

STUDENT HANDBOOK BRIDGEPORT

2025



American
English
Academy

ENGLISH FOR THOSE WHO ARE COMMITTED

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WELCOME

TO THE AMERICAN ENGLISH ACADEMY BRIDGEPORT



Your educational journey to the United States is off to a great start with American English Academy, now located in the heart of Bridgeport. We are accredited by the Commission on English Language Accreditation (CEA), and since 2019 we have had the privilege of serving the language needs of students, including those seeking F-1 status, from around the world, and we look forward to working with you!

A MESSAGE FROM THE FOUNDER / CEO

Dear students,

It is my pleasure to extend a warm welcome to all students joining us at American English Academy.

As your language training begins, please know that we are here to support your individual goals each step of the way.

We are proud to offer you personalized services and it is our goal to make your time with us a pleasant and successful experience.

This student handbook will provide you with descriptions of the programs and services we offer as well as our rules governing academic life and our student code of conduct.

Whether you have questions concerning academic, personal, or immigration issues, please know that I am always available to assist you.

I am confident that you will find your studies with us memorable and productive.

*Leonardo Reis
Founder and CEO*

MISSION STATEMENT

The American English Academy provides language instruction, cultural training, to both domestic and international students in response to all language needs and educational objectives.

ACCREDITATION

The American English Academy is accredited by the commission on English language program accreditation (CEA) through April 2029 and agrees to uphold the CEA standards for English language programs and institutions.

HOURS OF OPERATION

American English Academy's hours of operation are as follows:

Monday – Friday: 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.

Saturday: 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Sunday: Closed

CLASS SCHEDULE

Morning – Monday to Thursday – 9:00 to 2:00 pm

Evening – Monday to Thursday – 5:00 to 10:00 pm

Weekends – Friday and Saturday – 9 am to 6 pm

CALENDAR

WINTER TERM – Jan 06 – Mar 22, 2025

SPRING TERM – Apr 07 – Jun 21, 2025

SUMMER TERM – July 07 – Sep 20, 2025

FALL TERM – Oct 06 – Dec 20, 2025

REGISTRATION DEADLINES

Jan 04 for the Winter Term

April 05 for the Spring Term

July 05 for the Summer Term

Oct 04 for the Fall Term

HOLIDAYS

- New Year's Day – Martin Luther King's Day – President's Day – Good Friday
- Memorial Day – Juneteenth – Fourth of July – Labor Day
- Columbus Day – Thanksgiving Day – Christmas Day

EMERGENCY CLOSINGS

Although rare, emergencies such as severe weather, fires, or power failures may at times disrupt school operations. During extreme conditions, decisions to close the school are left to the discretion of the Executive Director. Official notification of any school closures will be provided on AEA's website at

www.aea.edu

METHOD

Objective

Teach students from different nationalities to speak English as naturally as possible.

Basic principles

- Create a comfortable English-speaking classroom environment.
- Make students feel okay to risk and make mistakes.
- Expose students to the English language as much as possible, not only by speaking it but also by using decoration in English.
- The learning process involves 4 abilities: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. During class, listening and speaking should be the focus, but the other 2 abilities shouldn't be forgotten.
- Students learn by understanding, repeating, and producing.
- To explain new vocabulary, definitions, gestures, examples, realia, and drawings could be used.
- Students should never repeat what they don't know.
- Repetitions should be used to improve pronunciation and intonation.
- Oral production is the central part of the class. Students are supposed to feel free to communicate. During oral production, minor mistakes shouldn't be corrected.

LANGUAGE PROGRAMS

American English Experience Program (AEEP)

The AEEP is for complete beginners through advanced students who need English for everyday and social purposes. Overall, there are 8 (AEEP) courses.

TOEFL Preparation Program

The Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) Preparatory Program is for high intermediate students who need English for academic purposes. This course targets reading and listening comprehension, proficiency in speaking and writing, and test taking strategies that will help students achieve a high score on the TOEFL exam.

Learners who enroll in this program will have the opportunity to take several practice exams. By the end of their course, they will achieve the English language competence needed to succeed academically and to improve their scores on the TOEFL exam.

Period of study

All level courses are 220 hours (20 hours per week). An average of 11 instructional weeks is required to complete each level. At the end of each level, students are required to take the final exam. Students who successfully pass the exam are permitted to move on to the next course level.

Attendance

Students enrolled on an F-1 visa must attend the class for at least 20 hours per week.

- All absences must be explained.
- The student must attend 80% of classes throughout the term. A term has 220 hours, that means they must attend 176 hours; therefore, they can only miss 8 classes during a term.
- If a student does not attend the first week of classes and does not notify American English Academy, they may be dropped from class.
- If an F-1 student is absent due to illness or injury for more than 5 consecutive days, medical documentation must be submitted as soon as possible.
- Students who do not comply with the 18 hours per week of instruction will put their F-1 status at risk and will have their SEVIS record terminated.

Confidentiality of student records

Student records are considered confidential in nature. Records for active or recently inactive students are kept secured in the office of the Registrar. Inactive student files are kept secure in locked storage close.

We are allowed to disclose student records without the prior students' consent to its administrators. Faculty members, who are involved in the educational program may only review information related to a student's course of study. F-1 students' records must be disclosed to the student and exchange visitor program (SEVP), as required by law

ADMISSIONS

American English Experience Program

Students who wish to enroll in the American English Experience Program must:

- Take our placement test, online or in person;
- Be a non-native English speaker of 18 years of age or older; and
- Pay the registration fee and tuition before the first day of class.

TOEFL Preparation Program

Students who wish to enroll in the TOEFL preparation program must:

- Prove English ability equivalent to at least a level 5;
- Be 18 years of age or older; and
- Pay the registration fee and tuition before the first day of class.

F-1 Visa Students

In addition to the requirements listed in each program, F-1 visa students must also:

- Complete and submit an I-20 application form;
- Agree to maintain a full course load of studies, which includes at least 18 hours of instruction per week.

F-1 visa students can read the immigration regulations for F-1 visa students' section for more information.

Admission into Existing Classes

Students may be admitted into existing classes on the condition that they meet all appropriate admissions requirements listed below.

- Results on the student's placement exam or most recent achievement test should match the current level of students already enrolled in the course.
- There must be sufficient room in the existing class. Group classes typically contain no more than 18 students.

Enrollment and Registration

Students may register via email or in person by completing the *Registration Form* and by paying the registration fee.

The Registration Form details the general terms and conditions of enrollment. These include but are not limited to our cancellation policy, student registration fees, and the cost of the program.

All registration fees are non-refundable and must be submitted at the time of registration. By signing the registration form, students are agreeing to all terms and conditions listed.

Tuition Policies

Tuition must be paid before the term starts.

If payment is late, a late fee of \$50 will be added to the invoice.

Payments are made via Stripe (online)

The registration fee is due at the time of registration. Once students begin their program, it is their responsibility to make sure they pay for their sessions in advance.

Refund Policy

Students will get a refund of

- 100% tuition fee if the visa is denied.
- The registration fee is non-refundable.

- 50% tuition refund if students drop out during the first week of classes.
- And no refund after the first week of classes.
- A refund will be credited to the original method of payment.

Certificate of Completion

We issue a certification of completion at the end of the program. This is a free service.

ASSESSMENT

Proficiency Evaluation

In the American English Experience Program a placement test will determine each student's level of proficiency. Students may take this exam after they complete registration.

Please note that complete beginners may be exempt from participating in the placement test.

Ongoing Assessment

Once enrolled in one of the programs, students will be assessed twice:

Week 3 and 7 – Independent Task prepared by the instructor (Pass/Fail)

Week 5 – Midterm test = 50%

Week 11 – Final Exam = 50%

The American English Academy uses a standardized test published by Pearson to measure progress and level of achievement.

In our TOEFL preparation program, students will participate in sample TOEFL exams to measure their progress during their program and to demonstrate achievement at the end of their course.

After participating in an exam or performance evaluation, students will receive feedback in written and verbal form, and they will receive a copy of the original assessment if applicable.

To complete levels successfully, students must score at least 80% of the total of 100%.

Normal And Satisfactory Progress

Students are expected to progress through the levels steadily and they should not have a record of failures. To progress to the next level in any of our leveled programs, as a rule, the student must complete one term and receive a grade of A, B, or C.

Limit on Repeat Attempts

If a student does not produce enough direct evidence of the SLO mastery and thus receive a grade of F, they will stay at the level for another 16 weeks and work towards the grade of A, B or C.

However, if the student fails two consecutive terms, they will be put on academic probation and warned that if they do not make progress and receive at the least the grade of C in the following term, they might be withdrawn from the course.

Students are allowed to stay at the same level up to four terms, but the fourth term will be allowed only in exceptional circumstances. The student will be required to formally explain his/her situation in a letter, which then will be evaluated by the Academic Director.

The Academic Director will then confer with the relevant faculty members and make the decision whether the student in question should be allowed to stay in the course.

Appeal procedures

Students who would like to alter their placement may request a change of level by contacting the Academic Coordinator. She is available during regular business hours, by appointment, or via email.

Within 24 hours of receiving the student's request, the Academic Coordinator will contact the student's instructor to gather feedback regarding the student's placement.

Students who would like to appeal their grades or promotion decisions may do so by contacting the Academic Coordinator. Within 24 hours of receiving the student's appeal, the Academic Coordinator will conduct a thorough review of the data, meet with the student, and gather feedback from the student's instructor. They will then determine whether or not the student should retake the exam in question.

STUDY TIPS

To make the most of their programs, students are encouraged to review and practice their language skills outside of class. While everyone has different study habits and routines, AEA recommends that all students should:

- Attend class regularly
- Participate in class as often as possible
- Listen carefully to others during each lesson
- Review class notes daily
- Complete all homework assignments
- Write down any questions or areas of concern related to homework assignments and class notes
- Bring questions to class and ask teachers for clarification

- Record unfamiliar words and their definitions in a notebook
- Try to incorporate new vocabulary words and concepts into everyday conversations
- Seek opportunities to practice conversational skills outside of class
- Read in the target language daily
- Listen to media, such as the news or the radio, in the target language

ADJUSTING TO AMERICAN CULTURE

Immersion into a new culture is an exciting experience, but at times, it may also be stressful. It is completely normal for students to experience culture shock as they notice differences between their values and habits and the values and habits of those around them. As students adjust to American culture, AEA offers the following advice:

- Be patient and remain flexible. Remember that life in America may seem different and it may take time to adjust
- Ask teachers or members of the school questions about American culture
- Become active by attending any activities during which you may have the opportunity to meet others
- Keep in touch with your family and friends at home
- Enjoy learning about American culture, the town you are visiting, and the people around you.

IMMIGRATION ADVISORS

The school also has immigration advisors, our DSO is available to assist students seeking information pertaining to Student Visas on appointment basis.

Prior to enrollment

Immigration advisors are available to answer questions about the visa application process. Information that may be addressed includes program start dates, personal information and paperwork, processing times, costs, and procedures.

Students will receive information related to immigration regulations before they register. Advisors are available to explain this information and to answer any questions.

Post enrollment

Once students are enrolled in the school, immigration advisors are available to assist students with the following:

- Program start and end dates;
- Questions related to visa regulations;
- Requests for time-off or issues related to class attendance; and
- Rules and regulations needed to help students maintain their student visa status

The DSO will monitor students throughout their programs to ensure that students maintain their student status. The DSO reviews attendance sheets and updates information accordingly. The DSO may also provide advice as needed.

STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

Overview

At **AEA**, creating a safe, welcoming, and productive learning environment is our top priority. When students choose to enroll in the school, they are expected to abide by our Student Code of Conduct and to follow all of the policies and procedures detailed in this handbook. Failure to do so may disrupt the learning of others and could possibly result in the expulsion of the student. If you have any questions about the expectations we set for students, please contact the School Director.

Mobile Phones

The use of cellular phones to make calls or to send text messages during class is prohibited. All cellular phones should be kept on silent or vibrate mode during class. Students who need to make or receive an emergency call are asked to step out and take the call outside of the classroom so as to not disturb others.

F1 VISA IMMIGRATION POLICIES

All F-1 Visa students must follow the policies, rules, and regulations described in the F-1 Visa Regulations section of this handbook.

Harassment

We will not tolerate, condone or allow any kind of harassment, whether engaged in by students, administrative staff or other non- employees who conduct business with us. We encourage reporting

all incidents of harassment, regardless of who the offender may be. Students are expected to treat all faculty, administrative staff, and fellow students with respect. The harassment of others is a serious matter and may lead to expulsion from the school. If you feel you are being harassed, please do not hesitate to file a complaint.

School Equipment

All school equipment, such as books, classroom furniture, kitchen appliances, and technology, should be treated with respect and care. Intentional destruction of school property is not tolerated and may be cause for expulsion from **AEA**.

Solicitations

Solicitation for any cause, service, or product is not permitted at the school at any time. This includes during off-site classes as well.

Dismissal Policy

Students are expected to abide by our student code of conduct as well as the policies and procedures outlined in this handbook. F-1 visa students are also expected to attend class as scheduled, make satisfactory progress, and follow all Immigration regulations, which are outlined in the Immigration regulations for students' section of the Handbook.

Students who fail to abide by these rules will first receive a verbal warning. If they continue to ignore our policies and procedures they will then receive a written warning. Continued behavior may result

in students being asked to leave the program. The decision to expel a student will be made by the Executive Director.

For serious offenses, such as illegal activity or the harassment of others, we reserve the right to expel students from the school immediately.

We adhere to all federal, state, and local laws and regulations.

STUDENT FEEDBACK AND COMPLAINTS

Feedback

Students are asked to submit written feedback about their program each term. Students are also welcome and encouraged to share suggestions verbally, in writing, or electronically, at any point throughout their program by contacting the Academic Coordinator.

Complaints

Students who wish to file a formal complaint about any issue (e.g., services, programs, class materials, facilities, teachers, schedules, classmates) are encouraged to complete a *Complaint Form*.

A copy of the form can be obtained from the Academic Coordinator. A sample of the *Complaint Form* can be found at the end of the Handbook (see *Appendix A*).

The completed *Complaint Form* should be submitted to the Academic Coordinator. A written response to the complaint will be provided within 48 hours.

Complaint Procedures

While we take all student complaints seriously, complaints about administration, administrative staff, faculty, or students, and complaints about unprofessional conduct may necessitate further investigation. To do so a student should complete and submit a Statement of Complaint. A sample of the Statement of Complaint can be found at the end of the Handbook (see Appendix B).

The following procedures are followed to ensure that complaints are resolved effectively.

1. Upon receipt of a complaint, the Academic Coordinator will review the complaint to first determine if:

- The person being complained about is a member of the Administration, Administrative Staff, Faculty or Student; and
- The complaint could be considered unprofessional conduct based on the policies of the institution.

2. If any of the two criteria above are not met, the complainant will be notified that this is not within the jurisdiction of the institution to receive this complaint.

If the two criteria are met then:

- A case is opened and a number is assigned (C+ Registration Number of the student). This number will appear on all correspondence sent from the school about the complaint. If a student contacts the school they are asked to reference their case file number.
- A letter will be sent to the complainant indicating that the school has received the complaint and has opened a case.
- A letter will be sent to the person that is involved in the complaint indicating a complaint has been made against him/her.
- The case will be presented to the Executive Director.
- The complainant and respondent will be contacted by the Executive Director. Other people with knowledge of the complaint may also be contacted.
- The Executive Director may request assistance from other administrative staff members to assist with decision making in reference to the complaint.
- The Executive Director will meet, as necessary, with the parties involved and will prepare a recommendation.
- A letter will be sent to the complainant indicating the actions taken to resolve the case.
- A certified letter will be sent to the person at charge to inform them of the decision taken.

F-1 VISA

Immigration Regulations for Students

All F-1 visa students must follow the policies, rules, and regulations described in the F-1 visa regulations section of this handbook. The following is intended to help F-1 visa students better understand federal immigration regulations. For detailed information, please visit the U.S. government website at: <https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/students>.

- An F-1 visa is issued to international students who are attending an English language program at a SEVIS certified language training.
- The prospective student may enter the United States no more than 30 days prior to the program start date on the student's form I-20.
- F-1 visa students are expected to complete their studies by the expiration date on their form I-20.

Maintaining Full-Time Student Status

- An F-1 student must attend a minimum of 18 weekly hours of scheduled classes.
- An F-1 student must leave the country within 60 days of the end of the program.

Once terminated, the student must immediately leave the country or apply for reinstatement. The information below was taken directly from the U.S. department of homeland security's website.

By violating the requirements that govern your immigration status, you may jeopardize your ability to remain in the United States as a student or exchange visitor. Examples of violations include the following:

- Failure to enroll by the date specified on the I-20 form
- Unauthorized employment during your stay
- Failure to leave the United States following the completion of your course, an exchange visitor program, or program- related employment course load. A fully maintained full

course of study is a minimum of 18 hours of language instruction per week.

Potential Status Violations

- Failure to begin a course of study by the start date listed on the I-20
- Employment of any kind during the course of study
- Failure to leave the country within the 60- day grace period after the end date listed on the I-20
- Unauthorized drop below 18 hours of study per week

How to Apply for an F-1 Visa

The I-20 form certifies that a student has been registered and accepted into a full course of study at a center. It also proves that they have sufficient funds to study and live in the United States during a program of study. Information about how to begin the I-20 application is detailed below.

1. Complete the I-20 application.
2. Submit a \$250 registration and processing fee by credit card, cash, or bank transfer.
3. Submit the i-20 application with the following documents:
 - A. A copy of current passport.
 - B. If dependents (spouse and/or children) will be accompanying students, copies of their passport information pages.
 - c. A completed affidavit of support. The affidavit of support is to be completed by the applicant and their sponsor(s). Each sponsor must sign the affidavit of support. This application can be found online at <http://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/files/form/i-134.pdf>
4. As required by U.S. law, financial evidence, such as bank statements, proving that the student can support the cost of living and studying in the U.S. for each year of the program of study. The documents must be dated within 2 months of the date of admission.
5. Submit the I-20 application (electronically or by mail) and all required documentation to the designated school officials (DSO) at dso@aea.edu

After we receive your documents

Once an applicant's documents are received, and reviewed and they have met the admission requirements, we will mail the I-20 form and a letter of acceptance.

Once you receive your I-20

When a student receives our I-20 form they must: Pay the SEVIS I-901 fee. This fee is required for all F students. Without this fee, you will not be eligible to apply for a visa. Make sure your form I-20 matches that on your SEVIS I-901 fee form. To pay online go to: <http://www.ice.gov/sevis/i901> and learn how to make a payment.

After paying the I-901 fee and getting a receipt, you can apply for a visa at any American embassy or consulate before you leave for the United States. The following links will assist with this process: for more detailed information, please visit:

<https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/2015/06/five-ways-to-prepare-for-your-visa-interview>

Be prepared to explain to the embassy/consulate why you want to study at American English Academy.

Change of Status: B-2 Status to International Student Visa (F-1)

In order to be able to change a B-2 status in the U.S. to a student F-1, you will need to be officially accepted to a full-time academic program at a school that can issue you a form I-20 or form DS-2019.

As a B-2 visa holder, you can take classes for recreational, hobby, or cultural purposes without applying for a change of status. These students must not go above 15 hours of instruction per week.

Your request to the U. S. Citizenship and immigration services (USCIS) for the change to F-1 should consist of the following:

- Register with us and get the I-20 form
- Pay \$100 for registration fees
- Completed form i-539 (<http://www.uscis.gov/files/form/i-539.pdf>).
- Check payable to "department of homeland security" (no abbreviations) for \$370. (filing fee subject to change. Please check <http://www.uscis.gov/files/form/i-539.pdf> for updates.)
- Pay SEVIS fee online: \$350 and print the receipt letter from you to USCIS containing the following: your address, telephone number, and date, your request to change from B-2 status to F- 1 status. This request should state that you will be a full-time student and the reason that you are requesting the change.
- Original SEVIS i-20 signed and dated.
- A copy of your passport pages showing both the picture and expiration date.
- A copy of your U.S. visa page.
- Copy of the front and back of the i-94 card (<https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/i94/#/recent-search>)
- Verification of source and amount of financial support.
- Copy of the letter offering the assistantship.
- Bank statement showing financial proof.

You cannot leave the U.S. while a change of status is pending or you abandon the application.

Policies for F-1 Visa Students

To be in compliance with immigration regulations, we must adhere to strict policies and procedures regarding F-1 students that obtain

admission to our school. It is the responsibility of the international student to maintain lawful immigration status.

In order to help students better understand federal immigration regulations, we recommend that they visit the us government website at:

<https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/>

Students are informed that:

- International students who are issued an F1 visa must enroll in a full-time English language program at a SEVIS-certified language training center.
- The prospective student may enter the United States no earlier than 30 days prior to the program start date listed on the student's I-20 form
- Attend and pass their classes
- F1 students are expected to complete their studies by the expiration date on their I-20 form.

To help our F-1 students avoid status violations, in accordance with the rules set forth by SEVIS, we have developed the following policies:

1. Attendance: to maintain their active status, all F1 students must attend 18 hours of class per week.

2. Tuition: registration and processing fees are due at the time of registration. Students will be issued their I-20 once they register. Monthly tuition payments are due on the first day of each month.

3. Vacation: in an effort to accommodate F-1 students' vacations, we have created a new vacation calendar and changed its policies as below.

A. Eligibility for vacation time.

F-1 students who are enrolled for a minimum of 3 terms.

F-1 students who have attended at least 3 terms of language training.

4. Students are required to submit a request for an absence form in advance. F-1 students cannot miss their classes without valid excuses (evidence, such as a doctor's note, hospital stay, etc. Must be presented to us). Before leaving on vacation, the student must have an updated signed I-20 by our DSO. Additionally, they must inform the F-1 student advisor of the destination as well as the return date. All F-1 students receive a copy of our vacation policy.

5. Absences outside the calendar are not refundable nor credited for make-up classes.

6. Emergency closing is not refundable.

7. Harassment: we will not tolerate, condone or allow any kind of harassment, whether engaged in by students, school personnel, or other non-employees who conduct business with us.

We encourage the reporting of all incidents of harassment, regardless of who the offender may be. Students are expected to treat all faculty, administrative staff, and fellow students with respect. Harassment is a serious matter and may lead to expulsion from the school.

If you feel you are being harassed, please do not hesitate to file a complaint with the PDSO.

8. End of program: Upon the end of the program, the F-1 student has an additional 60 days to prepare for departure from the US or to transfer to another school.

CONTACT INFORMATION

American English Academy



4749 Main Ave, Suite 5
Bridgeport, CT 06606



+1 (203) 903-7833



Information: hello@aea.edu

DSO : dso@aea.edu

CEO : leo@leoreiscorp.com



website
aeabridgeport.us

APPENDIX

A. Professional Information (Name of the person you are complaining about)

Last name

First name

Type of professional you are complaining about

☒ Teacher ☐ Administrator ☐ Office Staff ☐ Student ☐ Other

Mailing Address

City

State

Zip Code

Phone number

E-mail

B. Complainant (You) Information



Last name

First name

Mailing Address

City

State

Zip Code

Phone number

E-mail

C. Witnesses with factual knowledge of the events leading to your complaint, if applicable

First Witness (if any)

Last name

First name

Mailing Address

<i>City</i>	<i>State</i>	<i>Zip Code</i>
<i>Phone number</i>	<i>E-mail</i>	

Second Witness (if any)

<i>Last name</i>	<i>First name</i>	
<i>Mailing Address</i>		
<i>City</i>	<i>State</i>	<i>Zip Code</i>
<i>Phone number</i>	<i>E-mail</i>	

- D. Description of complaint: Describe your complaint in detail below. List services provided by the professional, and dates. If you need more space, please continue on the next page, and/or use additional sheets of paper.

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- E. Attach copies of supporting documents and records related to incident, if any.

STATEMENT OF PERSON FILING THIS COMPLAINT

I understand that a copy of this complaint, and any additional information attached to this complain, may be sent to the person who is the subject of this complaint.

<i>Signature of Person Filing this Complaint</i>	<i>Date</i>
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American
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English for those who are committed