Where should I study English?

How to choose a place to live and study.

Find A Home

1. Size
When moving to a foreign country it’s important to determine the size and population density of the city you want to live in. If your home city is crowded and busy you may be comfortable with something similar, or you may prefer to live in a smaller city with a smaller population. If you’re from a small town, you may not be ready to move to a big city. No matter the size, find a city you will be able to navigate through in a foreign language.

2. Climate
You may be moving to a country with a very different climate than the one you are used to. If you will be experiencing winter for the first time, make sure you are prepared ahead of time with appropriate clothing and footwear. If you’re not sure what the climate is like for a city you’re interested in, find out before you arrive. Many students study in Eastern Canada so they can experience all four Canadian seasons, but it’s important to prepare in advance so you can enjoy the beautiful weather all year long.

3. Safety
Living in a new city, especially one where the predominant language is new to you, can be scary. Finding a city that allows you to feel confident and safe is important. Do your research and talk to people who live in the city.

4. Cost of living
No matter what country you live in, the cost of living will vary from city to city. Living in Vancouver, for example, can be more expensive than living in Halifax, but the lifestyles are also quite different. Keep in mind the cost for accommodations, groceries, utilities (power, water, internet, telephone), automobile related expenses, and entertainment.

5. Proximity to other destinations
If you’re going to be travelling far from home you may want to take advantage of travel opportunities. Side trips to various other cities in the same country are fun, but look to see if there are opportunities for adventures to cities or destinations in other countries as well. When you’re in the area it makes sense to explore as much as possible.

6. Lifestyle
Find a place that is friendly and welcoming to visitors, so you can feel comfortable in asking for directions or assistance, but also look for a place that matches your personality or will allow you to broaden your horizons. Are you hoping to learn to ski or surf? Do your weekends always include attending a sporting event? Are you a huge fan of live music? Do you love art?

Make sure the place you’re going to live matches your interests and lifestyle.

Choose A School

1. What is the average class size?
The right number of students is an important factor in how the classroom functions. You will want to be able to get individual attention from your instructors, but having classmates will facilitate your learning. Attending an English language program that is affiliated with a North American University means you will have an opportunity to interact with a large number of Canadian students, outside the classroom.

2. What are the instructors’ qualifications?
Check with the school to find out what qualifications your instructors have.

3. What is the format of the classes?
A private language school may structure their classes differently than one affiliated with a University. A combination of conversation, lecture, listening and speaking activities is the usual format. Each school and each program within a school will place additional importance or focus on different facets of learning, depending on your goals. Look for a school that has programs suited to your long-term language learning goals.

4. Placement
Understand how the school determines each student’s level of study. It’s important that you be placed in a program that challenges your language skills, but that is appropriate for your current level.
of comprehension. It’s also important to understand the levels of the available programs. Many schools have their own level system that doesn’t adhere to any international standard. Some schools, however, use the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), which allows students to talk about their learning and proficiency in a way that will be understood all over the world.

5. Style
Find out how the instructors and other staff interact with students. Are there opportunities for you to access additional help or resources? Will your instructors make themselves available for questions? Is the learning environment formal or is it flexible enough to meet the varying needs of each student? Find a school that will allow you to learn in a way that suits your individual learning style.

6. How many instructors will I have?
Find out how the learning is structured. Will you have one instructor for a specific period of time, or will there be different instructors for different aspects of your program?

7. Cost
Education is important and is usually worth the expense, but it’s equally important to understand if you’re getting value for your expenditure. Studying abroad can be quite expensive for International Students. Tuition and living expenses vary from country to country. Costs in Canada, for example, are generally much lower than in the United Kingdom or the United States, but can also vary from province to province.

8. Housing
Does your school offer support in finding accommodation for the duration of your studies? If so, are there a variety of options to choose from? Generally a school associated with a University will have options for residence at University which would include a meal plan, they will also offer homestay programs where you can live with a family and experience life as a “local”, and many will offer support in finding off-campus accommodation if you prefer to rent an apartment on your own or with friends.

9. Support
In addition to accommodation support, are there staff at the school who are dedicated to helping you get settled? A good language school will make the transition easy for you by having student advisors and homestay coordinators to help you obtain school identification, navigate your new city, set up your telephone and banking, as well as assist with any other concerns that may arise as you acclimate to a new country.

10. Extracurricular
Does the school have extracurricular activities for you to take part in? Are there sports teams, or clubs and societies you can become involved with? If your school is affiliated with a University will you be able to take advantage of University facilities and become involved in University activities? Are there opportunities for you to take part in planned excursions while you study? A good language school will help you take advantage of the opportunity to explore your new home and learn about the culture while you practice your new and improving language skills.

Once you’ve gotten answers to all your questions, choose the city and school that will suit you best and get ready to start your adventure in learning!

Contact us for more information on learning English in Canada