

Useful tools for ESL/international students

Dictionaries and a Thesaurus

Merriam-Webster: <http://www.merriam-webster.com/>

This website offers a dictionary and thesaurus. Audio links give you the opportunity to hear words pronounced.

Cambridge Learner's Dictionary: <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/>

Excellent source for definitions as well as examples of words in sentences. (Note: Below the search box, you have a choice of dictionaries, including one for phrasal verbs and another for idioms.)

Onelook: <http://www.onelook.com/>

This site offers easy access to multiple dictionaries at once. It provides links to definitions for words as well as idiomatic phrases.

Vocabulary

Vocabulary: <http://www.angelfire.com/wi3/englishcorner/vocabulary/vocabulary.html>

This ESL website has extensive wordlists, exercises, and other resources.

The Academic Word List: <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/lals/staff/averil-coxhead/awl/>

The Academic Word List is comprised of 570 word families chosen for their frequency in an academic corpus (Coxhead 2000). Click on the site's links to explore the headwords and sublists.

Grammar

In general:

<http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/index2.htm>

Grammar help on 427 topics.

<http://www.1-language.com/englishcourse/index.htm>

To find the guided grammar lessons, open the link and scroll down the page.

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

Use the left-side menu to navigate grammar lessons and exercises.

<http://a4esl.org/>

Grammar and vocabulary quizzes and games, including bilingual quizzes.

Gerunds and Infinitives:

<http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/verblast.htm>

<http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/gerunds.htm>

<http://www.1-language.com/englishcourse/index.htm> (lessons 37, 38, and 39)

<http://www.englishpage.com/gerunds/>

Some verbs may be followed by either a gerund or an infinitive. For a few verbs, your choice will determine the meaning of a sentence:

John stopped smoking cigarettes. John stopped to smoke a cigarette.

Learn about the most common verbs that change meaning in this way by visiting these two websites:

http://www.1-language.com/englishcoursenew/unit39_grammar.htm

After you're done with the grammar lesson, click on the link at the bottom of the page to try the grammar exercises. Choose the answers, then click on "Grade me" to see how you did.

<http://esl.lbcc.ca.us/esllessons/gerundinf/gerundinf.htm>

Click on "Both Gerund and Infinitive—Meaning Change List"

Understanding Word Usage in American English

The websites below allow you to see how a word or phrase has been used in journals, books, newspapers, and television broadcasts.

MICASE--American spoken English: <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/micase/>

MICASE offers examples of word usage transcribed from recorded spoken English in a variety of settings. To use MICASE, enter a word in the search engine. If it finds your word, MICASE will provide a list of sentences with the word(s) you chose in the middle. If you want to read more of any text, look to the right of a particular sentence and click on the word 'view.'

Corpus of Contemporary American English: <http://www.americancorpus.org/>

This corpus of Contemporary American English is a database drawn from a variety of genres and subgenres (e.g. spoken and written sources, fiction, popular magazines, newspapers, academic writing, movie scripts, editorials, scientific journals, etc.). Designed as a tool for applied linguists, particularly those studying language use in "real world" texts, this corpus also allows students to see examples of words used in context. The search engine allows you to filter for sentence positions, genres, frequency, and other limits.

Duke University Writing Studio: <http://uwp.duke.edu/wstudio>

Schedule an appointment: <http://uwp.duke.edu/wstudio/schedule/index.html>

Additional ESL Resources: <http://uwp.duke.edu/wstudio/resources/eslefl.html>

International House: <http://ihouse.studentaffairs.duke.edu>

English Conversation Club:

<http://ihouse.studentaffairs.duke.edu/programs/intlstudents/englishhour.html>