

AEC Newsline

The student e-newsletter of the Applied English Center at the University of Kansas

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About this publication

AEC Newsline is the digital newsletter for students at the Applied English Center at the University of Kansas. *AEC Newsline* is published twice per semester and once during summer.

Editor-in-Chief is Tiffany Edwards.

To provide feedback or suggest content, please send an email to aecnewsline@ku.edu.



Vietnamese Teachers Attend Mid- TESOL

By Huy Ha Khanh

Editor's Note: Mid TESOL is a conference, or meeting. TESOL stands for Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages. It's called Mid TESOL because the teachers are all from the Midwest.

I cannot deny that I am having a really wonderful time at KU. I have experienced a lot of new, interesting things that I have never experienced before. Among those things, the most memorable event has been the trip to Warrensburg to attend the MIDTESOL 2014 Conference. This was a really surprising gift that the AEC gave us. At first, when we were told about the conference, every member in our group felt very excited. It was not only because this was a chance for us to get out of Lawrence to a new city in another state, but the purpose of the trip was more important. *(continued on page 2)*

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This was the first time we had a chance to attend such a big and interesting event about English language teaching in the US. We were also very impressed by the way that the AEC carefully prepared for us for the trip. We were divided into groups and went to Warrensburg with AEC teachers. They were all very friendly and helpful. They answered all of our questions about the conference and a lot of questions about many other things. This helped us know more about them and also narrowed the gaps between us. At the conference, we learned really useful things from various presentations on many topics. We found some of the issues similar to what we have in Vietnam, but there were many other differences. We also met many well – known professors and teachers from different universities and schools and we had nice talks with them. Although the trip was short, we all felt happy and thankful to the AEC. This was really a nice experience I had here at KU!

Huy Ha Khanh is an English teacher from Son La province in Vietnam. He is studying with 12 other colleagues at KU with a program sponsored by the U.S. Department of State and administered by the Hanoi Bureau.

Proficiency Test to Be Held December 6, 2014

The AEC proficiency test will be held Saturday, December 6. Testing begins at 9 a.m. and ends at approximately 1:30 p.m. All students should have received information from their AEC teachers about where and what time to report for the test. If you haven't received this information, see Doris at the AEC office.

Results will be available Tuesday, December 16, at 1:30 p.m. You are the only person who may pick up your test results. Also, due to privacy laws, the AEC cannot give you results by email or telephone. However, your results can be mailed. See Doris for more information.

AEC Conversation Groups

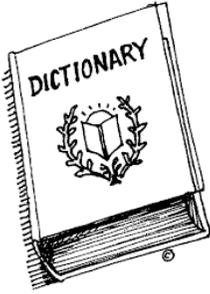
NO Tests. No Homework.

Just Good Conversation.

Monday to Friday | 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Kansas Union First Floor





LEO Resource Recommendations: *Online Dictionaries*

As students of English, most of you have probably heard your teacher recommend that you use an English-to-English dictionary to look up vocabulary. Although it seems much faster to use a translation dictionary that gives you the definition in your first language, it will benefit you more in the long run to use an English dictionary. In English we use the expression “easy come, easy go”, which means that things that are easily/quickly attained are also easily lost. This idea is also true when it comes to learning vocabulary. In other words, using a translation dictionary quickly gives you the meaning of the word, but that meaning is also quickly forgotten! Using an English-to-English dictionary takes more time, but the harder you work to find the definition, the longer it will stay in your memory!

However, all English-to-English dictionaries are not created equally! Some are much more user friendly and appropriate for students who are learning English. With this in mind, we would like to share with you a few online dictionaries that we recommend:

- [Longman English Dictionary Online](#)
- [Cambridge Free English Dictionary](#)
- [Macmillan Dictionary](#)
- [Oxford Dictionaries](#)

We recommend these dictionaries for English learners because:

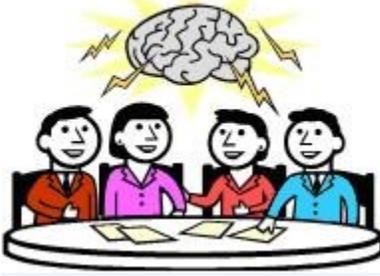
- They include simplified definitions for English language learners
- The definitions clearly state whether nouns are countable or uncountable
- They show topics related to each entry (this helps you categorize words, which helps the learning process!)
- They allow users to browse words that come before and after each entry in the dictionary
- They give the pronunciation of the word (Longman also gives a pronunciation of sample sentences)
- Mobile versions are available in iOS and Android
- Cambridge includes specialized searching for American English, British English, Business English, English language learning, and grammar
- Most show common collocations (collocation = the combination of words formed when two or more words are frequently used together in a way that sounds natural)

Bonus: [Dictionary of English Phrasal Verbs](#)

Even the most advanced English learners struggle with understanding phrasal verbs (A *phrasal verb* consists of a verb and a preposition or adverb that combine to create a new meaning.)

This online dictionary is great for English learners because it allows students to search for definitions based on the verb OR the preposition/adverb that makes up the phrasal verb. Students can see the definitions, examples, and whether or not it can be separated or use an object.

These are just a few of our recommendations. If you can suggest any other online dictionaries that you use, please let us know!



Group Work

By Sandra Issa, AEC Language Specialist

"All right, let's get into groups and discuss this reading."

Have you heard your instructor say those words? Do you have to work in small groups with other students in your AEC classes? It is very common for instructors at the AEC to have students work together in class. It is also very common for professors at KU to have students work together in class. In fact, "the use of small groups has become a common pedagogical practice in college and university classrooms." People work together in groups in all areas of life. For example, it is very common for employees in a company to be assigned a group project. This is one of the reasons why colleges and universities ask students to work together in groups.

There are many benefits to working in groups, but it may take you some time to get used to this. Are you comfortable working in a group? Think of your group work at the AEC as good practice for your university classes.

How can you make your group work experiences positive? Start by asking yourself what kind of a group member you are. Do you participate in the group? Do you try to be the leader of the group? Do you try to avoid being the leader of the group? Do you try to talk as much as possible? Do you try to talk as little as possible? Do you try to do all of the work in the group? Do you try to do none of the work in the group?

Here are a few tips for getting started when your instructor puts you in a group and expects you to work together with the other group members.

- First, introduce yourself. Make sure you know the names of all the members of your group. Write them down, so you don't forget.
- Second, try to make sure everyone in the group has a job to do. For example, one person can be the "secretary." He or she can write down what the group discusses. Another person can be the "presenter." He or she can report the group work to the rest of the class. If everyone has a job to do, it is more likely that everyone will participate in the group.
- Third, try to make sure everyone has a chance to participate. If one student is talking too much, you could say, "Let's hear what the other group members have to say."

Perhaps the most important thing to remember when working in a group is to respect the other members of a group. You may not like all of the people in your group. You may disagree with what some of the group members say. However, you can still be respectful of them.

If you would like to read a little bit more about group work, go to the AEC website at www.aec.ku.edu. Click on "Resources" at the top of the screen. When you get to the "Resources" page, make sure the tab is set to "Current Students." Next, click on "Advising & Counseling" on the left of the page. This will expand the "Advising & Counseling". Click on "Advising & counseling FAQ." From there, click on the question "Why is there so much personal interaction in the classroom?" This will give you some additional information.

Gillespie, Diane, Sally Rosamond, and Elizabeth Thomas. "Grouped Out? Undergraduates' Default Strategies for Participating in Multiple Small Groups." *the Journal of General Education*. 55.2 (2006): 81-102. Web.