

## Tips for Better Written and Oral English Work

- Always check your work. When you think you've finished, check it again. Use a dictionary to help you find spellings that you are not sure of.
- Go to class regularly. Do your homework and hand it in on time. If your teacher doesn't give you any homework, ask for some. Ask for extra work to do at the weekend. If your teacher doesn't mark it, ask them to give you feedback. If you don't understand something in class, ask your teacher. Discuss English work with your friends at break-time and after class. Practise talking in English. Talk about it with your family. See if you can help your family to improve their English. Encourage them to go to a class.
- In written work – *answer the question!* To answer the question you must *read* the question! What does the question ask you to do? Make sure you do what it asks. If it says 'use a key' then use a key! If it says 'circle the correct letter – a, b, c or d' then circle the correct letter. If it says, 'write about your family', write about your family.
- Spend time deliberately learning vocabulary sets. You are always going to need to know the meanings and correct spellings of days, months, numbers, clothes, food, family members, your name and address, and so on. Practise at home. Make things much easier for yourself in class by learning these words in your free time.
- Plan written compositions before you start. Use a flow chart to help you think of about four or five ideas to write about or sketch out your ideas by writing notes on a rough piece of paper. Think: what do you want to say in this piece of writing? Start with a short introduction, then write a paragraph for each idea. Your final paragraph should draw the ideas together into a conclusion. Each paragraph should contain about four or five short sentences.
- Spend time deliberately learning basic verb tables – both regular and irregular – especially the four key irregular verbs: 'to be', 'to go', 'to have' and 'to do'. Learn different tenses: present/past simple, present/past continuous and present/past perfect. Learn the past participles of key irregular verbs, for example have/had, do/done. Make sure you can use many common verbs like 'eat', 'read', 'sleep' and 'go' to talk about your daily activities in both the present and past tenses.
- Read English language books and magazines. Read signs and notices. Write down any words or phrases that you don't understand and look them up. Keep a vocabulary notebook where you write down new words and phrases. Check it regularly.
- Watch English-language TV. Use subtitles so that you can match the words to the voices. Record programmes and play them back, pausing the action if it's going too quickly for you. Use the internet to find information in English. Use free online translation services to translate text into your language. Visit websites that have games and resources for learning English. Print out materials and test yourself at home. Recommend good websites that you find to your teachers and classmates.
- Use it or lose it! If you want to remember what you have learnt, make sure you use it every day. Practise speaking and listening, reading and writing every day. If possible, join a club or society or do a sporting or voluntary activity where you will meet native English speakers. Use your initiative!
- Don't give up! If it feels like you're not learning anything, persevere. You are doing fine.