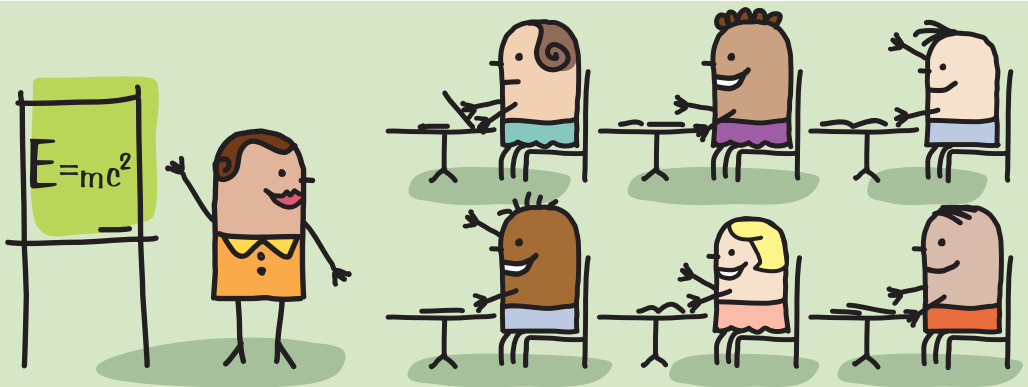


COLLEGE THE AMERICAN WAY

A Fun ESL Guide to English Language and
Campus Life in the U.S.



Sheila MacKechnie Murtha, M.A.
Jane Airey O'Connor, M.Ed.



- The international student's ESL guide to campus life in the U.S.
- Learn tons of everyday idioms and vocabulary
- Have fun with quizzes and activities
- *Plus* audio to practice speaking and listening until you're perfect



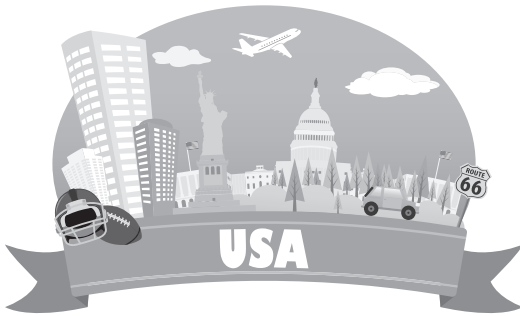
Audio Included



Part 1

- Here You Are!
- Getting to Know You
- Money Money Money
- Culture Catch-Up!

HERE YOU ARE!



Arriving in America

WOW! You did it! Can you believe it? **Go on**, give yourself a **pat on the back**—you **figured out** everything that had to be done . . . and **YOU DID IT!** You have the **applications, documents, visas, forms, files—phew!** You **filled in, filled out, signed on the dotted line**

. . . That's a **lot of paperwork!** But . . . **YOU DID IT!** You figured out all the **red tape**, signed all the official documents, put your **initials** on changes to all the official documents, and now you're **finally** here!

Is someone meeting you at the airport? We hope you figured that out before you left, ha! If not, there are always ways to get where you need to go. Taking a **shuttle** is probably the easiest plan. Your **luggage** will **fit** easily, and the **van** will **drop you off right** at the door. **Door-to-door** service! But if you need a **Plan B**: Most airports have buses or trains that will take you into the city. That's easy if you don't have a lot of luggage; however, if you have **lots of bags** it can be **pretty tricky** getting on and off the train. Those **suitcases** are heavy, and they take up a lot of space! If you're lucky, the bus will have a **baggage compartment** . . . And if you're *really* lucky, the driver will help you **stow** your **stuff!**

A more **expensive option** is to take a **cab**. Most **major** airports have a **taxi stand**—a place where cabs wait to take people wherever they need to go. Sometimes you may be able to share a cab with someone who’s going in the same direction you’re going. And speaking of sharing—the popular **ride-share** services offer door-to-door service, usually at a much lower cost than a taxicab’s **fare**. Be sure to check out the **carpool** option! If others are going in the same direction, you can share the cost of the ride, and the app will do all the planning work. Just **open the app** on your phone, **tap in** where you want to go, and someone will show up in a car to drive you to your door. No money needed—it’s all done in-app. Away you go!

Yes, here you are—It’s the place you’ve been dreaming about for so long! (Okay, so maybe you weren’t dreaming about the *airport*, haha, but you know what we mean. . .) WELCOME to the U.S.!



THINK ABOUT IT

What’s your **first reaction**? What’s the first thing that you noticed? Was your **first impression** of the U.S. exactly what you **pictured** in your mind? Is this city bigger than you imagined? Smaller? More **crowded**? Louder? Busier? Have a

great time exploring your new college home!

BY THE WAY . . .

We know—you just can’t survive without that smartphone. In English, these are the magic words to say what you do on that phone:

- **open the app:** touch an icon to start using the program
- **tap:** touch the phone screen (on your computer we say *click*)
- **double tap:** touch twice, very quickly (on your computer we say *double click*)
- **press the home button:** touch the small button at the bottom (This “wakes up” your screen)
- **swipe:** move your finger across the screen
- **icon:** the little picture that represents the application (app)

LANGUAGE SPOT: BAGS



Wow. *Luggage*, *baggage*, *suitcases* and *bags* . . . they all refer to the same thing: the cases holding all that stuff you packed for your American study adventure! Yes, they refer to the same thing, but we don't use them **interchangeably**. *Luggage* and *baggage* are non-count nouns (sometimes called *uncountable*); *suitcase* and *bag* are count nouns (sometimes called *countable*).

- *Luggage* is a non-count noun. It's never used as a plural (with s). *Luggage* can refer to many bags, but it's used as one (collective) unit. So, your luggage *is* in the taxi (even if it means four bags!). And yes, it's used in the singular, but you do not use an article. If you buy too much stuff while you're here, you may need to buy *luggage* (or *some luggage*, but never *a luggage*) for the trip home!
- *Baggage* is also a non-count noun—never used in the plural. It usually refers to the suitcases (luggage!) that you load onto the plane or train. With a little luck (haha) your *baggage* won't get lost, and you'll find it at Baggage Claim when you arrive!
- *Suitcase* and *bag* refer to the individual items. They're count nouns, and you can use both in the singular (yes, use an article) and the plural. You may need to buy a *suitcase* before you return home. You may think three *suitcases* will be enough, but you may need another one for all the cool stuff you buy while you're here!

The taxi driver can put two *bags* in the back seat; a *bag* will have to go in the front, next to him.

Most airlines allow only one **carry-on** bag.



TRY IT!

Can you choose the correct *bags* word in the following sentences? Answers are on page 221.

1. Oh no! I've got too much _____ to fit in the car.
2. Exactly how many _____ do you have?
3. I've got four _____, but the airline's limit for checked (4.) _____ is three.
5. Well, at least you won't have to buy more _____ in the U.S.
6. I'm not so sure about that. If I can't fit all my new shoes into one _____ I'll have to buy more (7.) _____.
8. I really like your carry-on _____!
9. Thanks! I've always wanted to have a leather _____.
10. Well, I hope all my _____ shows up at Baggage Claim when I arrive at the airport!

DIALOGUE: AUDIO TRACK 2

We're Here . . . Now What?



HE: We did it! **I can't believe it**, but **we did it!** We're here! Take a look at that sign: "Welcome to the U.S.!" That's *us!* We're here in the *United States of America*. . .

SHE: I know! Just think: We'll be studying here for **FOUR YEARS!** We'll be **experts** at speaking English, ha! And we'll also have a **fancy** college **degree** when we're finished. But um, for right this minute. . . Yeah, we're here . . . but . . . **now what?**

HE: Well, I don't know about you, but the first thing I want to do is **grab something to eat**. I'm **starving!** Let's get our bags at Baggage Claim and find someplace to get a nice American lunch.

SHE: Sounds good to me . . . I'm hungry too. But we haven't exchanged our **currency** yet—we don't have American money.

HE: No worries. We've got **plastic!**

SHE: Uh-oh. Will we be able to pay for a taxi with plastic?

HE: Sure, most cabs take credit cards. Or maybe we can just get an **Uber**. We'll be fine. I'm not worried about the cab. I'm worried about my stomach! I'm hungry—let's find someplace to eat!

SHE: Okay, okay. **Hey**, wait ... Look what I found at the bottom of my carry-on bag—a **twenty** from my visit last year! We can use that for lunch!

HE: Ha, twenty **bucks**?! That will never **cover** lunch AND a cab. . . . But hey, it's a good idea to **break** the twenty. Then we'll have some smaller **bills** for **tips**.

SHE: Great idea. I'll buy a magazine at the **newsstand** and get **change** for the twenty.

HE: Hmm, yeah. Maybe two fives, and the rest in singles? That should cover tips for lunch, and for all the bags too.

SHE: Too much luggage! I told you we should have **packed light!**

HE: What?! I *did* pack light! I only have one suitcase! All the other bags are yours!

SHE: Well, um, yes, but it's all *very* important stuff! Okay, let's go **pick up** the luggage and get something to eat!



YOUR TURN!

Can you answer these questions about the sections above?
Answers are on page 221.

1. What phrase tells you he's really hungry? _____
2. How much American money did she find in her bag?

3. What expression does he use to mean "get smaller bills"?

4. What are "two fives"? _____
5. What phrase means *do not* bring a lot of stuff? _____

6. What expression means pick you up exactly where you are, and bring you to the entrance of where you want to go? _____
7. What is “plastic”? _____
8. What’s the difference between a taxi and a cab? _____
9. What’s the word for the small shop at an airport that sells newspapers, magazines, and small items? _____
10. What word means only the first letters of your first, middle, and last names? _____

BY THE WAY . . .

Tipping for services is expected in the U.S. If an airport worker helps with your bags, you should tip that person. The usual baggage-handling tip is \$1 per bag. For other services, tips are usually 15% to 20%. The better the service the bigger the tip! (That includes taxi drivers. If the driver helps with your luggage, add \$1 per bag. Hey, we told you not to pack so much **stuff!**)

VOCABULARY

- **a lot of:** many; much
- **application:** a form with personal information used to apply to a school or for a job
- **baggage compartment:** the place on a bus, train, or airplane where you put your bags
- **bills:** paper money
- **break** (a bill): exchange a large bill for smaller bills or coins
- ① **bucks:** dollars
- **cab:** taxi
- **carpool:** people going to the same place sharing a ride in one car
- **carry-on:** a small bag (luggage!) that you can bring on the plane with you. Airlines are very strict about the size of a carry-on, so be sure to check the rules before you go to the airport!
- **change:** coins; also, get smaller bills and coins from a large bill; also, the money you get back after paying with a larger bill than the amount due
- **cover:** be enough to pay for something
- **crowded:** filled with TOO many people!
- **currency:** a country’s money

- **degree:** The document that shows you've completed all the requirements for graduation in your program of studies. See how smart you are?
- **document:** official, important paper
- ① **door-to-door:** from one exact place to another exact place
- ① **drop someone off:** leave someone at a place
 - **expensive option:** choice that costs more
 - **expert:** person with special knowledge or skills
- ① **fancy:** very special; impressive; often expensive
 - **fare:** cost of the ride in a cab, bus, train, or airplane
- ① **figure out :** analyze something to understand it
- ① **fill in:** complete the individual items in a form with information
- ① **fill out:** complete a form with information
 - **finally:** at last! after a long time
 - **first impression:** your first opinion
 - **first reaction:** what you think right away; your first opinion
 - **fit:** have enough room; be the right size
 - **go on:** continue
- ① **grab something to eat:** get something to eat
- ① **hey!:** said to get someone's attention
 - **I can't believe it:** I never thought it would happen!
 - **icon:** the little picture that represents an application (app)
 - **initials:** The first letters of your first, middle, and last names (Ours are SMM and JAO.)
 - **interchangeably:** something able to be used in the place of another thing
- ① **lots of:** many
 - **luggage:** suitcases and/or bags; used in the singular form only
 - **major:** large; important; also a student's main field of study in college
 - **newsstand:** small shop to buy, ahem, NEWSpapers, magazines and snacks (Ha! Did somebody say SNACKS?)
- ① **no worries:** "it's not a problem"; "it's okay"
- ① **now what?:** What's the problem now?
 - **open the app:** touch an icon to start using a program
- ① **pack light:** don't put a lot of things in the bags
 - **paperwork:** forms, reports, letters . . . any papers you need to complete
- ① **pat on the back:** an acknowledgment that you did something well
- ① **phew!:** word to express relief

- **pick up:** collect; lift off a surface; learn something informally
- ① **picture:** think about; imagine
- **Plan B:** what you'll do if your first plan doesn't work
- ① **plastic:** debit and credit cards
- **press:** push with a little force
- ① **pretty:** quite
- ① **red tape:** too many forms, papers, documents, applications to fill out, and too many rules to follow!
- ① **ride-share:** pay to ride in a person's private car (use that app!)
- ① **right:** exactly
- **shuttle:** small bus or train that goes to and from point A and point B
- ① **sign on the dotted line:** write your signature on a form
- ① **sounds good to me:** I think that's a good idea!
- ① **starving:** very hungry
- **stow:** store; put away
- ① **stuff:** things
- **suitcase:** a large bag, usually rectangular, used to carry clothes and other items while traveling
- **swipe:** move your finger across a screen
- ① **tap in:** enter information by touching the screen of the device
- **tap:** touch a phone screen
- **taxi:** cab
- **tip:** extra money you give for a service—for example, to a server in a restaurant
- ① **tricky:** difficult or challenging
- ① a **twenty:** a twenty dollar bill
- **Uber:** one of the most popular ride-share services
- **van:** a vehicle bigger than a car, smaller than a bus
- ① **we did it!:** we were successful! Yay!
- **WOW!:** word to express surprise or excitement



USE YOUR WORDS!

Unscramble to find the new word from the section above. Answers are on page 221.

1. _____ This is not how I reupticd the campus. It's much larger than I thought!

2. _____ The hardest part about coming to this college was filling out the lcpnoaiptat.
3. _____ Did somebody say “lunch”? I’m gsrtvnia!
4. _____ Let’s find a place to wost our luggage while we eat.
5. _____ Let’s take the thulest to the mall. It’s cheaper than a taxi.
6. _____ Hurry! Change your money into the local cyrucren so you can go shopping right away!
7. _____ This bag is so heavy! Okay, I admit it—I packed too much fufst.
8. _____ Phew! The airport was really ddwcore. It’s nice to be out in the fresh air!
9. _____ I’m glad I bought this new ggguela. The bags are so easy to wheel.
10. _____ After four years of hard work (and a lot of fun!), you’ll graduate with your eedgr.

GETTING TO KNOW YOU



Orientation

Whew! You’re here! **Bye-bye**, airport. **So long**, taxi. **See you later**, shuttle bus. Yes, you have arrived at your new home for the next few years. Welcome to **campus!** Your first stop will be to **check into** your **residence hall**. We hope you remembered to fill out that form—you know, the one where you requested the type of room you prefer. If not—haha, you may be sleeping on the classroom floor! Okay, we’re only kidding about that, but admit it—it’s pretty funny to think about.

We know you're tired from the long trip . . . but *TOO BAD!* There's no time for a **nap!** Take a quick look around your new room, put down your heavy luggage, and take a look at the schedule . . . It's time for . . . **ORIENTATION!** Yay!

We **get it.** You're tired. You're excited. (And if you're like us, you're HUNGRY!) You don't know anyone. You're probably a little nervous about what to do and where to go. But here's the **genius** part about orientation—the entire event is planned to help you with every one of those worries! (Yes, even the hungry part. We can almost taste those chocolate chip cookies, just thinking about them! **Yum!**) Oh yeah—and it will be FUN.

The orientation team has been planning for this all summer. **Faculty** and students have planned games and activities, and everyone is excited about meeting the new first-year students—YOU! In fact, everyone is so excited to share information with you that you may feel **overwhelmed** by the **tons** of stuff! You'll learn what fun things there are to do on campus and in the local community. The orientation team will give you information about: classes, clubs, campus **resources**, where to pay **tuition** bills, how to get money transfers wired to you from your family at home, how to change classes, and where to find the most popular food trucks (we think that's the most important information!). Food trucks! Ha, who needs student cafes? The **food trucks** have the best and cheapest food around campus!).

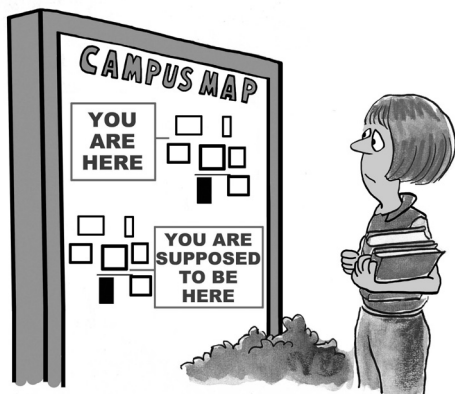
You get the idea. Tons of information!

As an international student, you'll probably have a special program before the main orientation for all new students. Yes, you're special! This special program will give you some time to get adjusted to the American campus and get over that **jet lag!** Students and faculty can answer any questions you have about documents, forms . . . and lunch! Someone may bring you to the offices where you'll get your student **ID** and make copies of important papers. Uh-oh. Did you forget to research the U.S. voltage system? Someone can tell you where to get an **adaptor** so you can plug in your appliances. (Or even better: They can tell you where to buy a new hair dryer here—some cost only about ten dollars!) You'll learn about **maintaining** your student visa and about the resources available to you as an international student. Your program will help you get all the **right** papers to all the right places!



But first, you'll really need that student ID. If you want to use any of the campus **amenities**, like the library or the copy center, you'll need to **show** your ID. You can't **sign up** for the gym unless you show your ID. (We know you can't wait to start exercising, ha!) Your college ID is very **handy** for other things too. A lot of places, like local restaurants, movie theaters, and bookstores will give students a **discount** if they show their ID. Many cultural and arts **venues** encourage young people to attend **exhibits**, concerts, and shows, so they offer **special pricing** with student ID. HEY! We want a student ID!

Many colleges have special **ESL** programs with English writing and other **tutoring** services. In these programs you'll be matched with a **tutor** who can help you with academic subjects that may be difficult for you. Make sure you **take advantage of** these free (!) resources for a successful year! This is a perfect time to meet other international students . . . even students from your home country. Yes, we know—it's exciting and fun to meet people from all over the world, and **OF COURSE** you'll want American friends . . . But we know that sometimes it's comforting to speak your own language, eat your own favorite foods, and just be with people from your own culture.



Wow! Does this sound like a lot to do? Are you tired just thinking about it? Relax! Actually, you've done a lot already! Remember those online activities you completed? The English proficiency tests you took? The forms you filled out for hours? You may even have taken placement tests for some of your classes. (These are to help schedule you for class levels where you'll feel most comfortable.)

Wasn't that special international student program fun? Do you think you can . . . *finally* . . . test your new mattress and . . . *finally* . . . have a NAP? Sorry—no! Now it's time for the main orientation, with all the other new students. Think about it this way: You've had some time to meet the other

international students, and now it's time to make more American friends! Here's how it usually works: All the students will meet in one place, often a large **auditorium** or meeting room. The orientation team will introduce themselves, and each person will give a presentation. There may be tables around the room with **flyers** and **brochures** and applications and information about activities. (It's probably a good idea to bring a bag—you'll be collecting tons of papers that you can look over later.) Experienced students will be around to answer your questions and show you where to go. And here's the best part of orientation—**FREEBIES!** You'll get free pens, free **mugs**, free t-shirts, free bags . . . FREE STUFF! Some places we know even give the new students **stress balls**. . . **just in case**, ha! (But we're sure you won't need those.)

Once you've collected all the cool free stuff, you can choose to attend meetings about topics you want to know more about. For example, one session may discuss how you can **support** your academic studies. Another may give helpful information about services for students with disabilities. You can attend sessions about career paths you're interested in, like business, medicine, engineering, or design, among lots of others. There are sessions sponsored by different student organizations and religious organizations.

But we're not finished yet! You'll also have to attend some **mandatory** sessions, so make sure you look very carefully at the schedule. These may be meetings with your faculty advisor, or residence hall meetings to discuss life in the **dorms**. Best of all, there will be lots of social events scheduled to help you meet other students. Are you worried that you'll never remember everything you hear at orientation? Don't worry—you don't have to remember everything. You just have to remember where you put all the flyers!

And did we mention food? Oh boy, how could we forget to mention food? (Haha, by now you probably know that food is our favorite part of every activity!) Yes, food—there will be plenty of it! Everyone wants to welcome you with **delicious goodies**. Breakfast, **brunch**, **ice cream socials**, **boxed lunches**, **BBQs**, pizza parties, cookies and energy drinks . . . Uh-oh. This may be the start of the "**Freshman 15!**" (Hey, don't blame us . . . blame orientation.)

Yes, orientation is a crazy few days, but then it's time to **get down to business**, **enrolling** in classes and getting set for future success. Hmm, now where did you put all those flyers. . . ?