



Mastering English

Every class and most teachers have some special requirements to be successful. To achieve, it is important to adjust your study so you can learn the most and use your time well. While there is no guarantee that any strategy or approach will be effective, all subjects do have some characteristics that make them different. The purpose of this lesson is to help you understand some of these characteristics for English and to study systematically using effective skills.

Characteristics of English

These are two main parts of English: grammar and punctuation rules and understanding and interpreting literature. Both are somewhat subjective based on the standards and purposes of your teachers. You have probably noticed that your English teachers have been different in terms of their expectation and methods of teaching. Success is clearly based on understanding what your specific teacher expects; so, it is important to learn these expectations.

Grammar and punctuation generally follow fairly well established rules. This may be the most predictable and orderly part of English. Most teachers want students to use grammar accurately so it is important to follow these conventions.

Interpreting literature can be approached in several ways. Some teachers present literature so that there is a single correct interpretation. Others allow more variety in the impressions and meaning taken from literature. In any event, it is important to concentrate on central themes and to seek evidence of these themes in the events and characters in literature. Again, the criteria your teacher uses should be the main factor in choosing learning strategies. Below we look at using systematic study with English for in-class and home study learning.

**STUDY SMART**

In-Class English Learning

PREPARE

- A. Set goals for yourself such as to write better, increase your language skills, etc.
- B. Review your notes from previous classes
- C. When writing, review your teacher's comments on previous papers
- D. Predict topics and issues to be covered in class
- E. Complete all assigned reading

ACT

- A. Listen actively and take notes using a systematic approach

- B. Ask questions in class
- C. Review regularly what your teacher says using good systematic listening skills
- D. Listen for main points
- E. Identify common problems described by your teacher and eliminate these
- F. Listen for possible test questions

TEST

- A. Review your notes and upgrade them
- B. Summarize from memory the main points and your impressions from class
- C. Ask your teacher questions if you do not understand a point or idea
- D. Check your self against goals

**STUDY SMART**

Home English Learning

PREPARE

- A. Review the purpose of the assignment
- ask yourself why the teacher gave you the assignment and what you can learn from it
- B. Review the criteria your teacher uses to grade assignments
- C. Set goals for yourself
- D. Survey all reading

ACT

- A. Focus your attention and regularly monitor your concentration during class
- B. Read actively using good reading skills
- C. Look for main themes

D. Relate themes to events, people, actions, and issues

E. Make a note of what you don't understand

TEST

A. Discuss ideas and themes with others (e.g. This is what I think, what do you think?)

B. Review and summarize frequently

C. Develop questions to ask in class