

ENHANCING YOUR ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

Oral Communication Skills:

- Engage in regular interaction with native English speakers through:
 - Pair and group work in and outside of class
 - Language exchanges
 - Volunteering
 - Student groups
 - Academic and professional organizations
 - Cultural exchanges
 - On- and off-campus get-togethers based on hobbies and other interests
- Make a regular effort to seek out the company of multilingual classmates and others who do not speak your native language(s).
- Work with prospective English and English-as-a-second-language (ESL) teachers.
- Attend guest lectures and other events in your department and discuss the content afterwards.
- Go to movies, readings and other cultural events with native English speakers and others; socialize before and afterwards.

- **Listening:**
 - Listen to and watch how native English speakers use words, intonation, grammatical structures, body language, personal space, etc.; make note of those communication features that require clarification and follow up on them.
 - Ask questions when you don't understand what is being said; write down questions before asking them if possible.
 - Request permission to record lectures so that you can re-listen to them.
 - Watch English-language television programs and YouTube videos with closed captions (CC).
 - Listen to web-based programs that include corresponding transcripts (e.g., some TED talks), so that you can check your comprehension.
 - Subscribe to English-language podcasts and locate other audio/video media in your field of study and/or on topics that interest you.

- **Speaking:**
 - Record yourself speaking in English so that you can play it back and learn more about how you sound:
 - Transcribe your speech so that you can more concretely understand your language use.
 - Make notes of aspects of your language use that you would like to improve and actively work to improve them.
 - Determine what you like about your language use in English so you can enhance those aspects, too.
 - Locate online resources that can help you with discrete pronunciation information, such as English-language dictionaries, ESL YouTube videos, etc.
 - Ask trusted native speakers in your classes and/or discipline to give you feedback on your oral presentations before they are due.
 - Watch English-language YouTube videos about topics in your field of study to see how speakers deliver their presentations; pay close attention to the language (vocabulary, grammar, organization...), gestures/body language and visual aids used.

Written Communication Skills:

- Understand that to be a good writer, you must be a good reader.
- **Reading:**
 - Scan title, section headings and other parts of the reading (such as abstract, photographs, tables, etc.) to get the gist of what is being discussed.
 - Take notes as you read; key notes to the page numbers and sections of the reading.
 - After taking notes, write down questions that you have related to the overall themes of the reading, as well as the specific details; ask someone to help you clarify these issues within the text.
 - Determine:
 - What the **purpose** of the text is (informative, persuasive, etc.)
 - Who the **audience** of the text is (general readership, specialists in your discipline, educated professionals outside of your field, etc.)
 - Analyze what you read for content, as well as these features:
 - Author's stance
 - Organizational structure at the macro- and micro-levels
 - Source integration, such as quotations, paraphrases and summaries
 - Language use, such as personal pronouns, hedges, passive voice, etc.
 - Keep a vocabulary journal.
 - Read non-specialist texts in your field to become more conversant with how discipline-specific issues are discussed in a wider context.
 - Read non-specialist texts in an area of interest to build a wider vocabulary.
- **Writing:**
 - Make sure that you understand exactly what the assignment requires before you begin:
 - Ask questions to clarify what you don't understand.
 - Request models or examples of completed assignments.
 - Start early and make a plan:
 - Break down the writing assignment into the smallest "work chunks" possible.
 - Map out a schedule for completing each of these "work chunks" **before the due date**.
 - Do not procrastinate.
 - Apply what you have learned about texts in your discipline to your writing.
 - Know your audience:
 - What does the audience already know and think about your topic?
 - What must the audience know about your topic for your paper to make sense? What's not important for you to include in your paper for this audience?
 - Will the audience disagree with your point of view? If so, how will you counter their criticism?
 - Understand that writing is a recursive process:
 - **Prewriting:** Generating ideas through brainstorming, outlining, reading, etc.
 - **Drafting:** Getting those ideas down in writing
 - **Revising:** Making sure that the ideas are well argued/supported, organized, etc.
 - **Editing:** Correcting errors in grammar, punctuation, formatting, etc.
 - Write regularly in English.
 - Use English-only dictionaries and language-based resources.
 - Know the university's academic integrity policy: <https://integrity.uncc.edu>
 - Ask questions if you do not understand what is required.

- Seek feedback on the content and language of your writing:
 - Peers
 - Professors
 - Writing professionals, such as at the Writing Resource Center
- Join or start a writing group in your department.
- Hire a professional editor if necessary.
- Take a writing-based course in your discipline and/or specifically for multilingual writers.
- Consult library- and web-based resources to learn more about academic writing.

Writing-based Resources

Courses:

- For undergraduate students—mixed classes of multilingual and native English speakers:
 - UWRT 1101: Writing and Inquiry in Academic Contexts I
 - UWRT 1102: Writing and Inquiry in Academic Contexts II
- For graduate students, post-doctoral fellows and visiting faculty—only for multilingual speakers:
 - GRAD 6010/8010: Graduate-Level Writing for International Students

Individual Writing Consultations:

- For all students:
 - Writing Resource Center: <https://writing.uncc.edu/writing-resources-center/schedule-appointment>
- For dissertation students, post-doctoral fellows and visiting faculty:
 - Dr. Russell-Pinson: lpinson@uncc.edu

Campus-based Writing Workshops and Events:

- For all students:
 - Writing Resource Center: <http://writing.uncc.edu/writing-resources-center>
- For graduate students, post-doctoral fellows and visiting faculty:
 - Center for Graduate Life: <https://gradlife.uncc.edu/workshops>

Websites:

- General academic writing (including grammar):
 - Using English for Academic Purposes: <http://www.uefap.com/writing/>
 - The Purdue University Online Writing Lab (OWL): <http://owl.english.purdue.edu>
 - The Writer's Handbook, University of Wisconsin-Madison: <http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/>
 - Graduate Workshop Program Handouts, University of California-Davis: <http://writing.ucdavis.edu/programs-and-services/the-workshop-program/graduate-handouts>
 - Writing Handouts, University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill: <http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/>
 - Additional Resources for Speaking and Writing, University of Toronto (Canada): <http://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/currentstudents/Pages/ELWS-Additional-Resources.aspx>
 - Research Writing at the Graduate Level, Portland State University's Writing Center: http://www.writingcenter.pdx.edu/resources/grad_library.php?grad_research.html#detail
- Academic vocabulary and phrase building:
 - Academic Word List, Victoria University of Wellington (New Zealand): <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/lals/resources/academicwordlist/>
 - Academic Phrasebank, University of Manchester (United Kingdom): <http://www.phrasebank.manchester.ac.uk>
 - Latin and Greek Roots: <https://www.learnthat.org/pages/view/roots.html>

- Visuwords, an online visual dictionary and thesaurus: <http://www.visuwords.com>