



English Language School Courses and Curriculum

Full-time students at Saint Mary's College English Language School typically enroll in five classes per day: three "fundamental" courses and two electives. Each "fundamental" course is one hour per day, five days per week. The elective courses are 70 minutes each day, four days per week. Each day, students have three "fundamental" language courses. The "fundamental" courses incorporate all language modes or skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing), but focus on one particular mode or skill. Students choose two elective courses per day. Each elective course incorporates all language modes (listening, speaking, reading, and writing).

Below are the courses offered at the Saint Mary's College English Language School. All "fundamental" courses and levels* are offered each semester. Elective courses are subject to change each term.

Fundamental Language Courses

Speaking and Listening

Beginning Level (010)

At this level students develop speaking and listening skills and pronunciation through intensive work on basic communicative skills, grammar and vocabulary. The content includes asking and answering WH information-questions, Yes/No questions, and other basic questions. Students are exposed to both informal and formal speech through simple conversations, short lectures, and basic presentations. Students develop their listening and speaking skills through engaging in individual, pair, and group language activities. Major topics include daily life, personal preferences, and opinions. By the end of this level, students will understand the main idea in a message but may not capture many of the details. Students will also be able to engage in basic conversations on familiar topics and ask simple questions but will still have errors in their pronunciation, word order, and comprehension.

Intermediate Level (020)

At the intermediate level, students' speaking, listening, and pronunciation skills allow them to comprehend speech rates at a faster speed than at the beginner level. Students begin to understand both the main idea and the majority of the details in a message. Students master skills for explaining procedures, giving instructions, describing places and locations, making requests, expressing ability, giving advice, and making small talk. They also begin to develop academic presentational skills. Students give short presentations about topics they have researched and participate in class discussions. Students further develop their listening and speaking skills through engaging individual, pair, and group language activities. Topics move away from daily-life and personal preferences toward subjects that require objective or educated responses. At the end of this level, students will be able to function with confidence in daily conversations. They will be able to understand questions and answers in most time frames and be able to respond. Students will have some errors in pronunciation, word order, and comprehension.

Advanced Level (030)

This level focuses on further development of students' speaking and listening skills with a plethora of opportunities to practice expressing opinions, summarizing and analyzing key points from lectures and

presentations, negotiating and persuading, participating in informal and formal discourse, and recognizing and expressing cultural appropriateness in communication. The class format is based on small group discussions, pair work, and short oral presentations. Students reinforce and expand their knowledge of vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar structures. The level is designed to further develop students' speaking and listening skills and improve their pronunciation so that they are able to clearly understand main ideas, details, and begin to understand more complex meanings that are culturally-specific. Students practice listening and note-taking through extensive exposure to short lectures given by the teacher or by audio recordings. Students learn to respond to classroom situations, communicate competently in social settings, analyze and evaluate opinions, and make suggestions and requests. Students also learn to recycle information as they use questions and answers to practice speaking and to build vocabulary. By the end of this level, students have few errors in pronunciation, word order, and comprehension. They will be easily understood by all listeners and able to engage with confidence in all scenarios.

Superior Level (040)

The superior level is designed to help students become better speakers in a variety of academic settings. These skills include summarizing, analyzing, giving presentations, participating in debates, role playing, conducting interviews, and extemporaneous speeches. As good speaking always comes from effective listening and thinking, students will develop the skills of critical analysis through a number of authentic oral texts meant to extend and deepen their listening comprehension skills. They learn to distinguish between register, to agree, disagree, and refine discourse strategies in academic and professional situations, to synthesize and critique concepts and points of view. By the end of this level, students will have little to no errors in their speech. They will be able to give lengthy, detailed presentations. Superior level students are able to understand and respond to complex meanings that require deep knowledge of the culture around them.

Reading

Beginning Level (011)

Students in the beginning reading level will master basic understanding of a text and begin moving toward making their own inferences and conclusions. Students begin with simple reading selections that gradually increase in difficulty and length. Students learn various reading strategies including scanning for details, previewing materials, and how to predict content from titles, graphics, and introductions in order to draw conclusions and make basic inferences before engaging with a text. Students learn to read for main ideas and supporting details. They also build their vocabulary by learning each word in context and engaging with each word in multiple ways. Students will leave this level with basic knowledge of pre-reading techniques, the ability to read simple texts, and increased vocabulary recognition and understanding.

Intermediate Level (021)

This level provides students with intensive practice on essential reading skills that they will need in an academic environment. The level is designed with intermediate students' needs in mind, so the focus is on good comprehension of authentic texts (e.g., newspapers, magazines, and other full-length readings) and understanding new words, as well as their derivatives and collocations, in a variety of contexts. Selected texts from a variety of genres will increase in difficulty and length overtime. Students are expected to have a working knowledge of various reading strategies including previewing material, scanning for details, identifying main ideas, making basic inferences, and developing comprehension skills. They will continue to build vocabulary knowledge by using context clues to determine meaning of new vocabulary words. As students learn to determine the meanings of new words by using textual clues, minimal use of dictionary is emphasized. Students will leave this level with the ability to read a variety of lengthy and complicated texts from a number of genres.

Reading Advanced/Superior Level (031 / 041)

Students will further improve their reading comprehension skills through their extensive exposure to lengthy, authentic reading materials (e.g., novels, academic articles, etc.). The emphasis is placed on acquisition of high-

frequency, academic vocabulary and students' ability to determine the author's register, tone, and style through the choice of words and rhetorical structures. By the end of the advanced level, students are able to comprehend and confidently respond to academic readings that would be found in degree-level courses.

Writing

Beginning (012)

The course is designed for students to improve their writing starting from the sentence level and ending at the paragraph level. Students first master basic word order, basic parts of speech, present and past tenses, basic punctuation, and are able to compose simple sentences. Students then move to more complex sentence structures, ultimately building toward writing a cohesive, simple paragraph that includes a topic sentence, supporting ideas, and a conclusion. Along the way, students will learn pre-writing techniques (e.g. free-writing, brainstorming, etc.) and revising techniques (e.g. peer editing, self-editing, etc). As students progress, they will focus on coherence and cohesion in their writing.

Intermediate (022)

The Intermediate level further develops students' mastery of a simple-paragraph form, which includes effective topic sentences, supporting ideas, conclusions, coherence and cohesion. By the end of this level, students will master the basic essay (introduction, body, and conclusion) and experience writing six to eight major types of essays (e.g. narrative, comparison, cause-and-effect, etc.). Students will be expected to produce cohesive and coherent essays that increase in length from one to three pages. Students will master complex sentence structures and punctuation. They will incorporate writing devices, complex parts of speech, and various points of view into their writing to begin working with style and voice. Building on skills learned in the basic level, students will continue using pre-writing and revising techniques.

Advanced (032)

This level expects students to have mastered the basic essay but still need support to enhance their writing skills. Within the context of the process approach, students continue to work with essay structures: clear thesis statements, effective inter- and intra-paragraph development, strong conclusions, unity, and coherence. They continue to revise and edit their writing to achieve a high level of control of most English grammar structures, spelling, and punctuation. Style and voice start to become a key part of a student's writing development at this stage. Students will master various citation styles and be expected to do scholarly research for essays that are three or more pages in length. At this level students begin to develop writing, reading, and listening skills within a reading-writing connection framework. Using a variety of assigned readings, students will analyze text, master vocabulary, and synthesize main ideas and purpose, in order to form a written response. By the end of this level, students should be able to successfully complete a first-year college writing course but may need additional language support (i.e. consultation with professor, additional drafts and revisions, visit to the writing center, etc.)

Superior

Much like a degree-level course, this class format is based on small group discussions, in-class revision sessions, and take-home essay drafting. This level expects students to have a high control of English grammar structures, spelling, and punctuation to be able to focus on writing lengthy, multi-paragraph essays with effective thesis statements, body paragraphs, and conclusions with less support from the teacher. Students develop writing, reading, and listening skills by using assigned readings as a springboard for writing. Students analyze readings/writings for rhetorical style, master vocabulary, synthesize main ideas and purpose, and develop critical thinking in order to respond in written form. While a portion of assigned writing will not be text-based (e.g., personal and opinion essays), major writing projects will be text-based, with students demonstrating mastery of source-material content (e.g., synthesizing source readings on a variety of topics, producing research papers, using a variety of citation techniques, etc.). By the end of this level, students should be able to successfully complete a first-year college writing course without additional language support.

Electives

Intensive University Academic Preparation (013)

The course is designed to develop students' academic writing, reading, and listening skills. Students write summaries, textual-analysis essays, and learn effective ways to do research and appropriately integrate supporting material in their writing through various citation styles. They further improve revision and editing skills by focusing on coherence, cohesion, sentence structures, spelling errors, and punctuation in their own writing. Other academic skills such as study strategies and time management skills will be incorporated as needed.

This class requires students at the advanced level to audit a selected Saint Mary's College degree-level course for a complete semester. Advanced students attend a regularly scheduled university course and meet with their ELS instructor to discuss the content and issues highlighted in the course. Students will be expected to complete all course assignments and requirements, but will be aided and evaluated by the ELS instructor. The ELS portion of this class emphasizes academic skills necessary for success in university courses.

Writing, Reading, Listening for Scientific Purposes (*not currently offered*)

Through intensive reading, advanced students continue to develop their analytical thinking and critical reading skills within the context of writing for scientific purposes. In addition, through reading exceptional works of scientific writing, students further hone their reading comprehension skills, reading speed, summarize main and supporting ideas, and practice skimming, scanning, and making inferences. Students learn to write following the established conventions of scientific writing. The course is offered when there is adequate enrollment.

Cultural Exploration & Service Learning (099)

The Cultural Exploration and Service Learning course is ideal for students who want to learn the English language or improve their English language skills while exploring the U.S. culture and their own cultural identity. The course includes discussions, excursions, site visits, and various assignments that require interaction with Americans. Students learn about and connect with people from different cultures and backgrounds in the U.S. The optional service learning component allows students to volunteer with local organizations to use the English language in practical contexts as well as engage with the off-campus community. Through each of these cross-cultural encounters, students develop important intercultural skills and gain a deeper understanding of U.S. culture as well as their own.

TOEFL Prep (035)

This course is for students who want focused preparation for taking the TOEFL or other language exams (e.g. IELTS, TOEIC, etc.). Daily instruction includes sample tests, guided practice and explanation, and test taking strategies and skills. Additional focus is given to grammar and English language functions that might appear on language exams.

Grammar (036)

Designed for students who wish to hone their English grammar skills, this course includes daily exercises, instruction, and independent work to focus on particulars of English grammar and usage. Students have the ability to practice using digital and printed materials.

Topics in English Language (090)

In this course, students develop reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills through a theme-based or content-based curriculum. The theme and course requirements will vary depending on the instructor and session. Daily participation, classroom discussion, daily tasks or assignments (in class and out of class), projects or presentations, and assessments are all requirements for the course. Information about past courses is available upon request.