

## An International Newcomer's Guide to...

# Santa Monica High School

Fall 2024

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## Over 35 languages are spoken here!

Santa Monica has a terrific high school! It also has a lively multicultural community with many international students, as well as bilingual students who have lived here all their lives. This guide is for newly arrived international students who might still be learning English. It was created by students for you... we hope this is helpful!

Russian

Spanish

Chinese

Portuguese

Korean

Farsi/Persian

French

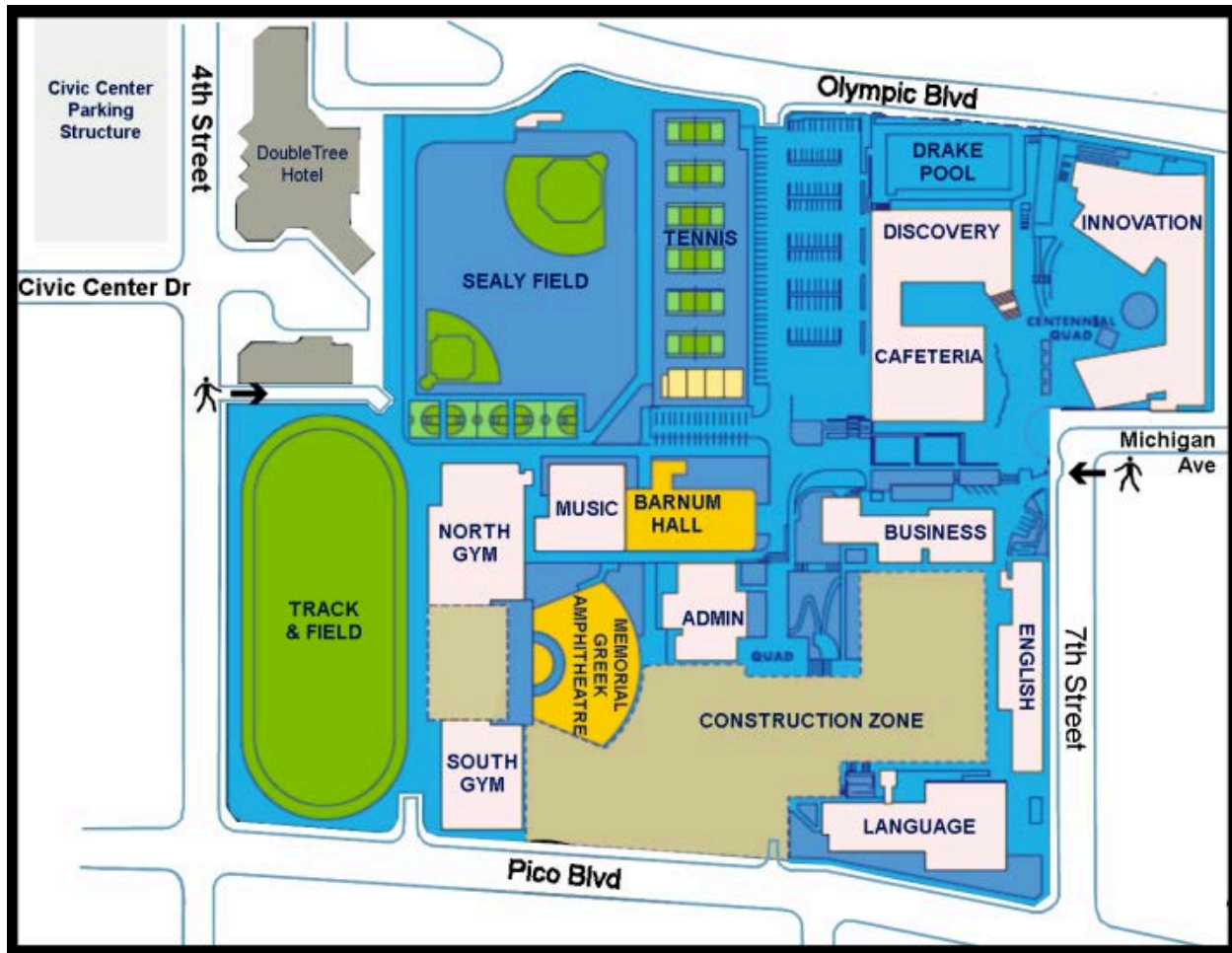
Amharic

Polish

This guide was made for students by the Student English Language Advisory Committee (2024). Content was drafted by the Student ELAC. Translators included Daria Zolotovska, Maiia Palshyna, Arthemen Shakibaeian, Bahar Eftekhari, Zhihan Andy Cao, Sofia Arteaga-Selvas. Editing by EL Program Lead Teacher Adrienne Karyadi.

## How do I... find my classroom on the first day of school?

You will use the grade book program called "[Aeries](#)" to find your schedule. Open the app called Aeries on the first day of school and it will tell you what room to go to for your first class.



**On your schedule, the room number will be a letter and a number. The letter stands for the building name. Ground floor rooms start with the number 1.**

Abbreviation for building names:

A - Admin	D - Discovery	L - Language
BH- Barnum Hall	E - English	N - North Gym
B - Business	I - Innovation	S - South Gym

[School's map on the Samohi website](#)

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## What are “houses”?

Because the school is so big, it is divided into 4 groups, called “houses.” A “house” is the office where your advisor and principal meet with students.

You can go to this office and ask your advisor or the house assistant to help you with any problems you have. Advisors are the ones who meet with you to make your schedule and help you solve problems.

The house office also helps you with these other things:

- **Absences**—whenever you are not in school, the house office has to know where you are. Your family can call the house office to tell the school if you were sick, at a doctor’s office, on vacation, or absent for other reasons.
- **Questions**—advisors, house assistants, and principals can answer all your questions! Such as questions about...
  - your grades from another country (what counts for credit in the US?)
  - what you need to take to go to college in the U.S.
  - what courses you need to take next year
  - how to solve any problems
  - how to find clubs and activities on campus
  - how to join a sports team
- **Schedule changes**—at the beginning of the year, advisors will be making schedule changes in D100. If you need a schedule change for any reason, it’s better to ask advisors as early as possible about those changes.
- **Leaving school early**—if you need to leave school early, your family has to call the house office or write a note. The house assistant will send a special pass to your class so that you can leave. The pass also tells security that you have permission to leave campus.
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The 4 different offices are listed here:

House Name	Phone Number (310) 395-3204	Office	Principal and Assistant	Advisors
S	Extension 71-139	E109	Tristan Komlos Ms. M. Anaya	<a href="#">Lisa Demirjian</a> <a href="#">Amy Golden Malone</a> <a href="#">Rachel Bereny</a>
A	Extension 71-208	i208	Walter Gavidia Ms. T. Morris	<a href="#">Jessica Garrido</a> <a href="#">Yunuen Valencia</a> (Spanish)

<b>M</b>	Extension 71-281	D201	Lisette Bravo	<a href="#">Maribel Pulido</a> (Spanish) <a href="#">Lauren Takashita</a>
<b>O</b>	Extension 71-381	D301	Greg Pitts Ms. E. Gilbert	<a href="#">Maricela Gonzalez</a> (Spanish) <a href="#">Mele LeVeaux</a>

The school wants every student to get ready for college or a career. So the advisors and the school will ask you to take exams to go to US universities. These tests are listed below:

**PSAT:** In grades 9, 10 and 11, you will take this test in October. It's called the PSAT because it is a ***practice*** SAT test. The test is free and you will take it during school hours. However, when you reach 11th grade, the PSAT exam is very important because schools use the score you get to decide if you are eligible for scholarships. So be sure to do really well when you take this exam in October of your junior year!

**SAT:** Some colleges require this test, called the Scholastic Aptitude Test. (There is a different version of this test, called the ACT, that you could take instead.) Many publicly funded universities stopped using this test a few years ago, but they might change the rules by the time you apply for college. The school usually offers a free test session for juniors to take this test during school hours.

## What will my classes be like?

### You will have only 6 subjects each semester.

Your advisor will give you a schedule with only one class for each core subject that's required for college entrance (such as Math, English Language Arts, History, Science). Other subjects (Art, Music, Languages, Career education, technical training) are called "electives" because you get to pick which ones to take. Also, students are required to take Physical Education (Sports) for 2 years.

If you find out that you are not in the correct class, you can see your advisor to change your schedule during the first 2 weeks.

### Each class meets 4 times a week.

The bell schedule for when classes meet is below.

Monday, Tuesday, Friday	Wednesdays EVEN Flex <i>No AM classes on these days</i>	Thursday ODD Flex
Period A 7:20 – 8:22 AM	<i>Staff Meeting 7:40 – 8:40 AM</i>	Period A 7:20 – 8:22 AM
Period 1 8:30 – 9:25 AM	Period 2 8:55 – 10:24 AM	Period 1 8:30 – 9:59 AM
Homeroom 9:34 – 9:43 AM	Break 10:24 – 10:26 AM	Break 9:59 – 10:01 AM
Period 2 9:43 – 10:38 AM	Period 4 10:35 – 12:04 PM	Period 3 10:10 – 11:39 AM
Break 10:38 – 10:40 AM	Flex-Time 12:13 – 1:03 PM	Flex-Time 11:48 – 12:39 PM
Period 3 10:49 – 11:44 AM	LUNCH 1:03 – 1:38 PM	LUNCH 12:39 – 1:14 PM
Period 4 11:53 – 12:48 PM	Period 6 1:47 – 3:16 PM	Period 5 1:23 – 2:52 PM
LUNCH 12:48 – 1:23 PM		<i>Staff Meeting 3:10 – 3:40 PM</i>
Period 5 1:32 – 2:27 PM		
Period 6 2:36 – 3:31 PM		

### You will have a flexible study period ("Flex Time") 2 times a week.

On Wednesdays and Thursdays, you only have 3 of your classes. Each class will be longer than usual. But there's an extra "class" that day. This is called "Flex Time." You can use your Flex Time to study for tests, ask teachers questions, catch up on reading or homework, or work on a project.

You have to sign up with a teacher for flex time. To do this, use the website "[Enriching Students.](#)"

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How do I...

make friends?

The school plans on-campus activities to help students have fun together. These activities will also help you make friends.

- Pep rallies
- Dances—Prom (formal), Homecoming
- Art shows
- Concerts
- Homecoming carnival
- Games for sports (like football, basketball, etc. games)



## Join a club!

Clubs give students a chance to do their favorite activities at lunch. Student groups are forming clubs in the first 2-4 weeks of school. Then a list is posted of all the clubs and where they meet on campus. You can usually find a list of clubs on the [Samohi web page](#). Click on “Students” at the top, then on “Activities.”

## Join a team! Or the band!

If you like sports, ask your advisor about how to join a team. Usually, coaches will schedule tryouts, but if you miss those events, you can still talk to the coach. You can also watch practices.

If you already play music, consider taking an extra class in the morning to be in the Samohi band. Band students are usually very friendly with each other and spend a lot of time together.



## Ask a teacher.

A lot of teachers will know other students who speak your home language. They can introduce you! Your advisor also probably knows students who can talk to you in another language. If a teacher knows you are looking for friends, they can recommend clubs or activities you might like. If you tell a teacher about something you miss from home, they can help you find the same thing here.

## Join drama, music, technology, writing or other electives.

If you want to work on your listening, speaking, reading and writing skills, certain elective classes will help you... and you will be working with people at the same time, making friends.



## Ask your classmates.

American schools emphasize working with others and projects. So you will often be sitting in groups and working together on an assignment. This is a chance to get to know other students and practice listening and speaking skills, too. Don't be afraid to tell your classmates that you are from another country. They will probably be very curious to know more!

Your classmates can tell you where to go after school to eat your favorite foods or do your favorite hobbies. They can tell you how to do things like sign up for school leadership or try out for a play. When you are part of a group that plays games online, your friends might go to Samohi. Are you a skateboarder? Some of the people at the skate park probably go to Samohi.

They can also help you figure out Google Classroom and Aeries.

**Don't forget that you can make friends outside of school, too!**

## Where do I go to...

The following list are places on campus that you should know about.

**Vike's Inn:** This is the place you go to buy PE clothes before the school year starts. It's inside the building closest to the Greek Amphitheater (called the Administration building). You can also buy school t-shirts, school supplies, and snacks. When there is any sports game on campus, the Vike's Inn will sell the tickets. And special events like prom or Grad Nite are sold there too.

**Textbook room:** This is the place where you get your books for class before the school year starts. It is in the basement of the Discovery Building. This is also where you will pick up your computer (a Chromebook) for the first time. If you lose something, the textbook room has a "lost and found." (check back several times). To report a lost item, tell your house assistant.

**Computer Help:** If your computer doesn't work or has problems, you can fill out a fix-it ticket. Click on [this link](#) to see other solutions. The computer technicians on campus have an office in i103 if you need in-person help.

**Clever:** Teachers require students to use many different applications. To avoid creating new accounts and passwords for each application, the school has a single sign-on service called "Clever." You will use it to see your online textbook, too. You can find a blue button labelled "Clever" on the Samohi web page.

**Library:** This is a useful resource at Samohi, but because it is in the Language building, few people go there. So it's a nice, quiet, relaxing place to study before or after school. Tutors can help you with classes in the library. [The library](#) has databases and online books, too.

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## How do I... find my assignments on the computer?

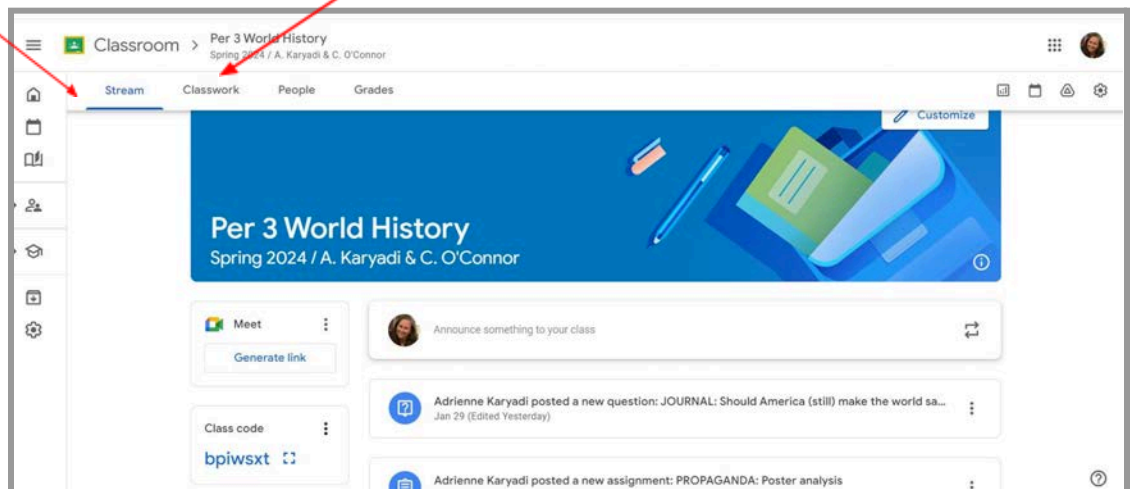
Every student automatically is enrolled in Google Classrooms for your teachers' websites.

- You can use the school Chromebook to get your Google Classroom classes
  - Every time you use the school computer, it will automatically have your correct Google sign in.
  - If you forget your school Google account and password, you can ask your advisor or the House office assistant.
- You can use an app on your phone to access the classes too.

[Google Classroom](#) Home Page

Whenever a teacher posts anything new, it will appear on the "stream"

Click here to find out what your assignments are



Some teachers will post your scores on Google Classroom and others will post those grades only in the electronic gradebook (called Aeries). Google Classroom doesn't have all of your assignments for the class listed; it only lists the assignments you need the computer to complete.

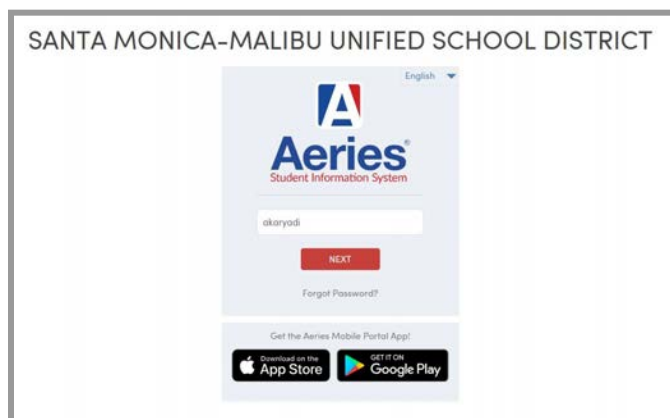
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# How do I... find out what my grades are?

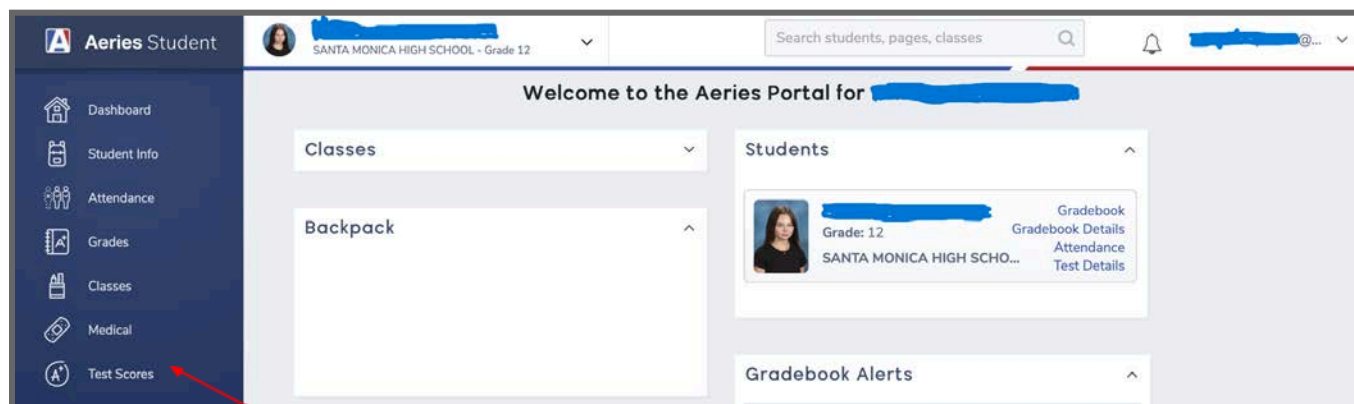
## The electronic gradebook is called Aeries.

Teachers will put in grades that you can see from Google Classroom. They will also put in grades that are not posted on Google Classroom. The official grade is in AERIES. You can access Aeries from your school Chromebook or by using an app on your phone.

To access your grades on the Chromebook, go to the Samohi webpage and click on the “Parents” tab. Then click on the “Aeries Student/Parent Portal.” You’ll see a screen that looks like this:



Once you log in (it's the same log in information as logging in to your Chromebook), you will see a screen that looks something like this:



This side of the screen will help you find most of the information you want

On your phone, you need to download the app from an app store (Aeries Student Information System). The first screen you'll see when you log in is something like this:



This usually shows a list of the recently graded or assigned work in class.

This menu at the bottom allows you to see your grades with a click  
You can check for missing assignments by class

Every 6 or 7 weeks, the school will send to your parents an electronic report card. Official transcripts only list grades at the end of the semester. Fall semester ends in December. Spring semester ends in June. Grades in the United States usually are based on percentages:

A = 100 - 90%

C = 79 - 70%

F = 59% or less\*

B = 89 - 80%

D = 69 = 60%\*\*

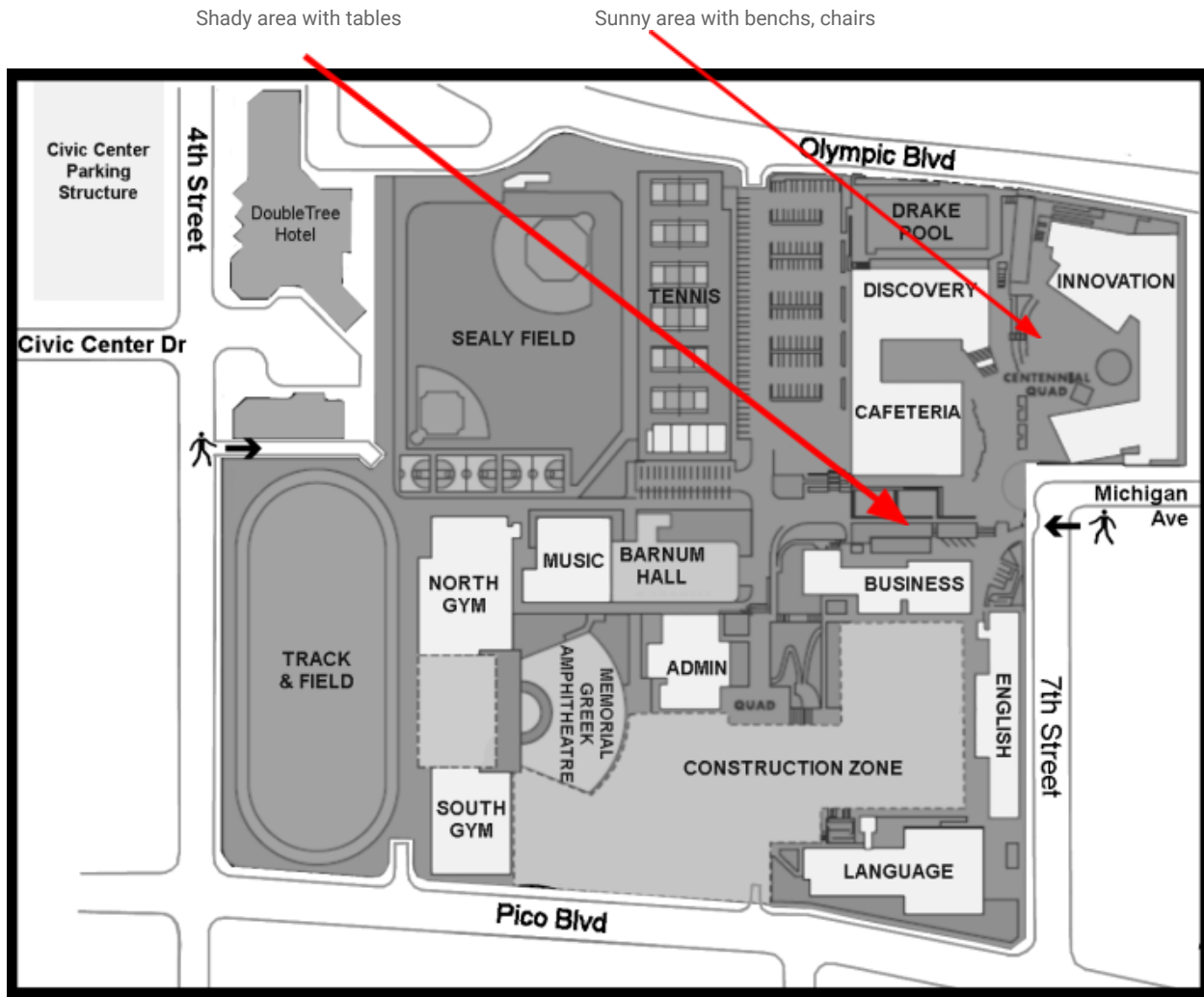
\*This grade requires a student to re-take the class.

\*\* A grade of D or lower is not accepted by colleges when students apply there.

Each department has different weights for assessments. Check out the department courses by looking at the [Samohi webpage](#), and clicking on "Departments" to read more.

## How do I ... know where to buy and eat lunch?

The open air spaces outside of buildings are the best place to eat lunch. There is also a cafeteria for eating lunch.



### To buy lunch, you have several options

Food carts will sell snack food and fast food on campus. The cafeteria also sells food like salads, pasta, fruits, snacks, and drinks. **But every student is allowed to eat lunch for free.**

If you are in grades 10-12, you can apply to get an off-campus pass. This pass lets you leave school during lunch to buy food. As long as you are back before classes, you get to keep your pass. But if you do not return on time, you can lose your off-campus lunch pass.

You cannot eat inside classrooms unless teachers allow you to eat in their classroom. You aren't supposed to eat on the furniture in the hallways of the Discovery Building, either.

## Who do I... ask about my English test results?

The ELPAC test is required by federal law when a new student who knows a language besides English enrolls.

Ms. Mendoza, the lady working in the enrollment office, will schedule all international students to take a practice test. This will help your advisor to put you in the right English class. About 3 weeks after you start school, you'll take the official test. Your first test (the "[Initial ELPAC](#)") will tell the school what your status is.

- **IFEP** = You are fluent in English on your very first try. Congratulations! The school will not be giving you any special assistance to learn English more fluently.
- **EL** = You are still learning English. You qualify for extra services to learn English. Those services could include college test preparation, extra English classes, classes with other international students, and classes with an extra aide in the classroom.

If the school thinks you need extra English classes, especially with writing, they will put you in a class called an ELD (English Language Development) class. If your English is at the Beginning ELD level, you will only take an ELD English class; all other levels will take the regular English class for their grade. The school can change your schedule if it is wrong.

If you have an ELD class, and you make quick progress, you can change your extra English class after the fall semester.

Your English class will give everyone an extra English test called STAR Reading. This test happens 3 times a year. If your scores on this test are above 38%, you are eligible to be reclassified as "Redesignated (Fluent in English)" or RFEP. But in order to qualify, you also have to score at Level 4 on the "[Summative](#)" ELPAC exam in spring.

If your score on the STAR Reading test is below 38%, or if your ELPAC score is below level 4, you will continue to receive services to improve your English skills.

If you have questions about these tests, you can ask your advisor to tell you about your status or scores on recent tests.

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