

Welcome to ENGLISH GROUP!

Thank you for your interest in supporting our community. You are choosing to be a part of something special. This experience will provide you the opportunity to make new friends, may broaden your awareness of individuals from different cultures and countries, and likely deepen your appreciation and understanding of the English language.

We meet for two sessions annually, each Fall and Spring, on designated Tuesdays from 12:30-2p.m. in the Waunakee Public Library program room. Learners and tutors come when they can. We create the experience together from one week to the next-- and one session to the next. We remain flexible and attentive to the needs and interests of our participants. ENGLISH GROUP is co-sponsored by the Waunakee Community School District (WCSD), the Waunakee Neighborhood Connection (WNC) and the Waunakee Public Library.

You will be asked and expected to complete the WNC background check form and confidentiality agreement. Additionally, each week we ask that all those in attendance sign in. This data helps the WNC with grant applications and making the case for why it is a sound investment to continue with this educational offering.

So, you'd like to know a little more?

English Group started back in 2004 and continues to evolve. Prior to the start of each session, interested volunteers meet the week before the first class to outline our goals and review the scope of the instruction. It is important that we create a spirit of community. We share and discuss ideas for fostering this learning environment. All community members are welcome and invited to join us. Tutors choose when they are comfortable to step into the active role. They shadow the group until they feel ready. We support one another and give people the opportunity to bring forth their gifts, enthusiasm, and spirit of stewardship and service.

We advertise the English Group opportunity in various local locations: the *Waunakee Tribune*, the Piggly Wiggly, the food pantry, the Mexican grocery store, the Village Center, St. Vincent de Paul store, the WNC, via the English Language Learner teachers of the WCSD, on social media, and via word of mouth. We also reach out to previous English Group participants to remind them of the opportunity.

Our learners include members of the community who desire to strengthen their communication skills. We focus on literacy, primarily oral and reading skills. We recognize that our learners come with diverse backgrounds, cultures, and experiences. There is a broad representation of skills, from just beginning to use English-- to advanced and comfortably immersed. Currently, our learners have been those who speak Arabic, Chinese, Russian and Spanish. We target the parents/families of our students of the WCSD to help those individuals support their child's academic achievement. Our goal is for parents/families to be comfortable and interested to learn and understand what their children are receiving, doing, and offering in the schools. We also

recognize that some of our learners would not be available to participate if we did not welcome their young children. Parents are invited to bring their children to English Group. We offer toys and books for these children while their parents are studying. Typically, if we have sufficient tutors for learners, then a tutor will pull the kids aside to keep them entertained and engaged so the parent/guardian may stay focused on his/her own lesson and experience.

English Group is supported through Title III funds. We are grateful to have this investment from the State of WI and appreciate that the Waunakee Community School District allocates this funding to us. Each time English Group meets we follow a sequence of instruction. Our materials and schedule of activities include: announcements from school and community-based information, a large or small group activity, and partner work. We have a workbook, Side by Side by Steven J. Molinsky & Bill Bliss (view sample at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YGUm_63qAsA).

This theme-based workbook provides the tutor and learner the platform for study. We also issue learners a picture dictionary. Depending on the lesson, the group activity may use that tool as a common focus of study. Generally speaking, about 45-50 minutes is spent in partner work. We monitor and track progress, keeping data for the next class which includes citations as to what the learner accomplished or worked on and recommendations for the next lesson. Tutors do not necessarily work with the same learners from week to week. Our progress sheets help with continuity. Additional volunteer tips, including a short video tutorial, are offered at <https://www.waunakeeneighborhoodconnection.com/english-group/>.

Some tutors have expressed interest to work with learners beyond the schedule Tuesday offerings. Tutors are welcome to work with learners beyond the scheduled group time, e.g., in the evenings or mornings. If this is your interest, we highly encourage and recommend that your “semi-private sessions” take place in a public setting out of consideration and respect for everyone’s safety. If this is your plan and course of action, please track your progress so we can build on your efforts from one week to the next for whoever works with the learner next. If you wish to use the English Group materials, please check out a Side by Side workbook to accompany your lessons. Please do not write in the books as they are re-used from one session to the next.



It is with heartfelt thanks and appreciation that we celebrate YOU and these community partnerships. This program model is an example of what we know.... “It takes a village.” Thank you for your continued support and for choosing to be a part of something special.

Laura Sowinski, Lead Facilitator for English Group

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