

Learning English for School

There are two kinds of English skills. One kind is the “everyday” language for conversation. This is called *basic interpersonal communication skills* or *BICS*. The other way to use English includes ways of thinking, talking and writing about ideas, especially the ideas of school topics such as science, history or literature. This is called *cognitive academic language proficiency* or *CALP*. It may take students many years to learn *CALP* English. Students develop both *BICS* and *CALP* through many different school activities and interactions. They develop English at the same time as they develop their understanding of school topics. They transfer knowledge from their first language.



Elementary Schools

Students take classes with English speakers. Teachers adjust their way of communicating, select different materials, or use different groupings and techniques to help English Language students learn English.

Middle and Junior High Schools

Students take classes with English speakers. Students may use different materials or technology tools, or work in different groups or classes to get help learning English. They may get extra help in English option classes, resource rooms or tutorials. They learn the English they need to be able to work in their classes. Some schools have extra “homework clubs” or recreational activities.

Senior High Schools

High school guidance counselors look at the students’ language proficiency levels and place students into classes where they could be successful, based on their English level and their previous school experiences. Some classes may be ESL (English as a Second Language) classes. Students may get extra help in Learning Strategies classes or tutorials. Some schools have volunteer community or peer helpers.

