

What should you do to earn English lab credit?

That is a great question, one that could be taken further with other questions regarding [lab work](#):

- What does your teacher think you should work on, as clarified in written or spoken comments?
- What are your current assignments, and how might lab involvement enhance your process?
- What do you already know you need to work on based upon lingering confusion (guessing) and diagnostic test results?

Think about these questions when [seeking guidance](#) from your teacher and from the English lab faculty and staff. For example, if you need to plan an essay, you might discuss the assignment and your purpose/content ideas with **a tutor in the Writing Lab**. Then you might go to **The English Lab in Library 205** to use the *Inspiration idea-mapping program* or the **Thesis-Builder** site **OR BOTH** to develop and formalize your plan, your outline.

After you have a plan, you might need to do a little research, if you have not already. Work with our **technology and tutors** to integrate that research into your outline. In fact, you might even meet with **a reading tutor**, not just a writing tutor, to gain more control over how to read and integrate your research.

It is also very possible that you may want to **strengthen some mechanical/grammatical skills** before shifting from the outline to the essay. **Perhaps your teacher has commented on one of your papers** that you often confuse commas and semicolons, or that your subject-verb agreement is inconsistent. Maybe you just turned in a homework exercise on MLA style and were totally confused. **Identify the area that you want to be more aware of and want to have more control over and try some online exercises** in, say, *Exercise Central* or the *Rules for Writers* companion site, which are good because of their record-keeping once you complete the free registration. There are also hundreds of other sites offering practice, clarification, and motivation linked to the [Web Resources](#) page. (Check with your teacher about how much of this may be done off campus—distance-ed—for lab credit.)

While drafting your essay, keep in mind that many students in the English labs have found that text-to-speech programs such as *Write Outloud* and *Read Please* have helped them produce richer, clearer, smoother essays. Since these programs **read your work aloud**, giving greater critical distance, they not only help with editing for punctuation and vocabulary issues but also provide ways to think about the rhythm, content, and balance of your ideas.

Inspiration and *Write OutLoud* can also help with reading comprehension, providing you with visual ways to take notes or explore vocabulary, as well as allowing you to hear assigned reading (if it can be copied and pasted electronically). These programs are also in the **Reading Lab**. You might even use these programs in conjunction with the work you are doing in a lab-credit [writing or reading group](#)!

Thousands of students also use the *Reading Plus* program to improve reading fluency and comprehension. It is vital that you discuss your progress reports with your teacher and the lab faculty so that specific activities within [Reading Plus](#) can be targeted to address your needs. Specific progress reports--such as the *Reading Around Words* report, which lists vocabulary words in need of review—can also provide clues as to skill needs that might be addressed in other programs and Web sites (e.g., the *Inspiration Vocabulary template* or, say, the *Guide to Grammar* site's activities on sound-alikes.)

By taking advantage of the multiple tutors, groups, computer programs, and Web sites, and by communicating with your teacher about your needs and strengths, as well as being open with yourself about those needs and strengths, you will find that the English labs offer almost too much to do!

So, what should you do?

Learn more at www.ccsf.edu/english/labpage