

Independent projects

Students in this seminar must complete an independent project of their own choice. You may choose **one** of the following projects, or suggest your own idea for a project. Choose something that is interesting to you. Try to choose a project that suits your own needs, interests, and preferences. If you would like to suggest a different project, talk to the instructor before the third class.

- Reading journal
- News report
- Conversation partner
- Circles or activities

Reading journal

Reading things that you enjoy allows you to encounter new words and idioms. This helps improve your vocabulary and spelling, and may help with writing and general fluency.

You may choose either books or magazines written for fluent English speakers – what English teachers call "authentic materials" – or books with vocabulary selected for people learning English, which teachers call "graded readers". Some people prefer authentic material because it gives a true image of how native speakers use the language. Other people prefer graded readers because they help you advance your English reading level. Choose material that you find interesting and helpful.

If you choose authentic material, read at least 12 pages per week. If you choose graded readers, read at least one book every other week, and try to increase the level of the books over time.

Every time you read, make a note of what you read, including how many pages.

To receive course credit

Find books.

The Central Library has a collection of English graded readers, called 英語多読読本, which you may wish to check out and read. If you prefer authentic materials, choose any books or magazines, but *not* textbooks.

Read.

Read at least the minimum number of pages or books each week. You may of course read more. Read at least one time each week.

Keep a journal.

Each time you read something, write a note about what you read. Include the title of what you read, the author's name, the date, and the book level (for graded readers) or number of pages (for authentic material). You can also include a response, such as what you liked or disliked about the book.

Hand in your journal.

Hand in your reading journal on or before the due date. During a 15 week term, you should have read at least 180 pages of authentic material or more than 7 graded readers.

Report on a news event

Japanese newspapers such as *The Japan Times* or *Japan News* publish world news in English. In addition, foreign web sites allow us to read, watch, or listen to international news. Sites such as *The Guardian* (a British newspaper), ABC News (an Australian radio and TV network), and NPR (an American radio network) provide different perspectives on events.

Choose some event or topic that is interesting to you. See how different news organizations report on it. See different stories related to the same event published at different times or in different places. Read, watch, or listen to eight or more news stories.

Then write your own report about the event or topic.

To receive course credit

Choose an event or theme.

Pick some recent event that is interesting to you and see how the news media write or talk about it. If there are not many media stories about the event you chose, you should look for stories about additional related events. (You may add to or change your

topic during the term if you need to.)

Read, watch or listen to news.

Follow coverage of the event in newspapers, radio, or television, or online media related to these traditional media. (For example, *New York Times* blogs are acceptable, but personal blogs are not.) Collect **at least eight news stories** in English about the event or theme. You may include additional stories in Japanese, but you do not have to.

Make notes.

Follow the pattern below. Write down as much information as you can about the news item. If information such as the reporter's name is not available, you can skip it. Then write a short summary (in English or Japanese) of the news item.

Hirano, Keiji. July 28 2014. "Original barefoot gen manga on atomic bombings goes on display." *The Japan Times* page 3.

Write your report.

Write a report in English about the event or theme. Your report should describe the events in enough detail so that someone who does not know about it can understand what happened. You can also describe any differences among the media stories you collected. Be sure to indicate which news stories you got your information from. Write about two to three pages. Hand in your report by the due date.

Conversation partner

The best way to improve your speaking ability is to speak. If you can find a partner to speak with, you and your partner can practice English and Japanese and learn more about each other.

Your partner does not have to be a native speaker of English, but you and your partner must have different mother tongues. For example, if you are a Japanese speaker your partner must not be a Japanese speaker. Also, about half of your conversations should take place in English. For example, if you meet for a total of eight hours, you should speak English for at least four hours. The instructor cannot help you find a conversation partner. Finding a partner may be the most difficult part of this assignment.

To receive course credit

Find a partner.

As it says above, your partner does not have to be a native speaker of English. But your partner must have a different native language than you do, and you must speak English with your partner.

Meet with your partner and have a conversation.

You and your partner should meet eight times or more. Your conversations must total **at least eight hours** to receive credit. If your partner wants to work on Japanese, speak Japanese together about half the time. Speak English together about half the time, for at least four hours total.

Keep a record.

Write down your partner's name and some basic information about him or her. Every time you meet your partner, write down the day and time. After your meeting, make a note of what you talked about, and about how much of the time you used English. Your notes should be in English.

Hand in your record.

By the due date, hand in the record of the days and times you met, what you talked about, and how much English you used.

English related circles or activities

There are a number of clubs or activities at Nagoya University dedicated to English or international communication. Participating in these activities allows you to use English with other people, which is a great way to improve fluency and understanding.

Groups at Nagoya University include Nagoya University E.S.S., 名古屋大学 English College, and student activities at NU ACS among others. You can also find activities in other places, such as Nagoya International Center or LEX Hippo.

To receive course credit

Check with the instructor.

Tell the instructor which group you are in or plan to join. Explain how you will use English while participating in the group. You must get instructor approval before the fourth class.

Participate in the group.

Be an active member of your group throughout the term.

Keep a journal.

Each week, write down what you did as part of the group. Be sure to include the dates and times of meetings or other activities, and a brief description of what you did.

Write a reflection report.

Write one or two pages in English describing what you did as a group member and how you feel about participating.

Hand in your materials.

By the due date, hand in your reflection report, your journal, and any other related materials.

Other activities

You can try some other independent project if you have one in mind. To receive course credit you must talk to the instructor during the second class and receive instructor approval by the fourth class. Explain specifically what you plan to do, how the project can be evaluated, and how the project will help you improve your abilities.