

# Preparing for the Placement Exam

---

The ETSC English program is designed to help students develop as readers, and particularly as readers of theological texts. It is not primarily designed to teach either grammar or conversation. In that spirit, the ETSC English placement exam consists of a series of texts, with each text followed by a set of reading questions. Some of the texts are theological in nature, while others are more general. Each placement exam includes both theological and non-theological texts.

The best way to prepare for the exam—and for the ETSC English program as a whole—is to read English texts. Read the Bible in English; read articles online; read an English newspaper; read stories and poems; read, read, read!

While the ETSC English course is not a grammar course, becoming a successful reader of English depends on a solid understanding of English grammar. If you have not used English for some time, or if you know that your knowledge of basic English grammar is weak, the list below gives you an idea of the key topics you should study. This list highlights the grammar topics that students should be familiar with at the time that they enter ETSC. The ETSC English course assumes that students will be familiar with these topics—though not that they will never make mistakes!

(**NOTE:** These topics are not tested directly either on the placement exam or in the ETSC English course. The point is that successful reading depends on a solid understanding of grammar, and these topics are the most basic and essential for successful reading.)

- **Verbs**
  - Tenses
    - Present Simple
    - Present Continuous
    - Past Simple
    - Past Continuous
    - Present Perfect
    - Past Perfect
    - Future with “will”
    - Future with “be + going to”
    - Future continuous
  - Voices
    - **Passive Voice.** Be able to recognize and produce the passive form of each of the above tenses.
  - Irregular verbs
  - Modal verbs (e.g., should, can, might, etc.)
- **Nouns**
  - Regular & Irregular plurals
  - Countable & Uncountable nouns
- **Pronouns**

- Subject pronouns
- Object pronouns
- Possessive pronouns
- Possessive adjectives
- **Adjectives**
  - Comparative adjectives
  - Superlative adjectives
  - Participial adjectives (i.e., using the present and past participles as adjectives; these usually end in -ing and -ed, respectively)
- **Adverbs**
- **Articles/Determiners** (a, an, the, some, any)
- **Prepositions** (in, at, on, for, during, while, etc.)
- **Conjunctions & linking words** (and, but, or, because, so, since, therefore, however, though, although, etc.)

## Online Study Resources

---

There are many resources online that are designed for people who want to improve their English. Some useful websites are listed below. The first website is a great place to go if you want to focus on your reading skills. The last two websites in the list are particularly useful if you need to learn about any of the grammar topics in the list above. In addition to these websites, there is an ETSC-produced grammar workbook available from the registrar that you might find helpful (PDF format).

<http://www.readtheory.org/home>

- Create a free account (you can sign-in through Facebook)
- Take the short placement exam (15 questions)
- Start reading, and watch your skills improve!

<http://www.voanews.com/learningenglish/home/> (Voice of America)

- Articles about many topics (news, movies, music, culture, politics, etc.)
- Read & listen at the same time!
- “The Classroom” page has more articles, as well as activities and vocabulary

[www.spotlightenglish.com](http://www.spotlightenglish.com)

- Read and listen to articles at the same time
- Some basic word lists

[www.englishclub.com/learn-english.htm](http://www.englishclub.com/learn-english.htm)

- Click the “Learn English” link to find lessons, games, videos and more!

[www.usingenglish.com](http://www.usingenglish.com)

- Has grammar lessons, vocabulary, and tests & quizzes that you can take

- “Tests & Quizzes” and “English Reference” will probably be the most useful pages

<http://web2.uvcs.uvic.ca/courses/elc/studyzone/>

- Excellent place to go if you want to review or practice grammar (all levels)

<http://www.englishpage.com/grammar/index.html>

- Another good grammar resource