



## Intensive A Content-based Course: Academic Skills Handbook

Speaking, listening, reading, writing, grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation... these are all important English skills and having a good level of English is important. But that is just the start and **English is just a tool**. You use English to do something else: speak to friends, listen to music, surf the internet, write to a homestay family, travel, or study something like culture or business.

In Ancient Greece and Rome, young students were taught the art of **rhetoric**, which is the art of speaking and writing well so that you can influence or change how people think. This was for leaders at that time. Today, almost everyone goes to school, but this idea continues and academic skills like **essay writing** and **giving presentations** are still in many ways the foundation and most important tools of Western education today.

Of course, there are many other academic skills you need to learn and practice including **taking notes** during lectures, **working in groups** and **learning how to research**. You also need good **computer and technology-related skills**.

**Intensive English A is a content-based course**. The classes are in English and you will work on all of the above language skills – but you will also be working on the **academic skills**. In particular, you will be giving a lot of **presentations** and you will be doing a lot of **essays**. However, before we look at all of those, it is much more important to start with life skills and study habits.

Starting university is a big change and can be a big challenge. It is a new level of schooling with different types of classes and content. Your teachers will not look after you in the same way your high school teachers did, so you need to **be more active** and **responsible** and **ask questions**. In addition, maybe you are living alone for the first time and are doing things like **learning to cook** and **manage your money**. Perhaps you also need to **work** to pay for your daily needs. Whatever the challenges, the good news is that this is a good time to look at your life and make new habits!



# Life skills and study habits

## LIFE SKILLS

- **Eat well** – Don't eat only snacks and sweets. Eat a balanced diet. Learn to cook – it can be cheaper and, if you can make your food, you will become more confident.
- **Rest well** – Of course, we all need to sleep. But sleep also helps you remember things you study – it is the time your brain organizes your memory. If you want to do well in an exam or a presentation, make sure you get enough sleep.



## GOOD NOTES HELP YOU:

- To understand the topic
- To review and remember what you read or heard
- To organize your thoughts



- **Get some exercise** – Exercise not only keeps you fit, it also helps you think. A healthy mind needs a healthy body. Go for walks. Try out the university gym. Join a sports club if you can. Stretch every day. Dance. Try yoga if you can.
- **Be careful with money** – Now is a great time to learn to plan your finances (which means how you use your money.) Write down how much you use. Make a plan and budget (which means decide how much each month you will use on food, your mobile phone, going out with friends, clothes, etc.)

# Life skills and study habits



- **Find and develop support** – Make new friends. Join groups like a club or circle. These are the most important things to do. But also find out about support available on campus just in case. There is a student counselling service and support services for students with disabilities. Don't get too stressed. If you are worried about something, tell people. Ask questions. Staff and teachers are there to help you.

- **Find out what choices there are and decide what you want.** University is an exciting time. It is a chance to try things. Do more than think only of clubs and circles. Start a new hobby. Why not try some volunteer activities? If you get a part-time job, try to get one that will help your dream come true. Travel. Try something new. Do you want to study abroad? When, where and how long? Dream



# Life skills and study habits



## STUDY HABITS

To help your studies, remember to:

- **Read** – Not just LINE with friends, Facebook or manga. Read novels. Get into the habit of reading the news and find out about the world. Try to read the news in English too – you will find a different point of view. Read a wide range of things - different to what you usually read.
- **Develop a study routine** – Keep study time regular. Learn to manage the time you study. Keep a list of your homework. How much time will each piece of homework take? What needs to be done tonight? What can be done later? If you have some extra time, what can you do to stay ahead in your studies?

- **Use technology well** – How good are you at Word or PowerPoint? Can you type? Learn to use and check the university POST notification system, the Outlook mail system and the OneDrive cloud storage system. Use your time with technology well - it is easy to surf the internet for hours and hours but do nothing. Take notes. Stop looking at the screen and think about what you are reading. Stay focused.
- **Enjoy your studies.** Not all teachers will be great, not all courses will be perfect. You will feel stressed and tired. If that happens, think: Why did you come to university? What do you want to do? What interests you? Be positive. Find something interesting about the course. Read some books to find out more. The only person who can make something boring is you. Still stressed? Take a break, have a cup of tea or coffee, smile, and talk to some friends. Then try again.

