



SADDLEBACK COLLEGE

YOUR PATH TO THE TOP

Which placement test is the right one for me? The English or the ESL test?



Perhaps you are going through matriculation and wondering whether to take the English or the ESL placement test. Saddleback College wants you to succeed and knows that much of your success depends upon taking the right classes and making the right choices. Perhaps a friend advised you to take the English test because you are in a hurry and want to get into regular English classes sooner. Perhaps you feel that the ESL test is not as academic. Perhaps you want to take regular colleges classes or feel that you don't need ESL.

Well, this may be a mistake. See if you agree with the following statements?

1. English is not the main language spoken in my home.
2. I don't read English newspapers or listen to the news in English on a regular basis.
3. I went to an American high school but found it difficult to understand the teacher.
4. I am a foreign visa student who is not comfortable in English.
5. My TOEFL score was low or borderline. (450-480)
6. I feel more comfortable speaking, reading, or thinking in a language other than English.
7. I speak English reasonably well but have trouble reading and writing English effectively.
8. I need extra time to work on essays and papers in the English language.
9. I find English grammar difficult and confusing.
10. Americans have trouble understanding me when I speak to them.
11. I read my textbooks and other English material very slowly.
12. My English vocabulary is limited (not very large).



**If you agree or said "YES" to 2 or more statements,
the ESL test is the right one for you!**

ESL placement test and courses offer these advantages:

- ✓ The ESL placement test places you in the appropriate ESL class.
- ✓ ESL courses help students correct mistakes that are unique to non-native speakers. Remedial classes such as English 300 work on errors that are typical of native-speakers of English. These errors are different from second language learner mistakes.
- ✓ ESL courses give you more class time to work on your writing.
- ✓ ESL courses lead into regular English classes at a higher level. ESL 350 taken for credit leads to English 200.
- ✓ Our research has shown that we have a very educated ESL student population. You often learn as much from your fellow students as from your teacher.
- ✓ ESL curriculum is varied and allows you to work on the skill areas you need.

Reminder: F-1 visa students should seek a Foreign Student Advisor's (Norma Yanni) input before deciding on which placement test to take.

**Please be sure you make the right choice for yourself and make your
appointment with Matriculation at (949) 582 4970.**

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Why does Saddleback College offer classes for 0 units and is it the right choice for me?

Saddleback College is one of the few colleges that offer ESL classes for 0 units. We, however, believe that access to language study is so important that we want to make sure that everyone is able to attend ESL classes, regardless of residency or economics. Some students have such limited incomes that it would be difficult to pay any tuition. It is for those students that we have created the 0-unit option.

0 UNITS OR UNITS? WHICH IS RIGHT FOR ME?

Many students decide to take ESL classes for zero units for 2 reasons: lower cost and "freedom" from the stress of grades.



1. **COST:** For zero-unit courses, you do not pay. For units courses, residents pay \$20 per unit and non-residents pay \$173 per unit.

But... You might be able to get financial aid if you take the **unit courses**. This can help with books and tuition. Zero-unit students are NOT eligible for financial aid. (Check with the Financial Aid office in SSC 106 or EOPS in SSC 126 to see if you're eligible.)

REMEMBER, TOO, that taking the course for units helps the college: the library, labs, salaries, building maintenance, etc. If you can afford it, it is the responsible thing to do. We depend on state funding and the college receives double the support for unit course students as it does for zero-unit students.

2. **GRADES:** For zero-unit courses, students do not get grades. This means there is no record they passed the course or attended the course. Because there is no record or grade, the class **cannot fulfill a prerequisite**. Unit course students get grades and these grades **can fulfill prerequisites**. (All of the ESL writing courses and ESL 350 have prerequisites. If you do not clear the prerequisite course, you must take the placement test, perhaps more than once, to enroll in those classes.)

IF YOU'RE WORRIED ABOUT A GRADE, unit course students can take the course for credit. Go to the Admissions Office (SSC 102) and ask for a "Grade Option Change Form." Instead of receiving a letter grade (A, B, C, D, or F), you can just get a Credit/No Credit grade. If you get a "Credit", this fulfills prerequisites and appears on your record, but it doesn't affect your GPA (grade point average).

ONE MORE THING TO CONSIDER:

During registration, the ESL department sets a limit on the number of zero unit seats in every class. When all the seats for zero units are taken, that part of the class closes. However, there still may be seats in the class for unit students.

Students who need zero units and wait until the first day of class may or may not get a seat in class. Students who enroll for units can guarantee a spot in the class when the zero-unit part of the class is already closed. They don't need to wait until the first day to find out if they can get a seat.

However, please note our **NEW POLICY**. In the future, during the first two weeks of class, you will NOT be able to switch from units to zero-units even if the teacher is adding zero-unit students on the first day. On the other hand, during the first two weeks of class, the teacher can switch you from zero-units to units.)