ESL [ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE]
A SELECT WEBLIOGRAPHY OF RESOURCES FOR TEACHERS AND STUDENTS:

2011 revisions (April 27, 2011)

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NOTE: The terms ESL and EFL are used interchangeably in this webliography of free Internet Resources

ESL WEB SITES OF THE YEAR:
Larry Ferlazzo's Daily Blog on the best ESL/EFL WEBSITES:
Larry Ferlazzo's Website of The Day for teaching ELL, ESL, EFL:
http://larryferlazzo.edublogs.org/
Now, this blog of the best ESL/EFL sites includes Twitter Feeds!

ALSO, CHECK OUT THE FOLLOWIGN WEB SITES:

Confusing Words Clarified: http://www.freetech4teachers.com/2009/04/confusing-words-clarified.html

16 Ways to supercharge your English Language Vocabulary:
http://www.dumblittleman.com/2008/08/16-websites-to-super-charge-your.html

Explain Confusing Words To Your Students of English: http://www.confusingwords.com/

Simple English Wikipedia: http://www.freetech4teachers.com/2009/02/simple-english-wikipedia.html A useful source in finding articles and resources using basic simple English words

ESL Holiday Lessons http:// www.eslholidaylessons.com
ESL Holiday Lessons provide a comprehensive collection of lesson plans for every major holiday in the United States. The collection also includes many lesson plans for minor holidays. http://eslholidaylessons.com Contains English Lesson Plans and Handouts.

And **Breaking News English :www.breakingnewsenglish.com**

Breaking News In English ESL Podcasts for Easier Learning (available in MP 3 files)
http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/podcast.html
Most mobile phones now (Nokia, windows mobile, etc) can take mp3 files and play them... so, iPods not actually necessary

.**VOA SPECIAL ENGLISH**: http://www.voanews.com/learningenglish/home/
An excellent web site for English language learners.

USA Today for Educators and English Language Learners http://www.usatoday.com/educate/
Provides glossaries, vocabularies and lesson plans from current articles in USA TODAY.

PART I: NEW GENERATION SEARCH ENGINES:
in the search window provided in these new search engines below, type the word ESL to retrieve the ebst new resources now available.

Librarians Index to the Internet and the Internet Public Library are now combined into one new search engine: http://www.ipl.org/ Try a search on the word ESL in http://www.ipl.org/

INFOMINE: http://infomine.ucr.edu

LOOK AT I**NFOMINE**, go to the **SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES SECTION from the main home page,** , then click on Subjects at the very bottom of the second page, then go to the E section and then look at the subject heading ENGLISH LANGUAGE -- ACCENTS AND ACCENTUATION (1) until you find the following Internet site

SPEECH ACCENT ARCHIVE http://accent.gmu.edu/

The Speech Accent Archive has collected 300 plus audio speech samples from people, native and non-native speakers of English, around the world -- reading the same English paragraph. The archive "allows users to compare the demographic and linguistic backgrounds of the speakers in order to determine which variables are key predictors of each accent." A person's accent is commonly (improperly or prejudicially) assigned a certain social standing, demographic, and income level. The goal of this project is to show the continuity of accent across geographical language groups. The native language phonetic inventories section gives a chart of the phonetic qualities of each language, so that two or more languages can be compared. The "Accent Atlas" pinpoints on a map

different speakers, and audio samples represent the different locales.

Research Development Network (RDN): http://www.rdn.ac.uk/
has Virtual Training Suites**:** http://www.vts.rdn.ac.uk
One of these suites deals with ESL: ESOL Virtual Training Suite (RDN):
http://www.vts.intute.ac.uk/fe/tutorial/esol

PART II: FREE EDUCATIONAL AND DOCUMENTARY VIDEOS FOR LEARNING ENGLISH: THE CONNECT WITH ENGLISH SERIES FROM THE ANNENBERG FOUNDATION AS WELL AS OTHER FREE RESOURCES:.

FREE ESL VIDEOS
Free ESL video quizzes and resources for ESL / EFL students and teachers. www.eslvideo.com
Simply excellent: each embedded video has a free quiz attached. Excellent resource for teachers and students

FREE ESL VIDEO: WATCHNOW:
http://www.watchknow.org/Video.aspx?VideoID=4107&CategoryID=875
 (English Grammar: Verb Tenses)) See also:
http://www.watchknow.org/Video.aspx?VideoID=26707&CategoryID=3224
Writing Essays

THE ANNENBERG FOUNDATION at http://www.learner.org has **free educational and documentary videos in all subject areas.** One video series in particular, *Connect with English,* follows the adventures of Rebecca as she travels across the U.S.A.
The series is available at this URL: http://www.learner.org/resources/series71.html

Access to this entire video series is free, but one does need to register first.
Registration is absolutely free and takes just minutes.

This description of *Connect with English* is from the overview":

"Through the story of Rebecca, an aspiring singer on a journey across America, ***Connect with English*** touches on life's important issues: leaving home, parenting, education, work, love, success, and loss. All of the characters use meaningful, natural language that students can put to work immediately in their own lives. Each episode features dialogue that is slightly slowed down and subtly simplified. Key lines are repeated, idioms paraphrased, and important events retold. There are constant visual clues to meaning, such as written signs, notes, and documents. Facial expressions, gestures, and body language also reveal meaning for students. Closed captioning can be used as a teaching and literacy resource. For levels from high beginning through low and high intermediate."

Another in this series from the Annenberg Foundation is **Writing English Better:**
English Composition: Writing for an Audience (Annenberg Media)
http://www.learner.org/resources/series128.html from the VIDEO ON DEMAND (VoD) SERIES

"How does one write a great essay? Is it possible to come up with an
original voice? These two questions and many more are discussed in this 26-part

series on English composition.

Offered as part of the Annenberg Media website, this video series "introduces basic principles and strategies for communicating in writing to a variety of audiences and improving general composition skills." Over the course of this series, interested parties will hear from a wide range of writing professionals. Each episode is 30 minutes long and the program titles include "Finding Something To Say", "Reading as a Writer", and "Peer Feedback".

Others in the series for free videos on the English Language from the Annenberg Foundation:

"Usage and Mechanics"
<http://www.learner.org/workshops/hswriting/workshops/workshop5/>,
Workshop 5 of Developing Writers: A Workshop for High School Teachers,
reviews effective strategies for teaching grammar. Web materials include
an interactive to help you assess your own methods of assessing student
work.

 Read Dave Barry's humorous views on grammar
<http://www.learner.org/catalog/extras/interviews/dbarry/db05.html> **and**
Andy Rooney's quibbles on word choice and usage
<http://www.learner.org/catalog/extras/interviews/arooney/ar01.html

 Teaching Grammar presents certain challenges. The article "To Grammar
or Not to Grammar: That Is Not the Question!" in PDF format
<http://www.learner.org/workshops/middlewriting/images/pdf/W8ReadGrammar.pdf>
emphasizes the importance of teaching grammar in the context of writing.
The article is included in Workshop 8 of Write in the Middle: A Workshop
for Middle School Teachers <http://www.learner.org/workshops/middlewriting/>.

 Explore sentence syntax as it relates to math and patterns in our
Teacher's Lab Syntax Store
http://www.learner.org/teacherslab/math/patterns/syntax/syntax_back.html

PART III: INTERNET SITES USEFUL FOR TEACHERS AND STUDENTS:

**The British Council's** Learn English website http://www.learnenglish.org.uk/
A useful site for learning the rules of grammar. The activities are listed by grade level Materials for Children, teachers, professionals Adult Learners and also professional Podcasts.

My English Images: Pictures Depicting Content for ESL Students: Resources For Teachers
http://www.myenglishimages.com/Home.html
Includes Conversation Tips, Grammar, Games, Pronunciation, Vocabulary, etc.

EL Civics - Civics Lessons for ESL Students
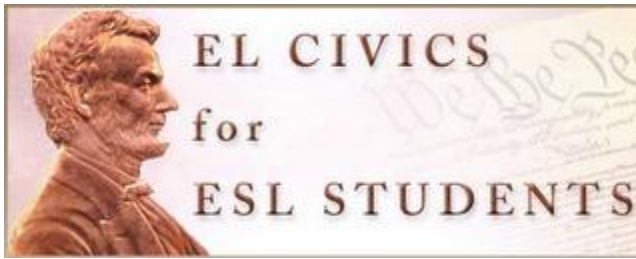
EL Civics is full of lessons, activities, and virtual tours designed to help students learn about American civics. EL Civics has lessons that cover the functions of government, important holidays, and US History. There is also a section called life skills that contains lessons to teach personal finance, finding employment, and other skills needed to be a successful citizen in the United States.

Five New Online Resources For ESL Teachers: **http://www.makeuseof.com/tag/5-online-resources-for-english-language-ESL-teachers/**

Using English: **http://www.UsingEnglish.com**
Provides grammar glossaries, reference sheets on irregular verbs, phrasal verbs and idioms, teacher handouts, and ESL forums. The forums are particularly useful, as registered users can post questions in the "Ask a Teacher!" feature, and receive a response from one of their team of expert advisors. The articles area contains short pieces on using punctuation properly, teaching English in South Asia, and formal letter writing. The site also has its own Weblog, which contains valuable information on various elements of the English language that may be helpful both for ESL teachers and those seeking to learn the language.

ESL Gold [Real Player, Pdf] **http://www.eslgold.com/** The site's primary materials are thematically organized into categories such as "Speaking", "Listening", "Reading", and "Writing".
Within each of these sections, visitors can take a look through topical resources that compartmentalize different more digestible themes, such as "Topics for Writing" or "Organizing and Composing".
As might be expected, visitors can also find materials for beginning, intermediate, or advanced level students.

Larry Ferlazzo's Website of the Day for teaching ELL, ESL, EFL:
http://larryferlazzo.edublogs.org/ Now, this blog of the best ESL/EFL sites includes Twitter Feeds!

Online English Language Program From The University of Oregon: **http://oelp.uoregon.edu/**

English Language Programs: http://exchanges.state.gov/education/engteaching/
Includes Lesson Plans and Activities

Translation Resources on the Web: A Guide To Accurate, Free Sites: *C&RL News*, **June 2009**
htt**p://www.acrl.org/ala/mgrps/divs/acrl/publications/crlnews/2009/jun/translation.cfm**

Regional English Language Office of the US Embassy in Cairo, Egypt: http://egypt.usembassy.gov/pa/relo.htm
Includes links to Forum Magazine, Civic Education Resources and Activities for teaching ESL and a variety of online resources. Excellent site

U.S. Consulate in Vladivostok Russia: http://vladivostok.usconsulate.gov/elf.html

Includes an American values through Films module including actual Lesson Plans, and sample questions to be used as discussion areas and pointers for how to teach Film effectively (Films included are "Dances with Wolves", "Erin Brokovich," "All the Presidents Men," "To Kill a Mockingbird," "Twelve Angry Men," High Noon" and "Sea Biscuit")

This value added website also includes a separate module titled: "Creating Interactive PowerPoint Presentations - Teacher's Guidebook (from Kursk, Russia)" that includes the best web sites for teaching and introducing Special English, using Voice of America broadcasts as one example.
Also teaches how to create meaningful interactive PowerPoint presentations that captivate your audience.

Also see the English Language Programs administered by the **U.S. EMBASSY in MOSCOW**:
http://www.usembassy.ru/bilateral/bilateral.php?record_id=pa_english
Includes a Connect with English Handbook, VOA Special English, Language and Civil Society,
Online Resources for ESL Educators and Handbooks for English Language Summer Camps for Youth.

These highly innovative Summer Camp combines English Language Study, American Culture and
Leadership Skills. The Handbooks themselves give "guidelines on how to organize and implement
an English language Summer Camp to combine both leisure activities and intensive study of the English language and American culture for middle and secondary school students during the summer vacation period."

ESL Cyber Listening Lab [Windows Media Player, Real Player] http://www.ESL-lab.com/
Developed by an educator with a series of experiences spent educating persons in the art of learning English, this website provides a multimedia experience for those seeking to learn the language.
The focus on the site is most definitely on developing users' listening skills, and it provides dozens of helpful audio features that quizzes students on topics such as renting an apartment, understanding credit cards, and making doctor's appointments. Along with these more practical skills, another section
of quizzes deals with subjects that students might encounter in other situations, such as
the TOEFL or more advanced conversations. The multimedia experience of the site is greatly
enhanced through video presentations of long conversations on topics such as family history,
investing, and solar eclipses.

THE READING MATRIX http://www.readingmatrix.com/
The Reading Matrix is designed to create a place where both teachers and other interested persons could come together to find resources about reading and writing. Most of the resources are geared towards the language needs of ESL and international students, but given the cornucopia of materials here, there is really something for everyone. The Archives are a good place to start, as there are subject-oriented resources for English-language learners that range from dictionaries, grammar quizzes to speaking and
listening practice.

PART IV: MAJOR PORTAL or GATEWAY SITES:

U.S. Embassy, Mexico City: free Internet Sites for English Language Teaching**:**
http://mexico.usembassy.gov/bbf/bfingles.htm

English Language Programs from the **U.S. State Department**: http://www.englishprograms.state.gov
Describes the programs available at U.S. Embassies overseas and offers their publications, all free and online:
the English Teaching Forum, their Publications Catalog; and their Ejournals: Language and Civil Society

(http://exchanges.state.gov/englishteaching/resforteach/ejournals/language-and-civil-society.html) and Language and Life Sciences: (http://exchanges.state.gov/englishteaching/resforteach/ejournals/language-and-life-sciences.html)

PART V: RESOURCES FOR WRITING BETTER:

6 VISUAL DICTIONARIES AND THESAURI: http://www.freetech4teachers.com/2010/10/six-visual-dictionaries-and-thesauri.html

Writing Center Handouts from the University of North Carolina:
http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/handouts/
High-quality materials on the art and craft of effective college-level writing are always in demand, and this website from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill has a veritable cornucopia of such documents. The materials were created by the school's Writing Center, and they are Divided into four areas: "Writing the Paper", "Citation, Style, and Sentence Level Concerns", "Specific Writing Assignments/Contexts", and "Writing for Specific Fields". The "Writing for Specific Fields" area is a great place for students who have declared a major, and each piece contains a bit of background on the nature of writing in each field, along with some information about the key units of analysis, assumptions, and so on. What is perhaps most impressive about this site are the multimedia writing demonstrations which cover "Developing Ideas", "Drafting", and two other key areas of the writing process.

WRITING GUIDELINES FOR ENGINEERING AND SCIENCE STUDENTS *http://writing.engr.psu.edu/*
Penn State University provides a great web resource for all engineering and science students with the models, exercises, and advice that it gives for over a half dozen type of documents they will likely encounter in their schooling and eventual professions. On the left hand side of the homepage visitors will find "Student Resources", "Instructor Resources", and links to the "Contributors", which include "Virginia Tech", "University of Illinois", and "Georgia Tech". The "Introduction" on the homepage, offers the following basics to consider when starting a paper: "Assessing the Audience", "Selecting the Format", and "Crafting the Style". Also on the homepage the site gives links to guidance on "Presentations", "Correspondence", "Formal Reports", "Proposals", "Instructions", and "Journal Articles". The "Design of Presentation Slides", under the "Presentations" link, demonstrates the use of the assertion-evidence structure for presentation slides, as opposed to the typical PowerPoint template, along with many resources on the left hand side of the page that tout the benefits of that structure

ESL: DAILY WRITING tips: http://www.dailywritingtips.com/

PLAIN ENGLISH WEBSITE: converts convoluted language to plain English:
http://labs.slate.com/articles/plain-english/

THE WRITING CENTER AT HARVARD UNIVERSITY

http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~wricntr/resources.html

The Writing Center at Harvard University is perhaps the oldest formal writing center at an American university, and their complementary website presents a valuable trove of instructional handouts for writers young and old. On this page, visitors will find over a dozen helpful handouts with titles such as "How to Read an Assignment", "Essay Structure", "Developing a Thesis", "Summary", and "Revising the Draft". Each piece is written in clear prose, and the advice offered is sound and practical. Also, visitors should note that the site also includes a link to Harvard's guide to citation and integration of sources, "Writing with Sources", and a selection of links to other related writing style guides.

Includes the following instructional handouts:

- *How to Read an Assignment*
- *Moving from Assignment to Topic*
- *How to Do a Close Reading*
- *Overview of the Academic Essay: Thesis, Argument and Counterargument*
- *Essay Structure*
- *Developing a Thesis*
- *Beginning the Academic Essay*
- *Outlining*
- *Counter-Argument*
- *Summary*
- *Topic Sentences and Signposting*
- *Transitioning: Beware of Velcro*
- *How to Write a Comparative Analysis*
- *Ending the Essay: Conclusions*
- *Revising the Draft*
- *Editing the Essay, Part One*
- *Editing the Essay, Part Two*
- *Tips on Grammar, Punctuation and Style*

 ESL:WRITING CENTER: **http://garbl.home.comcast.net/~garbl/**
Includes these resoures:

- an annotated **directory of writing resources** on the Web
- aneditorial **style manual**
- several **guides to concise writing**
- a **bookshelf of writing references**

ENGLISH 1010 HANDBOOK: INTRODUCTION TO ACADEMIC WRITING: courtesy of UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY **http://ocw.usu.edu/English/english-1010/english-1010/english-1010-handbook.pdf**

50 Free Resources That Will Increase Your Writing Skills:

http://www.smashingmagazine.com/2009/06/28/50-free-resources-that-will-improve-your-writing-skills

ESL Writing Den: Writing Tips for Teachers:
http://www.freetech4teachers.com/2009/05/writing-den-writing-tips.html

50 Free Resources that will increase writing skills:

http://www.smashingmagazine.com/2009/06/28/50-free-resources-that-will-improve-your-writing-skills

Forms of Writing And Grammar Help and Free Videos:
http://www.greatsource.com/iwrite/students/s_grammar_hndbk.html
(Includes free tutorials and free videos with a free grammar handbook.)

Amherst College: Online Resources For Writers
https://www.amherst.edu/academiclife/support/writingcenter/resourcesforwriters
Amherst College has created online resources divided into thematic headings such as "Preparing to Write", "Thesis and Argument", "Clarity and Grace", and "Using Sources". On the left hand side of the page, users can view the same list and also learn more about the writing center at Amherst and their work. Overall, it's a set of resources that college students in particular will find useful, especially as they approach a paper deadline.

"English Composition: Writing For an Audience"
<**http://www.learner.org/resources/series128.html**> A Free Video that introduces basic principles for communicating in writing to a variety of audiences. Throughout the series, students meet an array of professionals whose work involves writing, including writers working in television--but also nurses, engineers, athletes, and others for whom the importance of writing may not be as obvious. THIS VIDEO IS FREE BUT PRIOR REGISTRATION MAY BE NECESSARY AT **www.learner.org**

Online Writing Assistant: http://www.powa.org/

ESL Independent Study Lab: http://www.lclark.edu/~krauss/toppicks/toppicks.html

How to Write Effective Argumentative Essays:
http://www.powa.org/argument/index.html

Writing Guides from Free Technology for Teachers:

http://www.freetech4teachers.com/2009/03/language-arts-links-you-might-have.html

Includes tips for teachers on motivating students to write and how to detect plagiarism.

University of Wisconsin, Madison Writing Center:
http://www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook/

Dartmouth College Writing Center:
http://www.dartmouth.edu/~writing/materials/about.shtml

Bibliography of Effective Writing Resources: http://www.au.af.mil/au/aul/bibs/ewr.htm

Free Writing Courses Online http://education-portal.com/articles/10_Universities_Offering_Free_Writing_Courses_Online.html
Links to self-study modules offered by 10 universities to teach various kinds of writing: technical, news, essays, fiction, academic prose, and more.

K-12 Writing Lesson Plans from Expo & Scholastic http://www.scholastic.com/expo/

 Scholastic and Expo have partnered together to create the Expo Writing Resource Center. The Expo Writing Resource Center offers lesson plans for teaching writing. The lesson plans are organized into four groups based on grade level. Each lesson plan includes PDFs of printables to distribute to your students. While the lesson plans are free, Expo is obviously trying to sell more markers because they give directions for color coding various aspects of the lesson plans.

The free lesson plans offered in the Expo Writing Resource Center cover all grades K-12. There are lesson plans for teaching creative writing, persuasive writing, and vocabulary development.

Imagination Prompt Generator:
http://www.creativity-portal.com/prompts/imagination.prompt.html

Two Resources of Writing Prompts: http://www.freetech4teachers.com/2009/01/two-sources-of-writing-prompts.html

PART VI: GRAMMAR HELP:

Grammar Exercises from OWL (very useful for teachers as it includes very clear explanations):
http://owl.english.purdue.edu/exercises/2/
OWL is the Online Writing Lab from Purdue University in the U.S.

Road to Grammar is a free resource featuring quizzes, games, and lessons for English language learners. Visitors to Road to Grammar will find 365 grammar quizzes. Each quiz provides instant feedback and notes to explain why an answer is correct or incorrect. Before taking the quizzes visitors can work through a dozen practice activities and five practice games. **Applications for Education** In addition to the resources that students can use individually, Road to Grammar offers some downloadable resources for teachers. Teachers will find the collection of eight downloads offer discussion starters for English lessons, lesson warm-up activities, and some worksheets. http://www.roadtogrammar.com/

A COLLECTION OF ONLINE GRAMMAR GUIDES may be found at:
http://garbl.home.comcast.net/~garbl/writing/grammar.htm

The **GRAMMAR PRACTICE PARK** produced by Harcourt School Publishers provides 12 games for students in grades three, four, and five. Excellent for young children.**http://www.harcourtschool.com/menus/preview/harcourt_language/grammar_park.html**

CONJUGATION OF ENGLISH VERBS: http://conjugation.com/ provides tables of conjugation of English verbs – searchable
In the search box provided, type in the verb "lie" : yes, this conjugation tends to confound even native English speakers! Similar to the 500 conjugated verbs, regular and irregular, that one used to buy in bookstores.

VERBS ONLINE - VERB CONJUGATION IN 6 LANGUAGES

Verbs Online provides foreign language students with a good selection of activities for practicing verb conjugations. Practice activities are available in English, Spanish, French, German, Italian, and Portuguese. The practice activities deal with the past, present, and future tenses of regular and irregular verbs. Students can choose to do the activities in sets of ten through fifty practice items.

http://www.freetech4teachers.com/2009/06/verbs-online-verb-conjugation-in-6.html

Online English Verb Conjugation Trainer: http://www.verbs-online.com/english-verbs/english-verbs.htm

Free Videos on the Essentials of English Grammar:
http://www.greatsource.com/iwrite/students/s_grammar_hndbk.html

Grammar Cheat Sheet: http://retinart.net/miscellaneous/grammar

5 Great Grammar Resources: http://www.freetech4teachers.com/2008/11/five-great-grammar-resources.html

English Grammar 101: http://www.dailywritingtips.com/english-grammar-101-all-you-need-to-know/

Internet Grammar of English: http://www.ucl.ac.uk/internet-grammar

Blue Book of Grammar and Punctuation: http://www.grammarbook.com

Grammar Bytes : http://www.chompchomp.com/menu.htm
Provides a glossary of terms, handouts, interactive exercises, and slide show presentations. There are eighteen slide show presentations available for free download from Grammar Bytes. Each slide show is accompanied by a handout for students to complete as they view each presentation. The interactive activities on Grammar Bytes require students to do more than memorize the rules of grammar. The Grammar Bytes interactive activities require students to read sentences and identify errors. In some of the activities students have to correct errors in a sentence. Each interactive activity is accompanied by a handout on which students can record their scores and measure their progress. The design and content of Grammar Bytes makes it a good resource for students and teachers. Contains online exercises as well
http://www.chompchomp.com/menu.htm

 Guide to Grammar and Writing: http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar

 Grammar Girls Guide to Better Writing and Understanding the Finer Points of Grammar:
 http://grammar.quickanddirtytips.com/default.aspx

Grammar Girl http://grammar.quickanddirtytips.com/ is a great weekly podcast containing tips on the use of the English language. The Grammar Girl podcast is a great resource for personal use and for classroom use. I have listened to the podcast off and on for the last two years. Listening to the podcast has helped students get a better understanding of the trickier parts of the English language. The video below found on Jeffery Hill's The English Blog, takes viewers behind the scenes with the Grammar Girl.

 University of Minnesota, Online Grammar Handbook:
 http://www.tc.umn.edu/~jewel001/grammar/

 Self-Study Grammar Quizzes: http://a4ESL.org/q/h/grammar.html

Grammar Guides and Writing Resources from The New York Public Library**:**
http://www.nypl.org/weblinks/2576

 Online English Grammar: http://www.edufind.com/english/grammar/subidx.cfm
 Free English grammar and study guides: the website for language learners.

 Online Grammar Exercises and Practicums: http://www.ego4u.com/:
English grammar lessons for EFL / ESL students. This site has lessons on all parts of speech and grammar resources for English learners and teachers.

Online Grammar Exercises:
http://www.webcrawler.com/webcrawler300/ws/results/Web/english+grammar+tests/1/417/TopNavigation/Relevance/iq=true/zoom=off/_iceUrlFlag=7?_IceUrl=true&gclid=CPGe44mKvagCFapl7AodHxWQDw
On this page you find a selection of grammar quizzes that can be done online. Simply click the exercise of your choice, key in your answers.

All About Grammar: http://webtech.kennesaw.edu/jcheek4/grammar.htm:
A detailed look at grammar, style, diction, word formation, gender, social groups and scientific forms.

English Grammar Book: http://www.englishpage.com/grammar/
An online English grammar book of teacher-evaluated lessons and grammar resources.

English Composition: Writing for an Audience
http://www.learner.org/resources/series128.html
(Free Video Series, registration required, but registration absolutely free)

VIDEOS FOCUSING ON GRAMMAR MAY BE FOUND HERE

"Usage and Mechanics,http://www.learner.org/workshops/hswriting/workshops/workshop5/
workshop :" A Workshop for High School Teachers," reviews
effective strategies for teaching grammar. Web materials include an interactive activity to help you assess your own methods of assessing student work.

Read Dave Barry's humorous views on grammar
http://www.learner.org/catalog/extras/interviews/dbarry/db05.html and Andy Rooney's quibbles on word choice and usage
http://www.learner.org/catalog/extras/interviews/arooney/ar01.html on learner.org's News Writing Interviews site.

Teaching grammar presents certain challenges. The article "To Grammar
or Not to Grammar: That Is Not the Question!" in PDF format
http://www.learner.org/workshops/middlewriting/images/pdf/W8ReadGrammar.pdf
emphasizes the importance of teaching grammar in the context of writing.

The article is included in workshop 8 of Write in the Middle: A Workshop
for Middle School Teachers.http://www.learner.org/workshops/middlewriting/

Explore sentence syntax as it relates to math and patterns in our
Teacher's Lab Syntax Store:

http://www.learner.org/teacherslab/math/patterns/syntax/syntax_back.html

 Scientists have found that grammar and patterns in language are
hard-wired in the brain. Learn more about this, and about how language
is acquired, in Discovering Psychology: Updated Edition program 6,
"Language Development." http://www.learner.org/discoveringpsychology/06/e06expand.html

Free Video series CONNECT WITH ENGLISH : http://www.learner.org/resources/series71.html

PART VII: IMPROVING ENGLISH LANGUAGE VOCABULARY:

Confusing Words Clarified: http://www.confusingwords.com/

16 Ways to supercharge your English Language Vocabulary:
http://www.dumblittleman.com/2008/08/16-websites-to-super-charge-your.html

Explain Confusing Words To Your Students of English: http://www.confusingwords.com/

Simple English Wikipedia: **http://simple.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main_Page**
A useful source in finding articles and resources using basic simple English words

ESL Holiday Lessons http:// www.eslholidaylessons.com
ESL Holiday Lessons provide a comprehensive collection of lesson plans for every major
holiday in the United States. The collection also includes many lesson plans for minor
holidays. http://eslholidaylessons.com Contains English Lesson Plans and Handouts.

  and Breaking News English :www.breakingnewsenglish.com

Breaking News In English ESL Podcasts for Easier Learning (available in MP 3 files)
http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/podcast.html
Most mobile phones now (Nokia, windows mobile, etc) can take mp3 files and play
them... so, iPods not actually necessary

  .   **VOA SPECIAL ENGLISH**: http://www.voanews.com/learningenglish/home/
        An excellent web site for English language learners.

    USA Today for Educators and English Language Learners
    http://www.usatoday.com/educate/
    Provides glossaries, vocabularies and lesson plans from current articles in USA TODAY.

PART XIII: DISTANCE EDUCATION RESOURCES:

MIT Distance Education: http://ocw.mit.edu

MIT's Course on Consumer Culture with Essay and Homework Assignments Expressly Created To Develop Expository Writing Skills: http://ocw.mit.edu/OcwWeb/Writing-and-Humanistic-Studies/21W-730-3Consumer-CultureFall2002/CourseHome/index.htm

MIT's Expository Writing Class with samples of Student Work and downloadable assignments: http://ocw.mit.edu/OcwWeb/Writing-and-Humanistic-Studies/21W-730-3Spring2001/CourseHome/index.htm

Free Educational Videos from YOU TUBE: College Courses on Video for students to practice their understanding of academic English:
YOU TUBE EDUCATIONAL VIDEOS**: http://www.youtube.com/edu**

Yale University Courses Online: offers the Video, the Audio and a Printed Transcript of each lecture: http://open.yale.edu

Academic Earth: Best Free Educational Videos on the Web:
http://www.academicearth.org/

PART IX: TEACHER and STUDENT RESOURCES: LESSON PLANS and MATERIALS and TEACHING AIDS:

ZOOM IN ON AMERICA: U.S. EMBASSY, POLAND:
 http://www.usinfo.pl/zoom/
Includes Quizzes and Lesson Plans and an Archive of previous issues.

GREENWOOD SKILLS CENTER FOR RESEARCH AND WRITING:
http://skillscenter.greenwood.com
Several Lesson Plans are compiled here that are real time savers for teachers. One available is a Lesson Plan to teach Civil Rights for students and adult learners.

Free Technology for Teachers: Lesson Plans and how Teachers are using Technology to teach English and other subjects: http://www.freetech4teachers.com/
Voted one of the best new Internet resources of the year.

Online Grammar Exercises and Practicums: **http://www.ego4u.com/**: English grammar lessons for EFL / ESL students. This site has lessons on all parts of speech and grammar resources for English learners and teachers.

Many Things http://www.manythings.org/ is a website offering ESL students and teachers an extensive collection of games, quizzes, and other online learning activities. Visitors to Many Things will find materials appropriate for beginning through advanced ESL students. In addition to games and quizzes, visitors will find listening activities made possible through the use of MP3 recordings. Many Things also offers visitors video lessons on speaking and writing English. Embedded below is an example of the video lessons you can find on Many Things.

MY ENGLISH IMAGES: http://www.myenglishimages.com/Home.html

[My English Images](#) is a collection of drawings demonstrating words, phrases, and parts of speech. The drawings are intended to provide visual aids for students that are beginning to learn English. The images are organized into collections for conversation, grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary. In addition to the images teachers can find worksheets and games on [My English Images](#).

ESL PRINTABLES: LESSON PLANS AND ACTIVITIES FOR THE CLASSROOM:
http://www.freetech4teachers.com/2009/05/esl-printables-worksheets-and-lesson.html

[ESL Printables](#) is a community for ESL teachers to find and share worksheets and lesson plans.
To use [ESL Printables](#) you have to be a registered user. Registration is free, but to complete your registration you have to contribute a printable worksheet, lesson plan, or Powerpoint of your own. Every time someone downloads one of your submissions, you also earn points that you can use to download more materials.

ESL Holiday Lessons http:// www.eslholidaylessons.com

and **Breaking News English** :www.breakingnewsenglish.com

.   [ESL Holiday Lessons](#) provide a comprehensive collection of lesson plans for every major holiday in the United States. The collection also includes many lesson plans for minor holidays. http://eslholidaylessons.com Contains English Lesson Plans and Handouts.

VOA SPECIAL ENGLISH: http://www.voanews.com/learningenglish/home/
An excellent web site for English language learners.

Breaking News English is written by and hosted by the creator of ESL Holiday Lessons. Breaking News English uses current events articles as the basis for ESL lesson plans.
http://breakingnewsenglish.com

ESL/EFL Worksheets, Lesson Plans, Curriculum Materials and Free Print Resources For ESL Teachers:
http://www.freetech4teachers.com/2009/05/esl-printables-worksheets-and-lesson.html

English Language Programs: http://exchanges.state.gov/education/engteaching/
Includes Lesson Plans and Activities

Powerpoint PALOOZA: **http://pptpalooza.net/**
Lesson Plans and Free Powerpoints for Education

USA Today for Educators and English Language Learners
http://www.usatodayeducate.com/wordpress/

Provides glossaries, vocabularies and lesson plans from current articles in USA TODAY.

Breaking News In English ESL Podcasts for Easier Learning (available in MP 3 files)
http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/podcast.html
Most mobile phones now (Nokia, windows mobile, etc) can take mp3 files and play them... so, iPods not actually necessary

See also the main website at: **http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/** for additional examples of Lesson Plans and ideas for ESL Teachers.

MORE LESSON PLANS:

Thousands of other Lesson Plans at Curriki:
http://curriki.org (Must register first to see course content, but registration is absolutely free)

One Example of Teaching ESL from Athabasca University with Complete Lesson Plans:
http://www.curriki.org/xwiki/xwiki/view/MyCurriki/Collections?user=Athabasca

 Many other Lesson Plans in all areas at EDSITEMENT from the National Endowment for the Humanities: **http://edsitement.neh.gov**

PART X: RESOURCES FOR CHILDREN:

Working with Young English Language Learners:
http://www.cal.org/resources/digest/0301coltrane.html

International Digital Children's Digital Library: http://en.childrenslibrary.org/
FULL TEXT OF CLASSIC Children's BOOKS IN OVER TWENTY LANGUAGES and GROWING EVERY DAY.

Online Stories For Children: http://www.storylineonline.net/
Students can listen to the stories at the same time that they read the text. I also like the following website:

Read Aloud Stories For Kids:
http://www.rif.org/assets/Documents/readingplanet/ReadAloud_Stories/safari_song.html

Kids Sites and Educational Resources: http://ejw.i8.com/kids.html

ALA [American Library Organization]
Great Web Sites for Kids: http://www.alsc.ala.org/blog/?p=789

A 2010 Update to this site is at: http://www.alsc.ala.org/blog/?p=1917

PART XI: ESL EJOURNALS USEFUL FOR TEACHERS AND STUDENTS:

TEACHING FORUM, from the Educational and Cultural Exchanges Branches of the Department of State:
http://exchanges.state.gov/englishteaching/forum-journal.html

and

ZOOM IN ON AMERICA: U.S. EMBASSY, POLAND:
 http://www.usinfo.pl/zoom/
Includes Quizzes and Lesson Plans and an Archive of previous issues.

APPENDIX I:
MAY 24 2007 SPECIAL WEBCHAT ON INTERNET RESOURCES FOR LEARNING ENGLISH

Educator Discusses Internet Resources for Students to Learn English (USINFO Web chat transcript, May 24)

Dr. Silvio Avendano, **University of Maryland Baltimore County (UMBC) director of the online TESOL professional development programs participated in a May 24 USINFO Web chat on assessing Internet resources to learn English.**

This is a first in a new series on "Internet Tools and Curriculum Design for Young Leaders of English," hosted by the U.S. State Department's Bureau of International Information Programs and is brought to us by the U.S. Embassy in Mexico City.

Following is the transcript:

(begin transcript)

U.S. Department of State
Bureau of International Information Programs USINFO Webchat transcript

Internet Tools & Curriculum Design for Young Learners of English: Assessing Internet Resources

Guest: Dr. Silvio Avendano
Date: Thursday, May 24, 2007
Time: 5:00 p.m. EDT (2100 GMT)

Moderator: Welcome to the first of four webchats in our new series "Internet Tools & Curriculum Design for Young Learners of English." This series is hosted by the U.S. State Department's Bureau of International Information Programs and is brought to us by the U.S. Embassy in Mexico City.

You are welcome to send in your questions now or you may wait until the live event begins today at 4:00p.m. Mexico City/5:00p.m. Washington/21:00 GMT.

Because of the very high volume of questions coming in, our guest may begin answering some of the questions earlier than our scheduled start time. We will still begin the webchat officially at 5:00 p.m. EDT / 4:00 p.m. Mexico City.

And just to remind you, your questions will appear on this screen only after they are answered by our guest speaker.

Question [Ankara]: Good Day! I can't understand when chat started? In Kazakhstan right now is 0.35 am.

Moderator: Dear Ankara, the webchat will begin at 21:00 GMT /17:00 EDT. We will send your questions to our speaker, thank you for staying up so late!

Q [Cesar Valmaña]: Here in Qba we were invited to attend this webchat at 3:00 pm Havana time. Why have you made changes and kept users dis-/uninformed?

Moderator: Dear Cesar, we are very sorry about the time confusion. We do have your questions here in the webchat system and we will send them to Dr.
Avendano. Again, we apologize for this confusion.

Q [Ada]: I just have one tiny problem, this is the first time I get into this program which I personally think seems to be interesting and useful, but I do have a problem, here at my office I don´t have a camera, how does this work? How can I participate in the chat? Thanks!

Moderator: You are already participating! No camera is needed. When Mr.
Avendano logs in at 21:00 GMT, he will review all of your questions. When he answers a question, it will appear on this screen.

Moderator: Hello everyone! We will be getting started shortly. We ask that you please be patient as Dr. Avendano reviews your many questions.

If you would like to post a comment telling us who you are and where you are joining from, please do so. Just be sure to select the "comment" option and we will begin posting those after our guest speaker joins us online.

Silvio Avendano: Dear colleagues, I'm so honored to be guest speaking today about one of my favorite topics as a teacher and teacher educator. I'll start answering questions right away. I planned to enter earlier but I'm in my office and have had students coming all day. I will start answering questions today and if I can not finish today I will continue tomorrow. So, please enter again if you don't see an answer to your question. If I don't know the answer to your question, I'll let you know and will find somebody who might have the answer. Thanks so much for all your questions. - Dr.
Silvio Avendano

Q [queenross]: Congratulations Silvio. I am Rosa Acuña from Nicaragua. Your ex-collegue at UCA Universidad Centroarmericana. It is a pleasure for me to know you are doing this important work for education. God bless you. I have a lot of questions related to child´s psychology.

Q [IRC Antananarivo]: Hello, I'm Zo [in Madagascar]. I agree that teaching English through the internet is very interesting. But in some developing countries, there are many people who want to learn English and the problem is that most of them cannot use the internet due to the lack of money to afford it or the time. So what do you think of this problem.

Q [Ada]: Thanks, I have had the pleasure to meet Mr. Avendaño a couple of times at Nicatesol conferences held at UCA, Managua, and I just want to congratulate him for your deep interest in ESL, EFL, ESP, and everything related to the importance of English teaching, I personally have been working on some electronic pages he had recommend us with my students, which we have found interesting and useful and we have learnt a lot from them, thanks Mr. Avendaño.

And hopefully you can join us at UNAN-León II conference of teachers of English held at León, Nicaragua next year on January 31st and February 1st and 2nd, 2008.

And just taking advantage of this space, I will like to extend this invitation to all of those who may be interested in participating whether as Presenters or Participants, if you want more information please write at eflinglescongress2008@yahoo.com (mailto:eflinglescongress2008@yahoo.com).
Thanks!

Q [Eneida]: For many years I have used internet to support my teaching.
Young learners love to sit in front of a computer or to play in a computer.
We should take advantage of this and use different websites in our classes and even for homework.

Q [Naimat Ullah Khan - LC Karachi]: I would like to ask about the available resources for the English Learners. I represent the Lincoln Corner Karachi, and aimed to provide assistance & guidance to the students.

Your advice would enable me to provide some valuable information to the visitors of Lincoln Corner.

A [Silvio Avendano]: Hello Naimat, thanks for your question. There are so many websites you can visit. Here's a website that contains lots of lesson plans for teaching children and teenagers.

It is one of my favorite sites:
http://www.marcopolo-education.org/teacher/shell.aspx?filename=/teacher/lesson_plan_content_index.aspx&site_area=teacher.

silvio

Q [Ibrahim Saleh]: Dear Dr. Avendano, I think that one of the main problems we might face using the Internet to design curricula is that we do not use good search words which help us get what we need from among the myriads of sources on the Web. Few days ago, I was in need of some mortgage finance materials to use in an ESP class. I failed to get enough material, but I am still sure that it is the problem of my deficient search words/phrases. If you agree with me, could you please elaborate on this point taking mortgage finance as a case study? Many thanks in advance.

Q [Frank2]: Franklin Téllez from Nicaragua-BNC. Our students like to use Internet, we know that it's an important tool, we have 6-week course, and how often do our students need to use these websites?

Moderator: Welcome "Walid"! We see your questions and have sent them to Dr.
Avendano. If you would like to introduce yourself to the group, please choose "comment" and we will post your comment directly to this page. Thank you!

To all participants, Dr. Avendano is scrolling through all of the questions. When he answers a question, the full question and his answer will appear together.

Q [Mr. Chaviano]: Mr.Bendaña:

1.When you mention the term "young learner", what ages/school level are you referring to?

2. Would it be possible to have some WEB PAGES ADDRESS, before the Web Chat, so that we can see/assess the contents in advanced?

Mr. Chaviano/UAM -NICARAGUA

A [Silvio Avendano]: Hello Mr. Chaviano, thanks so much for your question.

Prof. Joan Shin will address the topic of TEYL specifically, but the following websites will provide some useful information:

http://www.cal.org/resources/digest/0301coltrane.html

http://www.etprofessional.com/articles/challenge.pdf

silvio

Q [Ibrahim Saleh]: I am Ibrahim Saleh, an instructor at the American University in Cairo, Egypt.

Q [Manuel Aguirre]: Is there any recommendation to use the internet sites, or the resources?

A [Silvio Avendano]: Hello Manuel, thanks for your question. Where are you web chatting from? In my graduate class on computer-assisted language learning, I normally ask students (course participants) to assess resources that they can use with children or any other type of students in the class.
I have developed a simple Internet Assessment Questionnaire that helps my students develop a webliography of Internet resources. I think you need to be careful with what you select, especially for teaching children.

The questions my questionnaire includes are:

. What is the address for the Web site?

. What's the domain of the site? Is the site affiliated to a university?

. Who created the Web site?

. Are the Web site's links working?

. If you find some links that are not working, write the Web addresses here.

. Was the Web site created for teaching ESL/EFL? Or was it created for other purposes?

. What kind of activities does the Web site have?

. Listening activities? Reading activities?

. What changes would you make to the activities from this Web site?

. What activities can you envision to do with this Web site?

. What are the implications of using this Web site in your class?

. Are other sites discussed?

. Is there contact information for you to ask questions or to provide feedback?

. If there is contact information, please write it down here.

. Would you recommend this Web site to other colleagues?

. What advice would you give to other teachers who want to use this Web site?

Silvio

Q [rochgypsy]: The problem with some teaching not utilizing the many available options are that they feel they will be replaced or not work as many hours, but it is just the opposite for once they start the work is much more and the students response is far greater.

Q [chanta]: Many less developed and developing countries are having difficulties reaching the minorities, having their own respective mother-tongue to make transition to use national language and yet having to accommodate the national curricular requirement for their children to learn English as another language in addition to having to master the national language first.

Are there guidebooks on TEASL www that teachers from less developed countries can make use of the contents posted in the www for teaching? Are they grouped according to the advance levels of learners? Thank you.

A [Silvio Avendano]: Hello Chanta, where are you connecting from?

If you are asking about resources that are available over the Internet for teachers to use, the answer is yes!! There are plenty and most of them are organized by level of instruction and by discipline. I have already provided one of those websites; I'll type it again here for you:
http://www.marcopolo-education.org/teacher/shell.aspx?filename=/teacher/lesson_plan_content_index.aspx&site_area=teacher.

There is also a wonderful online book that is old and it was not developed necessarily for ESL but it has great, great ideas for using the Internet in our classrooms. You can see the whole book online at:
http://www.nifl.gov/nifl/fellowship/reports/susanc/inthome.htm.

I hope this will help.

Silvio

Moderator: Just a reminder to everyone. There are many participants today and only one Dr. Avendano ... he is working as quickly as he can!

Q [frank21]: It's a great topic and I hope to get good sites of learning English. Could you give us good sites to teach English?

A [Silvio Avendano]: Hello Frank21, what level of instruction do you teach?
I have provided some online resources where you can find all kinds of materials for your class. Please see previous questions and answers. - Silvio

Q [inasym]: Hello everybody, this is Inas Youssef; an assistant lecturer at the faculty of Al-Alsun Ain shams University; Egypt.

Q [Zamarripa]: How can I improve my students' listening and speaking skills via the internet?

A [Silvio Avendano]: Hello Zamarripa, where are you communicating from?

That's a great question. It depends of what you want to do in class. There are several websites that can help, but it also depends on the level of English proficiency your students have. I like the following website, but it might be too advanced for beginners: http://www.storylineonline.net/

Students can listen to the stories at the same time that they read the text. I also like the following website:
http://www.rif.org/assets/Documents/readingplanet/ReadAloud_Stories/safari_song.html

Keep in mind that when you use the Internet for listening and speaking, you need to make sure that your computer has all the plug-ins and tools that are needed for using the listening or speaking sites. You might need a good microphone, a very good Internet connection, an updated version of Java, and good speakers.

silvio

Q [ajc]: Mr. Avedano, my name is Alex Cabrera and I am a teacher at the Instituto Cultural Dominico Americano in the Dominican Republic. What are the basic requirements that a site must have to qualify as useful?

A [Silvio Avendano]: Hello Alex, how are you? Thanks so much for your question.

Great question. As I said in a previous answer/question, you need to assess the validity and usefulness of a site for your specific class. I have provided a questionnaire that I have students in my graduate class use to critique websites.

In sum, a website is only useful if it meets the needs of your students and if it will help you achieve your class objectives more effectively. Just like anything in teaching, a website that might be very useful for me, might not work for you. You really don't want to use a website just for the sake of using technology. As a teacher, you want to ask: How will this website enhance my lesson? What will the students get out of this Internet-enhanced activity?

silvio

Moderator: Welcome Managua! If you would like to introduce yourselves to the group, please select the "comment" option.

Q [Fresia]: Hi, I'm Fresia Pampas from Huancayo, Peru. It's 4:00 p.m. I'm glad of being part of this discussion.

Moderator: Welcome Peru!

Q [IRC Antananarivo]: I am Mrs. Voahangy Ratsimba-Razafimahefa, a national coordinator of English in primary schools. English is decided to be considered as one official language in Madagascar and it is to be introduced in grade 4.

What kinds of activities can we present, as the focus skills are on listening and speaking?

A [Silvio Avendano]: Hello Mrs. Voahangy Ratsimba-Razafimahefa, thanks so much for your question.

You certainly can do all kinds of activities in your class. What activities you choose to do really depends on the level of proficiently your students have, the local context of your teaching, and your students' profile

in general. For example, I can recommend that you use online songs, but does your context allow you to do that in your classes?

I suggest that you visit the online book I recommended in a previous answer and decide what from there you can use or adapt. The link for that book is:
http://www.nifl.gov/nifl/fellowship/reports/susanc/inthome.htm.

Silvio

Q [IRCManagua]: Hello everyone! We are glad that [you] have the opportunity to participate in such initiative. We certainly are much geared towards English Language Teaching. Thanks so much for this valuable chance.

Moderator: Welcome Sonora, Mexico!

Q [Enthot]: Hello right there Mr. Avendaño ... how is everything?

I`m Allan Garcia from Matagalpa, Nicaragua and I am pretty happy to be online ha! I want some suggestions on how to use internet with my students.
Actually, I just ask my students to send me some messages to my e-mail address, comments, or suggestions for my classes at school ... what else cal I do?

Thanks,

Q [aimee Cabrera]: I want to know how I can teach English as a second language to students that are learning the 3rd grade at elementary school, there isn't any program for them (they begin to study English at 6th grade) but they are very interested in learning some English and they have the chance to use Internet, how can I do for them?

Q [Silvio Avendano]: Hello Aimee, thanks so much for your question.

I would first introduce the students to the computer and use the computer as a context for providing language input. Gordon Lewis in the wonderful book The Internet and Young Learners provides the following activities:

1. Show computer objects

2. Introduce them to typing practice

3. Introduce them to cut and paste

4. Show them how to find their way on the web

5. Introduce them to what a website is

You might think that this is so obvious and easy, but you will really be providing a lot of language input if you plan your lesson carefully. You can subscribe to the Oxford University Press (OUP) Teachers' Club for more resources on this textbook.

The web address for subscribing to OUP is:
http://www.oup.com/elt/catalogue/teachersites/rbt/?cc=global.

When you sign in and enter the website you want to scroll down and choose the book by Gordon Lewis.

Silvio

Q [Edison]: How can a teacher avoid students using internet to do something which is not class related?

A [Silvio Avendano]: Hello Edison, great question! This is a problem that we all share. It really depends on how your computer lab is set up. Some schools enjoy the privilege of having special and inexpensive software (I think one of them is NepSchool) that gives full control of all the computer screens to the instructor.

Also, you can ask you IT staff to help you create special settings on the computer to block sites that you don't want students to see. A pedagogical suggestion is to always have students work in pairs or in groups of 3 and make sure that students always know that there is someone (you) watching.

I know it is easy to say it but difficult to work with that situation. I've presented at conferences, where I would expect everyone to be interested, but I also have had my hard time with teachers emailing friends when I have not even started talking. So, you're not alone.

silvio

Moderator: Dear Manuel. Your question has been forwarded to Dr. Avendano.

Q [Musiker]: I am concerned about copyright issues when using material taken or adapted from the web. Any pointers?

A [Silvio Avendano]: Hello Musiker, where are you web chatting from?

Thanks for your wonderful question. This is such an important question, especially when we talk about using Internet resources.

I suggest that you always make sure that you give credits to the source or author of the materials. Many times, I have observed classes or attended conferences where I recognize materials taken from ESL Internet sites that do not contain the URL or the name of the authors. I understand sometimes we unintentionally omit the URL or the name of authors in these types of materials, but making these mistakes should not become a habit. It is not fair for our colleagues everywhere in the world who have devoted so much time creating and posting materials that we do not give them credits. And you know, it's a matter of ethics, we really don't want to present materials from others as ours. If we unintentionally fail to give credits to sources, we should write errata or tell students or colleagues that we have not created such materials.

In sum, do NOT omit the URL from Internet materials. If the URL is not included when you print the materials, take a pen or pencil and write it yourself before reproducing the material.

Also, as a courtesy to the authors, it is a good idea to let them know that you are or will be using their materials. In U.S. universities, failing to provide credits to sources or presenting somebody else's materials as our own is a very serious issue. Students who don't follow academic integrity can suffer serious consequences.

Silvio

Q [Javier]: How can I keep the attention of the students on these www specifics sites, when there are too many other sites (not to learn English) that attract young people?

A [Silvio Avendano]: Hello Javier, thanks for your great question. You need to integrate Internet technology as part of your lesson. You don't take your students to a lab and do free-for-all activities. Your Internet-enhanced lessons need to be structured just as any other lessons.
In previous messages, I have provided guidelines on how to critique/choose websites for our classes.

The website that you choose should nicely fit into the topic and objectives of the lesson. I am thinking of teachers who use beautiful songs that are unrelated to their lessons' topics and objectives. Of course students will ask to listen to more songs and the class might become unstructured. In the same way, you want to choose an internet sites that will help you achieve an instructional objective.

Silvio

Moderator: To all participants. Dr. Avendano is going to continue to review and answer questions. We will extend this webchat for at least one-half hour.

If Dr. Avendano has time, he will return to answer more of your questions on Friday, May 25.

Q [IRC Antananarivo]: What are the most successful teaching methods for developing countries where internet access is not available for young learners of English language? Is it possible to achieve English proficiency without having recourse to immersion education?

For countries where there is already a second language how to teach another foreign language successfully?

A [Silvio Avendano]: Hello Antananarivo, thanks for your question. Let me see if I understand your question. Are you asking how you could teach or immerse students into English if you don't have Internet access? I don't think you should feel at a disadvantage if you don't have Internet access.
There are so many things that you can do with traditional technology. There is not good or bad method for teaching ... the success of a method really depends on where and who you are teaching. - Silvio

Q [Mirna]: Hi Silvio, it is great to hear from you again, I am Mirna Beltran, from Centro Cultural Salvadoreño filial San Miguel.

Q [IRC Antananarivo]: Hi! My name is GERMAIN, I am an English teacher, I have two questions: would you give us a specific or a special address on how to find a course in grammar, text comprehension, and writing.

Could you give us techniques on how to set a class curriculum for a finishing year (high school). THANK YOU

A [Silvio Avendano]: Hello GERMAIN, check the following websites:

http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/grammar/
http://a4ESL.org/q/h/grammar.html
http://www.tc.umn.edu/~jewel001/grammar/
http://online.ohlone.cc.ca.us/~mlieu/adjclause/what_h.html

silvio

Moderator: Hello Margaret, welcome! We have sent your question on to Dr. Avendano.

Q [IRC Antananarivo - Rajaoanrison]: What do you think about using mother tongue in teaching English to young students? The point is we don't have that mother tongue in the Internet. Thanks.

A [Silvio Avendano]: Hello Rajaoanrison, I'm not sure I understand your question. Using the mother tongue should not be a problem. I think it has to do with how often you use it and the rationale for using it. - Silvio

Q [IRC Antananarivo - Rasoarivelo]: Is it possible to watch a real English class situation where young learners between 10-14 are taught?

A [Silvio Avendano]: Hello Rasoarivelo, I don't know if I should tell you now, but there is a great project sponsored by the U.S. Department of State. The online project provides teachers with examples from actual classrooms. Ask at the U.S. embassy in your country about the "Shaping the Way we Teach" project. - silvio

Q [Ada]: Hello, as I said before I've been working on some pages this semester, most of them about listening, and they are easy to access, you may not need high speed system, I just would like to help, ´cuz I've been reading some of your questions, and I found this pages very useful, especially because my students have improved in their learning.

Just to give some help, www.ESL-lab.com (http://www.ESL-lab.com/) (here you can find listening exercises with pre, while and post activities, and it has a wide list on different topics of real life from beginners to
advanced)

http://cla.univ-fcomte.fr/english/sites/dictations.htm (it has listening exercises on video from real life, with interviews on different topics)

http://pbskids.org (http://pbskids.org/) (it is for children, it has most of the TV programs for kids, it has a wide range of activities. It's also good for listening and it will help your students improve their listening and speaking while working on their favorite TV shows,)

www.ondemand-english.com (http://www.ondemand-english.com/) (it´s good for listening too, but it teaches your students to learn real life and everyday expressions)

Finally, I found this page www.ask.com (http://www.ask.com/) (here you just ask for a topic and it will provide you some pages related to the question/topic you ask)

Hope these pages may be useful for you!! Thanks.

Q [NOVOA]: Dear Dr. Avendaño, this is Horacio Novoa, from Universidad Centroamericana in Managua, Nicaragua. My concern about educational technology is that most of the practice available is somehow attached to a behaviorist approach. As some of my colleagues may have seen, there is a lot of repeating, identifying, recognizing and manipulating patterns, which keeps learning at a basic level. I would like you to provide us with activities that somehow make use of technology engaging, interactive and meaningful. I guess that teachers are very interested in keeping students involved in activities that really help them use the English language spontaneously and in an unrehearsed manner.

Q [Mónica]: What are the technical features designed to aid navigation?

What are the main features we have to find at the Web site to evaluate an English language course before using it with our students?

A [Silvio Avendano]: Hello Monica, Thanks for your question. Are you talking about online courses? Or about Internet sites only?

The following websites will also help:
http://itESLj.org/links/TESL/Internet/Using_the_Internet/

http://edvista.com/claire/internet-ESL.html

Silvio

Moderator: Hello everyone. Just a quick update. Dr. Avendano will continue to answer questions, however he has been typing for 90 minutes now. We hope you will be understanding if he does not answer your question today.

Q [Silvia Laborde]: Hello, my name's Silvia Laborde and I'm joining the chat from Montevideo Uruguay. It was a real challenge to find out what time the chat was going to take place in Uruguayan time. I'm really sorry I'm so late; I'm trying to catch up!

Q [Maria Eugenia2]: What are some of the most important criteria to consider when evaluating Internet Resources?

A [Silvio Avendano]: Hello Maria Eugenia, thanks for your question.

Just as when choosing any other instructional material or tool, you need to examine what you really want to do with the Internet in your class. Sample questions to ask are:

1. Do I want to use the Internet to work on projects? If the answer is yes, then you want to develop a suitable activity, be a webquest or a scavenger hunt.

2. How does the Internet activity fit into my lesson?

3. Will my students learn the content of the lesson better if I use Internet-enhanced activities?

Some sites to visit are:

http://webquest.sdsu.edu/overview.htm
http://webquest.sdsu.edu/
http://www.spa3.k12.sc.us/WebQuest Development.htm http://www.spa3.k12.sc.us/WebQuests.html
http://www.ozline.com/
http://www.web-and-flow.com/help/formats.asp
http://www.geocities.com/techlabloms/Quest.htm
http://www.ozline.com/webquests/intro.html#choosing
http://edweb.sdsu.edu/people/bdodge/active/ActiveLearningk-12.html
http://www.ci.swt.edu/faculty/peterson/webquestworld2/webquestworldhome.html

http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Bridge/9672/
http://jwilson.coe.uga.edu/EMT668/EMAT6680.F99/Glazer/softeval/
http://www.kn.pacbell.com/wired/BHM/tuskegee_quest.html
http://www.spa3.k12.sc.us/webquesttemplate/webquesttemp.htm
http://www.spa3.k12.sc.us/survival.htm
http://www.spa3.k12.sc.us/webquestrubric.htm
http://curry.edschool.virginia.edu/go/readquest/strat/tps.html

Moderator: Welcome Silvia!

Q [Walid]: Hi, however, I did not get an answer to my question, I am learning a lot out of the answers to others. It is so informative.

When can we continue this webchat. I mean the next session, if any. Walid

Moderator: Dear Walid and everyone, our next webchat in this series will take place one week from today on May 31. Our chat will be The Internet--A Treasure Trove for Teachers of Young Learners with Dr. Caroline Linse.

Dr. Avendano continues to review your many questions.

Q [Tom Baker]: What is a web quest and how can it be used to benefit learners? How do you prepare a web quest?

A [Silvio Avendano]: Hello Tom, thanks for your question.

A web quest in simple teachers' language is an Internet-based inquiry or research project. A web quest can be done in one class, in one week, in one month or in one semester.

A web quest is usually confused with a scavenger hunt. A web quest is different from a scavenger hunt in that it follows a more organized structure and objective. It is not just a list of questions. The main components of a web quest are:

1. Introduction

2. Task

3. List of sources (URLs) that you want students to use

4. Steps that students need to follow to complete the task

5. Instructions or specific guiding questions

6. Conclusion

Web quests are wonderful activities that are done in small groups or as a class. See previous message for a list of related websites.

- Silvio

Q [Izaura]: Do you think young learners of English language can be introduced to PBS kids for instance without the help of their native language?

A [Silvio Avendano]: Hello Izaura, thanks for your question. It depends on how much English they already know. What I would do is to introduce them to some characters of http://www.pbskids.org/ first or to some of the words of activities they might find at the PBS site. One easy activity you can start with is coloring. See link below:
http://www.pbskids.org/coloring/index.html

- Silvio

Q [ANARA]: It is a pity, but I think, during realization this webchat I shall sleep already...

Therefore my question such: What addresses of active language Internets - communities you know, which the pupils of the senior schools (14-18 years) with second English language could use?

A [Silvio Avendano]: Hello Anara, sorry that you might be sleeping already.

The following website can give you ideas on how to set up projects for your students: http://itESLj.org/links/ESL/Student_Projects/

- Silvio

Q [Roy2]: Hi, I am Roy. I am interesting in knowing useful websites to download posters or pictures to teach young learners.

A [Silvio Avendano]: Hello Roy, thanks for your questions. One of my favorite sites for pictures for ESL/EFL is http://www.manythings.org (http://www.manythings.org/).

- Silvio

Q [Frank2]: Hi, from Nicaragua. We have a six-week course. How often do the teachers have to take the students to use ESL/EFL websites?

A [Silvio Avendano]: Hello Frank, thanks for your questions and hello Nicaragua!

Pedagogically, it is not how often you use a website, but why and how you use it. Skillful teachers who take their students one or two times during a course might have a more productive class than those teachers who take the students to a computer lab everyday for unstructured activities. Your Internet-enhanced activities should closely relate to your class or course outcomes. - Silvio

Moderator: Dr. Avendano continues to review your questions.

Q [Ibrahim Saleh]: Dear Dr. Avendano, thanks for being with us today. I teach at the American University in Cairo and usually have a problem with knowing whether a Website is peer reviewed or not. I hope that the standards we should observe to evaluate whether Websites are so-reviewed or not be considered today.

A [Silvio Avendano]: Hello Ibrahim, thanks for your question and for welcoming me!!

There are many wonderful websites that were not created for teaching or for ESL/EFL and it is our job to review them for our own instructional purposes. You might want to join an online community. One option is to visit www.ESLcafe.com (http://www.ESLcafe.com/) and join one of the suggested online communities for ESL teachers. You will be able to interact with other teachers who have probably reviewed sites that you might be interested in.

In previous messages, I have shared ideas on how to critique websites for our classes.

- Silvio

Q [Walid]: Hi dears, it's my first time to participate in this web chat. I am sure that I will learn many useful things. Do we have any standards to assess internet resources?

A [Silvio Avendano]: Hello Walid, thanks for your question. In previous messages, I have posted suggestions for evaluation websites. - Silvio

Q [Ada]: Hi Mr. Avendaño, my name is Ada from Nicaragua, thanks for taking some of your valuable time to share with us part of your experience in teaching English, my first question is related to pages about listening, I've working hard this semester trying to find pages that offer listening exercises for free and of good quality, and it's been hard for me, so which is the best page to get into and work on it? This because I want my students to improve this skill?

A [Silvio Avendano]: Hello Ada, thanks for your greetings and your question.

There are many websites that provide listening exercises. I can think of two that I completely trust, are easy to use and where activities are organized by level:

One website is: http://www.ESL-lab.com/

another website is: http://www.lclark.edu/~krauss/toppicks/listening.html

- Silvio

Q [goyito]: Can using internet chat programs such as Skype and MSN Messenger improve my spoken English proficiency?

A [Silvio Avendano]: Hello Goyito, thanks for your question.

Yes, they can but it depends how you are using them. Are you using them to chat informally with friends? Are you using them with native speakers of the language? Are you using them as part of a class project (meaning is someone supervising that you are getting something out of the chat activity)? Yes, they help.

I always recommend my students to use those tools.

- Silvio

Q [Ibrahim Saleh]: Many thanks professor. I do appreciate your reply and being with us during this really informative Webchat. In Egyptian Arabic we say, Shukran Keteer (many thanks).

Q [inasym]: Do you really accept the fact that teachers should depend mainly on the .edu sites?

2. Would you kindly suggest some useful electronic sources for teaching grammar through a communicative technique?

A [Silvio Avendano]: Hello Inasym, thanks for your questions. Are you asking me if I suggest that teachers only use websites with the .edu domain?

My answer is no. As I have said earlier, there other websites that can be used in our ESL/EFL classes and they are not necessarily from educational organizations (i.e. university or school). One example is http://www.pbs.org (http://www.pbs.org/).

Two good sites for grammar are:

http://a4ESL.org/q/h/grammar.html
http://www.englishclub.com/grammar/index.htm

- Silvio

Q [Mr. Chaviano]: Mr. Abendano: What's your experience in using online exams as placement, achievement or assessment tests? - Mr. Chaviano

A [Silvio Avendano]: Hello Mr. Chaviano, thanks for your questions. In our program, we use online quizzes but we don't use them to determine student placement. Most of the online quizzes include the answers, so you might want to be careful that the students are not looking at the answers. - Silvio

Q [Mr. Chaviano: Mr. Abendano: In your experience, is there a methodological framework to follow when Ss are in the lab practice online?
- Mr. Chaviano

A [Silvio Avendano]: Hello Mr. Chaviano, yes, there is and it's really the same framework that you would use for any other class.

De Szendefy (2005) recommends that the teacher in the CALL classroom

. Circulate

. Talk to each student

. Look at what students are doing on-screen

. Have a student first help another student asking a question

. Keep abreast of what's happening and who might need help

. Let students know that they're not on their own

(Szendefy, 2005, p. 18)

Dear colleagues, wow! What an honor to be here!

I am enjoying so much being here. I want to let you know that I need to take a little break and talk to some students that are waiting for me. I will continue responding to questions in one hour. You can also come back tomorrow and look at the questions and answers.

Thanks. Silvio

Moderator: Participants, please check back later today and tomorrow. Dr.
Avendano, thank you so much for taking the time to webchat with our group around the world.

The webchat is on hold for the moment but we will continue to accept your questions.

Q [IRC Antananarivo - Rasoarivelo]: Is there any website that could help us improve our English level in order to better teach English to young learners? Thanks.

A [Silvio Avendano]: Hello there! You might want to visit some of the recommended websites (see previous messages) and try out some of the activities yourself. That will help you determine what area of the English language you need to improve. There are other websites that can help you improve specific areas. One website that I use with my TOEFL students to help them improve their reading skills is:
http://www.turboread.com/read_checks.htm

Also, if you visit the toefl.org website and register, you will be able to take real tests that can help you assess your level of proficiency.

- Silvio

Q [IRC Antananarivo - Rasoanirina]: What do you think is the best way to teach beginners when using the Internet?

A [Silvio Avendano]: Hello Rasoanirina, in an earlier message, I recommended some ideas from Lewis, the author of Internet for Young learners. I also recommended that teachers subscribe to the Oxford University's Teacher Club to get sample articles and lesson ideas. - Silvio

Q [IRC Antananarivo - Rasoanirina]: How long should we teach English in a week? Thanks.

A [Silvio Avendano]: Hello Rasoanirina, well . It depends on what your students' purpose for learning English is or what your purpose for teaching them English is. It also depends on the materials that you are using. I would suggest at least one hour a day, but I know this sounds unrealistic in places that do not have enough teachers or resources and can only afford to teach English for one or two hours a week.

If you plan your lessons carefully you should be able to do a lot with your limited time. By a lot I mean not to make the students become bilingual, but at least to be able to use some language in a coherent way.

- Silvio

Q [IRC Antananarivo - Elysette]: I would appreciate your replies on the
Following:

1) a list of internet websites featuring some tips for ESL/EFL Curriculum Design for young learners

2) some internet websites with learning activities for young EFL learners

3) some instructions related to the evaluation of curriculum design websites Thanks a lot.

A [Silvio Avendano]: Hello Elysette, from your questions I take you are developing curriculum for young learners. You might want to look at the models used in the United States. There is a wonderful online handbook that we use in a TEYL course that we teach at UMBC. The web address for that handbook is: http://eric.ed.gov/ERICDocs/data/ericdocs2/content_storage_01/0000000b/80/10/b1/d8.pdf

- Silvio

Q [IRC Antananarivo - Zo]: In Madagascar, teaching through Internet is still impossible especially in state schools due to the great number of students and poverty. Most teachers (not living in the capital) do not even know how to use Internet. What solution can you suggest? Thanks.

A [Silvio Avendano]: Hello Zo, your situation is true in many countries.
Mona Soliman, from Egypt has developed strategies to overcome those challenges. In her classes, she asks students to get in groups of 3-5 and find a cybercafé or a computer hooked to the Internet anywhere else.
Students have specific tasks to complete and report back to class.

Ms. Silliman's approach has been very successful. You might want to try it out. Develop specific activities that students can do in groups. Start with something simple and have student report their activities to the class.

- Silvio

Q [IRC Antananarivo - Lova]: Can the Internet replace the teachers?

A [Silvio Avendano]: Hello Lova, what a great question and a question that worries so many teachers around the world.

The answer to your question is NO! The Internet is just a tool. Students will always need a human being to provide some sense of direction in the class. Meloni (1998) argues that teachers who do not catch up with technology will be replaced by those who are up to date with how teaching and technology relate to each other. so, teachers might be replaced by other teachers, but not by the Internet or other type of technology.

- Silvio

Q [IRC Antananarivo - Lova]: The use of the Internet is limited to privileged learners. How to extend it to the whole public?

A [Silvio Avendano]: Hello Lova, I have provided some ideas in a previous message. If your students cannot access the Internet at all, you might want to find ways to access it yourself. You could use the Internet to find activities that you could adapt for the regular classroom. For example, the website www.manythings.org (http://www.manythings.org/) contains a lot of materials that you can print, put on cardboard paper and use them in your regular class.

- Silvio

Q [IRC Antananarivo - Lova]: Is the use of the Internet really beneficial for the students or does it make them lazy?

A [Silvio Avendano]: Hello Lova, The Internet, just as any other tool that is used with an instructional objective in mind, can be very beneficial to students. You might also argue that a book make the students lazy because they don't have to take notes or handwrite information from the blackboard.
The Internet is beneficial only is integrated wisely within a lesson. There should be a pedagogical rationale for using it in the classroom.

-silvio

Q [IRC Antananarivo - raked]: The use of the Internet is meant to facilitate learning. Does it really? Can it cater cultural differences, educational procedures and learners' expectations?

A [Silvio Avendano]: Hello Raked, it sounds like you're making a strong statement. I can say that the Internet is very useful for the ESL/EFL class, but whether it facilitates learning really depends on how it is used or integrated into the curriculum, the syllabus, the course book or the lesson. The Internet by itself will not facilitate learning. You, as an expert of your local teaching context as an experienced educator will have to make sure that the Internet or any other instructional materials such as books and tapes are culturally and pedagogically suitable for your class.

- Silvio

Q [IRC Antananarivo - Rabodonavalona]: Are folk songs helpful for young beginners to get new vocabularies?

A [Silvio Avendano]: Hello Rabonavalona, Wow! What level of English proficiency do your students have? I think it depends on how you use them.
I would use something much more simple, like children songs first.

- Silvio

Q [IRC Antananarivo]: Razanajaona: What is the best way to make Internet available for public school?

A [Silvio Avendano]: Hello Razanajaona, it depends. It really depends on your government policies. It doesn't depend on my answer to your question.
Some countries are implementing projects in which they create public spaces, like cybercafés or local technology sites that are accessible to students under agreement between local ministries of education and public schools. I understand the money comes from foreign funding.

One successful example is Chile with their project "English by 2010" or something like that. Another country that has implemented similar projects is Egypt. You might want to read the following wonderful article by Mark
Warschauer: http://epaa.asu.edu/epaa/v11n38/

- Silvio

Q [IRC Antananarivo - Mano]: Learning English by Internet is a good idea but does everybody know how to use Internet? In addition to that English we need to learn [written and spoken] English. Thanks.

A [Silvio Avendano]: Hello Mano, no, not everybody knows how to use the Internet. You might want to read the following nice article by Dr.
Christine Meloni:

http://www.ESLmag.com/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=10

- Silvio

Q [IRC Antananarivo - Noro]: This my questions: How many minutes is the first lesson and how many sentences? When I begin the lesson after the introduction what should I teach grammar or vocabulary?

A [Silvio Avendano]: Hello Noro, what you teach and how much will be based on the guidelines established by your English program. It will also depend on what teaching philosophy your program subscribe to.

- Silvio

Q [Cesar Valmaña]: How can I introduce the written English to 4th, 5th, 6th graders in Qban public schools? I have already started to teach such graders listening skills, mainly songs, sayings, tongue twisters, etc. from USIA teaching materials.

A [Silvio Avendano]: Hello Cesar, great question! It sounds like you're talking about literacy development. Here's a wonderful website recommended by Prof. Joan Shin.
http://www.etprofessional.com/articles/createclas.pdf

- Silvio

Q [Frank2]: In ESP which do you think it would be the best exercises to work in communicative approach to elaborate a workbook?

A [Silvio Avendano]: Hello again Frank, What do you mean by "a workbook"?
Do you mean a handbook or a collection of materials?

- silvio

Q [Ibrahim Saleh]: Dear D. Avendano, I sent this question before, but I did not see it on the View Discussion screen. Anyway, thanks a lot for being with us today. I just want to ask about how to know whether a Website is peer reviewed or not. In other words, what are the standards I should consider to know whether a Website is trustable or not? This is of great help for me both as a researcher and EFL instructor.

A [Silvio Avendano]: Hello Ibrahim, I did answer your question. Please check carefully.

- Silvio

Q [IRCManagua]: Hi, we are from Unan-leon. we are just wondering about what suggestions of pre, while and post activities you can tell us about to teach young learners who are just entering the university, so that we can motivate them.

A [Silvio Avendano]: Hello UNAN-Leon! Nice to "see" you here. [Long live Leon!] I think you're asking me about activities for young college students, right? What level of English proficiency do they have?

- Silvio

Moderator: The following sites were inadvertently left off the transcript:

http://curry.edschool.virginia.edu/go/readquest/strat/tps.html
http://curry.edschool.virginia.edu/go/readquest/strat/clock_buddies.html
http://curry.edschool.virginia.edu/go/readquest/strat/3mp.html
http://curry.edschool.virginia.edu/go/readquest/strat/qta.html
http://curry.edschool.virginia.edu/go/readquest/strat/raft.html
http://curry.edschool.virginia.edu/go/readquest/strat/summarize.html
http://curry.edschool.virginia.edu/go/readquest/strat/thesis.html

We wish to thank Dr. Silvio Avendano for joining us and for spending so much time answering the many questions that have come in.

The webchat is now closed.

Please visit our Webchat Station (http://www.america.gov/multimedia/askamerica.html) for more information on upcoming events and a transcript of today's discussion (posted within one business day).

(Guests are chosen for their expertise. The views expressed by guests are their own and do not necessarily reflect those of the U.S. Department of State.)

(End Transcript)

WRITING TIPS FROM WILLIAM ZINSSER:

Writing English as a Second Language

Posted By <u>William Zinsser</u> On December 1, 2009 @ 5:59 pm In <u>P of D</u>, <u>Point of Departure</u>, <u>Winter 2010</u> |
<u>Comments Disabled</u>

A talk to the incoming international students at the Columbia Graduate School of Journalism, August 11, 2009

Five years ago one of your deans at the journalism school, Elizabeth Fishman, asked me if I would be interested in tutoring international students who might need some extra help with their writing. She knew I had done a lot of traveling in Asia and Africa and other parts of the world where many of you come from.

I knew I would enjoy that, and I have—I've been doing it ever since. I'm the doctor that students get sent to see if they have a writing problem that their professor thinks I can fix. As a bonus, I've made many friends—from Uganda, Uzbekhistan, India, Ethiopia, Thailand, Iraq, Nigeria, Poland, China, Colombia and many other countries. Several young Asian women, when they went back home, sent me invitations to their weddings. I never made it to Bhutan or Korea, but I did see the wedding pictures. Such beautiful brides!

I can't imagine how hard it must be to learn to write comfortably in a second—or third or fourth—language. I don't think *I* could do it, and I admire your grace in taking on that difficult task. Much of the anxiety that I see in foreign students could be avoided if certain principles of writing good English—which nobody ever told them—were explained in advance. So I asked if I could talk to all of you during orientation week and tell you some of the things my students have found helpful.

So that's why we're here today.

I'll start with a question: What is good writing?

It depends on what country you're from. We all know what's considered "good writing" in our own country. We grow up immersed in the cadences and sentence structure of the language we were born into, so we think, "That's probably what every country considers good writing; they just use different words." If only! I once asked a student from Cairo, "What kind of language is Arabic?" I was trying to put myself into her mental process of switching from Arabic to English. She said, "It's all adjectives."

Well, of course it's not *all* adjectives, but I knew what she meant: it's decorative, it's ornate, it's intentionally pleasing. Another Egyptian student, when I asked him about Arabic, said, "It's all proverbs. We talk in proverbs. People say things like 'What you are seeking is also seeking you.'" He also told me that Arabic is full of courtesy and deference, some of which is rooted in fear of the government. "You never know who's listening," he said, so it doesn't hurt to be polite. That's when I realized that when foreign students come to me with a linguistic problem it may also be a cultural or a political problem.

Now I think it's lovely that such a decorative language as Arabic exists. I wish *I* could walk around New York and hear people talking in proverbs. But all those adjectives and all that decoration would be the ruin of any journalist trying to write good English. No proverbs, please.

Spanish also comes with a heavy load of beautiful baggage that will smother any journalist writing in English. The Spanish language is a national treasure, justly prized by Spanish-speaking people. But what makes it a national treasure is its long sentences and melodious long nouns that express a general idea. Those nouns are rich in feeling, but they have no action in them—no people doing something we can

picture. My Spanish-speaking students must be given the bad news that those long sentences will have to be cruelly chopped up into short sentences with short nouns and short active verbs that drive the story forward. What's considered "good writing" in Spanish is not "good writing" in English.

So what is good English—the language we're here today to wrestle with? It's not as musical as Spanish, or Italian, or French, or as ornamental as Arabic, or as vibrant as some of your native languages. But I'm hopelessly in love with English because it's plain and it's strong. It has a huge vocabulary of words that have precise shades of meaning; there's no subject, however technical or complex, that can't be made clear to any reader in good English—if it's used right. Unfortunately, there are many ways of using it wrong. Those are the damaging habits I want to warn you about today.

First, a little history. The English language is derived from two main sources. One is Latin, the florid language of ancient Rome. The other is Anglo-Saxon, the plain languages of England and northern Europe. The words derived from Latin are the enemy—they will strangle and suffocate everything you write. The Anglo-Saxon words will set you free.

How do those Latin words do their strangling and suffocating? In general they are long, pompous nouns that end in *-ion*—like implementation and maximization and communication (five syllables long!)—or that end in *-ent*—like development and fulfillment. Those nouns express a vague concept or an abstract idea, not a specific action that we can picture—somebody doing something. Here's a typical sentence: "Prior to the implementation of the financial enhancement." That means "Before we fixed our money problems."

Believe it or not, this is the language that people in authority in America routinely use—officials in government and business and education and social work and health care. They think those long Latin words make them sound important. It no longer rains in America; your TV weatherman will tell that you we're experiencing a precipitation probability situation.

I'm sure all of you, newly arrived in America, have already been driven crazy trying to figure out the instructions for ordering a cell phone or connecting your computer, or applying for a bank loan or a health insurance policy, and you assume that those of us who were born here can understand this stuff. I assure you that we don't understand it either. I often receive some totally unintelligible letter from the telephone company or the cable company or the bank. I try to piece it out like a hieroglyphic, and I ask my wife, "Can you make any sense of this?" She says, "I have no idea what it means."

Those long Latin usages have so infected everyday language in America that you might well think, "If that's how people write who are running the country, that's how I'm supposed to write." It's not. Let me read you three typical letters I recently received in the mail. (I keep letters like this and save them in a folder that I call "Bullshit File.")

The first one is from the president of a private club in New York. It says, "Dear member: The board of governors has spent the past year considering proactive efforts that will continue to professionalize the club and to introduce efficiencies that we will be implementing throughout 2009." That means they're going to try to make the club run better.

Here's a letter to alumni from the head of the New England boarding school I attended when I was a boy. "As I walk around the Academy," she writes, "and see so many gifted students interacting with accomplished, dedicated adults" [*that means boys and girls talking to teachers*] and consider the opportunities for learning that such interpersonal exchanges will yield…" Interpersonal exchanges! Pure garbage. Her letter is meant to assure us alumni that the school is in good hands. I'm not assured. One thing I know is that she shouldn't be allowed near the English department, and I'm not sure she should even be running the school. Remember: how you write is how you define yourself to people who meet

you only through your writing. If your writing is pretentious, that's how you'll be perceived. The reader has no choice.

Here's one more—a letter from the man who used to be my broker; now he's my investment counsel. He says, "As we previously communicated, we completed a systems conversion in late September. Data conversions involve extra processing and reconciliation steps [*translation: it took longer than we thought it would to make our office operate better*]. We apologize if you were inconvenienced as we completed the verification process [*we hope we've got it right now*]. "Further enhancements will be introduced in the next calendar quarter" [*we're still working on it*]. Notice those horrible long Latin words: *communicated*, *conversion*, *reconciliation*, *enhancements*, *verification*. There's not a living person in any one of them.

Well, I think you get the point about bad nouns. (Don't worry—in a minute I'll tell you about good nouns.) I bring this up today because most of you will soon be assigned to a beat in one of New York's neighborhoods. Our city has been greatly enriched in recent years by immigrants from every corner of the world, but their arrival has also brought a multitude of complex urban problems. You'll be interviewing the men and women who are trying to solve those problems—school principals, social workers, health-care workers, hospital officials, criminal justice officials, union officials, church officials, police officers, judges, clerks in city and state agencies—and when you ask them a question, they will answer you in nouns: Latin noun clusters that are the working vocabulary of their field. They'll talk about "facilitation intervention" and "affordable housing" and "minimum-density zoning," and you will dutifully copy those phrases down and write a sentence that says: "A major immigrant concern is the affordable housing situation." But I can't picture the affordable housing situation. Who exactly are those immigrants? Where do they live? What kind of housing is affordable? To whom? As readers, we want to be able to picture specific people like ourselves, in a specific part of the city, doing things we might also do. We want a sentence that says something like "New Dominican families on Tremont Avenue in the Bronx can't pay the rent that landlords ask." I can picture that; we've all had trouble paying the landlord.

So if those are the bad nouns, what are the good nouns? The good nouns are the thousands of short, simple, infinitely old Anglo-Saxon nouns that express the fundamentals of everyday life: *house*, *home*, *child*, *chair*, *bread*, *milk*, *sea*, *sky*, *earth*, *field*, *grass*, *road* … words that are in our bones, words that resonate with the oldest truths. When you use those words, you make contact—consciously and also *sub*consciously—with the deepest emotions and memories of your readers. Don't try to find a noun that you think sounds more impressive or "literary." Short Anglo-Saxon nouns are your second-best tools as a journalist writing in English.

What are your *best* tools? Your best tools are short, plain Anglo-Saxon *verbs*. I mean *active* verbs, not *passive* verbs. If you could write an article using only active verbs, your article would automatically have clarity and warmth and vigor.

Let's go back to school for a minute and make sure you remember the difference between an active verb and a passive verb. An active verb denotes one specific action: JOHN SAW THE BOYS. The event only happened once, and we always know who did what: it was John who activated the verb *SAW*. A passive-voice sentence would say: THE BOYS WERE SEEN BY JOHN. It's longer. It's weaker: it takes three words (WERE SEEN BY instead of SAW), and it's not as exact. How often were the boys seen by John? Every day? Once a week? Active verbs give momentum to a sentence and push it forward. If I had put that last sentence in the passive—"momentum is given to a sentence by active verbs and the sentence is pushed forward by them"—there is no momentum, no push.

One of my favorite writers is Henry David Thoreau, who wrote one of the great American books, *Walden*, in 1854, about the two years he spent living—and thinking—in the woods near Concord, Massachusetts. Thoreau's writing moves with simple strength because he uses *one active verb after another* to push his meaning along. At every point in his sentences you know what you need to know. Here's a famous sentence from *Walden*:

I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of nature, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived.

Look at all those wonderful short, active verbs: *went*, *wished*, *front*, *see*, *learn*, *die*, *discover*. We understand exactly what Thoreau is saying. We also know a lot about *him*—about his curiosity and his vitality. How alive Thoreau is in that sentence! It's an autobiography in 44 words—39 of which are words of *one syllable*. Think about that: only five words in that long, elegant sentence have more than one syllable. Short is always better than long.

Now let me turn that sentence into the passive:

A decision was made to go to the woods because of a desire for a deliberate existence and for exposure to only the essential facts of life, and for possible instruction in its educational elements, and because of a concern that at the time of my death the absence of a meaningful prior experience would be apprehended.

All the life has been taken out of the sentence. But what's the biggest thing I've taken out of that sentence? I've taken *Thoreau* out of that sentence. He's nowhere to be seen. I've done it just by turning all the active verbs into passive verbs. Every time I replaced one of Thoreau's active verbs with a passive verb I also had to add a noun to make the passive verb work. "I went to the woods because" became "A decision was made." I had to add the noun *decision*. "To see if I could learn what it had to teach—two terrific verbs, learn and teach; we've all learned and we've all been taught—became "for possible instruction." Can you hear how dead those Latin nouns are that end in i-o-n? Decision. Instruction. They have no people in them doing something.

So fall in love with active verbs. They are your best friends.

I have four principles of writing good English. They are Clarity, Simplicity, Brevity, and Humanity.

First, Clarity. If it's not clear you might as well not write it. You might as well stay in bed.

Two: Simplicity. Simple is good. Most students from other countries don't know that. When I read them a sentence that I admire, a simple sentence with short words, they think I'm joking. "Oh, Mr. Zinsser, you're so funny," a bright young woman from Nigeria told me. "If I wrote sentences like that, people would think I'm stupid." Stupid like Thoreau, I want to say. Or stupid like E. B. White. Or like the King James Bible. Listen to this passage from the book of Ecclesiastes:

I returned and saw under the sun, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favor to men of skill, but time and chance happeneth to them all. [*Look at all those wonderful plain nouns: race, battle, bread, riches, favor, time, chance.*]

Or stupid like Abraham Lincoln, whom I consider our greatest American writer. Here's Lincoln addressing the nation in his Second Inaugural Address as president, in 1865, at the end of the long, terrible, exhausting Civil War:

With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right [*eleven straight one-syllable words*], let us strive on [*active verb*] to finish the work we are in, to bind up [*active verb*] the nation's wounds, to care [*active verb*] for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and his orphan [*specific nouns*],—to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations.

Here's another American President, Barack Obama, also a wonderful writer, who modeled his own style on Lincoln's. In his memoir, *Dreams from My Father*. a beautifully written book, Obama recalls how, as a boy,

At night, lying in bed, I would let the slogans drift away, to be replaced with a series of images, romantic images, of a past I had never known.

They were of the civil rights movement, mostly, the grainy black-and-white footage that appears every February during Black History Month. . . . A pair of college students . . . placing their orders at a lunch counter teetering on the edge of riot. . . . A county jail bursting with children, their hands clasped together, singing freedom songs.

Such images became a form of prayer for me [*beautiful phrase*], bolstering my spirits, channeling my emotions in a way that words never could. They told me [*active verb*] . . . that I wasn't alone in my particular struggles, and that communities . . . had to be created, fought for, tended like gardens [*specific detail*]. They expanded or contracted [*active verbs*] with the dreams of men. . . . In the sit-ins, the marches, the jailhouse songs [*specific detail*], I saw [*active verb*] the African-American community becoming more than just the place where you'd been born or the house where you'd been raised [*simple nouns: place, house*]. . . . Because this community I imagined was still in the making, built on the promise that the larger American community, black, white, and brown, could somehow redefine itself—I believed [*active verb*] that it might, over time, admit the uniqueness of my own life.

So remember: Simple is good. Writing is not something you have to embroider with fancy stitches to make yourself look smart.

Principle number 3. Brevity. Short is always better than long. Short sentences are better than long sentences. Short words are better than long words. Don't say *currently* if you can say *now*. Don't say *assistance* if you can say *help*. Don't say *numerous* if you can say *many*. Don't say *facilitate* if you can say *ease*. Don't call someone an *individual* [*five syllables!*]; that's a person, or a man or a woman. Don't implement or prioritize. Don't say anything in writing that you wouldn't comfortably say in conversation. Writing is talking to someone else on paper or on a screen.

Which brings me to my fourth principle: Humanity. Be yourself. Never try in your writing to be someone you're not. Your product, finally, is you. Don't lose that person by putting on airs, trying to sound superior.

There are many modern journalists I admire for their strong, simple style, whom I could recommend to you as models. Two who come to mind are Gay Talese and Joan Didion. Here's a passage by Talese, from his book of collected magazine pieces, *The Gay Talese Reader*, about the great Yankee baseball star, Joe DiMaggio, who at one point was married to Marilyn Monroe:

Joe DiMaggio lives with his widowed sister, Marie, in a tan stone house on a quiet residential street near Fisherman's Wharf. He bought the house almost thirty years ago for his parents, and after their death he lived there with Marilyn Monroe. . . . There are some baseball trophies and plaques in a small room off DiMaggio's bedroom, and on his dresser are photographs of Marilyn Monroe, and in the living room downstairs is a small painting of her that DiMaggio likes very much [*how nice that sentence is—how simple and direct*]: It reveals only her face and shoulders, and she is wearing a very wide-brimmed sun hat, and there is a soft sweet smile on her lips, an innocent curiosity about her that is the way he saw her and the way he wanted her to be seen by others.
[*Notice all those one-syllable words: "the way he saw her and the way he wanted her to be seen." The sentence is absolutely clean—there's not one word in it that's not necessary and not one extra word. Get rid of every element in your writing that's not doing useful work. It's all clutter.*]

And here's Joan Didion, who grew up in California and wrote brilliant magazine pieces about its trashy lifestyle in the 1960s. No anthropologist caught it better. This passage is from her collection of early magazine pieces, *Slouching Toward Bethlehem*.

There are always little girls around rock groups—the same little girls who used to hang around saxophone players, girls who lived on the celebrity and power and sex a band projects when it plays—and there are three of them out here this afternoon in Sausalito where the Grateful Dead rehearse. They are all pretty and two of them still have baby fat and one of them dances by herself with her eyes closed [*perfect simple image*]. . . .

Somebody said that if I was going to meet some runaways I better pick up some hamburgers and Cokes on the way, so I did, and we are eating them in the Park together, me, Debbie who is fifteen, and Jeff who is sixteen. Debbie and Jeff ran away twelve days ago, walked out of school with $100 between them [*active verbs: ran away, walked out of school*]. . . .

Debbie is buffing her fingernails with the belt to her suède jacket. She is annoyed because she chipped a nail and because I do not have any polish remover in the car. I promise to get her to a friend's apartment so that she can redo her manicure, but something has been bothering me and as I fiddle with the ignition I finally ask it. I ask them to think back to when they were children, to tell me what they had wanted to be when they were grown up, how they had seen the future then.

Jeff throws a Coca-Cola bottle out the car window. "I can't remember I ever thought about it," he says.

"I remember I wanted to be a veterinarian once," Debbie says. "But now I'm more or less working in the vein of being an artist or a model or a cosmetologist. Or something."

Here's the first paragraph of an article of mine that originally ran in *The New Yorker*. (It's now in my book *Mitchell & Ruff*.)

Jazz came to China for the first time on the afternoon of June 2, 1981, when the American bassist and French-horn player Willie Ruff introduced himself and his partner, the pianist Dwike Mitchell, to several hundred students and professors who were crowded into a large room at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music. The students and the professors were all expectant, without quite knowing what to expect. They only knew that they were about to hear the first American jazz concert ever presented to the Chinese. Probably they were not surprised to find that the two musicians were black, though black Americans are a rarity in the People's Republic. What they undoubtedly didn't expect was that Ruff would talk to them in Chinese, and when he began they murmured with delight.

Five plain declarative sentences that get the story started at full speed—WHAP! You're right in that room at the Shanghai Conservatory on that June afternoon in 1981.

I've given you these examples because writing is learned by imitation. We all need models. Bach needed a model; Picasso needed a model. Make a point of reading writers who are doing the kind of writing you want to do. (Many of them write for *The New Yorker*.) Study their articles clinically. Try to figure out how they put their words and sentences together. That's how I learned to write, not from a writing course.

Two final thoughts. Some of you, hearing me talk to you so urgently about the need to write plain English, perhaps found yourself thinking: "That's so yesterday. Journalism has gone digital, and I've come to Columbia to learn the new electronic media. I no longer need to write well." *I* think you need to write even more clearly and simply for the *new* media than for the *old* media. You'll be making and editing videos and photographs and audio recordings to accompany your articles. Somebody—that's you—will still have to *write* all those video scripts and audio scripts, and your writing will need to be lean and tight and coherent: plain nouns and verbs pushing your story forward so that the rest of us always know what's

happening. This principle applies—and will apply—to every digital format; nobody wants to consult a Web site that isn't instantly clear. Clarity, brevity, and sequential order will be crucial to your success.

I emphasize this because the biggest problem that paralyzes students is not how to write; it's how to organize what they are writing. They go out on a story, and they gather a million notes and a million quotes, and when they come back they have no idea what the story is *about*—what is its proper narrative shape? Their first paragraph contains facts that should be on page five; facts are on page five that should be in the first paragraph. The stories exist *nowhere* in time or space; the people could be in Brooklyn or Bogotá.

The epidemic I'm most worried about isn't swine flu. It's the death of logical thinking. The cause, I assume, is that most people now get their information from random images on a screen—pop-ups, windows, and sidebars—or from scraps of talk on a digital phone. But writing is *linear* and *sequential*; Sentence B must follow Sentence A, and Sentence C must follow Sentence B, and eventually you get to Sentence Z. The hard part of writing isn't the writing; it's the thinking. You can solve most of your writing problems if you stop after every sentence and ask: What does the reader need to know next?"

One maxim that my students find helpful is: *One thought per sentence*. Readers only process one thought at a time. So give them time to digest the first set of facts you want them to know. Then give them the next piece of information they need to know, which further explains the first fact. Be grateful for the period. Writing is so hard that all of us, once launched, tend to ramble. Instead of a period we use a comma, followed by a transitional word (*and*, *while*), and soon we have strayed into a wilderness that seems to have no road back out. Let the humble period be your savior. There's no sentence too short to be acceptable in the eyes of God.

As you start your journey here at Columbia this week, you may tell yourself that you're doing "communications," or "new media," or "digital media" or some other fashionable new form. But ultimately you're in the storytelling business. We all are. It's the oldest of narrative forms, going back to the caveman and the crib, endlessly riveting. What happened? *Then* what happened? Please remember, in moments of despair, whatever journalistic assignment you've been given, all you have to do is tell a story, using the simple tools of the English language and never losing your own humanity.

Repeat after me:
Short is better than long.
Simple is good. (*Louder*)
Long Latin nouns are the enemy.
Anglo-Saxon active verbs are your best friend.
One thought per sentence.

Good luck to you all.

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 Other resources available at: **http://tinyurl.com/chn36u**