Welcome to Spring Semester 2021! This term we will do lots of fun activities so that you can practice English, make friends, and have fun outside of the classroom.

The ELI News is a weekly newsletter published by the ELI. The ELI News contains important information and announcements that you’ll need. You might also do activities with the ELI News in your Reading classes and perhaps other classes as well.

While the University is operating remotely, students will receive The ELI News in their Pitt email on Thursday mornings. The ELI news can also be found on the ELI’s website.

ELI Activity:

Virtual Tour of Pittsburgh
Sat, Jan. 23 * 1-2:00 pm

Did you know Pittsburgh has been ranked as the “Most Livable City in the US” several times by both Forbes.com and The Economist? We have a vibrant arts & culture scene, professional sports, world-class museums, many parks and outdoor activities, and friendly neighborhoods. Let’s explore the city together virtually!

Whether you’ve recently arrived to Pittsburgh or have been here for a while, join us for this virtual tour where we’ll show you around our neighborhoods; talk about our favorite places to eat, shop, and visit; share photos; and answer any questions you might have about our beautiful city. This is a great way to meet ELI students in other classes and levels, practice your English, and start planning your outdoor adventures for when group activities are permitted.

Advance registration is required. Our tour will begin at 1:00 pm on Zoom. After you register, you will receive an email with more information about this activity. For this Zoom meeting, you will use the same password that you use to access your ELI classes. If you have any questions about this ELI activity, please contact Rob Mucklo.

ELI Activity:

ELI Virtual Happy Hour
Friday, January 22 * 3:00-4:00 PM

You’re invited to the ELI Intensive English Program’s Virtual Happy Hour! Join us on Zoom on Friday, January 22, from 3:00 pm to 4:00 pm to celebrate the end of the first week of classes and to welcome the weekend.

This is a great opportunity to meet ELI students from other levels, meet other ELI teachers, and practice English in a relaxed, social environment. Did you know that there are students from 9 different countries in the ELI this semester? We will chat, play games, mingle virtually in breakout rooms on Zoom, talk about your ideas for future ELI activities, and more! Please register in advance by 1:00 PM on Friday for this activity so that we can plan for the games. You will use the same password you use to access your ELI classes.

“Happy hour” is traditionally a period of the day from 4:00 to 6:00 pm when drinks are sold at reduced prices at restaurants and bars. For the ELI’s Virtual Happy Hour, you can enjoy coffee, tea, juice, or whatever your favorite beverage is from the comfort of your own home. We hope you join us!

ELI Activity:

ELI Activities This Spring

Welcome to Spring 2021 in the ELI! Even though there are social distancing policies and procedures that we must follow, we will still plan weekly virtual social and cultural activities to give you opportunities use your English outside of class and have some fun!
At some point we would love to do activities in person and outdoors, so as soon as we have permission from the government and the University we’ll explore those options.

We already have lots of ideas for virtual activities:

- Virtual Happy Hour – Fri., Jan. 22, 3-4:00 pm
- Explore Pittsburgh – Sat., Jan. 23, 1-2:00 pm
- Scavenger Hunt – TBD
- Cooking Lesson – brownies, macaroni & cheese, and more! - TBD
- Valentine’s Day Cards & Traditions – TBD
- Online Video Game Competition - TBD
- International Speed Friending - TBD
- Virtual Movie Night – (time and movie TBD)
- Poetry Writing for Non-Native Speakers of English – TBD
- Virtual Picnic – TBD
- Language & Music Club – TBD
- Reading Club - TBD

We’ll announce all of the dates and times in upcoming issues of the ELI News. You can also visit the ELI Activities Calendar online.

Off-campus and in-person activities may be added if and when University and government policies allow for it.

**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.

**Talk Time Conversation Groups**

By: Suzanne Meyer

Talk Time conversation groups meet for one hour each week. Each group includes an English speaker and a small group of about ELI students. Joining a Talk Time conversation group is a great way to practice listening and speaking as well as to learn about culture!

**Look in next week’s ELI News for more information about Talk Time** as well as details about how to register for a Talk Time group!

**Pitt Emergency Alert System**

By Stacy Ranson

It is very important that ELI students know when there is an emergency regarding the University of Pittsburgh. For this reason, all ELI students must sign up for the Emergency Notification System that is provided by the University of Pittsburgh. This system will contact you by phone, email, or text, to tell you when there is an emergency regarding the University. When there is an emergency, you should follow the directions from the system notification.

To subscribe to the Pitt Emergency Notification System:

- Log in to my.pitt.edu
- Click on “My Resources” at the top of the page
- Click on “Emergency Notification”
- Enter your phone number and check whether you would like a voice message or text
- Click “Submit”

It is very easy to sign up and only takes a minute. Please sign up today!

**Write for the ELI News**

The ELI loves to publish articles by its students. Would you like to share your thoughts or an essay you wrote? Would you like to write about your American experience? Would you like to teach us something about your culture? If so, please email your submissions to us at elipitt@pitt.edu. This is a good chance to improve your English and have your writing published. All levels are welcome!

**ELI Storytellers Series**

One of the benefits of studying at the ELI is the chance to meet and to learn from people with diverse backgrounds.
backgrounds and experience. The ELI Storytellers Series gives students an opportunity to share their stories with classmates. Speakers give a 10-15 minute presentation, followed by a question and answer period. The talks are scheduled during the 12:00 or 1:00 lunch break or after classes at 4:00. The series is open to all ELI students, and it is a great way to get extra speaking and listening practice outside of class. Your English doesn’t have to be perfect! This is a great opportunity to challenge yourself and share your story with ELI friends, teachers and classmates.

How about you? Do you have an interest or a skill you would like to tell us about? Have you accomplished something special or done something fun and exciting? Would you like to share information about your culture or hometown? What is your story? If you are interested in giving a short presentation, email Heather at hlm44@pitt.edu.

New Student Checklist

Did you remember to:

• Get your Student ID card?
• Activate and begin to regularly use your Pitt email?
• Update your mailing address?
• Submit a copy of your Financial Guarantee?
• Give a copy of your Financial Guarantee to the Student Payment Center?
• Buy your textbooks?
• Make sure all of your technology for class is working and software is updated, including virus and malware protection?

Conversation Partners

By: Suzanne Meyer

The Culture and Language Exchange Program pairs ELI IEP students with English speaking “Conversation Partners” for informal communication. It’s a great chance for each person to meet someone and learn about another culture in English. Your partner may want to practice your language, too. Look for more details about registering for a conversation partner in next week’s ELI News.

ELI Absence Policy

For the Spring 2021 term, attendance will be taken each day in class on Zoom. You must attend each class during the Zoom class period to be counted present. Please note that the ELI attendance policy states that “there is no such thing as an excused absence” in the ELI. Even if you are sick, the absence must be counted as an absence according to the ELI rules.

According to the ELI absence policy, if you miss over 8 classes, you will not receive a certificate of attendance at the end of the term. If you miss over 12, you may not be invited back to the ELI next term. If you are an F-1 student and you miss over 15 classes, your visa may be terminated. Please see the online Student Handbook for more information on the ELI attendance policy. In addition, please remember that sponsored students have attendance rules from their sponsors, as well.

Remember that if you do not do the work in your classes and the homework, this will affect your grade. If you want to make progress with your language learning, it is important that you attend class on time, regularly, with your homework complete. Please contact Stacy if you have any questions or concerns about attendance in the ELI.

Health Insurance Requirements

The ELI requires all students to show proof of health insurance coverage. The ELI does not recommend or offer specific health insurance plans. Students may choose any hospital insurance plan they like, and the ELI will request a copy of the insurance card with the student’s name. Students who do not provide proof of health insurance by 12:00 p.m. on Friday, January 29, 2020 will not be permitted to register for classes. Please email Stacy if you have any questions or need help finding insurance. Do not submit the proof of insurance through email. Please submit it using this secure link: https://dsaspitt.wufoo.com/forms/p1lquhtz01f7d2d/

U.S. Alcohol Laws

All ELI students and employees of the University must fully obey the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania regarding the possession and consumption of alcohol. These laws prohibit providing alcohol to anyone under the age of 21 or to anyone visibly intoxicated. Anyone under the age of 21 is prohibited from possessing or consuming alcoholic beverages under any circumstances, and anyone under the age of 21 is prohibited from being on licensed premises where alcohol is served, unless under proper supervision. Please contact Stacy if you have any questions about these laws.

How to Get a Pitt ID Remotely

Panther Central, like the rest of the University of Pittsburgh, has changed how they operate due to COVID-19. To get a Pitt ID from the comfort and safety of your own home, follow these directions:

1) Make sure your Pitt email is active and you are using it.
2) Go to the Panther Central website (pc.pitt.edu) and click “Panther Card.”
3) Read through the “Panther Card Self Service Photo Upload” and
click “Online Photo Submission.” (They also have great guidelines on acceptable photos and a “Frequently Asked Questions” section.) Read the instructions. They’ve included photo requirements and some tips for getting good photos for your ID card. Then take your picture.

4) When you have a photo that you think fits the requirements, submit it by clicking “Online Photo Submission” on that same page. You should use your Pitt email address to do this so that Panther Central can verify your identity faster.

5) Send an email to panthercentral@pitt.edu from your Pitt email account to alert them that you have submitted a photo and need a Pitt ID card. Include your Peoplesoft Number and a current, valid mailing address.

You will be notified by Panther Central when your card is in the mail. Due to the COVID-19 situation, Panther Central asks that you allow 1-2 weeks for this process. If you need to re-take your photo because it does not meet the requirements, this process could take longer. Please note that students studying remotely in their home countries are not eligible to receive a Pitt ID.

### What Can You Do with a Student ID Card?

Did you know that your Pitt student ID card gives you free access to transportation, the student computing labs, and libraries? With your valid Pitt ID you can also get discounted rates on museum visits too! Here are some of the resources available to you when you carry your Pitt student ID.

**Museums:** Free admission at the Andy Warhol Museum, The Mattress Factory, the Carnegie Museum of Art and Natural History and other museums in Pittsburgh.

**Computing Labs:** Free use of the computing labs throughout campus, including Hillman Library and the Cathedral of Learning.

**Transportation:** Free use of Pittsburgh city buses as well as University of Pittsburgh shuttles around campus. The Pittsburgh city train (called “the T” by locals) is free with your Pitt ID too.

**Other Fun Stuff:** Free admission to the Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Gardens, as well as free rides on the Duquesne Incline and more!

### I-94 Numbers Required

Each student must give the ELI Main Office his or her I-94 admission number by 4:00 p.m. EST on Friday, January 29. To find your DHS I-94 admission number:

1. Go to: [https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94/#/home](https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94/#/home)
2. Click “Get Most Recent I-94”
3. Click on “Consent and Continue”
4. Enter information exactly as it appears on your visa.
5. Submit by 4:00 p.m. EST on Friday, January 29 using this secure link: [https://dsas.pitt.wufoo.com/forms/p1lquhtz01f7d3ld/](https://dsas.pitt.wufoo.com/forms/p1lquhtz01f7d3ld/)

Email the ELI Main Office at elipitt@pitt.edu if you have any questions.

### Paying Tuition Spring 2021

Tuition is charged to your Pitt account typically within 24 hours of registering. To avoid late fees, you should pay your tuition for the Fall 2020 term by February 10, 2021. Check your account by logging in to my.pitt.edu and clicking PittPay. There are several ways to pay your tuition.

- eCheck: Free online transfer from a US bank account to your Pitt account.
- Payment plan: $45 fee, see [http://payments.pitt.edu/payment-plans/](http://payments.pitt.edu/payment-plans/)
- Credit cards: online only at my.pitt.edu. There is an additional 2.75% fee for using a credit card.
- International students paying with a foreign bank account may use Flywire.

Please note that the Student Payment Center offices are currently staffed remotely. There is nobody in the Thackeray Hall offices, so cash, paper checks, and money orders cannot be accepted or processed at this time. Please email payments@pitt.edu (include your 7 digit student ID or Peoplesoft number) or call 412-624-7520 for remote assistance.

### Important Dates for Spring 2021

Below are some important dates to mark on your calendars for Spring 2021 for the Intensive English Program (IEP).

**Program Dates for the Intensive English Program (IEP):**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IEP Last Day to Submit Proof of Health Insurance and I-94’s:</td>
<td>January 29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IEP Tuition Payment Deadline:</td>
<td>February 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IEP Last Day of Classes/Closing Ceremony:</td>
<td>April 12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**IEP First Day of Classes:** January 19

**IEP Last Day to Withdraw:** January 29

**Holidays (No ELI Classes):**

- January 18, February 23, March 24

**IEP Final Exams:** April 5-8

Visit the ELI NEWS online: [www.eli.pitt.edu/eli-news](http://www.eli.pitt.edu/eli-news)
Withdrawal and Refund Policy

If you wish to drop one or more of your classes, you should immediately inform the ELI Main Office (ELIpitt@pitt.edu) and the ELI Student Advisor, Stacy Ranson (SAR72@pitt.edu).

If you drop courses before the end of the ELI Add/Drop period on February 5, 2021, you will receive a full refund. This check will be mailed to your home mailing address. This takes approximately 2 weeks. If you drop courses after the ELI Add/Drop period on February 5, 2021, you will NOT receive a refund.

Sponsorship Letters

If you have an official sponsorship letter from your government (SACM or CBIE, for example) you must submit it to the ELI Main Office. Students must send an updated sponsor letter to the ELI and to the Student Payment Center each term. If you have any questions about this, please contact the ELI Main Office at elipitt@pitt.edu. Please submit the letters to the ELI using this secure link (do not email):
https://dsaspitt.wufoo.com/forms/p1qtz01f7d2d/

ELI Joke of the Week

Every week, we try to include some family-friendly jokes to make everyone laugh. It’s also a good way to practice word play in English. This week’s joke is courtesy of Parade. Feel free to send us your favorite family-friendly jokes.

Question: What do you think of that new diner on the moon?

Answer: The food was good, but there really wasn’t much atmosphere.

Community Conversation Course begins January 2021

The ELI is pleased to announce that our Community Conversation Course (CCC) is returning for the Spring 2021 semester. This course helps non-native speakers of English improve their English language speaking and listening conversation skills. CCC is open to University of Pittsburgh students, staff, and faculty as well as to community members. All classes will be held remotely over Zoom. To register for CCC, applicants must complete the CCC online application and pay the $100 registration fee. More information can be found on the ELI website (linked above).

How to Contact the ELI’s Main Office for Assistance

As the Parkvale Building that houses the ELI offices and classrooms remains closed, the Main Office is happy to assist you virtually and over the phone.

For virtual assistance, you can email ELIpitt@pitt.edu at any time. Someone will reply within 24 hours or as soon as possible. Emails sent over the weekend will be answered the following business day or as soon as possible. You can also request a Zoom meeting. All emails will be answered and Zoom calls scheduled during normal business hours (8:30 a.m. to 4:45 p.m. EST Monday-Friday).

For assistance over the phone, call 412-624-5901 during normal business hours. If you cannot get through, or if you need to call outside of normal business hours, leave a voicemail and someone will return your call within 24 hours. Weekend calls will be answered as soon as possible during the week.

ELI Quote Corner

Every week, we try to include a quote to inspire your thoughts and conversation with friends, classmates, and family. Feel free to send us your favorite inspirational quotes.

“The best preparation for tomorrow is doing your best today.” – H. Jackson Brown, Jr. (author of Life’s Little Instruction Book)

Source: BrainyQuote

SOUND OFF: Do you agree or disagree with this quote, and why? What do you do to prepare for tomorrow? What do you do to make sure you’re always doing your best (including ways to take care of yourself)?

NameCoach at Pitt

NameCoach allows you to record yourself saying your name, which helps others to know how to pronounce it. Your NameCoach recording can easily be shared in your email signature (set this up under “Settings” or by clicking on the gear symbol), LinkedIn, and social media.

There’s more to NameCoach than just recording your name so that others know how to say it. Instructors can add it to Canvas, and you can also specify which personal gender pronouns (he, she, or they) you prefer.

Go to my.pitt.edu to get started, and search for NameCoach. You can also read more about it in Pittwire (a University of Pittsburgh newsletter) and on the Pitt Information Technology website.

The ELI bids you

to the Spring 2021 Semester!