

Tips for Students: How to Improve Your Academic English

Although the ELC may be far behind you, there is always room for improvement when learning another language. Even if you feel confident having casual conversations, watching television, or listening to lectures in English, you may still benefit from continuing to improve your academic English. If you commit to becoming more and more fluent, you will appreciate a greater degree of nuance in your lectures and course readings and feel more confident expressing complex ideas in writing. To make great strides in your English skills, consider incorporating the following habits and strategies into your daily life:

1. Practice a little bit every day. It is better to work for ten minutes each day than to work for several hours each weekend. Choose a specific time each day to work on a small task, such as listening carefully to a short YouTube video or podcast segment and writing down new vocabulary.
2. Attend conversation circles. Conversation circles at KOLT are a great way to practice speaking with fluent speakers in a relaxed environment. Don't be afraid to make mistakes: nobody will judge you, and you cannot improve if you never practice!
3. Choose one podcast, one news website, and one TV show in English to listen to, read, and watch regularly. Whatever you choose, make sure it is one you really enjoy. You will learn best if you are genuinely interested in the topics and content.
4. Be an active audience member. Ten minutes a day of active, focused reading (i.e. looking up unfamiliar words, writing down questions, trying out new expressions) is better than several hours of passive skimming. When you listen to your favorite podcast, pause the recording, rewind, and look up words you don't recognize. Keep a running list of all the new vocabulary you learn. If you are watching a show on Netflix, first try to watch a short segment without any subtitles. Try to guess words or phrases you didn't recognize. Then rewind and watch the same section with English subtitles. Write down any new words and look them up in the dictionary. Finally, watch the same segment a third time without subtitles to anchor the new words in your memory. Learning vocabulary within the context of a story will help you remember it.
5. Take all your reading and class notes in English. The more immersed you are in English throughout the semester, the easier it will be to take exams and write final papers.
6. To write more effectively, read more. Yes, you must practice writing in order to improve as a writer. But the more you read in English, the more familiar you will be with English sentence structures, word choice, and turns of phrase. Over time, this familiarity will improve your writing dramatically.

7. Get support at KOLT. Email kolt@ku.edu.tr to schedule a one-on-one support consultation to help you pinpoint where you can make changes to your study habits and routines for maximum improvement.

English Materials for Listening, Reading, and Speaking

Websites and News Magazines for Reading Practice:

Intermediate:

- BuzzFeed News: <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/>
- The Guardian: <https://www.theguardian.com/international>
- BBC News: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world>
- TRT World: <https://www.trtworld.com/>
- Al Jazeera: <https://www.aljazeera.com/>

Advanced:

- The New Yorker: <https://www.newyorker.com/>
- The Times Literary Supplement: <https://www.the-tls.co.uk/>
- The Atlantic: <https://www.theatlantic.com/world/>
- The London Review of Books: <https://www.lrb.co.uk/>
- The New York Review of Books: <https://www.nybooks.com/>
- Aeon: <https://aeon.co/>
- Psyche: <https://psyche.co/>

Podcasts for Listening Practice:

- On Being – conversations with artists and thought leaders from all religious faiths
- NPR's Invisibilia – the weird science of the unseen
- NPR's News Hour – daily news roundup
- The New Yorker Radio Hour – interviews with journalists and cultural figures
- This American Life – social and cultural documentary, reporting, and personal stories
- The Moth and the Moth Radio Hour – unique personal stories

Crowdsourced Speaking Resources / Connect with Native Speakers:

- HelloTalk: <https://www.hellotalk.com/about/>
- Verbling: <https://www.verbling.com/>

General English Practice:

- News in Slow English: <https://www.newsinslowenglish.com/>

- Rocket Languages: <https://www.rocketlanguages.com/english/premium/>
- Yabla: <https://english.yabla.com/>
- Cambly: <https://www.cambly.com/en?lang=en>

Pronunciation Dictionaries:

- Forvo: <https://forvo.com/languages/en/>