

Study Skills & Homework for English Language Learners

Learners have busy lives and are juggling family, work, study and more. Even with busy lives, daily practice is crucial to learner progress toward reaching their goals. Ask your learner what their ideas are for integrating study into their daily lives. Can they hang vocabulary words in their kitchen to study while doing housework or listen to an English language cd on the drive to work?

If your learner has limited schooling in their home country, or it has been many years since they have been in school, they may benefit from direct coaching in study skills.

Consider these topics:

- Time management – Does the learner use a planner or calendar? If not, work together with them to fill out a monthly or weekly calendar with work schedule, family time and when they will study.
- Study location - Does the learner do best in a quiet or busy location? Do they have a place to study at home - perhaps a quiet room with a desk or table? Or maybe they focus better away from home at a coffee shop, library, or in their car during a lunch break at work.
- Independent study techniques – What will the study session look like? Practice activities together to make sure the learner feels comfortable and knows what to do when working on their own.

What does homework look like for your learner?

For a learner who is building confidence in independent study skills, make sure that the homework is relatively easy. Homework is more likely to be done if the learner can bring back something to show you. See the following ideas for possible independent study activities that the learner can complete:

- Review vocabulary words practiced in sessions. Perhaps create flashcards. Write each word in a sentence and practice reading it aloud.
- Re-read a story or read a new story that is not too difficult.
- Answer written questions about the story.
- Copy the story one or more times for writing practice.
- After copying the story, cut up the words, mix them up and then put them back in order to review sentence structure.
- Read the story aloud and record with cell phone recorder or digital recorder.

Study Skills & Homework for English Language Learners (continued)

- After making the recording, listen to the recording and write the story as a writing “test”. Then check writing with the original story for corrections.
- Read with a family member, if appropriate.
- Listen to or watch the news in English – then write one or more sentence summary.
- Use ESL audio materials to listen and study (available at the library).
- Do workbook exercises.
- Speak English 10 minutes per day at home with family members.
- Write in a journal. Sentence starters can help beginners start writing. For example: Today I went to _____. Today I talked to _____. At work I _____. After work I _____.
- Practice English online using websites or apps such as USA learns or Mango Languages. <http://whatcomliteracy.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/Websites-for-ELL-Tutors-6.27.2014.pdf>

Follow up

After deciding with the learner what activities and content will be most valuable to them to do as homework, follow up at the next session. Ask the learner to tell you about what they did and show you their work. Have the learner re-read the story they practiced or show you the copying/writing they completed. Perhaps give the learner a spelling test for the words that they studied.

Increased study skills and extra practice at home can give your learner the mastery of language and confidence they need to succeed.