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## Q&A for St. Mark ESL Registration Fall 2017

### Cost/Payment:

**1. How much are the ESL classes?**

The registration fee is \$25 for the semester; students must also buy a book if they do not already have it.

**2. Do you accept checks/credit cards/debit cards for payment?**

Yes, both credit cards and cash are accepted for the registration fees and the book purchase. Registration is \$25 for ESL, \$10 for Conversation Class, \$10 for Citizenship Preparation, \$10 for Writing Class and \$10 for Beginner Workshop. Books cost \$15 to \$40, depending on class level.

### Location:

**3. Where are the classes?**

Classes meet in the St. Mark Christian Formation Center, 9972 Vale Road, Vienna, VA 22181.

**4. Which Metro station is nearest St. Mark?**

There is NO Metro station near enough to walk from. The Vienna Metro Station is the closest.

**5. Which bus line can I take?**

There is no bus line that serves St. Mark's location during class times (evening).

### Placement Process:

**6. How will my class level be decided?**

Each student will be tested and placed in the appropriate level during registration on **Tuesday, September 19 and Thursday, September 21.**

**7. My mother doesn't know any English. Will she have to take a placement exam?**

Students who truly do not know ANY English will take only an oral exam; Beginner 1 is the level at which students who do not know any English will be placed.



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**8. What if my class is too easy (or hard)?**

Students are asked to attend their assigned class for at least two class sessions. If the class doesn't seem to be a good fit for you, you may talk to the teacher about the possibility of a change in class level. We normally make any changes in the second week of the program.

**Citizenship Preparation:**

**9. Can you tell me about the citizenship instruction?**

All Citizenship Preparation students start in the group class; those students that provide the citizenship instructors with the acknowledgement of receipt of their N-400's by USCIS (United States Citizenship and Immigration Services) are eligible to have one-on-one tutoring and interview practice. The cost of registration is \$10 (cash). Citizenship Preparation class meets on Tuesdays and Thursdays, 7:00 PM – 7:45 PM.

**10. Is it possible to take both citizenship preparation and an ESL class?**

Citizenship Preparation students may also take an intermediate or advanced ESL class.

**11. What if I don't meet the LPR time requirement, but I would like to have citizenship instruction?**

You should consider the Citizenship Preparation class. Once you have met the LPR requirement and filed your N-400, you can also receive one-on-one tutoring and interview practice. Before being assigned a tutor, you will need to provide a copy of the N-400 and the USCIS acknowledgement of receipt of your application.

**12. My sister has already completed the N-400 (Application for Naturalization) form. Is it too late for her to benefit from Citizenship Preparation?**

No. Citizenship one-on-one tutoring is ideal for students who will be tested about 2-4 weeks after the conclusion of the term, but attending will still benefit students who expect to be called for their interviews before the end of the term.

**13. Do I need to take a placement exam for the citizenship instruction?**

There is no "citizenship placement exam," but you will need to take the St. Mark ESL placement exam and demonstrate at least intermediate proficiency.

**Schedule/Inclement Weather Policy:**

**14. When do the St. Mark classes take place?**

ESL classes meet from 8:00 PM – 9:30 PM on Tuesday and Thursday evenings; Conversation Class, Writing Class, Beginner Workshop, and Citizenship Preparation meet from 7:00 PM – 7:45 PM on Tuesday and Thursday evenings. **Classes for Fall 2017 begin on Tuesday, September 26 and end on Thursday, December 14.**

Aug. 7, 2017

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**15. How long is the Fall term?**

**11 weeks (September 26 to December 14) with no classes during the Thanksgiving holiday week, November 21 and 23. No classes on October 31 or December 7.**

**16. What is your inclement weather cancellation policy?**

-If the Fairfax County Public Schools are closed for the entire day due to bad weather, we will not have ESL or citizenship classes at St. Mark ESL.

-Also, if Fairfax Country Public Schools cancel evening activities due to bad weather, we will not have classes at St. Mark ESL.

-If the Fairfax County Public Schools open late in the morning due to bad weather, we will have classes as usual at St. Mark ESL.

-Please listen to the announcements on the radio or television!

**17. I want to study English, but I won't be here this Fall. When is the next term?**

Winter term registration is on Tuesday, January 9 and Thursday, January 11. Classes start on Tuesday, January 16. Check our Web page ([www.stmarkesl.org](http://www.stmarkesl.org)) or visit our Facebook page for information.

**Conversation Class:**

**18. Can you tell me about the Conversation Class?**

We offer an optional conversation class for students who are registered in an intermediate or advanced St. Mark ESL class. Each session is organized around a topic, and students may suggest future topics. The class is divided into small groups of about 4-5 students with an instructor for each group. The Conversation Class meets on Tuesdays & Thursdays from 7:00 PM – 7:45 PM; students will have a short break before their English classes begin at 8:00 PM.

**19. How much does the Conversation Class cost?**

The registration fee for the Conversation Class is \$10 (cash).

**20. Can a student enroll in the Conversation Class only (without taking an ESL class)?**

No, Conversation Class is a “bonus” for our ESL students; students must be enrolled in an intermediate or advanced St. Mark ESL class to register for Conversation Class.

**21. Can a Beginner student take the Conversation Class?**

No, Conversation students must at least be at the Intermediate 1 level.



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### Writing Class:

#### **22. Can you tell me about the Writing Class?**

We offer an optional Writing Class for students who are registered in an Intermediate 3, Advanced 1 or Advanced 2 St. Mark ESL class. Homework is required. The Writing Class will meet on Tuesdays & Thursdays from 7:00 PM – 7:45 PM; students will have a short break before their English classes begin at 8:00 PM.

#### **23. How much does the Writing Class cost?**

The registration fee for the Writing Class is \$10 plus \$25 for the textbook.

#### **24. Can a student enroll in the Writing Class only (without taking an ESL class)?**

No, the Writing Class is a “bonus” for our ESL students; students must be enrolled in an Intermediate 3, Advanced 1 or Advanced 2 St. Mark ESL class to register for Writing Class.

### Beginner Workshop Class:

#### **25. Can you tell me about the Beginner Workshop?**

We offer this optional class to improve beginner students’ skills, reinforcing the skills taught in the Beginner 1 & Beginner 2 classes. The workshop instructors use both interactive exercises and the companion workbooks for the Beginner 1 & Beginner 2 classes. After some initial exercises with the entire group, the students are subdivided into Beginner 1 students & Beginner 2 students for skills practice.

#### **26. How much does the Beginner Workshop cost?**

The registration fee for Beginner Workshop is \$10 plus \$15 for the textbook.

#### **27. Can a student enroll in the Beginner Workshop without taking a regular English class?**

No, the class is a “bonus” for our students who are already enrolled in the Beginner 1 or Beginner 2 English class.

### Class content/teachers/students:

#### **28. Which countries are the ESL students from?**

Our students are quite diverse and came from over 30 different countries this year. In recent years, the largest groups have been from South Korea, El Salvador, Bolivia, Colombia and Peru. The multinational nature of the program helps our students communicate in English because it is the only language we all share.



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**29. How many students are in each class?**

There are usually 15-20 students in each class, but some classes may have up to 25.

**30. Do the classes involve homework or exams?**

Sometimes. This depends on the individual teachers, except that all students are tested in the spring for fall placement.

**31. I already know enough English to get by. Are there classes for more advanced students?**

Yes, St. Mark offers three intermediate levels and two advanced levels for students who already have some proficiency in English. We also offer a unique conversation class and a writing skills class.

**30. Who are the teachers in the St. Mark program?**

The teachers and aides in our program are all volunteers, which is why our program is so economical. Some are professional teachers, but most are not. All of them are dedicated to helping our students master English and adjust to life in the USA. Most classes have two volunteers, a teacher and an aide or two co-teachers. The teaching teams are typically different on Tuesday evening versus Thursday evening.

**Miscellaneous Registration Questions:**

**31. I can't make it to registration by 7:00 PM. Can I come later?**

You should come as early as possible because the registration and testing process can take 90 minutes or more. If you can arrive before 8:00 PM, you will be able to register. Keep in mind that ESL classes will meet from 8:00 PM to 9:30 PM, so your schedule must allow for you to arrive before 8:00 PM for classes. Note that the Citizenship, Conversation and Writing Classes take place at 7:00 pm, before the ESL classes.

**32. I can't come on **September 19 or 21** . Can I register on **September 26**, the first day of class?**

Yes, but some classes may not have space for additional students. You may contact (703) 980-9380 for more information.

**33. What if the weather is bad on the day of registration?**

-If the Fairfax County Public Schools are closed due to bad weather, we will not have registration.

-Also, if they cancel evening activities due to bad weather, we will not have registration.

-If the Fairfax County Public Schools open late in the morning due to bad weather, we will have registration.

-Please listen to the announcements on the radio or television!

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**34. Do I need to purchase a book?**

Yes. The books cost \$15 - \$40, depending on the level. You should bring a credit card or enough cash with you for the registration fees and the book.

**Other:**

**35. Can I bring my children to class?**

No. Unfortunately, we do not offer childcare, and children may not accompany you in class.

**36. Can my teenage daughter/son take classes at St. Mark?**

Our classes are for adults, 18 & older. If your child is enrolled in public high school, he or she should have an opportunity to take ESL classes there, if needed.