

How can I revise for my IGCSE in ESL exam?

Revising for your English examination is not as straightforward as in other subjects since you do not have a body of content to learn. On the other hand, there are some useful things you can do:

- Practise reading texts (e.g. in newspapers, magazines or textbooks) and making notes of the main points
- Use a thesaurus to build up collections of vocabulary - e.g. assorted ways of expressing these concepts:
 - *good, bad, nice, enjoyable, interesting, boring*
 - *bored, surprised, happy, sad, afraid, worried*
 - *friendly, strict, easygoing, honest, reliable*
 - *say*
 - *move/walk/run*
 - *see*
 - *think*
- Re-read model essays (e.g. technological change, zoos, vegetarianism, private ownership of guns) you have received from the teacher and think about the way they are organised (then scribble plans for similar essays!)
- Read your notes on various "for/against" topics; use them to scribble essay plans
- Re-read good examples of formal letters (e.g. you got one after your Gr. 9 Mock Exam, an application for a job as a play-worker); notice the structure:
 - Where I read the advertisement + Basic information about myself (not name!)
 - Why I believe I am suitable for the job: 1..... 2..... 3..... 4.....
 - Who to approach for references
 - Yours faithfully/sincerely + name
- Notice and practise writing common phrases found in formal letters:

- Recently I read your advertisement for a ...
- I would like to apply for ...
- the position of ... / the job of ... / the vacancy.
- I believe that I am suitable for the job in a number of ways.
- Firstly, ... Secondly, ... Thirdly, Finally, ...
- Also, ... In addition, ...
- I have worked as a ...
- I had a holiday job as a ...
- I have good _____ skills
- I have experience of _____ing ...
- If you wish to obtain a reference, you may contact ...
- Please feel free to contact me at any time.
- I read your recent article on ...
- I would like to lend my support to ...
- The School Council recently proposed that ...
- I believe that this idea should be rejected.
- There are a number of reasons for this. Firstly, ... Secondly, ...

- Re-read your notes on how to begin/end informal letters; make notes for a letter to a friend about a recent experience (e.g. taking part in a performance, winning a competition, meeting your hero, meeting an old classmate, visiting a foreign country, learning a new skill); work out what each paragraph is going to be about; make a note of likely connectives (*the following day, by the end of our conversation, as a result, because of this, in the end etc.*); write the letter!
- Re-read old essays and think about your most common errors (especially tenses, missing "a"/"the", plural "-s", uncountable nouns, prepositions of time/place *-in Jakarta, in March, at night etc.*; vocabulary - *go shopping, to be interested in..., to apply for...*); write new sentences that follow the correct patterns (e.g. *My brother went shopping while my two sisters and I went fishing.*)
- Revise lists of connecting words/phrases:
 - Firstly, ... Secondly, ... Thirdly, ... Finally ...

- For example, ... For instance, ...
- In addition, ... Also, ... Furthermore, ... What is more, ...
- As a result, ... Because of this, ... Consequently, ... Therefore, ...
- On the one hand, ... On the other hand, ...
- It is true that ... However, ...
- ..., however, ... In contrast, ... On the other hand, ...
- Similarly, ...
- Another argument against _____ is that ...
- Another disadvantage of _____ is that ...

Informal Letters

Yes, an informal letter should be fairly informal - but don't overdo it! The examiner will *not* be impressed by text messaging shorthand such as "U" for you. Likewise, please avoid excessive use of slang: your objective is to show off your knowledge of standard English vocabulary and grammar.

The content of informal letters is difficult to predict. However, they often include an account of recent events. If you have to write a letter like this, then take care with your verbs! Also, try to use some time phrases (e.g. *Shortly after that, Later, That afternoon, After dinner, ...*) Try to use a good range of vocabulary too, avoiding dull words such as "nice", "fun" and "scary".

Dear Cameron

BEGINNINGS

- Thank you for your lovely letter.
- Many thanks for your letter.
- Thanks for writing.
- It was good to hear from you.
- Sorry for not replying sooner. I have been very busy.
- Sorry for taking so long to reply. I have been revising for my exams.

SIGNALLING: "THE END IS NEAR"

- Well, that's all my news for now.
- It's getting late, so I'd better stop now.
- I'd better stop now. It's past midnight and I have an exam tomorrow.
- Time to stop: Mum's calling me for dinner.
- I'd better finish - I'm running out of space.

ENDINGS

- I look forward to hearing from you.
- I can hardly wait to meet you.
- Please write again soon.
- Please keep in touch.
- Give my regards to ...

BEST WISHES

- Lots of Love
 - Regards
 - Thinking of you
-

Formal Letters

Dear Sir or Madam → → → → Yours faithfully

Dear Ms Waters → → → → Yours sincerely

Use a formal tone: this affects your choice of vocabulary and grammar. For example, the first text below would not be appropriate in a formal letter, whereas the second would be:

Hey

I saw some stuff in your mag about activities for kids and I just wanna say that the activities in this town

suck. I mean what are we supposed to do in the evenings?

Dear Sir or Madam

With regard to your recent feature on leisure activities for young people, I would like to make a few suggestions. Firstly, there is a clear shortage of playing fields with the result that many children play football in the road, which is dangerous. Secondly, ...

NOTE: You should not use short forms (e.g. don't, won't, isn't) in a formal letter.

Letter applying for a job

Dear Sir or Madam

I have read your advertisement in the Daily News and would like to apply for a position as a Playworker. I am a fifteen-year-old student at Brookvale College and will be available for work throughout the school holidays.

I believe that I am suitable for the job in a number of ways. Firstly, I have worked as a babysitter for the past three years and my employers have been very satisfied with my work. The children I have looked after are between four and ten years old. Secondly, I have good organisation skills as I am a Girl Guide leader and have helped to plan four camping trips. As part of my duties, I supervise team games and sing-song sessions. I also play the guitar. Thirdly, I am a reasonably good cook. I can prepare simple pasta dishes and I have a lot of experience of making sandwiches for Girl Guide outings. Finally, I am bilingual, speaking both Indonesian and English fluently. I am also beginning to learn French.

If you wish to obtain a reference, you may contact my Headteacher, Ms L Jones (Tel: 7643218) or Mrs K Lee (8790021) who has employed me as a babysitter.

Yours faithfully

Argumentative Essays - Expressing Your Opinion

There are three basic ways of organising an argumentative essay:

1. **Set 'em up and knock 'em down** (present your opponents' arguments and destroy them with your own stronger points)
2. **The balanced approach** (present arguments from both sides of the debate, but then say what you think yourself)
3. **Problem-Solution** (explain the problem/s and then propose solutions)

1. Set 'em up and knock 'em down

You have already practised writing an opinion essay following the "set-up-and-knock-down" approach. Look also at my model essay on zoos below. Using this approach, you present each of your opponents' arguments in turn (you "set it up" like a bowling skittle) and then demonstrate that it is false or weak (you "knock it down").

Below you can read an example on the topic of zoos. (Phrases have been highlighted to draw your attention to the way the essay is organised.)

Zoos - Sanctuaries or Prisons?

Zoos have been popular for hundreds of years, introducing a wide variety of animals to visitors who otherwise would never have seen them. Times change, however, and we must question whether zoos are still relevant in a world where we wish to treat animals humanely.

It is often said that zoos are educational. They teach people, especially children, about animal behaviour and encourage an interest in animal welfare. This may be partly true, but does

a captive animal behave like its counterpart in the wild? Zoo animals are often confined to a very small area compared with their vast natural habitat. Polar bears, for example, roam for hundreds (even thousands!) of kilometres in their Arctic home whereas in zoos they can only manage about 20 metres. As a result, many animals develop unnatural habits such as pacing back and forth or swaying.

Another argument put forward in favour of zoos is that they help to conserve endangered species through breeding programmes. Thus, for example, a rare species such as the orang-utan can be protected and encouraged to reproduce in a zoo environment. In reality, though, breeding programmes often fail because the animals do not benefit from natural selection and successive generations grow weaker. For example, attempts to breed pandas in captivity have been very costly and unsuccessful. Even successful breeding programmes have their limitations. For instance, two rare lynxes released into the wild in Colorado died from starvation even though their natural prey, a hare, was abundant. Evidently zoo life does not prepare animals for the challenges of life in the wild.

Supporters of zoos sometimes claim that the inhabitants are even better off than their counterparts in the wild. On the contrary, the zoo is an unnatural environment that exposes animals to numerous dangers. Diseases often spread between species that would never co-exist naturally. For example, many Asian elephants have died in US zoos after catching herpes from African elephants. Zoo animals are often exposed to chemicals, solvents and other toxic substances. Also, in an effort to control their behavior, animals are sometimes forcibly medicated and tranquilized. Furthermore, it is not uncommon for visitors to tease and provoke confined animals.

In summary, therefore, the continued existence of zoos cannot be defended. They do not educate people; they do not conserve wildlife; and they do not treat animals humanely. They are cruel prisons and the time has come to abolish them.

2. The Balanced Approach

A different approach is to look at both sides of the argument in a more balanced way. In the end, however, you must indicate your opinion. The following is an example of how such an essay might be structured:

- Introduction: The issue of handgun ownership
 - A. Some people believe individuals should not own handguns
 - B. Others believe ownership is an important personal right
- Disadvantages of handgun ownership
 - Adults and children can have accidents
 - People can use guns for crimes
- Advantages of handgun ownership
 - + People can protect themselves from intruders
 - + People can use guns for recreational purposes
- Conclusion - summary & evaluation of arguments presented
 - Problems of accidents and crime make gun ownership difficult to accept
 - Gun ownership should not be allowed in the interest of a better society

Now here is the essay itself:

A spate of recent murders at American schools has led to a lot of debate about the issue of gun ownership. While some believe that private individuals should not be allowed to own guns, others maintain that gun ownership is an important personal right.

Both sides present convincing arguments, but I have little doubt that that the possession of such weapons threatens the safety of society as a whole.

One of the strongest arguments against handgun ownership is that accidents can happen when adults use guns carelessly or when children discover them. Statistics also show a relationship between the crime rate and the number of privately owned handguns. The number of deaths by shooting in the USA, where handguns are legal, is far higher than in Britain where they are not.

Those in favour of handgun ownership argue that citizens should be able to protect their homes and families from intruders. On the other hand, in a society where guns can be bought over the counter, even petty criminals find it easy to obtain a weapon. Supporters also argue that guns are used for recreational purposes such as hunting. However, such "hobbies" often result in the death or injury of innocent bystanders.

Supporters of gun ownership claim that these weapons have been part of our life for centuries. Nevertheless, the problems of increasing crime and family conflict in today's society make gun ownership difficult to accept. Handguns are too dangerous to be made freely available to just anyone who wants them.

Adapted from an essay at: <<http://www.ceu.hu/misc/tews.htm>>

*Central European University (Language Teaching Center), 21 April
2001*

3. Problem-Solution

This approach does not work for every topic. However, if you are discussing a problem of some sort (e.g. graffiti, litter, poverty, examination stress), then it makes sense to use it.

A **Problem-Solution** essay or letter has a fairly simple structure: first, you explain the problem (or problems), and then you propose a solution (or solutions). The following example looks at health problems in shanty towns (slums) and suggests a few solutions:

There are numerous health problems in shanty towns. Firstly, because the sites are illegal the government does not provide piped water. As a result, drinking and bathing water are usually dirty and this causes diseases such as dysentery, typhoid and hepatitis, as well as skin and eye diseases. Secondly, houses are often overcrowded and have poor air circulation. This makes it easier to catch diseases like flu, TB and diphtheria where infection enters through the throat. Thirdly, there are no drains, sewers or rubbish collection services. The resulting pools of stagnant water and heaps of household waste attract rats and insects, which can pass on diseases.

The government could do a lot to solve these problems. For example, they could supply clean, piped water to individual houses or, at least, to neighbourhoods. This would make drinking water safe and reduce infections. In addition, the authorities could provide householders with building materials to improve their conditions and educate them about the importance of ventilation. Lastly, the city council could construct drains and provide a rubbish collection service to reduce the risk of infections spread by rats and insects.

If the government took these steps, the result would be a safer, healthier environment. Furthermore, the improvements would also lead to increased employment opportunities in areas such as construction, plumbing and rubbish disposal. It is time for politicians to come to the aid of the people who elected them!

Looking more closely, we can see that the actual structure of text is:

PROBLEM → SOLUTION → CALL FOR ACTION

Vocabulary for Argumentative Writing

When we write an argumentative essay, our opinions carry more weight if we look at both sides of the issue. In other words, we acknowledge our opponents' views but try to convince the reader that our own argument is stronger.

Our essay would be extremely dull if we used the words "*supporters*" and "*opponents*" all the way through. Similarly, it would be unimpressive if we only used the verb "say" to refer to people's opinions. The tables below contain a list of useful alternatives.

+	-
Supporters	Opponents
Proponents	Opponents
Those in favour of ...	Those opposed to ...
Defenders of ...	Critics of ...
Advocates of ...	Objectors
Pro-... (e.g. <i>Pro-abortionists</i>)	Anti-... (e.g. <i>Anti-abortionists</i>)

say that ...

argue	allege
claim	insist
maintain	contend
assert	suggest

contend

point out

A List of "For/Against" Topics

The use of animals in scientific research

FOR

Animals are only used when really necessary and most animal experiments do **not** involve pain

Brain surgery and "replacement surgery" (e.g. replacing hip joints, heart transplants) requires practice; we cannot practise on humans!

When surgery is necessary, an anaesthetic is always used so that the animal feels no pain

- We need to test new drugs/chemicals on animals in order to predict whether humans will suffer side-effects; if we don't do this, we will never find cures for AIDS, cancer etc.
- Lots of research with animals helps to develop new treatments for *animal* diseases

AGAINST

- It is morally wrong to do things to laboratory animals which we would not do to our pets; lab animals are burned, poisoned, blinded, crippled and driven mad
- Human and animal brains are very different, so surgeons do not gain much from practising on animals
- Most animal experiments are done for trivial reasons - e.g. to produce cosmetics, household goods, food additives etc.
- A lot of research turns animals into drug addicts or removes part of their brain, just so we can observe changes in their behaviour!
- Most new drugs are created in order to make profit for the drug companies; only 1-2% are essential for good health
- Tests on animals do not give reliable results since animals

react differently to humans (e.g. aspirin causes birth defects in cats, dogs & monkeys but not in humans)

- We should be spending more money on preventing diseases instead of focussing so much on cures (many diseases are linked to smoking, bad diet and pollution)

Should motor traffic be restricted?

FOR

Cars are a major source of air and noise pollution, as well as numerous accidents that cause death or injury.

Motorways are an eyesore in the countryside and disturb wildlife habitats .

Traffic in modern city centres moves at roughly the same speed as it did 100 years ago. The solution is to discourage drivers from entering

AGAINST

- Motor vehicles make travel more convenient, contribute to economic development and enrich our leisure; petrol is much "greener" than it used to be.
- The USA has more cars than any other country, yet its accident rate is less than half that of many European countries. The answer lies in better roads, better driver training and better vehicle maintenance.

Well-designed motorways blend into the countryside just as much as canals or railways.

Public transport is simply not adequate to handle the volume of people who need to enter cities. The real solution to road congestion

city centres (e.g. by imposing taxes). The govt. should also improve the public transport system and provide free parking on the outskirts of cities.

Railways are more suitable (faster & safer) than cars for traffic between cities; they are also more suitable than large trucks for carrying goods

is to build more roads and car parks.

Railways are inflexible and do not suit our modern desire for "door-to-door" transport; goods deliveries by rail are often delayed

Capital Punishment (the Death Penalty)

FOR

It discourages criminals from carrying guns and carrying out serious crimes such as murder

Some hardened criminals cannot be reformed; we know that so-called "life sentences" are often reduced, so they are a great risk to society if we do not execute them

It is better for a society to get rid of its enemies than to pay for them to stay in prison

AGAINST

- Capital punishment is not an effective deterrent: for example, the USA (where the death penalty exists) has a far higher murder rate than the UK (where there is no death penalty)
- Out of 30 countries that have abolished the death penalty none has reported an increase in murders

The death penalty belongs to a time when punishments were cruel and society was less civilised; the destruction of human life is wrong

Where the death penalty is used, juries are often afraid to convict someone in case they are wrong; in this way, many criminals escape punishment (if the penalty was

People are not sentenced to death if there is any doubt in the minds of the jury; mentally insane murderers are never convicted

imprisonment, juries would be less afraid)

If a jury makes a mistake (and they do!) this cannot be reversed; a civilised society should not take this risk. Also, many prisoners are kept on "death row" for decades; they are often completely reformed individuals by the time they are executed

Euthanasia should be legalised

FOR

Many people die long and painful deaths from incurable illnesses. We put animals out of their misery rather than let them suffer terrible pain; why should we deny humans the same release?

The patient him/herself is the best person to judge when life has become too hard to bear. Suicide ceased to be a crime in the UK in 1961; there has been no increase in the suicide rate because of this, so it is unlikely that large numbers of people would choose euthanasia if it were legalised.

If a patient is completely unable to make a decision, doctors should be allowed to make a recommendation and then close relatives could make

AGAINST

A doctor cannot draw up a list of incurable illnesses; for example, patients suffering from so-called incurable diseases such as cancer and AIDS frequently are cured and live long, productive lives.

- If a physical suffering is a valid excuse for cutting life short, then why not mental/emotional suffering as well?
- A request for euthanasia might be the result of temporary depression; people in great pain are not always responsible for what they say

Doctors do not always correctly estimate a patient's power to recover; they should not have to make the terrible decision to kill a

the final decision.

If we call it murder to take someone's life with their own consent, then logically it is theft to take a person's property with their consent - which is absurd.

Many unfortunate people are born with severe physical and/or mental defects that mean they will never lead a normal life and will be a huge burden to their families. Relatives should have the right to opt for euthanasia in such cases.

patient. This is a heavy responsibility for relatives too. Some relatives might even misuse their power (e.g. in order to inherit wealth)

Many religions teach that it is wrong to take away human life; if we are reluctant to kill even murderers, we should be even more reluctant to kill innocent people.

We must respect all human life; otherwise, we may become like the Nazis, who had millions of people put to death for imaginary "racial defects".

Examinations should be abolished

FOR

Examinations test only a limited range of skills; they favour people who have a good memory and good "exam techniques" even though they may not be very original or imaginative.

Examinations depress students and deaden their initiative; teachers, too, become less creative as they

AGAINST

- Passing an examination shows that the candidate can handle unfamiliar problems and communicate effectively; these are important qualities in the workplace.
- Examinations have changed a lot in the past 20 years; most include coursework today and this helps to test a greater range of skills.

The mental effort of preparation for examinations is valuable; no harm is done to anyone. Without

are forced to "teach to the exam".

the discipline of examinations, teachers could fail to cover some important topics/skills.

Examinations are set as if all children have reached the same mental level at the same age. However, psychologists and educationalists agree that this is not so. Also, girls tend to mature earlier than boys.

The greatest gaps in development occur at primary age; exams are rare there nowadays. The inequality is much less at secondary level.

Examinations encourage competition and favour academically gifted students; the less able (who actually need the most help) get neglected.

The problem of "mixed ability" classes would exist whether we had examinations or not. The solution is to find better ways of organising classes and to employ more teachers.

Research has proven that different examiners grade student papers differently; indeed, the same examiner will often give different marks to the same paper after a few months!

Modern examination boards have sophisticated "moderation" systems for ensuring that marking is done fairly. In addition, most examinations include practicals or orals, so a student's result does not depend completely on written work.

Writing Practice Tasks

Try writing some of the letters, essays etc. in the lists below. Make sure you give yourself practice in a range of text types. Ideally, you should work against the clock (about 15-20 mins per text). However, before writing have a look at your corrected homework: what can you learn from your mistakes there? Look also at model essays or other writing tips.

(NOTE: The writing tasks below have *not* appeared in past papers.)

NARRATIVE

- During a recent holiday by the sea, you spotted someone in trouble and helped to rescue him/her. Write a letter to a friend or relative describing what happened. (About 150 words)
- A person you admire a lot (e.g. a sports person, musician or leader) recently visited your town. Write a letter to a friend describing the visit. Include the following points:
 - why you admire the person
 - why he/she was visiting
 - what happened
 - your feelings

(About 150 words)

- Recently you witnessed a road accident involving a car, a motorbike and a pedestrian. Write a report for the police describing what you saw. Include the following:
 - where you were and what you were doing
 - a brief description of each vehicle, as well as its approximate speed, direction etc.
 - how the accident happened
 - what happened afterwards

(About 150 words)

ARGUMENTATIVE (OPINION) ESSAY

- Some people argue that the Internet is just as harmful as it is helpful. Write an article for your school magazine giving your views. You may wish to consider some of the following arguments:
 - *"Email, electronic shopping and search engines make life far more convenient than in the past."*
 - *"Teenagers become addicted, wasting their time playing games instead of studying or playing sport."*
 - *"Frequent Internet users become loners and lose the skills they need for healthy human relationships."*

- *"Email and 'Chat rooms' allow lonely or busy people to develop friendships with others who have similar interests."*
- *"Internet Chat sites allow abusive adults to prey on young people."*

(About 200 words)

- Your school newspaper has invited suggestions for making the school more environmentally friendly. Write a letter with practical suggestions for creating a "greener" campus. The slogan "*Reduce, Re-use, Recycle*" may help you to think of some ideas. (About 200 words)
- "Ban the car!" An environmental organisation has proposed that cars should be banned since they cause pollution, traffic jams, road deaths and stress. Write an article for a newspaper giving your opinion. (About 200 words)

FORMAL LETTER

- A student magazine is running a "Teacher of the Year" competition. Students have been invited to write to the magazine with recommendations. Write a letter nominating one of your teachers and giving reasons why you think they should receive the award. (Please do not use a real name!) (About 200 words)
- Your principal has asked for ideas about how to improve the school's facilities. Write him/her a letter giving your suggestions. (About 150 words)
- You have read the following advertisement in a student magazine. Write a letter applying for any one of the vacancies.

RADIO CAMPUS – VACANCIES

"Radio Campus" - the radio station run by students for students –
is seeking suitably experienced and motivated staff.

We have the following vacancies:

Station Manager; Marketing Staff; Advertising Staff; D.J.s

Interested students should apply in writing to the Managing Director, giving details of relevant skills and experience.

(150-200 words)

General Points Concerning READING Tasks

- You will not lose marks for grammatical, spelling or punctuation errors (unless, of course, your answer is impossible to understand!).
 - For most questions, a short answer is fine. There is no rule that you should write in full sentences. In fact, you would be wasting valuable time if you wrote lots of long answers.
 - The first 15-20 questions require fast (but accurate!) reading: think of the 1 mark questions as needing about one minute of reading on average.
-

General Points Concerning SUMMARY Tasks

- Read the instructions carefully: what are you being asked to write about?
- Half the marks are awarded for including relevant points, half for "quality of language". Highlight or underline the relevant points in the original text before you try to write your summary.
- Simple connectives such as "Firstly/Secondly/Thirdly" or "In addition/Also" or "Consequently" can help to make your summary more coherent.
- Use your own words/phrases where possible. Feel free to change the order of points if that seems logical.
- Do not write too much: you will not receive any credit for points made after the word limit. (On the other hand, do not get stressed about writing a few words too many.)

General Points Concerning TIME

- The exam lasts for 2 hours (= 120 mins) and there are a total of 84 marks. That works out at 1.4 mins (= 84 secs) per mark.
- *22 mins* for a 16-mark Writing task;
- *17 mins* for a 12-mark Writing task;
- *11 mins* for an 8-mark Summary;
- *6 mins* for a 4-mark Summary.

Useful Websites

Reading Comprehension Practice

- <http://www.readingmatrix.com/esllab/>
- <http://www.lclark.edu/~krauss/toppicks/reading.html#identity>
- http://www.selfaccess.com/sa/sa_home.php (You will need to sign up for the trial lesson)
- <http://www.english-to-go.com/> (Select "Sample Lessons" and then choose at least Intermediate level - in fact, Upper-Intermediate or Advanced would be better for you)
- <http://literacynet.org/cnnsf/> (CNN news stories)
- <http://www.smic.be/smic5022/ReadcompVladi.htm> (a reading comprehension task about inflation in Russia)
- <http://www.bangkokpost.net/education/> (reading tasks based on articles from the Bangkok Post)

Summary Practice

- <http://brunei.cfbt.org/bn/tzone/material/summary2.pdf>

Writing Practice

- <http://www.kent.wednet.edu/KSD/KR/WRITE/FIVE/>
- <http://members.tripod.com/~lklivingston/essay/>
- <http://www.essaypunch.com/>

- <http://www.eslplanet.com/teachertools/arguweb/frntpage.htm>

Listening Practice

- <http://esl-lab.com/> (You need Real Player)

Brush Up Your Grammar!

- <http://www.uwcsea.edu.sg/esl/MiddleESL/grammar.htm#diff>

Vocabulary

- <http://www.better-english.com/vocabulary.htm>
- <http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/news/index.shtml>

Miscellaneous

- http://lc.byuh.edu/CNN_N/CNN-N.html (CNN news - mainly vocabulary and grammar practice)

Last but not Least?

- http://www.geocities.com/frankie_meehan/

Frankie Meehan