

User Guide for Learning English Online

Currently, the Strasbourg University Language Resource Centre is our main internet resource for English language learning. It has a range of fun, interesting and useful websites you can use to improve your language skills.

This user guide will give you tips about some of the interesting things you can find on this website, and how to use it. It is organized according to the four sections: Listening, Reading, Speaking, and Writing. So decide which area you want to work on today, and find some useful and fun ideas in our user guide. Some students might have difficulty navigating these pages at first, so we encourage all students to come to the LRC and ask for assistance to use them.

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LISTENING

1. Listening with exercises

Suitable for all levels

- **The Web Language Lab**
Audio files in different difficulty levels. You can also choose between American and British English. The translations are from English to French, however, the website is still easy to use. It also has a crossword game to practice translating between American and British English.
- **Lyrics Training**
Complete the lyrics of your favourite songs.
- **Randall's Cyber Listening Lab**
Short audio recordings with a few questions and the script. This site includes easy material. You can choose between international English, American English, and Academic English. Suitable for all levels.

Suitable for intermediate to advanced

- **Adult Learning Activities**
Many different topics, short texts you can listen to with the script and exercises.
- **Breaking News English**

For those of you who are interested in news. Read and listen to the news stories, and complete the exercises below.

- **English Listening Lesson Library Online**
Short audio and video recordings, with activities and the script. A large variety of accents. Quizzes and songs also available.
- **Literacyworks Learning Resources**
TV reports on various subjects, with activities and the script. Not user friendly. Click on a topic, then on a title. To see the video, click on “story”, then the Realplayer logo. Be patient when downloading the videos.

2. Listening with subtitles/ scripts

Suitable for intermediate to advanced:

- **BBC Words in the News**
Study the vocabulary related to specific news stories. Also includes videos and exercises.
- **CNN Student News**
10 minute overview of the news every day for US High School public. You may encounter problems launching the videos.
- **TED**
Engaging, interesting and up-to-date presentations on a variety of subject. Be patient when buffering the website.

3. Courses and Lecture:

Suitable for upper intermediate and advanced:

- **MIT OpenCourseWare**
Free online courses from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.
- **TED**
Engaging, interesting and up-to-date presentations on a variety of subject. Be patient when buffering the website.
- **The Vega Science Trust Videos**
Informed scientific visual and audio media (lectures, interviews, etc.).

4. Podcasts

Suitable for beginners and lower intermediate:

- **Spotlight podcasts**
Easy weekly five-minute audio show on varied topics (the interviewer speaks really distinctly).

Suitable for intermediate

- **BBC 6 Minute English**
Listen to 6 minute programs on many different subjects.
- **Breaking News English podcast**

Suitable for upper intermediate and advanced

- **BBC Radio 4 Podcasts**
High quality podcasts on a variety of subjects from BBC Radio 4.
- **Open Culture - Science Podcast Collection**
Links to various websites that provide podcasts that cover all branches of science.

NOTE: Unavailable websites

CNN Student News does not have available podcasts anymore. They do, however, have an interesting blog.

5. Dictations

Suitable for beginners and lower intermediate:

- **Real English Video Dictations**
Short videos of street interviews with English speakers discussing ordinary subjects. Includes help and solutions. The menu is in French, but you do not need to know French to use the website.

Suitable for upper intermediate to advanced:

- **Stories for listening to English**
Choose a story, listen and complete the dictation on the screen. Includes help and solutions. The menu is in French, but you do not need to know French to use the website.

6. More Useful Websites

Suitable for intermediate to advanced.

- **BBC Radio 4 Science Archive**
Radio broadcasts on a wide variety of scientific subjects for the general public. A written introduction gives an idea of what you will hear.
- **BBC Radio 4 History - In Our Time**
Discussions on "the history of ideas". This is a selection of subjects related to science but there are plenty of others. Suitable for intermediate and advanced.
- **YouTube Education**
Videos and channels from college and university partners of YouTube.

NOTE: Unavailable websites

Unfortunately, we are currently unable to play videos on Videojug. Also, ResearchChannel is currently unavailable.

NOTE: Websites in French

The following websites are designed for French speakers learning English. You can use them, but it may be difficult for you to understand.

- My Sweet Babe <http://91.121.72.108/mysweetbabe/index.html>
- AudioVidéoCours <http://audiovideocours.u-strasbg.fr/avc/>

READING

If you want to improve your English reading skills, there is a large amount of resources available online.

1. Reading the News

Suitable for beginners:

- **CBBC**
An easy-to-read news website from BBC. Great for beginners.
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/cbbc/>
- **First News**
Interesting, easy-to-read news.
<http://www.firstnews.co.uk/>
- **Scholastic News**
Scholastic's classroom news site.
<http://teacher.scholastic.com/activities/scholasticnews/index.html>

Suitable for intermediate and advanced:

- **TheBigProject.co.uk**
An array of links to English newspaper websites throughout the world. Simply pick the country that you would like to read the news of and select a newspaper. For intermediate and advanced English language students.
<http://www.thebigproject.co.uk/news/>
- **Onlinenewspapers.com**
A wide selection of newspaper websites in English from all over the globe. Firstly select the continent from the country which news you would like to read, select the country, and find a collection of newspaper websites to be directed to. For intermediate and advanced English language students.
<http://www.onlinenewspapers.com/index.htm>
- **World-newspapers.com - Magazines online**
The website contains links to newspaper and magazine websites throughout the world. Simply navigate your way through the links to select the criteria of your choice to find the relevant news websites. For intermediate and advanced English language students. <http://www.world-newspapers.com/index.html>
- **Presseurop.eu**
At a glance, the website looks like a single newspaper website. However, this website takes the most important news-stories, in English, from newspapers across Europe. For intermediate and advanced English language students.
<http://www.presseurop.eu/en>

2. Miscellaneous

Suitable for intermediate to advanced

- **How Stuff Works**
How Stuff Works is an English-language website offering numerous amount of articles on a wide range of entertaining topics. The website offers quizzes, podcasts and games surrounding general knowledge.
<http://www.howstuffworks.com/>
- **Greenfacts**
Green Facts contains a number of scientific publications and news on health and the environment.
<http://www.greenfacts.org/en/index.htm>

NOTE: Unavailable websites

Google Directory of Science Magazines does not work.

http://www.google.com/Top/Science/Publications/Magazines_and_E-zines/

3. Reading for Fun

Suitable for all levels

- **Everyday Topics**

Although this page does not exist, once you are taken to the page you can click on the 'home' button, followed by one of the links under 'Student's Sites', or scroll down to the bottom of the 'home' page to find a list of links under 'Learning Resources.'

The website is plagued with fun activities and games and has resources for students of all levels of English.

http://elt.oup.com/student/naturalenglish/pre/n_weblinks/%20

- **Comics -**

The 'Everyday Comics' link does not work. However if you click on the 'here' button, it will take you to a website that allows the user to create their own short comic strips. This can be used by all levels except absolute beginners as it requires the user to have a basic understanding of sentence-building.

<http://www.makebeliefscomix.com/Comix/>

- **Riddles**

While the link takes you to the 'comic fun' page, containing lots of different short comics, this page is not very useful. However, by using the links at the top of the page under 'related links', you can find a number of different activities such as word games, puzzles, quizzes, and jokes. The website is mainly useful for beginners and lower intermediates.

<http://www.justriddlesandmore.com/comicfun.html>

Suitable for intermediate to advanced

- **How to do anything and everything**

An endless amount of articles on how to do almost anything: From how to invest in gold to how to become a spy.

<http://www.howtoguides365.com/>

4. Reading Techniques

Suitable for beginners

- **Improve your Reading Skills**

A website offering complete or near beginners a variety of activities on reading, spelling, writing, and grammar. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/skillswise/english>

5. Reading Activities

Suitable for all levels

- **ESLHome.org Stories**

A variety of stories with exercises on comprehension and writing. For those who have some knowledge of English. Various levels of English.

<http://home.earthlink.net/~eslstudent/read/readdo1.html#uvic>

Suitable for intermediate to advanced

- **Breaking News English**

The website offers a range of news articles suitable for lower-intermediate and intermediate English students. <http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/>

- **Literacyworks Learning Resources**

A number of news articles divided into categories. Each article is amended to make an abridged, or shorter, article, and also comes with a series of questions on the article under 'story outline'. <http://www.literacynet.org/cnnsf/archives.html>

NOTE: Websites in French

The following websites are designed for French speakers learning English. You can use them, but it may be difficult for you to understand

- **Reading Scientific Articles in Journals**

The link is not useful for An-Najah users. The website contains academic articles in French for students at the University of Strasbourg.

<https://ent.unistra.fr/uPortal/render.userLayoutRootNode.uP;jsessionid=1BC9C49AE62C69E20BF404F43C003D07.esup-tom3>

Useful databases and search engines

- **Google Scholar**

Find scholarly articles within all academic fields on Google Scholar.

<http://scholar.google.com/>

- An Najah

<http://www.najah.edu/page/2242>

- <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/>

- <http://www.scopus.com/home.url>

Search with these search engines for scientific articles of yours choice. For Google Scholar, it takes you to the French website. To go to the English website go to <http://scholar.google.com/> instead of scholar.google.fr. These websites are recommended for advanced English students only.sdf dafd

Speaking

In addition to organizing your own discussion groups to improve your speaking, there are plenty of online resources that can help you improve your pronunciation and general speaking skills.

Centre site: http://www.netvibes.com/english_online#Speaking

1. Pronunciation (and more useful links)

Links suitable for all levels:

- **BBC Learning English**
Practise your pronunciation with the BBC.
- **Holly's Corner**
Various exercises on the sounds of English.
- **Shiporsheep.com**
Basic site focused on vowel sounds.
- **Fonetiks.org**
Pronunciation guides to 9 varieties or dialects of the English language.
- **Howjsay.com**
A dictionary of Pronunciation. Hear words and expressions pronounced correctly.

2. Everyday English

Suitable for all levels:

- **New Headway** offers links specific for each level, to practice their everyday English.

Suitable for intermediate and advanced

- **Focus English**
Focus on learning idiomatic and everyday English. Listen to everyday conversations with script. Suitable for intermediate to advanced.

3. Discussions, debates, interaction

Looking for topics to discuss with your fellow students?

Suitable for intermediate and advanced:

- **Deatabase** and **Debatepedia** offer a wide range of topics, along with arguments, background information, related websites, and more sources. Suitable for intermediate and advanced.

4. Giving a presentation

Written advice on oral presentations at scientific conferences.

Suitable for intermediate and advanced.

- Are you making a presentation and using PowerPoint as a visual aid? The PowerPoint presentation titled, “**How to make good PowerPoint slides**” can give you useful hints and tips. Suitable for intermediate and advanced.

5. Job interviews

Suitable for intermediate and advanced:

- **Job Interview Questions**
All you need to know to do a successful job interview.
- **Job Interview Videos 1 and Job Interview Videos 2**
Two series of videos designed to help you give better job interviews

NOTE: Unavailable websites

Symboles phonétiques - Académie de Montpellier

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- **Yvan Baptiste's Gateway to English**
- **Conference on oral communications by David Crossley (EOST)**

Writing

The LRC can assist you with your writing skills in a number of ways, regardless of your level. Currently our primary resource for writing help is the Strasbourg University Language Resource

Centre site: http://www.netvibes.com/english_online#Writing

1. Communicating with a native speaker

This site has many different tools for practicing and enhancing your writing skills. One tool that this site offers is a pen pal program, where the student can find a pen pal in an English speaking country who is studying Arabic. Through this, both students can practice the language that they are learning, as well as learning more about the culture of their new friend. These sites are suitable for students of all levels.

Websites:

- **My Language Exchange** is the best on offer. It is easy to register, however there might still be a wait for pen pal allocation.
<http://www.mylanguageexchange.com/Learn/English.asp>
- **Polyglot** is a good site, however it is difficult to register as a Nabulsi on the site.
<http://www.polyglot-learn-language.com/>

- **eTandem** is a simple web site that is easy to navigate. Unfortunately there are not enough native English speakers who want an Arabic pen pal right now, so there could be a long wait. <http://www.slf.ruhr-uni-bochum.de/etandem/>

In 2012, the LRC will establish its own pen pal program with the Arabic Society of the Australian National University

2. Writing and Grammar

The site also contains websites from other universities which can help the students from their own home with their writing and grammar.

Websites for all levels:

- **Mahalo** contains a 12-step guide to improving your writing. It has simple tricks for fixing common grammar mistakes and polishing your work. <http://www.mahalo.com/how-to-improve-your-writing/>
- **English Grammar Online (EGO4U)** is good if you are looking for quick answers to simple questions. <http://www.ego4u.com/en/cram-up/writing>
- **About.com**'s website on English Writing Skills is a great site for examples of how resumes, essays and short stories should look. http://esl.about.com/od/writinginenglish/English_Writing_Skills_Letters_Resumes_and_Writing_Style.htm

Websites for intermediate and up:

- **M.S. Willis - Writing Exercises**
Includes many writing exercises, but they are too advanced for beginners. <http://www.meredithsuewillis.com/writingexercises.html>
- **AskOxford.com - Better Writing**
This is a great resource, as its answers are concise and thorough. It has answers to all of the questions that you have about fine-tuning your English skills. Recommended for upper-intermediate and advanced. <http://oxforddictionaries.com/page/betterwriting/>

3. Creative Writing

The Strasbourg site has examples of other creative writing to inspire the students. In 2012, the LRC will run creative writing competitions for its students. The winners will receive rewards and the stories will be published on the LRC blog.

4. Academic Writing

For the more advanced students, there are sites which assist with academic writing and applying for jobs and study in English.

- **Purdue Online Writing Lab.** For scientific writing the Purdue Online Writing Lab is a great tool. <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/>

5. CVs and Cover Letters

There are also a number of sites specifically designed to help with writing a CV, but we encourage the students to bring any CVs or resumes to the LRC staff before using them.

6. Blog

For students who are looking for more of a challenge, we are encouraging students to start a blog. A blog is a great tool for expression, and a great way to practice writing. Visit our blog at <http://najahlrc.wordpress.com/>. This also has links to the LRC students' blogs.

7. Other activities

The LRC is also open to help students with their written work for their English class. We cannot correct the work, but we can make suggestions and work through the issues that the student is experiencing. This will also depend on the availability of the staff at the time.

NOTE: Unavailable websites

The University of Mississippi – Writing the Abstract

The UNC Writing Center

Univ. of Pennsylvania - OnlineResumeWorkshop

NOTE: Websites in French

The following websites are designed for French speakers learning English. You can use them, but it may be difficult for you to understand

- **ToutApprendre.com – Rédiger un CV**
 - **ToutApprendre.com – Rédiger une lettre de motivation**
-