

Your learning experience at Kings



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Teaching in the USA

Every country has its own educational culture. Studying in the United States is not just a question of what you will study but also how you will study it. North American teachers expect learners to become responsible, independent, autonomous and self-motivated. So what does this mean?

Your teachers at Kings are informal. You will be able to call them by their first names. You must always follow the course and complete your homework or assignments on time. If you are ill or have other good reasons for not finishing work on time, your teachers will be understanding and give you as much help as they can. However teachers cannot help if students don't do any work!

You must attend your classes. At Kings, you will only be presented with your Certificate if you have at least 90% attendance. Full attendance is also a condition of your visa and we have a duty to report you to immigration if you do not turn up for classes.

Your teachers appreciate students who know what their goals are. This could be to learn your subject for a special purpose, to pass an exam, to qualify for a job, or to study the subject as deeply

as possible. If you are clear about your goals, your teachers can advise you on how to achieve them. In the U.S., you can find information to help with your studies in many places - in libraries, bookstores, online, and through television and radio programs. Your teachers will tell you where you can find information and how you can use it. They will give you advice on how you can explore your subject and make discoveries for yourself. However you must be willing to go to teachers and ask for their help and advice. If you do, teachers will be happy to help, but they expect you to do the work.

Questions are the key to learning. If you ask your teachers good, relevant questions you will show that you are interested in the subject. This also makes the classroom a more interesting place for learning. Teachers in the U.S. like being asked questions. Your fellow students are glad if you ask questions because it helps them learn, too.

Teachers will ask you to speak during classes or seminars. This is part of the learning process, especially in language classes but also in other subjects. Speaking will help you form opinions and share them with others. When you speak, your teachers are not judging or testing you, they are giving you a learning opportunity. The more

you speak, the more you will improve, especially if you are a language learner.

Do not be surprised if your teachers make jokes. Many teachers like to create a relaxed atmosphere in the classroom. Studies show that many people learn better when they are not worried. It is also natural in the United States to make or share jokes during both work and leisure.

At Kings, there are also 'free' study periods. During this time you can study alone and make use of resources such as libraries and computers. Teachers expect you to make the best use of your time without being told what to do. Of course, you can always ask teachers for advice on how to use resources during these 'free' study periods.

Every group of students is different. Every class you are in will offer you learning opportunities. Your teacher will sometimes encourage members of the class to work together, in pairs, groups or the whole class. This might include work outside the classroom. These will be good learning opportunities. Think of your classmates as live 'learning resources'. They can help you learn. You may also discover interests you have in common and become friends.



Testing your language level

On your first day we will give you a language test so that we can place you in the class suitable for your level of English. There are 8 levels at Kings, as follows:

Level 1	Beginner
Level 2	Elementary
Level 3	Pre-Intermediate
Level 4	Lower Intermediate
Level 5	Intermediate
Level 6	Upper Intermediate
Level 7	Pre-Advanced
Level 8	Advanced

Your classes

If you have studied in the U.S. before, or in a language institute in your country, you will know what to expect in a typical class. However, if you have never studied in this kind of college, or if you have not studied English since you left high school, you may find the classes quite different. This is how we teach at Kings:

- We use various different materials (books, CDs, DVDs, Internet).
- We expect you to participate fully in class activities.
- We expect you to speak a lot! You will do lots of work in pairs or groups in order to give you as much speaking practice as possible.
- We will give you homework every day. Please ask if you would like more work to do outside class.
- We will correct you - but not all the time! Some activities will focus on accuracy - in these you will receive correction; other activities will focus on fluency - you will probably only be corrected after these activities.

Making progress

You will stay in your class until you are ready to move to the next level. You will have a progress test every Monday so that we can check you have learnt and understood your lessons each week.

The average length of time to stay at one level is 8 weeks, but everyone progresses at different rates and you may be ready to move up after 6 weeks, or perhaps not until after 10 weeks. If you feel your class is too easy or too difficult, please talk to your teacher or to the Director of Studies. If we think you should change class, the change will usually take place on Tuesday. Please remember that we are here to teach you and to help you learn, but we cannot learn for you! You must also help yourself to learn - so do your homework, use the self-access materials, watch TV / DVDs, read as much as you can, use every chance to speak to people in English, join in the college activities - and then you will make progress!

Reports

Sponsored students receive monthly progress reports. All students who are at Kings for a minimum of 4 weeks receive an end-of-course report. Other reports are produced on request.

Taking exams

If you are interested in taking an internationally recognized English exam, such as iBT TOEFL or Cambridge First Certificate (FCE), ask the Director of Studies for more information. We offer test prep classes for these exams, and have plenty of study material to supplement your preparation.

Tips for learning outside class

At Kings, learning happens 24/7, even when you don't realize you're actually learning!

You can always schedule time with a teacher for guidance and support. You can also access the Computer Learning Lab between lessons to develop your language skills. Wireless internet access in every college means you can use your laptop to keep learning on the move.

You'll want to learn as much English as possible whilst you're at Kings. To help you learn as quickly as possible, here are some tips which you will find useful. Try to do at least one of these activities every day!

- Watch English language television - we especially recommend watching soap operas and the news!
- If you like soap operas, ask your host family to recommend a good one and to tell you the story.
- Listen to the radio - KCRW 89.9 FM is a free Internet public radio station of Santa Monica College, in Los Angeles, California - streaming news from National Public Radio (npr.org) or you can listen to Southern California Public Radio at 89.1, 89.3, or 90.3.
- Keep a diary in English and try to write a few lines every day
- Read an English book - your Course Director can recommend a book at your level

- Write your postcards in English
- Send emails to your friends and family in English
- Visit lots of English websites
- Talk to your host family and offer to help them at home - you'll learn lots of new words and your host family will appreciate your help
- Talk to other students in English
- Go shopping - ask where things are, ask if they have things in your size, etc.
- Read magazines and newspapers in which you're interested
- Use your imagination and think in English. When you're on the bus or walking to college, look around you and try and describe the things or people you can see. Use your imagination to make up stories about them. This will help you think in English!
- Use an English-English dictionary
- Revise the words you learnt in class when you go home
- Try to learn 10 new words or phrases every day. Try and use these words as often as you possibly can!
- Watch videos at college
- Come to college for activities - you'll have fun and make new friends

Study tip

Watch how your teachers teach. Make notes. Ask yourself the questions below. The answers may change and develop during your stay.

Do your teachers create a relaxed and informal atmosphere in class?
If so, how do they do this?

Does this make learning easier or more difficult?

Is this different from your educational culture?

Which styles of teaching and learning suit you best?

Has your time in the USA helped you become a better learner?