

5.

Tips* for Success in School

American schools are different. Newcomers must struggle with new subjects, and new teachers and classmates, as well as a new language.

Tips for English language learners

Don't take too many subjects your first years in a U.S. high school or college. Take classes that are **similar*** to classes you've had in your home country. Math, health, art, and music may be easier to learn. American history and English **literature*** classes might be very different from subjects in your home country. They **require*** a lot of reading.

Take care of your health

Eat healthful foods. Exercise. You need extra sleep. English language learners are **constantly*** hearing new words and ideas. Your brain gets tired!

Know what you must know

Find out the **requirements*** of your classes early in the year. Ask the teacher to tell you which **chapters*** of the book you need to read during the year. (Often a teacher **skips*** some chapters.)

Use native-language* books, audio CDs, and videos

Read information in your own language for your subjects. This way, you can understand the facts and **concepts*** in the topic. Then read your textbook to get the English **vocabulary***. Many textbooks have an audio reading **available*** online.

Do you have to read a famous **novel***? Get the novel in your own language, too. Go to your school's **media center*** or to

the public library. Ask if there is a movie or audio CD of the novel. Find out where you can **borrow*** or rent it. This will help you see the place, **characters***, and action in the novel. It can help you get started. However, watching the movie is not a **substitute*** for reading the book.

How to study

Keep a notebook or a part of your notebook for each subject.

Read a chapter *before* the teacher teaches a lesson about it. Write notes about the chapter in your notebook. Then read it again after the lesson. Look at the pictures and read the **captions***. When you read a chapter, notice the **headings***. After you read about a topic, write your notes in a notebook.

Read the chapter and your notes again before a chapter test. **Review*** the textbook. Review your notes before the final exam.

Use your dictionary

Learn the important vocabulary in a chapter. Try to guess the meanings of some words by the rest of the sentence. Carry a **bilingual*** dictionary with you to classes. (An **electronic*** bilingual dictionary is lighter and can be faster.) Write new words and their meanings in your notebook for that subject. Keep your notebook neat, so you can study it easily.

Get a buddy* in the classroom

Some teachers **assign*** a buddy to new students. You can ask for one, too. Ask a friendly classmate for their phone number or email address. You may need to call about the homework if you are absent. Some teachers

may post the homework at the school's website. Learn how to get that.

Neatness counts

Practice writing until your handwriting is easy to read and looks good. Learn how to type. Do important **assignments*** on the computer.

Writing tips

When you write a paper, first make a list of ideas. Then write a **rough draft.*** Read it out loud to yourself. This will help you to find your own mistakes. Make all your changes and corrections. If you are using a computer, run **spell check*.** Read your paper again to make sure spell check did not enter new errors. Then print it out to hand in to the teacher.

Speak!

Try to **participate*** in class **discussions*.** Raise your hand to give an answer or ask for information. Don't worry about making mistakes. Of course you will make mistakes! It's the way to learn.



Sometimes, others will laugh when your words sound funny or you give a wrong answer. Just laugh with them. Ask classmates to help you **pronounce*** words correctly. Teach them to say a short sentence in your language. They'll see that it's difficult.

Talk to the teacher

Ask questions when you don't understand.

Part of your



report-card **grade*** may come from participation. Another part will come from **effort*.** How will the teacher know the effort you are putting in? Show it. Show the teacher the vocabulary list of the words that are new for you. Tell the teacher how much time you spend on homework.



Students often work in groups.

If the teacher **offers*** help during lunch or after school, **accept*** it!

Take part in some **extra-curricular activities*** at school. These are a good place to make friends, practice English, and learn other **skills*.**



A high school marching band

Many schools have a Back-to-School Night in September. This is a time for parents to visit the school and their child's classroom.

Parents may question teachers about their child's **progress*.** They can tell the teacher how the student feels about the class. They can tell about any problems the student has with homework or understanding the lesson. Parents can join a PTA (Parent--Teacher Association). This group talks about school problems. They raise money for special programs or **scholarships*.**

Let's talk about it.

1. Is your American classroom different from classrooms in your home country?
In what ways?
2. Have you done any projects in school? Tell about one of them.
3. What kind of projects do you like to do?
4. How many subjects are you studying this year? Are they all in English? How much homework do you have for each class?
5. What can you do when the textbook for a subject is difficult to understand?
6. Is it easy or difficult for you to participate in class lessons? Why is it important?
7. How do you feel when someone laughs at the way you pronounce words?
8. What tips for success can you give to a new student?

Using new words:

Match the word with its meaning.

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|---|--------------------------------|
| _____ 9. the words under a photograph or picture | A. substitute |
| _____ 10. a person in a story | B. novel |
| _____ 11. a thing or person that takes the place of something else | C. extra-curricular activities |
| _____ 12. the first writing of an essay or project, not the final version | D. literature |
| _____ 13. novels, stories, poetry | E. caption |
| _____ 14. sports, clubs, marching band | F. character |
| _____ 15. A long story | G. rough draft |

Write a word in each sentence to make it correct. Choose from this list:
media center electronic heading assignment requirements

16. An _____ bilingual dictionary can help a person quickly learn the meaning of a word.
17. A _____ tells the reader what the next paragraphs are about.
18. You can do research in the school's _____.
19. Each teacher has _____ for passing a subject.
20. It's important to know the homework _____ each day.