

## Moorpark College ESL Self-Placement

Moorpark College offers a range of classes in English as a Second Language, to meet students' different goals. There are two different programs: Everyday English for work and social life (**noncredit** classes) and Academic English for school (**credit** classes). Read the information below so you can choose your best place to start. If you're still not sure, you can contact the ESL Coordinator, Daniela Guevara, at [dguevara@vcccd.edu](mailto:dguevara@vcccd.edu). You can also contact ESL academic counselor Giselle Ramirez ([gramirez@vcccd.edu](mailto:gramirez@vcccd.edu)) or ESL counseling assistant Alejandra Gonzalez ([agonzales@vcccd.edu](mailto:agonzales@vcccd.edu)).

### Noncredit & Credit

#### A. This is the sequence for **noncredit** ESL classes

ESL M901 (High Beginning)  
↓  
ESL M902 (Low Intermediate)  
↓  
ESL M903 (High Intermediate)  
↓  
ESLM904 (Low Advanced)

#### B. This is the sequence for credit ESL classes

ESL M01 (Beginning ESL)  
↓  
ESL M02 (Intermediate ESL)  
↓  
ESL M03 (Advanced ESL)

### English Classes

If you graduated from an American high school, or if you think you may be ready for a regular English class, please complete the [English Self-Placement Guide](#).

This is the sequence for <b>English</b> classes
ENGL M02 (Introduction to College Writing) ↓ ENGL M01A (English Composition)

ENGL M02 (3 units) applies to the AA degree; it is not transferable. ENGL M01A (4 units) is a transfer-level class. Professor Guevara offers sections of ENGL M01A that are specially designed for advanced ESL students. Students in this class receive additional ESL support while completing the transfer-level English requirement.

# What ESL Classes Does Moorpark College Offer?

## A. Everyday English (Noncredit):

ESL M901, M902, M903, M904.

These are free eight-week classes that meet two hours a day, four days a week. They are meant to increase your skills and confidence with English in everyday life and work. They address all aspects of English: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Students work with the teacher, a tutor, and each other on grammar, reading, writing, vocabulary, and conversation. You can repeat these classes as many times as you like. Students who complete two noncredit classes receive a certificate of completion.

## B. Academic English (Credit):

ESL M01, M02, M03.

These are college-level ESL classes. They meet 2½ hours twice a week. They prepare students to succeed in college classes in English and other subjects. They address all aspects of English: listening, speaking, reading, and writing at a college level. Students work with the teacher, a tutor, and each other on advanced grammar, academic vocabulary, paragraph and essay writing, and class discussions. These courses cannot be repeated.

## Should You Choose **Noncredit** or **Credit** Classes?

1. What is your goal in learning English?

A. ESL No Credit

Improve general English skills to perform everyday tasks (holding a conversation, writing short messages, reading paragraphs)

B. ESL for Credit

Improve academic English skills to complete a degree/certificate program or transfer to a university.

2. How many years have you studied English?

A. ESL No Credit

1-2 years

B. ESL For Credit

More than 2 years

3. How many years did you study in a US high school?

A. ESL No Credit

0-1 year

B. ESL For Credit

More than

4. Choose the statement that best describes your listening and speaking skills.

A. ESL No Credit

I can understand simple short conversations about common everyday topics: work, family, shopping, school, and food. I can ask and answer questions about these topics and people usually understand me.

B. ESL For Credit

I can understand conversations and discussions about common and advanced topics: news, politics, culture, and other subjects. I can share my ideas about these topics in conversation

5. Choose the statement that best describes your reading and writing skills.

A. ESL No Credit

I can complete common reading and writing tasks in English: grocery lists, a short introduction about myself, job application, hospital forms.

B. ESL For Credit

I can read and understand newspapers and websites in English. I can write sentences and paragraphs about a topic.

If you answered 3 or more of these questions with “A”, you should begin in the **noncredit** classes. If you answered 3 or more questions with “B”, you should enroll in **credit** classes.

## What Level of *Readings* Will Each Class Cover?

Here are samples of the kind of reading assignments you can expect in each class. If you can read and understand the paragraph easily, go to the next higher class.

### A. Everyday English (Noncredit Program)

#### ESL M901: High Beginning

##### My Goal

I am a nurse's assistant, but I want to be a nurse. That is my goal. There are three steps I need to take to reach my goal. First, I need to learn more English. I need to learn new vocabulary. Second, I need to take classes at the community college. I want to take classes for my nursing certificate. Third, I need to study very hard. Maybe I'll be a nurse in three years.

#### ESL M902: Low Intermediate

##### The Best Restaurant in My Town

The best restaurant in my town is Pharo's Burgers. It is a small family-owned restaurant that serves delicious American food. Before the restaurant opens, there is already a line of people waiting outside. Pharo's offers many classic breakfast options, and my favorite is the vegetarian omelet with potatoes. When I have breakfast there, I see the owner talking to many of the customers. He is very friendly and so is his staff. Even when he is out of the restaurant, people greet him. He donates profits from the restaurant to community projects, such as parks and education programs. Last year, he purchased uniforms for the middle school's soccer team. For these reasons, I believe that Pharo's Burgers is the best restaurant in my town.

#### ESL 903: High Intermediate

##### A Problem with My Neighbor

I have a problem with my new neighbor. Every day, he wakes up at 5 o'clock in the morning to mow the lawn and vacuum his house. Even though I close all my windows, I can still hear the noise from the lawnmower and vacuum. Not only that, but he also plays loud music while he works! I've talked to him about his impolite behavior several times, but he maintains this routine despite my complaints. I have spoken to other neighbors about our new neighbor, and they agree that his behavior is inconsiderate. I contacted our local police department last week and they issued him a citation. He paid the fine and continued vacuuming! I plan to call the police every day until this problem is fixed.

#### ESL 904: Advanced

##### Rosemary

Rosemary is an herb that is commonly used in home remedies. Many people cut rosemary leaves to make hot tea. This tea is used to treat upset stomach, heartburn, nausea, and vomiting. In addition, rosemary provides many health benefits. For example, it can boost the immune system and improve memory performance. Rosemary oil has become more popular in recent years. This oil has a strong rosemary aroma that can relieve stress and improve mood.

Although rosemary can be healthy, it is not safe to consume large amounts. People should always be careful about using medicinal plants

## B. Academic English (Credit Program)

### ESL M01: Beginning ESL

#### Borderlands

The areas along borders are unique because they share a history. There is often also a blend of customs and traditions from the cultures on both sides of the border. One of the longest international borders is between the United States and Mexico. The border is more than 3,000 miles long and stretches from the south end of Texas to the California coast. It divides two countries and two cultures.

The current border between the two countries has existed for only about 150 years. During the period between 1819 and 1853, the border moved several times. Before 1819, much of the land that is now in the Western United States belonged to Mexico. Some of the land came to the United States through agreements between the two countries. Other areas of Mexico became part of the United States as a result of war.

### ESL M02: Intermediate ESL

#### Photojournalism: A Dangerous Job

Journalists play an important role in modern society. They make sure that the public has free and open access to information. However, when journalists cover stories in locations affected by war or natural disasters, their work can be dangerous. This work is hazardous for all journalists, but for photojournalists – photographers that cover the news – the job is especially dangerous. Reporters that write their stories can sometimes cover events from a distance. They can also find out about a story on the telephone or through Internet communication.

Photojournalists, in contrast, must be right where the action and the danger are. Technology has changed the way photojournalists work. The first photojournalists appeared in the 1850s and 1860s during the Crimean War and the American Civil War. They took only still photographs, but during World War I, photojournalists began taking moving pictures. In those days, the photojournalists' equipment was heavy and difficult to carry. Today, however, the equipment is very light and portable. This allows journalists to move and get very close to the action. They can transmit live videotape of a battle, a fire, or violent storm.

### ESL M03: Advanced ESL

#### Gesture-Based Technology

Scrolling through the news while washing dishes, turning on a light while working in the garden, or consulting patient records while performing surgery are all activities accomplished with a flick of the wrist or the wave of the hand. Some of these may sound like science fiction but in fact, most of them are already possible, and soon, all of them will be merely ordinary. For a generation, human interaction with machines has been mediated by some other device: a keyboard, a mouse, or a remote control. More recently, this interaction has become more intimate. With the introduction of touchscreens, a technology available in most mobile devices, humans are able to communicate directly with machines. This form of communication is an example of HMI, or human-machine interface. In its most recent phase, it allows humans to connect with their machines without even touching them, by using their voices, facial expressions, and in many cases, hand movements. It is this last category that is the basis of gesture-based technology.

# What Level of *Writing Assignments* Will Each Class Require?

Here are samples of the kind of writing assignments you can expect in each class, along with examples of successful responses. Read each prompt (assignment): do you feel comfortable writing a paragraph about this topic? Then, read the student answers: can you write at this level? If you write confidently at one level, go on to the next higher class. Remember that you will have the teacher and a tutor working with you on these assignments.

## A. Everyday English (Noncredit Program)

**ESL M901 Writing Prompt:** Write a paragraph about one of your goals. Include three steps you need to take to reach your goal.

**Student Model:**

My Goal

I want to be a clothing designer. There are three steps I need to take to reach my goal. First, I need to buy a sewing machine and learn how to use it. Second, I need to take design classes at the community college. Third, I need to apply for work at a design company. I hope I can become a designer in a few years.

**ESL M902 Writing Prompt:** You live in an apartment with a few problems: the kitchen sink is broken and the toilet is clogged. Write an email to your landlord and ask him to repair the issues.

**Student Model:**

Dear Mr. Smith,

I am the tenant in apartment 18A. I am very upset about the issues in the apartment. I am writing to you because my kitchen sink is broken and the toilet is clogged. Could you please send a repair person to the apartment this afternoon?

You can contact me at 805-553-1112 if you have any questions. Thank you for your help.

Sincerely,  
Ricky Wang

**ESL M903 Writing Prompt:** When people get older, they usually make changes to stay healthy. Write a paragraph explaining three major changes you have made to stay healthy.

**Student Model:**

My Healthy Habits

When I turned 30, I made a few changes to my diet and exercise routine. First, I stopped drinking soft drinks every day. Now, I drink a lot more water and I only drink one soda during the weekend. Second, my doctor told me avoid smoking, and I am trying to quit. I used to smoke two packs of cigarettes per week, but recently, I have only been smoking one cigarette a day. Third, I am eating more vegetables with every meal. I did not use to eat vegetables at all. Instead, I used to eat a lot of meat and potatoes. After making all these changes, I lost fifteen pounds and I feel much healthier.

**ESL M904 Writing Prompt:** Think about a wish that you have for yourself or someone else. Then write about two positive and two negative results if your wish came true.

**Student Model:**

My Wish

One of my wishes is to be a famous singer. If I were a famous singer, I would have lot of money. I would not have to work as a security guard any longer. Also, I would travel a lot and meet many interesting people wherever I perform. However, being a famous singer also has disadvantages. I might not have enough free time to do regular things, such as buying groceries or going to the beach. I think I would be stressed because people would gossip about me and the paparazzi would follow me around. Despite these disadvantages, becoming a famous singer is still my biggest wish.

## B. Academic English (Credit Program)

**ESL M01 Writing Prompt:** We all like to be polite guests when we are invited to someone's home, but rules are different in every culture. Write a paragraph explaining how to be a polite dinner guest in your home country. Your paragraph should include four important steps. Each step should include three points: why the step is important, how to do the step correctly, and how to avoid mistakes.

### Student Model:

#### How to Be a Polite Dinner Guest in America

If you want to be a polite dinner guest at an American home, you should follow four steps. First, you should arrive on time to the host's home. This is important because Americans think it is impolite for others to wait for them. To do this step correctly, call or text the host to let him know you are coming. A common mistake people make is arriving late without calling the host. Sometimes, people are late to events because of traffic. If this happens, call the host to let him know. Second, you should bring a side dish to the dinner. This shows the host you appreciate the invitation. To do this step correctly, you should cook a special dish at home. If you do not cook, you can buy a dessert or bring flowers. Be careful about what you bring.

Some Americans do not drink alcohol and others are allergic to nuts! Third, offer to help your host. This is important because the host is busy and might need help to finish preparing. To do this step correctly, ask the host, "Could I help you with anything?" You should avoid helping without asking. Some hosts like guests to relax or they do not want too many people in the kitchen. Finally, you should compliment the food. Hosts usually spend a lot of time preparing dinners. Compliments are important because they make the host feel good. To do this properly, say, "This dish is so delicious!" while you are eating. Avoid offering suggestions in your compliments. You should not say, "This dish is so delicious, but it needs more salt." If you follow these four steps, you will have a great dinner with your American friends.

**ESL M02 Writing Prompt:** Every culture has its own traditions. Think about one important tradition in your home country and compare it to the American version. Write a two-paragraph essay explaining two differences or two similarities between the two traditions. (You may not write about food.)

### Student Model:

#### American and Arab Weddings

American and Arab weddings differ in two major ways: financial responsibilities of the couple and dancing traditions at the wedding ceremony. First, American and Arab couples have different traditions about paying for the wedding. When Americans get married, the couple splits the costs of the wedding. For example, my American cousin talked to his fiancée about splitting the cost of the wedding. My cousin and his family paid for the reception and church, while his fiancée and her family paid for the decorations and the food. In contrast, when Arabs get married, the man must pay for the entire wedding alone. Women are not expected to contribute to any wedding expenses. For instance, my brother-in-law, Amjad, got married in Kuwait. Before he could ask for the woman's hand in marriage, he had to show her family that he had enough money to support her. To do this, he bought her



\$2,000 worth of gold jewelry. He also had to take out a loan so he could pay for the cost of the wedding, which totaled \$25,000.

Second, American and Arab weddings have different dances. American weddings feature special dances for the newlyweds and their families. For example, I attended a wedding three years ago. At the wedding, the bride danced with her father in the “father-daughter” dance.

This is an important tradition because it symbolizes the father “giving away” his daughter so she can join her new family—her husband. On the other hand, Arab weddings only have same-sex dancing, so couples cannot dance together. For example, my best friend, Areen, got married four years ago in a traditional Arab-Muslim wedding. At the reception, she danced with her mother and sisters because men were not allowed to go inside. The DJ played traditional Arabic music and the women held hands in a long line while they sang. The men drank tea and talked in a separate room upstairs. Financial responsibilities and dancing traditions differ in American and Arab weddings. I suggest couples carefully consider the wedding traditions they would like to follow.

**ESL M03 Writing Prompt:** Select one of the articles about “design” in our reading book, *Making Connections 2*. Write a four-paragraph essay summarizing and responding to the author’s ideas. The first paragraph should only include a summary. The next two paragraphs should respond to two of the author’s points. You must not simply express agreement with all of the author’s points and repeat her ideas! The response must include original ideas. Include a final conclusion paragraph at the end.

### **Student Model:**

#### Summary-Response: The Design of Everyday Objects

In the article, “The Design of Everyday Objects,” Jo McEntire explains how good design influences and makes our everyday life better. McEntire opens her article by analyzing objects we use every day and how they were designed with artistic and engineering perspectives. Second, she explains how design has changed as more objects are made by machines. Because of this change, objects have become available with lower costs for everyone and stopped being status symbols for the wealthy. Next, she rejects the idea that design conflicts with function. McEntire emphasizes that a good design means an object is easy to understand and use. To explain, she shows some examples of how visual signs improve usability, such as using a long horizontal bar on a door to remind users to pull it. In the next paragraph, she analyzes emotional responses to everyday objects. The design of those objects does not only serve to bring pleasure, but also functions as a way people express their identity. After that, she argues that the big adventure in the future for designers is sustainability. She concludes the article by writing that good design today needs to focus on the three principles: functionality, usability, and emotional response.

McEntire argues that good design must create a positive emotional response and be functional. I mostly agree with her ideas; however, she is missing a few key points. First, it is true that most people buy objects that bring pleasure, but good design can also cause negative emotional responses. For example, smoke alarms are loud and irritating. When people hear these loud noises, they want to turn the alarm off as quickly as possible. This means that they must act quickly to remove the smoke from their homes. Because of their annoying noise, smoke alarms save people. If smoke alarms played soft relaxing music, people might ignore them. This example illustrates how good design can also include negative emotional reactions. Antifreeze is another example of a product that causes a negative emotional

response. In the past, antifreeze used to smell sweet, like candy. Because of this, many children used to drink it and die. Antifreeze companies had to change their formula. They made the antifreeze have an unpleasant smell and taste so children would not drink it. This change in design saved many lives. In the article, McEntire asks, “Does the product bring pleasure?” (177), but she does not ask if products can cause displeasure. Sometimes, it is necessary for products to bring unpleasurable responses. This is part of good design.

Next, McEntire explains that good design must also be functional. She writes, “A functional product does what it is supposed to do” and “[d]esign should not conflict with functionality” (176). It is true that most people want to buy products that are usable; however, sometimes design is more important than functionality. This is especially true in the fashion world. For example, Lady Gaga wore a dress made out of meat to a special event. The dress did not look comfortable, but since that day, many people have been talking about it. Because of this dress, Lady Gaga became famous for her fashion. It did not matter that she could not wear the dress again. This example illustrates that sometimes, visual aspects are more important than functionality. Another example of this idea are shutter shades. A few years ago, Kanye West started wearing shutter shades at his concerts. These “sunglasses” do not protect people’s eyes from the sun because they have many slits and holes. Since then, young people have been wearing them because they liked the style. The shutter shade company made a lot of money by selling these unique glasses. This example shows that people will buy products that do not work if the style is appealing.

McEntire has many great ideas in the article “The Design of Everyday Objects.” I agree with most of her points, but she should write more about pleasurable design and functionality. Sometimes, negative reactions are part of good design because they keep people safe. Smoke alarms and antifreeze are two examples of this idea. Also, design is sometimes more important than functionality. Two examples of this are Lady Gaga’s meat dress and Kanye West’s shutter shades. Since consumers will be buying products every day, I recommend that they consider all these aspects.

## Which Class Should You Take First?

Now that you've thought about which class best suits your needs, you can enroll in your chosen class; go to the [Schedule of Classes](#) to find the correct class. In the first week of classes, you can discuss your choice with the instructor to make sure you're in the best class for you. Each class combines two different levels, so there's a balance of support and challenge. The classes are offered in sequence:

### Fall semester:

- A. ESL M901/902 (combined) in the first 8 weeks, M902/903 (combined) in the second 8 weeks.
- B. ESL M01/02 (combined)

### Spring semester:

- A. ESL M902/903 (combined) in the first 8 weeks, M903/904 (combined) in the second 8 weeks.
- B. ESL M02/03 (combined)

**Congratulations** on choosing the best place to start your ESL classes at Moorpark College! Whatever you decide, the instructor will be there to guide and support you in your learning.