

FAQs: CESL Online

Q: Why should I choose studying online vs. a traditional way of face-to-face (F2F)?

A: By taking courses online, you can reach your academic or professional goals in the comfort of your home. Studying online eliminates costs related to travel and parking on campus and saves you time as most online courses are self-paced, and you can study while taking care of your career and/or family responsibilities. “Over three-quarters of academic leaders at public institutions report that online [instruction] is as good as or better than face-to-face instruction,” is stated in *Class Differences: Online Education in the United States, 2010* (Allen & Seaman, 2010).

Q: How are CESL online courses different from collections of materials online, most of which are available free of charge?

A: Our courses are teacher-guided and teacher-supervised. You get 24/7 access to highly-qualified University of Arizona instructors, all of whom have a master’s degree (or higher) in teaching English to non-native speakers of the language and multiple years of teaching experience. They are trained to teach online and guide students through online courses to maximize your learning outcomes and provide you with an exceptional learning experience. If you complete our courses successfully, you will receive the Certificate of Completion from the Center for English as a Second Language (CESL), the University of Arizona.

Q: How do I access course materials?

A: Your teacher will use the D2L (Desire-to-Learn) site to bring the readings, video and audio files, activities, exercises, and quizzes to you. In this easy-to-use layout, every week you will find a set of assignments to be completed and submitted to your teacher for grading by a given due-date (usually Sunday nights). Through D2L, you will be able to communicate with your classmates, post responses to discussion questions, chat and blog.

Q: What equipment do I need to have at home to be a successful online learner?

A: You will need:

1. Computer:

Windows: Supported OS’s and recommended versions of Java

- Windows XP (32 bit with 32 bit JVM)
- Windows Vista (32 bit with 32 bit JVM)
- Windows Vista (64 bit with 64 bit JVM)
- Windows 7 (32 bit with 32 bit JVM)
- Windows 7 (64 bit with 64 bit JVM)
- Pentium III 1 GHz processor
- Sun Java 1.5.0_17 or Sun Java 1.6.0_12 and greater

Macintosh: Supported OS’s and recommended versions of Java

- OS X 10.5 (32 bit with 32 bit JVM)
 - OS X 10.6 (64 bit with 32 bit JVM)
 - OS X 10.6 (64 bit with 64 bit JVM)
 - G4, G5 or Intel processor
 - Apple Java 1.5.0_16 (J2SE5 - 32 bit), Apple Java 1.6.0_07 (J2SE6 - 64 bit)
2. High-speed Internet connection and a web-browser (e.g., latest versions of Firefox, Internet Explorer, and Safari) DO NOT use Google Chrome!

3. A set of speakers, microphone, and a webcam (optional);
4. Adobe Reader (latest version);
5. Microsoft Media Player or VLC Media Player (latest versions).

Q: Will I be able to communicate with my classmates?

A: Yes. D2L has a discussion board where you will post weekly responses to questions, comment on your classmates' responses, and read their comments to yours. There are also blogs and text chats. Finally, you will be able to talk to your instructors and classmates during live weekly chat sessions (for that you will need a webcam or a microphone!).

Q: Will I practice reading in online courses?

A: Yes. In our online courses, there is a reading component that will require you either to complete the required readings (e.g., Communication in Nursing, TEFL Certificate courses) or to focus on practicing techniques that you need to master in order to read texts and answer comprehension questions successfully (e.g., the TOEFL, IELTS, TOEIC Preparation courses). You will focus on developing your guessing vocabulary from content, finding pronoun referents, simplifying meaning of sentences, finding facts, inferencing and other useful reading skills.

Q: Are there vocabulary exercises?

A: Yes. Vocabulary exercises will be provided to help you improve your knowledge of vocabulary for specific purposes (e.g., Communication in Nursing) or practice vocabulary for the tests (e.g., the TOEFL, IELTS, TOEIC Preparation courses).

Q: Are there listening exercises?

A: Yes. Most of our courses include video clips. You will be provided with comprehension questions to help you focus on the material while you are watching them (e.g., Communication in Nursing, TEFL Certificate courses). In some courses (e.g., the TOEFL, IELTS, TOEIC Preparation courses), you will learn about various questions that you will be asked in the listening sections of the tests and master strategies to answer them successfully. You will practice note-taking techniques, in order to be able to use your notes and answer questions on the tests.

Q: Will I practice speaking in online courses?

A: Yes. Your teacher will use the OLE board, Webswami or other similar voice-recording programs to help you practice speaking and answer questions. Your teacher will post numerous questions for you to answer, and you will use your microphone to record your voice as you answer the practice questions. You can also use your webcam so that your teacher will hear and see you. Then, she or he will listen to your recordings and give you useful feedback on how to improve your speaking skills. You will also practice speaking during your weekly live chats with your teacher. Some online courses (e.g., Pronunciation online) include extensive practices of pronunciation.

Q: Will I practice writing?

A: Yes. You will practice writing for the writing sections of the language tests (e.g., the TOEFL iBT and IELTS). You will be doing peer-reviews and work on multiple drafts to be able to improve your own writing (e.g., Academic Writing, Writing for Teens courses). Most courses will include a comprehensive review of major grammar topics and sentence structures to help you improve your writing skills (e.g., TOEFL, IELTS, TOEIC Techniques, Academic Writing, and Advanced Grammar for Teachers).

Q: How can I reach my instructor if I need help?

A: Your instructor will guide you through the course and will be with you every step of the way. The easiest way to contact your instructor will be via email. Besides that, she or he will be using Elluminate for your weekly live chats when you will be able to see your instructor, talk to him or her (for that you will need a webcam or a microphone!) or use a text chat to ask your questions or talk about your concerns.

Q: Where can I get a complete list of your online courses, application, fees and schedules?

A: Please, visit us at www.cesl.arizona.edu/online.html or email us at online@email.arizona.edu.

We are looking forward to helping you achieve your goals. Thank you for your interest in our online program.