

Course Descriptions 2014-2015

Students are required to take all four skills offered in their level. They are not permitted to take courses in different levels concurrently.

Integrated Skills (18 hours)



Starter (28 hours)

This beginner course serves as an introduction to the English language to familiarize students with the basic grammar structures and vocabulary relevant to their lives. Topics, which include transactional exercises and interactional exchanges, are focused on to make the learners more confident language users. In addition to daily life situations, vocabulary and structures related to past experiences and future plans are introduced while writing and speaking practices serve as a preparation for elementary level skill courses.

Elementary

This level focuses on daily communication through the use of basic vocabulary and grammatical structures. Topics include introductions, talking about oneself and discussing familiar people, places and things. Vocabulary and structures relating to basic past and future events are touched upon. Written and oral production is incorporated.

Pre-Intermediate

This level builds on the foundation from the previous level reviewing the topics and structures covered allowing students to express more detailed ideas. The topic of daily communication is extended to include the different ways to express things in the past and future. Main ideas in written and oral communication are examined.

Intermediate

The intermediate level focuses on developing students' use of more complex structures and vocabulary, and differentiating between proper tense usages. Students begin to make generalizations about a variety of topics and implement detailed language. The focus moves toward more abstract topics. Vocabulary and structures relating to giving opinions, personal views and talking about imaginary situations are introduced. Increasingly complex grammatical structures are introduced to allow for expression of more developed ideas.

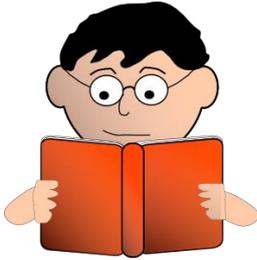
Upper-Intermediate

This level focuses on using more natural language, recognizing different registers, correct pronunciation and varied vocabulary. Correct tense usage, grammatical structure and modal usage is stressed. More sophisticated collocations and idioms are introduced. Ways of talking about personal beliefs are elaborated upon, including making suggestions and deductions.

Advanced

At the advanced level complex sentences with detailed descriptions and accurate vocabulary are studied. The distinction between formal and informal language is emphasized including idioms. Students are taught a range of advanced conversation strategies to aid in different types of settings and they expand upon their knowledge of written and oral Academic English.

Reading (4 hours)



Elementary

This is an introduction to reading simple texts in English. The focus is on understanding the main idea of a short text through the use of reading strategies. Vocabulary is introduced through contextual clues and then it is also used in a different context. Oral production is practiced in pre and post reading discussions.

Pre-Intermediate

In this level, the identification of main ideas and specific information in a reading text is the focal point. Skimming and scanning strategies are reinforced. Students develop prediction and inference skills through the use of suitable texts and class discussions. Students are introduced to semi-authentic texts organized in a contemporary format.

Intermediate

In this level sequencing, classifying and identifying information regarding the text is practised. Vocabulary building is taught through strategies such as deconstruction to teach students how to recognize unfamiliar words. Texts are increasingly authentic and based on up-to-date issues.

Upper-Intermediate

This level explores the skill more in depth through extended discussions which utilize different question types. A wider range of vocabulary is introduced and integrated into the lesson. Students work on summarizing and explaining a text as well as interpreting information presented in visual formats. Texts used are contemporary and based on authentic sources with little revision.

Advanced

In this level reading texts which are adapted from authentic sources are studied to find complex factual details, references and sequencing information. Paraphrasing and inferring are the main skills targeted, allowing students to elaborate on their own ideas using the materials studied. Academic vocabulary is expanded upon through various strategies.

Writing (4 hours)



Elementary

This course provides an introduction to writing in English beginning at the sentence level. The basic components of a sentence and general mechanics are studied. Students practise writing about familiar topics and complete different types of forms and they are guided to write in a context at later stages of the level.

Pre-Intermediate

In this level the paragraph structure is introduced to build on the elementary writing course and students focus on recognizing/identifying its components. The writing process begins by teaching outline construction and then looking at topic sentences and their supporting details. The concepts of coherence, cohesion and unity are introduced at the paragraph level. Students are also introduced to descriptive vocabulary for statistical data at a basic level.

Intermediate

In this level paragraph structure is practised via writing statistical data paragraphs and the structure of an essay is analysed. Five paragraph opinion essays are written based on outlines with a focus on effective introductions, supported body paragraphs and appropriate conclusions. Special importance is paid to the steps in the writing process.

Upper-Intermediate

This level perfects the introduction and conclusion paragraphs, practicing different ways of modifying the writer's viewpoint. Creating compelling and unified essays with accurate information is the end goal. The argumentative essay structure is also studied and practiced.

Advanced

In this final level students continue working on different types of academic essays. They learn to express their viewpoints using different compare and/or contrast essay structures.

Listening and Speaking (2 hours)



Elementary

This course is an introduction to oral communication in English that explores daily topics. Students practise to ask, understand and provide personal information as well as accomplish simple tasks which have been introduced in the starter level as a guide for interaction in IS lessons. Strategies to aid comprehension are introduced such as showing interest and responding to offers of help as well as techniques to make their pronunciation more natural.

Pre-Intermediate

At this level the topic of personal information is expanded upon to include individualized views and opinions on a familiar topic. Listening is practiced through recorded materials where students take notes on the main points of a conversation. Role-plays allow opportunities to practise a variety of scenarios.

Intermediate

In this level a wide range of strategies are studied to aid in listening to academic related topics. Academic vocabulary is introduced. Conversation topics become less personalized and focus more on organizational structure and sequencing. Students use critical thinking skills to express their opinions on a wide range of topics.

Upper-Intermediate

This level begins to focus on listening and speaking for more academic purposes. Lectures are used to practice notetaking. Accurate vocabulary is emphasized and students learn to differentiate between phrases used for facts versus opinions. Debating skills are introduced and practised.

Advanced

In this level strategies to compare ideas, signal emphasis and connecting ideas are stressed. Listening activities practise inferring meaning through context and conversation topics are more complex and academic. Colloquial references and abstract expressions are focused on to attain a more natural level of spoken English. Students discuss and debate on various topics by using strategies learnt in previous levels.