# Useful Online Resources for Developing English & Academic Skills

**Tip:** If a website doesn’t work properly, try using it in a different browser (Firefox, Safari, etc.).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Reference</th>
<th>How is the site useful?</th>
<th>Navigation &amp; Tips:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>English-English Dictionaries</strong></td>
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| [www.m-w.com](https://www.m-w.com)          | • College-level vocabulary  
  • Includes phrasal verbs (“hold up”, “hold out”, etc.)  
  • Pronunciation—includes audio for each entry  
  • Example phrases & sentences help you determine correct word choice & usage  
  • Thesaurus and synonyms lists at end of entries help you find words with similar meanings  
  • “Browse the dictionary” link at bottom of home page allows you to skim entries if you’re unsure of spelling                                                                                     | • Look up definitions of synonyms before using – they may not have the meaning you intended!  
  • *Note:* This is a commercial website containing ads that go to different sites                                                                                                                          |
| [dictionary.cambridge.org](https://dictionary.cambridge.org) | • Designed for English language learners, with understandable definitions for non-native speakers  
  • Example sentences show correct usage  
  • Entries have audio for pronunciation (click blue icon for American English)  
  • Grammatical information explains how to use words correctly (go to [dictionary.cambridge.org/help/codes.html](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/help/codes.html) for explanations of grammatical codes)  
  • Includes definitions for idioms and phrasal verbs (verb + preposition, such as “throw away”)  
  • Extensive cross-referencing with other dictionaries allows you to view specialized definitions, similar words/phrases & idioms containing a word  
  • If you are unsure about spelling but are close, the dictionary suggests the correct word                                                                                                      | • Select “American English” at top of page  
  • Type the main word of an idiom or phrasal verb to find definitions  
  • Click on “in other dictionaries” to see the same word defined in other dictionaries, such as Business English  
  • Click on “More results for” to see definitions of related words & phrases  
  • Click on “Browse the Thesaurus” to use the Smart Thesaurus, which allows you to scan related words and phrases, including idioms  
  • “Browse the Dictionary” links show nearby words on the dictionary page  
  • *Note:* This is a commercial website containing ads that go to different sites                                                                                                           |
| [visual.merriam-webster.com](https://visual.merriam-webster.com) | • Labeled images provide detailed color illustrations of words to help you remember them  
  • Educational information about processes, systems & how things work                                                                                                                                         | • This is not a commercial dictionary (contains 20,000 words)-use together with other dictionaries  
  • Search by word  
  • Browse by subject                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
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| **Word Usage** | • Search a collection of documents written for various purposes to see examples of how words and phrases are used in different contexts  
• Examples help you understand how words are used in context & grammatical sentence structures  
• Examples help you learn common word combinations  
• Type in phrases you are using in a paper to see if you have used words correctly | • Click on the word in the search results box to see all examples of how it is used  
• Search results can be sorted by the most common (highest frequency) usages  
• Select general “Academic” or specific academic subjects to see how words are used in those contexts  
• Specify date ranges for the subject you choose to see current usage |
| **Vocabulary** | • Shows the Academic Word List (AWL) developed by Averill Coxhead  
• Contains exercises to practice seeing how a specific word is used appropriately in a sentence.  
• Exercises on the AWL as well as academic vocabulary related to specific academic areas  
• Contains many ideas for building and learning vocabulary | • Click “General Vocabulary Exercises” for practice using common English words in a sentence.  
• Or click “Academic Vocabulary List” to view the exercises and sublists for the AWL  
• On the homepage, there is also the option of selecting “Weekly Study Guide” for a variety of practices and exercises |
| **Grammar** | • Review clear explanations of grammar rules containing helpful diagrams and examples  
• Do practice exercises for practice of different verb tenses & other grammar rules | • Grammar “Tutorials” provide clear explanations of grammar rules  
• Grammar “Exercises” provide practice, with feedback for correct/incorrect answers & hints |
| **ESL Workshop** | **Emory College of Arts and Sciences** | **Denise Dolan**  
denise.dolan@emory.edu | **Fall 2013** |
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| **Type of Reference** | • Learn phrasal verbs & other verb + prep combinations  
• Phrasal verb dictionary is a helpful reference | • Useful grammar sections on:  
• “Verb Tenses”  
• “Gerunds” (& Infinitives)  
• “Conditionals”  
• “Modals”  
• “Prepositions”–practice exercises as well as online dictionaries for phrasal verbs & other verb + prep combinations |
| **http://blog.tesol.org/great-grammar-websites-for-adult-ells/#more-1997** | • Contains links to numerous websites that provide help with English grammar in the form of interactive lessons, instructional videos, and quizzes | • Each linked website contains its own navigation. |
| **Writing** | • Over 70 handouts on a variety of writing topics, including:  
• Argument (persuasive) essays  
• Introductions & Conclusions  
• Thesis Statements  
• Revising & Editing  
• Citations & Avoiding Plagiarism  
• Grammar  
• Punctuation  
• Specific types of writing assignments  
• Most handouts have helpful examples to illustrate the writing skills they explain  
• A few handouts on grammar topics are written specially written for ESL students, including one on articles! | • Handouts can be viewed online or printed to keep in your notebook |
| **SEE ALSO:**  
Grammar topics for ESL students:  
[writingcenter.unc.edu/resources/esl/online-tools](http://writingcenter.unc.edu/resources/esl/online-tools)  
(look under “UNC Grammar Handouts”) | | |
| **Writing** | • Find extensive help with a variety of writing tasks, including:  
• Easy-to-understand explanations of how to use MLA & APA citations, including examples  
• Explanations of grammar & punctuation rules  
• Do exercises to help develop writing skills | • Go to “Grammar” section for explanations of grammar rules  
• Go to “OWL Exercises” for Grammar & other writing exercises with answer keys  
• Go to “General Writing” section for lessons on a variety of writing skills  
• Pages are available in printable format to keep in your notebook as quick references |
| **owl.english.purdue.edu/**  
(Online Writing Lab) | | |

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ESL Workshop  
Emory College of Arts and Sciences  
Fall 2013  
Denise Dolan  
denise.dolan@emory.edu
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| Citation          | • Automatically generates citations in a variety of formats (MLA, APA, etc.)  
• Enhanced version available to Emory students if logged in from the Emory campus  
• Links directly to library databases to locate sources  
• Search function allows you to automatically cite sources without having to input the information yourself  
• **Note:** Some professors do not want students to use this website! (Ask before using) | • Select the appropriate media (newspaper, websites, book, etc.) from the tabs across the top  
• Click "Manual Entry" to display appropriate fields for entering citation information for each type of source |

| | http://easybib.com/ |  |
| | • Automatically generates book citations in a variety of formats (MLA, APA, Chicago, etc.)  
• Helps you locate full citation information for books not available in the Emory libraries, for inter-library loan requests | • All versions of a book (paper/hardback, multiple editions) will display with a title search, so it may be necessary to scroll through to find the version you want to cite  
• Citations can be copy/pasted into your document or exported through EasyBib |

| | http://www.worldcat.org |  |
| | • Automatically generates book citations in a variety of formats (MLA, APA, Chicago, etc.)  
• Helps you locate full citation information for books not available in the Emory libraries, for inter-library loan requests |  |

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| Pronunciation     | • QuickTime, Adobe, & Shockwave plug-ins  
• Microphone optional | • Practice pronouncing and distinguishing between different sounds  
• Especially helpful for the “problem sounds” of English  
• Exercises you can do in the privacy of your room at your own pace, repeating as needed | • A variety of multimedia exercises, including:  
• Minimal pairs ("light" and "right")  
• Printable PDF workbook pages with MP3 audio exercises—some can be done with a partner  
• Dictation practice  
• Tongue twisters  
• Video demonstrations of how to make sounds |

| | http://international.ouc.bc.ca/pronunciation/ |  |
| | • Register for an account (free) | • Listening to different accents for each consonant and vowel sound  
• Several examples of each sound in different accents are available  
• Practice pronouncing each sound through games that give a score at the end (tells you how well you did) | • Tour of how the website works  
• Audio for every consonant and vowel in English  
• Pronunciation games for each sound that measure how accurately you are pronouncing the sound  
• Description of the way the mouth is supposed to form each sound |

<p>| | <a href="http://www.englishaccentcoach.com/">http://www.englishaccentcoach.com/</a> |  |</p>
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<td>you the percentage of how close you were to pronouncing the sound correctly)</td>
<td>• Authentic YouTube-like videos covering a variety of subjects &amp; everyday language used in different situations</td>
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<td><strong><a href="http://www.englishcentral.com">www.englishcentral.com</a></strong></td>
<td>• Subscription to access some sections of the site (others are free)</td>
<td>• Speaking practice, with emphasis on stress &amp; intonation rather than specific sounds</td>
<td>• While the video is playing, you can click on any word you do not know &amp; the definition of the word will appear, along with an audio clip of its pronunciation</td>
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<td>• Each video contains exercises for practicing spelling, speaking, and comprehension</td>
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<td>• Students can repeat the voice overs &amp; the browser then evaluates their speech</td>
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<td><strong><a href="http://www.uiowa.edu/~acadtech/phonetics/">http://www.uiowa.edu/~acadtech/phonetics/</a></strong></td>
<td>• Flash 7 or higher plug-in</td>
<td>• Pronunciation of each consonant and vowel sound in English according to the IPA chart.</td>
<td>• Examples of pronunciation for each consonant &amp; vowel sound in English</td>
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<td>• Video &amp; animated demos of how each sound is produced by the mouth</td>
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<td><strong>Reading</strong></td>
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<td><strong><a href="http://www.readprint.com/online-books">www.readprint.com/online-books</a></strong></td>
<td>• Online registration is optional, if you'd like to join a reading group/discussion.</td>
<td>• Read online books containing essays, short stories, poems, plays, &amp; novels</td>
<td>• Complete texts of selected books, if green “Read Online” button displays</td>
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<td>• Search by author, title, or keyword</td>
<td>• Biographical info about authors</td>
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<td>• Browse by author</td>
<td>• Groups (for online discussion of books)</td>
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<td>(Tip: Choose contemporary American authors for current English usage)</td>
<td>• Well-known quotes, sorted by subject or author</td>
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<td>• Note: This is a commercial website containing ads that go to different sites</td>
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<td><strong><a href="http://www.ted.com/talks">http://www.ted.com/talks</a></strong></td>
<td>• iTunes player v6.0 or later</td>
<td>• Listen to thought-provoking talks by experts in a variety of fields</td>
<td>• Videos of short talks about many subjects delivered by scholars and other experts (many are less than 15 minutes in length)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>itunes.emory.edu</strong> (click on “Emory on iTunes U”)</td>
<td>• iTunes player v6.0 or later</td>
<td>• Listen to or view podcasts containing academic content</td>
<td>• Collections of podcasts about many academic subjects in categories such as Business, Fine Arts,</td>
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| Student User Guide: lunes.emory.edu/userguides/studentguide.pdf (Emory also offers classes through ECIT) | • Latest version of QuickTime  
• iPod or other MP3 player (optional)  
• If you know how to use iTunes, you can use this site! | from Emory & other universities around the world  
• Learn about a variety of academic subjects  
• Practice listening to Emory professors & officials | Medicine, History, Literature, Math & Science  
• Browse by Category to find topics of interest  
• Podcasts produced by Emory that can be downloaded to an iPod or other MP3 player (subscribe to get regular updates on a channel or download an entire channel at one time)  
• Emory professors may use iTunes U to post course materials  
• All content is FREE! |
| iTunes U for other universities: web.mit.edu/itunesu itunes.yale.edu etc.        |                                                                               |                                                                                        |                                                                                        |
| www.voaspecialenglish.com or www.voanews.com/specialenglish                     | • MP3 player for downloading news stories (optional; only available for stories with audio icon next to title)  
• Flash player for Facebook videos | • Practice reading & listening to current news stories  
• Stories are told in a variety of native speaker voices  
• Familiarize yourself with American pronunciation  
• Match written words with spoken pronunciation  
• Search or browse topics | • Current news stories, written for non-native speakers  
• Choose from different topics like “World” & “Business”  
• Some stories are provided in both text & audio format  
• Audio plays at slower than normal rate of speaking  
• Double-click on any word in a story to see its definition in online Merriam-Webster Learner’s dictionary |
| www.literacynet.org/cnnsf/index_cnnsf.html                                       | RealAudio & Video player                                                      | • Listen to & read CNN & CBS news stories (text version of stories is shorter than audio version)  
• Audio reflects normal speaking rate of native speakers  
• Comprehension exercises help increase language skills & learn vocabulary | • News stories on different topics such as Business, Economy, Environment, Health & Technology  
• Most stories include audio & video as well as text  
• Story outlines and abridged versions help you understand main ideas  
• Links to Cambridge online dictionary for vocabulary lookup (“Look up the word...” box)  
• Multiple-choice questions for vocabulary & comprehension, with feedback for answers  
• Writing practice (under “Your Turn”) |
| http://www.esl-lab.com                                                           | • Listening practice                                                          |                                                                                        | A variety of audio clips that deal with different everyday situations.  
• Select from Easy to Difficult levels  
• Quizzes for each audio clip to test listening comprehension |
<p>| <a href="http://iteslj.org/links/ESL/Listening/Podcasts/">http://iteslj.org/links/ESL/Listening/Podcasts/</a>                                  | • Listening practice                                                          |                                                                                        | Links to a variety of websites containing podcasts for listening practice |</p>
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<td><a href="http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speechbanka-f.htm">http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speechbanka-f.htm</a></td>
<td>• Listening practice (recorded speeches)</td>
<td>• Scripts below videos allow you to follow along or check your comprehension • Video clips are generally about American political history</td>
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<td><a href="http://film-english.com/">http://film-english.com/</a></td>
<td>• Discussing students’ thoughts and reflections about a film. • Practice in listening and relating to a film or idea</td>
<td>• Each video clip has a complete lesson plan that includes opportunities for interaction and discussion (designed for teachers)</td>
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<td>Multiple skills</td>
<td>Different sites have different requirements; required plugins are noted on the site</td>
<td>• Practice a variety of English skills • Play games and do activities that help you learn English • <em>Note:</em> Some websites are for younger learners</td>
<td>• Regularly updated links to more than 250 websites • Skills are organized by difficulty level • Brief descriptions of sites help you decide which ones to use</td>
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<tr>
<td>legacy.lclark.edu/~krauss/toppicks/toppicks.html</td>
<td>Practice speaking, listening, reading, pronunciation, grammar, &amp; writing skills</td>
<td>• Blog posts pertaining to each ESL learning skill contain useful links, worksheets, videos, PowerPoints, etc. • Useful blog posts that reference a variety of ESL websites &amp; multimedia tools as for each category • YouTube videos of movie trailers with a quiz after to test listening comprehension</td>
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<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.eslcommando.com">http://www.eslcommando.com</a></td>
<td>Practice reading comprehension through news articles that come with a variety of quizzes and worksheets</td>
<td>• Various practice exercises in speaking, listening, reading, etc., organized by difficulty level • Contains exercises to complete before and after the lesson • Provides a general lesson plan for each article that includes pre-reading exercises, audio clips, worksheets, and matching games • Multiple quizzes for each article (Multiple Choice, Fill-in the Blank, etc.)</td>
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