



ELI NEWS

English Language Institute • University of Pittsburgh
Parkvale Building, Room M13, 200 Meyran Ave • Pittsburgh PA 15260

11-12-20, Volume 63 Issue 11
elipitt@pitt.edu

ELI Pre-registration Spring 2021

If you plan to study at the ELI next term, you must pre-register with Stacy. If you do not pre-register with Stacy, the ELI cannot guarantee your place for the next term. If you plan to take a vacation term, you must see Stacy to register for that, too. Please contact Stacy by November 23 if you want to continue at the ELI. Zoom meetings are available.

ELI Closing Ceremony By: Stacy Ranson

The ELI would like to invite you to the Closing Ceremony for this semester. The ceremony will be on November 23 from 12:00-1:00 pm on Zoom. We will recognize students who have earned attendance certificates, announce winners of the ELI Exceptional Effort and Perfect Attendance Awards, and announce the winners of the ELI Writing Contest at the ceremony. And we will have time to chat together before the December break. I will be sending you all a Zoom invitation by Pitt email soon.

You have played a big role in making this semester a success; we hope you'll come celebrate with us!

Fall 2020 Intensive English Program Certificate Survey

The end of the semester is approaching quickly! Students who

successfully complete the Fall 2020 Intensive English Program will receive virtual certificates. Some students may also want printed certificates. To request a printed copy of your certificate, please fill out the [ELI Intensive English Program Certificate survey](#) by **Friday, November 20 at 5 PM**. Students who want a printed certificate can either 1) pick-up their certificate in person if conditions allow OR 2) choose to receive their certificate by mail. If safety conditions change and students cannot pick-up their certificates, certificates will be mailed to all students who want printed certificates.

Printed certificates will be distributed in early December. Students who complete the ELI Intensive Program Certificate survey and successfully complete the Fall 2020 Intensive English Program will be contacted with more information on how to receive their certificates.

If you have any questions, please contact the ELI Main Office at elipitt@pitt.edu.

Student Submission:

Can Individuals Alleviate Food Insecurity?

By: Mohammed Alibrahim

Upon seeing a mediocre variety of low qualitative food items in our refrigerators which we are not even inclined to try, we should think

about the poignant image of starving people, most of whom live in poor countries and mostly are dependent on aids. Food insecurity has wider definition, is lack of food affordability, accessibility, or even availability, meaning some people, who live even in relatively decent income demographics, face the adversity of having a variety of or adequate food because of its price or existence. It is advisable for us not to be passive spectators but devote our power to alleviate the issue and eradicate it in the long run.

Believing that a full success cannot be accomplished by unilateral actions, individuals should work intensively with each other to alleviate food insecurity. In businesses, it is known that if a demand for an item increases, then its price goes up. Some people, whose wages are relatively low, may face may be unable to afford food. Hence, one feasible solution urges people start smart shopping in which consumers observe the price changing process and are aware why and when a price changes. If the customers are picky buyers in terms of prices, this can force prices to remain same or even be reduced. In the worst scenario, if the price does not decrease, consumers should start a boycotting campaign, which is for the sake of them and the sake of others. Therefore, the goal of this whole process ought to provide more accessibility and affordability to food for those with low incomes. On the other hand, Having the economy collapse due to people stop or lessen shopping is

claimed to be an issue which might lead a certain business to fail or reduce employee wages. However, the common saying goes “the customer is always right.” Smart shopping, and having prices controlled by consumers is more reliable to stabilize the economy rather than harmful it and alleviate food insecurity impact as a bounce. In other words, instead of intensively buying a specific item, consumers should buy other lower price items. For example, having item A not being bought because of its price, item B, C, and D will be considered, which increases the variety of items be bought, reduces item A price, makes item A producers to improve its quality, and enhances the economy as a result. To sum up, this option may not be easy as it sounds, but it is feasible and needs us to start it.

Listening Corner

The recommended podcast this week is American English Podcast. <https://americanenglishpodcast.com/the-free-podcast/> Each week, there is a new episode to listen to. Some episodes are short, “5-minute English” episodes that cover current topics you might see in the news or going on around you such as, Fall, Elections and Voting, and Wildfires. Other podcasts focus on English Expressions like, “On the edge of one’s seat,” “Through thick and thin,” and “To have a lot on one’s plate.” There are also podcasts that are chats between friends or descriptions of phrasal verbs or even just useful topics like how to correctly pronounce the names of all 50 of the United States! There’s something for everyone in this podcast and it includes transcripts as well so you can read along while you listen.

The Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh is Open

No matter what time of year it is, the [Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh](https://www.cpl.org/)

(CLP) is a great resource. While the pandemic forced the library to close for several months, the CLP arranged for loads of e-books and other services to be virtually available to the public. Currently, the CLP is [open limited hours](#) and with [strict Covid-19 precautions](#) for both staff and patrons.

New Covid-19 precautions include a re-arranged space inside to allow for physical distancing, wearing a mask properly over nose and mouth, limiting in-person services, and continuing to offer curbside pickup.

Available services:

- Computers and indoor Wi-Fi for 30 minutes maximum
- Printing, copying, faxing, scanning
- Select Grab n’ Go items for check out
- Returning materials
- Staff assistance, including library card services

Currently not available:

- Browsing the shelves
- Magazines, newspapers, other periodicals
- Programs or events
- Rooms for meetings or study
- Toys/games/puzzles

Real-time assistance is available every day of the week via phone (412-622-3114), chat (click the “How can we help?” icon on the website), and text (412-775-3900 standard message rates apply). Real-time assistance runs 10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Monday-Thursday and 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Friday-Sunday.

Please note that if you do not have a library card, it is [free to join](#) if you live in Pennsylvania. Minors (children under the age of 18) must have an adult with them willing to present ID and sign the form.

The CLP is a fantastic resource for practicing many English skills, and

we hope that you take advantage of your local branch whenever you can.

F1 Students and End-of-Term Grace Period

The Department of Homeland Security requires students to complete all levels of the ELI program in order to receive the 60-day grace period following the completion of study. This means that if you complete level 6 at the ELI, you will have 60 days after your last day of study to remain in the U.S or request a transfer to a new program.

If you end your study at the ELI before completing level 6, you will have a two-week grace period after your final day of class. This means that you will need to request a transfer to a new program or leave the U.S. within 2 weeks of your last day of study if you do not complete level 6.

If you transfer to a new program at any time, you must begin study at the first available term for the new program. If you transfer within your grace period, you are permitted to be out of school for up to 5 months before beginning the first available term of your new program. Please see Stacy if you have questions about these policies.

ELI Surveys Tell the ELI What You Think!

The ELI is very happy that you have chosen to come here to study. We always want to improve each student’s experience in our program and to make our program even better. Therefore, we hope you will participate in three different surveys and give the ELI your ideas and opinions!

The ELI has three different surveys, each one focused on a different aspect of the program. Teach survey

should take less than 5 minutes to complete. These are the surveys and a little of information about each one.

ELI Teaching Survey (OMET)

This survey asks you about your experience with each of your teachers this semester. You can provide feedback about different aspects of your teacher's instruction in the classroom on this survey.

When: November 2-16

How to complete: Check your Pitt email for link to the OMET survey.

ELI Curriculum Survey

This survey is about the content of each of your courses. It includes questions about the textbook and classroom activities.

When: During the last week of classes

How to complete: Your ELI teachers will give you instructions on how to complete these surveys for each class.

ELI Program Survey

The ELI Program Survey asks for your feedback on the ELI as an institute. The survey contains questions about the classrooms and facilities, the activities and what you like/dislike about the ELI.

When: Week 10-12

How to complete: You can complete this survey online through the university's Qualtrics survey system. Check your Pitt email for a link to the survey. Your responses will be anonymous; we at the ELI will see the total responses but we will not know how each individual student answered.

The ELI uses the information from these surveys to make very important decisions that affect the future of the ELI. Your feedback is a crucial part of this process. The ELI strongly encourages you to take a few minutes to complete each of these surveys.

Please ask the front office staff, Stacy or one of your teachers if you have any questions.

Evaluations of Your Teachers

by Christine O'Neill

As your ELI teachers evaluate you, you have an opportunity to evaluate your teachers. Your feedback is really very important! All evaluations are now online. Please go to your Pitt email. The Office of Evaluations and Measurements (OMET) will send you an email for each teacher you have. Just click on the link and follow the instructions. You may also access each evaluation in CourseWeb. Each evaluation should take you between 5 to 15 minutes.

Research indicates that people are more likely to do online surveys if they have negative responses. However, we really hope to hear from all of you. We hope to get all feedback –positive as well as negative and in the middle too. Please, your feedback helps us to be better. We can't do it without you!

Also, be sure to read the items in the survey carefully to be certain you are providing accurate feedback. Sometimes on surveys on a scale of 1 to 5, a "1" is very good; other times it is not good. In this survey **1 is the lowest rating.**

The surveys are available starting Monday, November 2. Please respond by Monday, November 16. The survey will not be available after November 16. Please be sure to respond before that day. If you have any questions, ask any or all of your teachers.

ELI Writing Contest

The ELI is holding a competition for students in all Writing classes. There will be one winner in each level (4,5,6), and the winners will be announced at the ELI Closing Ceremony.

If you have written a good composition in your writing class this semester, you should tell your writing teacher that you would like to enter it in the writing contest. Your teacher will then submit your paper for you. Your entry will be read anonymously by judges (your name will be removed from the paper, so they won't know who you are). The judges will choose the best composition from each level.

The deadline for entries is Monday, November 16 at 12:00 p.m.

If you are in level 4, 5, or 6, your entry must be an essay that you wrote in class this semester. Each student can enter only one composition.

Good luck!

F1 Visa Requirement: Travel Signatures

If you are traveling outside of the U.S. during the break, and you are returning for the next term, you MUST have Stacy sign your I-20 before you leave. No one else at the ELI is able to sign your I-20. See Stacy even if you think you may travel!

If you are planning to travel anywhere, please take all Covid-19 precautions: wear a good quality mask over both your nose and mouth, wash your hands frequently with hot soapy water for at least 20 seconds, and use hand sanitizer frequently. Mini packets of disinfectant wipes may also come in handy. If you haven't already, consider downloading and using the [COVID Alert PA app](#) or other Covid-19 tracker apps.

Stacy can be reached at SAR72@pitt.edu for questions or to set up a Zoom meeting during her office hours if you have any questions. Other arrangements can be made if you cannot make her office hours (listed below).

Stacy's office hours are:

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday
12:00 pm-1:00 pm

Stacy's Availability Term Break

I will be available to you all through Zoom or email during most of the winter break, but I will not be available from December 21-December 28, 2020. In addition, the ELI main office will be closed between December 21, 2020-January 3, 2021. If you have questions or concerns about the Spring 2021 term or any other needs, please keep these dates in mind and plan carefully.

FREE Duolingo English Proficiency Test

Even though we're temporarily not able to see you in our classrooms or in the ELI offices, we're still looking for ways to help you develop your English and be productive during these challenging times. To help with this, we have arranged for ELI students in levels 5 and 6 to be able to take the online Duolingo English Proficiency Test for FREE!

If you are interested in taking this free test, we ask that you complete a short [online registration form](#) by 11:59 pm on Monday, November 16. Students will be emailed a code for the free Duolingo test by Friday, November 20, and will have until December 15 to take the Duolingo test for free.

Many of you may already know the Duolingo smartphone app and website that teach 35 different languages in a way that feels more like playing a game. In addition to these games, Duolingo offers an English language proficiency test that is used by colleges and universities around the world in the same way that TOEFL and IELTS are used. At this time, several

degree programs at Pitt are also accepting Duolingo in place of TOEFL or IELTS. The ELI is interested in learning how our students perform on the Duolingo test.

Please be aware that for the test:

- You must have a PC or laptop with both audio and video capability; headphones and earbuds are not permitted.
- You must have a quiet, private room where you will not be interrupted while taking the test.
- The test takes approximately one hour.
- The test includes a graded section that evaluates your reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills, as well as a 10-minute video interview that records your answers to open-ended questions.
- The test is not transferrable. Your name will be provided to Duolingo and you will be asked to take a photo of yourself and show your passport by video before you begin the test.

Both you and the ELI will receive your score. In addition, you can choose to use your score to submit for applications to any college or university that accepts Duolingo scores in place of the TOEFL or IELTS. For more information about the Duolingo test and for a short video summary of what it looks like to take the test, visit the [Duolingo website](#) and scroll to the section of the page that says "Accurate results in minutes".

If you have any questions, please contact ELI Associate Director [Rob Mucklo](#).

Women of Broadway: Laura Benanti and Vanessa Williams

The Pittsburgh Cultural Trust and New York's Shubert Virtual Studios present a new livestream concert series called [Live from the West Side: Women of Broadway](#). Tony

Award winner Patti LuPone was already featured on the program. There are two concerts left: Tony Award winner and tv actress [Laura Benanti](#) and actress/singer [Vanessa Williams](#).

Laura Benanti is best known for her Broadway roles as Amalia Balash in *She Loves Me* and Cinderella in *Into the Woods*, as well as tv spots on *Nashville*, *Supergirl*, and *The Detour*. Her performance is on November 14 at 8:00 p.m.

Vanessa Williams is known for her Broadway roles in *City of Angels: A Hollywood Musical* and the 2002 Broadway Revival Cast of *Into the Woods*. She is perhaps most recognizable as the singer of "Colors of the Wind" from Disney's animated movie *Pocahontas*, for which she won an Oscar, Grammy and Golden Globe award each for the category of Best Original Song. Her performance is on December 5 at 8:00 p.m.

The benefits of livestreaming these concerts include safety from Covid-19, cheaper ticket prices, 72 hours of on-demand viewing after the livestream, and you can tune in from anywhere in the world. As an added bonus, your ticket purchase supports the Pittsburgh Cultural Trust's Critical Fund, which is a non-profit arts organization that assists actors, artists, musicians, and creators during the pandemic and ensures that the arts will live on through these tough times.

Tickets are \$30 each. Only one ticket per household is required to view the event.

Happening at Pitt

Below are some highlights from the Pitt Events Calendar that you might find interesting. These are great opportunities to practice different English skills outside of the classroom.

November 12

[2020 Virtual Polish Fest](#): starts at 10:00 a.m. Pittsburgh has a strong Polish community. Pitt Global Hub hosts this year's Polish Fest online. Join them to learn folk dancing, history, crafts, holiday customs and more from all of Pittsburgh's Polish, Lithuanian and Carpatho-Rusyn cultures. This event runs through November 15. [Videos available](#) via Pitt Global Hub.

[Illustration and Drawing in Photoshop](#): 11:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. Feeling creative? Want to learn more about Photoshop? Join this in-process livestream for an introduction to the tools, techniques, and creative decision-making process of using Photoshop to draw. Click on the [Zoom link](#) to join.

November 13

[Awakening Morning Yoga](#): 7:15-8:00 a.m. Part of Be Fit Pitt, you can expect 45 minutes of breath work, yoga flow, grounding and mindfulness to prepare you for the day ahead. During these stressful times, it's important to make time for your physical and mental health. Yoga provides the opportunity to do both at the same time. [Register](#) and make sure you have Zoom to participate.

[Lee Caplan Jazz Quartet](#): starts at 3:30 p.m. Tune into the [livestream](#) to hear Lee Caplan perform original jazz compositions. A great way to relax and enjoy a form of music started in America.

[Pitt African Music and Dance Ensemble](#): starts at 8:00 p.m. Join this [livestreamed event](#) that celebrates the music and dance of Africa.

November 14

[Falk School Virtual Open House](#): 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. Do you have a school-aged child? You might be interested in learning about the University of Pittsburgh's [Falk](#)

[Laboratory School](#). This virtual session hosted by Director Dr. Jeff Suzik, Assistant Director Jill Sarada, and Admissions Director Diana Dimitrovski will introduce you to the school's features and diversity. If you miss this opportunity, there will be a second open house on December 13 with the same hours. The Zoom link will be emailed to you the day before the event, so you must [register](#) for this event.

November 16

[Stress Free Zone Mindful Moment](#): starts at 2:00 p.m. Take a break from Monday and end-of-term stress for some self-care. [Join this meditation session](#) and give yourself some breathing room. The session is only a half hour long, and meditations last between 15-20 minutes.

November 18

[Experience America Lunch and Learn \(Winter in Pittsburgh\)](#): starts at 12:00 p.m. Winter feels and looks different from place to place in America. Pittsburgh has unique weather that changes often due to its geographical location and its three rivers. If you're going to be in Pittsburgh during winter, this is a Lunch and Learn you do not want to miss. Learn to how to prepare for Pittsburgh winter weather by [registering](#) today.

More Fun Things to Do

To find out what fun activities are planned for students in the ELI and/or offered by the University, check out these websites:

- [ELI Activities Calendar online](#)
- [Pitt Events Calendar](#)
- [Pitt Program Council](#)
- [Pitt Student Organizations and Clubs](#)
- [Pitt Global Ties](#)
- [Pitt International Community Facebook Group](#)

- [Pitt Serves](#) (volunteer opportunities)
- [Pitt Center for Creativity](#)

We hope you take advantage of these opportunities to use English outside of the classroom, make friends with students in degree programs at Pitt, and have fun, too!

Health and Wellness Resources at Pitt

Your health is very important, especially during stressful times, but there are many free resources available to students to stay healthy both physically and emotionally:

- [Pitt Fitness Centers and Gyms](#)
- [Be Fit Pitt](#) (live streaming and online exercise and fitness)
- [Healthy Ride](#) (free bike rental for Pitt students and employees)
- [Wellness Workshops](#) from the Pitt Counseling Center
- [The Stress Free Zone](#)
- [University Counseling Center](#)
- [Student Health Services](#)

In addition, students in the ELI's Intensive English Program can also contact the ELI Student Services Supervisor, [Stacy Ranson](#), for additional support.

Looking to Buy Pitt Merchandise?

The University of Pittsburgh is globally recognized, and wearing and using Pitt-branded merchandise is a mark of pride for many. They make great gifts for friends and family, too! If you'd like to purchase Pitt-branded items such as t-shirts, hoodies, mugs, pencils, and more, jump on over to the [Pitt Panther Store](#) and [University Store on Fifth](#) virtual stores. Hail to Pitt!

Unpaid Tuition

If you or your sponsor have not paid your ELI tuition for the Fall 2020 term, you are past the deadline for

payment. You can check your tuition account by logging in to my.pitt.edu and clicking PittPay. Please note that students with unpaid tuition cannot receive copies of final grades, letters of recommendation, or any other documents from the ELI.

There are [several ways to pay](#) your tuition.

- eCheck: Free online transfer from a US bank account to your Pitt account.
- Check, cashier's check, or money order: Make checks out to University of Pittsburgh and include student ID number and name on the Memo line. It is preferable to include the Remittance Form at the bottom of your Term Statement (click on the link above for directions and a how-to video under the "Payments by Mail" heading). Mail checks or money orders to University of Pittsburgh, P. O. Box 643092, Pittsburgh, PA, 15264-3092. Check and money orders may also be placed in the Drop Box outside of the Student Payment Center offices at G-9 in Thackeray Hall. You must fill out the Daily Covid Health Check before coming onto campus, and you must wear a mask properly at all times.
- Credit cards: Online only at my.pitt.edu—you may not use a credit card at Thackeray Hall. There is an additional 2.75% fee for using a credit card.

Please note that due to COVID-19, the Student Payment Center offices in Thackeray Hall are closed to the public. Please email them (payments@pitt.edu include 7 digit student ID number and name) or call 412- 624-7520 (Monday-Thursday 8:30 a.m. to 4:45 p. m. or Friday 9:30 a. m. to 4:45 p. m.) with any questions.

ELI Joke of the Week

This week's joke is sourced from [Red Tricycle](#). This week's joke is a play on words.

Question: What building has the most stories in any city?

Answer: The public library!

Quote of the Week

"The secret to doing anything is believing that you can do it. Anything that you believe you can do strong enough, you can do. Anything. As long as you believe."
—Bob Ross, American painter and host of *The Joy of Painting* tv series on PBS.

Source: [Goodreads](#)

SOUND OFF: What are your favorite accomplishments? How did you achieve them? What role did believing in yourself play in your success?

Safety Tips

The ELI believes that overall, the people of Pittsburgh are kind and welcoming to international students. The University of Pittsburgh's goal is to be a place where all students feel like they belong and are valued. You should be treated with respect and feel safe, whether you are at school or in the outside community of Pittsburgh. There may be times when you encounter someone who is not kind and welcoming, though. If this happens, or if you feel that someone has discriminated against you, please keep the following tips in mind:

- If you encounter someone who is rude or discriminates against you in public, ignore the person and leave the area as soon as possible. Do not respond to rudeness with rudeness; the safest and most intelligent thing to do is to walk away.

- If an employee of a business discriminates against you, leave the area, and write down the time, place, what happened, and name of the employee, if you have it.
- It is important to report inappropriate behavior to a store or office manager – the company or office will want to know if their employee is using inappropriate behavior. Stacy can help you decide if you want to make a report and how to do it. Stacy's email is sar72@pitt.edu.

The ELI is sharing these tips because it is good to be prepared in case something negative happens, but we are also confident that your time in Pittsburgh will be filled with positive experiences! We are committed to doing everything we can to make that happen, so please don't hesitate to contact Stacy if you have any questions or concerns.