

Quick Tips for Studying English at Nagoya University (Mark Weeks)

We all have different ways of studying, much as we have different ways of living. But here are some ideas, based on my own experience teaching English at Meidai, that I hope might help you.

1. English is probably not your main field of study and you may think that it takes too much of your time in the first year or two with us, but try to **think positively about it**. The reason that there is quite a lot of English at the beginning is that we think it's important to build on what you've learned at high school and begin directing your English skills towards future practical use. The chances of you using English in your future study, your career and/or your daily life, are extremely high.
2. If you have any questions or doubts during your English learning, **feel free to consult your teacher**. Sure, we teachers are often busy, but helping you is an important, and even enjoyable, part of our job.
3. In order to do your best and to enjoy the process, try to **begin working on homework assignments early**. This will allow you to think deeply, creatively about what you are doing and also give you time to consult your teacher or others in the process.
4. **Don't focus on your mistakes**. Of course, accuracy is important and we want you to work on that, but mistakes are going to happen anyway. Your teachers understand that. Every non-native teacher of English has some points they're not confident about; every English native speaker struggles in some way with Japanese every day—I sure do! In fact, even in our native language almost all of us have weak spots. So we know that perfection is a dream. Ultimately, we're more interested in what you *can* do than in what you *can't* do.
5. You will need to do e-learning outside of class, and some students find this annoying. Keep in mind that the content of that e-learning is designed to strengthen your English base and thereby improve practical skills for the future. Also, remember that the work you do on vocabulary or grammar there allows us to spend more time in class engaged in interesting applications and enjoyable interactions with others. So, **don't think of e-learning as a monster**.
6. Over your long life, most of your English learning and practice will not be done in a classroom situation. Now would be a good time to find out through experimentation what works for you individually as a way to retain and build upon your present English skills through regular—ideally, daily—use. **Look for what you find challenging and enjoyable** in using English so that motivating yourself over the long term, and when you're busy, will be easy. For instance, try doing some of your net searches in English, try reading articles or stories or playing games in English sometimes, meet people online in English. If it's an activity that you can look forward to, it's no longer work, and that changes everything!