedule for working on the class
  - if you change in your telephone number, address, or email address
- **I will go to the course websites Mondays and Thursdays** to look at the work you did, to look for emails from you, and to send you emails about your work. I can see:
  - the last day you went on to the website
  - the lessons you completed
  - the number of times you tried a lesson
  - your scores on the tests

I can help you understand the material, and give you suggestions so you can improve.

- **If you want a tutor to help you more with English, tell me.** We will try to find one.
- **Study partners**-- student will have the opportunity to meet other students. You can organize study groups so you can help each other or study together.
- **If you think of leaving the course, please talk with me first.** If you have any problems that make it difficult for you to complete the course, we can work together to find solutions.

## What you can expect of us

- Give you encouragement
- Support you (see **Supports for you** section)
- Respond every week to your work by email, phone or in person
- Give you educational counseling and referral
- Do the best we can!

## What we expect of you

- Work 4 to 6 hours each week on the course
- Tell the teacher if you want any support or changes in the class
- Check email and phone messages every week for communication from your teacher
- Do the best you can!

## **What is the best way for you to study?**

You will be studying on your own most of the time, so it is important for you to understand the best way for you to study. There are **seven different ways to study**. Which way is best for you? Read about each way to study. Find the one that describes you, and try the suggestions for study.

### **Visual-Spatial**

You like to draw, do picture puzzles, read maps, and daydream.

**Suggestions for study** Look carefully at pictures, movies, and maps. Draw pictures. Make pictures in your mind of things you read or hear. While you read, imagine in your mind things you are reading about. When you are learning new words, make a picture in your mind of the words. Draw pictures to show what you are learning. Use colors when you write things you are learning.

### **Bodily-kinesthetic**

You like to use your hands, or you like to move around. For example, you like making things or dancing.

**Suggestions for study:** Use the computer, act out stories, put new words and definitions on different index cards and move them around to match them. Move around while you study. For example after you read the web page, write down things you want to remember and study them while you walk. Chew gum while you study.

### **Musical**

You love music, and you are sensitive to sounds.

**Suggestions for study:** You may study better with music in the background. Turn lessons into songs, speak with rhythm, tap your fingers.

### **Interpersonal**

You like doing things with others, and you understand other people easily. You have many friends.

**Suggestions for study:** Find other students to study with. Talk with other people about your homework before you do it. Write or talk with friends, family, and your teacher about what you are learning.

### **Intrapersonal**

You are a little shy, you know your own feelings well, you have strong determination, confidence, and opinions.

**Suggestions for study:** Study alone, have privacy while you study, write a diary about your learning.

### **Linguistic**

You love using words, you think in words, you love reading, games with words, poetry, stories.

Suggestions for study: Read out loud, say what you are learning, repeat to yourself, talk into a tape recorder, or talk with other people, tell friends and family about what you are studying, study with someone else (could be sitting together, emailing, or telephone), While you read, write what you understand. Write questions you have. Write things that are new for you. Write things you want to remember. Get a computer program that can read text to you: <http://www.readplease.com/downloads/setupreadplease2003.exe> (Ask your teacher about how to use it.)

### **Logical -Mathematical**

You like learning about how things work, how things go together, puzzles, calculations.

Suggestions for study: Study the rules of grammar, make your work into a problem and investigate to find the solution (for example, ask questions you want to find answers for).

From <http://www.tecweb.org/styles/gardner.html>

## Student Participation Agreement

I will complete the orientation.

I will work 4 to 6 hours every week on the class. If I have an emergency and cannot, I will contact my teacher as soon as possible.

I promise I will contact the teacher if I have any problems with the class.

I promise I will contact the teacher before I leave the class.

I will take all tests required by the class.

I will stay in the course until \_\_\_\_\_.  
(date)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student

\_\_\_\_\_  
Teacher

Date \_\_\_\_\_

# Your goals list

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

What are your personal goals for attending Internet English course?

Goals	You can reach this goal this year
Listen and speak better in English	
Improve writing skills	
Improve reading skills	
Improve computer skills	
Communicate better at work	
Start a GED program	
Go to college	
Take job training classes	
If you don't have a job now: Get a job	
If you have a job now: Keep the job I have now	
If you have a job now: Make more money or get a better job	
Apply or interview for a job	
Help my children with homework, talk with teachers	
Join organization at my child's school	
Have better communication with my family	
Learn about U.S. culture	
Learn more about participating in the community (volunteering, working with neighbors to improve the neighborhood, etc.)	
Talk with people about services (phone, electricity, etc.)	
Apply for citizenship	
Vote	
<b>Other goals you want to add:</b>	