



English in Action

The English-Speaking Union

Andrew Romay New Immigrant Center
Class of 2018 Graduation

May 31, 2018

The Fourth Universalist Society of New York
160 Central Park West, New York City



The English-Speaking Union (ESU), under the banner English in Action, is a non-profit educational charity that employs English as a catalyst to foster global understanding and good will through education and cultural exchange. Founded in 1920, the ESU is a national organization with more than 65 branches nationwide and affiliated with a network of more than 50 ESUs around the world. Our educational programs focus on teacher enrichment, immigrant support, international exchange and public speaking.

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I am personally delighted and professionally gratified to celebrate the achievements of the fifth graduating class of the Andrew Romay New Immigrant Center (ARNIC).

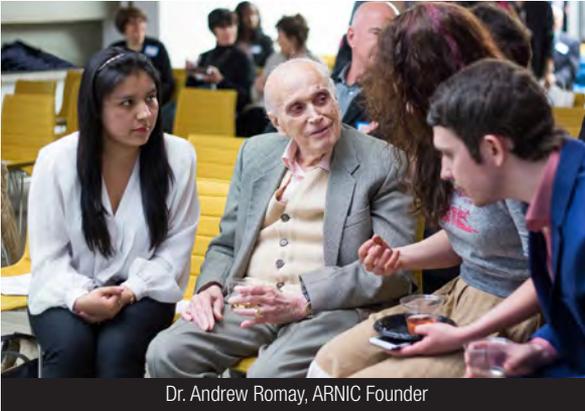
As the English-Speaking Union turns 100 in 2020, under the banner English in Action we enter our second century of promoting global understanding and good will through the English language. ARNIC truly embodies English in Action. This program has a profound impact, empowering new immigrants to rise to their full potential as they strive to build their lives in America.

Congratulations to all our ARNIC members, teachers, supporters, volunteers and staff who make ARNIC a warm home for a vibrant international family.

Christopher Broadwell
Executive Director
The English-Speaking Union of the United States

Empowering New Immigrants

The Andrew Romay New Immigrant Center (ARNIC) offers immigrants, refugees and asylum-seekers a home-like setting where they can improve their English fluency, learn about American culture, network and find professional development opportunities as they begin to build new lives in America. The center was founded in 2012 and named after the late Andrew Romay, a Hungarian Holocaust survivor who immigrated to the US in 1956. ARNIC has empowered more than 1,000 newcomers from 92 countries to realize their dreams and make positive contributions to American society. A hallmark of ARNIC is the English in Action Conversations program. For more than half a century, volunteer tutors have worked in partnership with English language learners to help them master conversational English and learn about life in the US. Since its inception, more than 17,000 students have participated in these valuable cross-cultural exchanges.



Dr. Andrew Romay, ARNIC Founder



An English in Action Conversations session



Interviewing workshop with Flushing Bank



United Nations field trip



Visiting the New York City Mayor's residence



Networking event with the NY Junior League



Celebrating Thanksgiving for the first time



Attending English language classes



Visiting Washington DC

Graduation Ceremony

Welcome Reception

Music by PROSSPEKT

Welcome Remarks

Christopher Broadwell, Executive Director, The English-Speaking Union of the United States

Dr. Paul Beresford-Hill CBE, KStJ, Chair, The English-Speaking Union of the United States

Rev. Schuyler Vogel, Senior Minister, Fourth Universalist Society of New York

Hon. Helen Rosenthal, NYC Council Member (6th District)

Class of 2018 Speakers

Niurka Melendez-Vasquez, ARNIC Graduate

Dieudonné Ndje Bayi Seh, ARNIC Graduate

ARNIC: Empowering New Immigrants

Moderator

Peter Frey, Trustee, Marietta and Andrew Romay Foundation

Panel Members

Eliana Maria Félix Herrera, ARNIC Graduate

Viktoriia (Vika) Sanzharevska, ARNIC Graduate

Margery Spagnoletti, English in Action Conversations Tutor

Laura V. Gonzalez-Murphy, Director, New York State Office for New Americans

Jenifer Rajkumar, Director of Immigration Affairs and Special Counsel, NY Department of State

New York City Welcomes Immigrants

Anne Montesano, Executive Director of Immigrant Inclusion at the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs

Commencement Address

Jan T. Vilcek, MD, PhD, Professor Emeritus and Research Professor at NYU Langone Medical Center

Class of 2018 Graduates

The 2018 ARNIC Graduates hail from:

Albania	Iran
Algeria	Iraq
Armenia	Japan
Azerbaijan	Kazakhstan
Bangladesh	Mexico
Belarus	Morocco
Benin	Nepal
Burkina Faso	Nicaragua
Burma (Myanmar)	Poland
Cameroon	Portugal
China	Republic of the Congo
Colombia	Russia
Cuba	Serbia
Democratic Republic of the Congo	South Korea
Dominican Republic	Spain
Ecuador	Syria
Egypt	Tajikistan
France	Togo
Guinea	Turkey
Haiti	Ukraine
Hong Kong	Uzbekistan
Hungary	Venezuela
	Vietnam

Ayman Abdelam	Dina Bezhdanova
Alaaeldin Abdelrahman	Alexandra Bogdan
Thabit Abdulkhaleq	Aziza Bouhlal
Kamil Abdullaev	Houria Boukhelifa
Liora Ageshina	Dorelle Prisca Mboungo Boutoto
Narcy Alvarenga	Betzabeth Briceno
Edson Arevalo	Yolwin Campos
Wint Aung	Martha Castillo
Yei Linn Aung	Juan Castillo
Sandra Ayala	Sandra Chavez
Soheila Babamoradi	Alexander Chetchikov
Presly Baleckita	Yinying Chu
Ildiko Balogh Batho	Elsa Conejo Males
Dayra Barona	Vanessa Constanza
Leonid Begun	Stephanie Cornejo
Andrii Beinyk	Nabin Dahal
Leila Bekmuratova	Nordi Daou
Vitalii Beliaiev	Sabira Davletshina
Nadezda Bellavina	Mamadou Diabate
Azzeddine Ryad BENGHABRIT	Aissatou Diallo
Onur Berispek	Thierno Diallo



Class of 2018 Graduates

Anastasiya Dmitrenko

Bouidi El Hassan

Gitta Epshtein

Natalya Fediyenko

Eliana Maria Félix Herrera

Felix Fernandez

Ahed Festuk

Adama Gadjaga

Manuel Garcia Morell

Evelyn Gaw

Ahmad Goharikakhki

Diana Golubeva

Marlon Gonzalez

Benjamin Dakiswende Guiguembe

Elena Guslyakova

Mustapha Hamdaoui

Diana Hernandez

Akery Hla

Ina Holik

Sofiia Hroshko

Entela Hysenbelli

Leyla Ibragimova

Bakhtiyar Indibaev

Anna Jarmolowicz

Yves Florent Kaboré

Mariya Kabrankova

Junhwan Kang

Nargis Karimova

Elnara Kazimova

Salah Khalfi

Cho Cho Khine

Lin L. Khine

Volodymyr Khodak

Suzanne Khoja

Liudmyla Khomchenko

Tete Kitissou

Viktoriiia Klymchenko

Deniz Kogdan Erturan

Kassim Kone

Yaroslav Kurdiaiev

Hanmi Lim

Volha Lipunova

Agnieszka Ludant

Aleksandr Lukiiianov

Alejandra Machuca

Alfredo Martinez

Paola Andrea Martinez

Ema Martinez

Gevorg Martirosyan

Olena Martynenko

Niurka Melendez-Vasquez

Mohammed Dulal Miah

Alicja Michno

Elena Murugova

Oleksii Musinov

Dieudonné Ndje Bayi Seh

Sik Fun Alex Ng

Whendy Noblecilla Vite

Mizuki Nomura

Maksym Novakh

David W. Pacmogda

Alex Paidarkin

Matthew Palomeque



Class of 2018 Graduates

Misun Park

Diana Pedura

Thu Pham

Jose Pinheiro

Alina Polianskikh

Denys Pozdieiev

Max Quinde Wiesner

Marina Raetckaia

Vadim Rebro

Clemente Regalado

Alejandra Garcia Reyes

Rafael Romero

Liwen Rong

Andres Rosas

Lidiia Rudenko

Marlon Rugama

Evgenia Ryzhkova

Luiza Sabirova

Soodabeh Saeidnia

Dani Sahakyan

Rose Saint-Cyr

Yana Samoylova

Raymond Sanchez

Yenni Sanchez

Viktoriia Sanzharevska

Ksenia Sapozhnikova

Stanislav Savchenko

May Myo Sett

Tetyana Shynkaryova

Thet Soe

Dmitrii Spirin

Seda Sungu

Nyein Chan Swe

Ibrahima Sylla

Olrice Tchadako

Rauan Telagissov

Phyu Thwe

Alba Toruno

Lina Tryhub

Olena Turbaba

Alla Udovenko

Safie Umerova

Viollca Ushe

Krystina Ustinovich

Arturo Valecillos

Raul Vasquez

Yuliia Voloshyna

Khine Zar Wai

Hla Wai

Thein Win

Xiao Yang

Gaelle Simo Yankep

Alexander Yankin

Olga Zakhartseva

Zeus Zalevskyi

Svetlana Zavorotynskaia

Olga Zavorotynskaia

Tai Zheng



Graduation Speakers

Eliana María Félix Herrera was born in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. Last year, at the age of 20, she moved to the US and began studying English at ARNIC. Eliana has always been interested in the arts: music, dancing, acting and singing and loves kids and helping others. She hopes to pursue a degree in speech pathology this year and is interested in learning other languages.

Peter Frey is a member of the English-Speaking Union board and retired partner of TRG Management, an emerging markets asset management company. Peter is also a trustee of J Street and the Tiffany Foundation. With his good friend Andrew Romay, he founded the Andrew Romay New Immigrant Center in 2012 and is a trustee of the Marietta and Andrew Romay Foundation.

Laura V. Gonzalez-Murphy, MS, PhD, is the Director of the NY State Office for New Americans. She previously consulted on immigration issues with the Woodrow Wilson Center for Scholars and co-chaired Albany's Committee on Immigrant Rights. Laura earned her PhD in comparative politics and in international relations from SUNY at Albany, an MS from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, and a BS from Elmira College. Laura also authored *Protecting Immigrant Rights in Mexico*.

Niurka Melendez-Vasquez is a community activist, mother, and an asylum seeker who came to the US three years ago from Venezuela. Niurka works as a web coordinator and volunteers as an interpreter. Together with her husband, she founded Venezuelans and Immigrants Aid (VIA), which supports and empowers the Venezuelan diaspora in New York. She graduated *cum laude* with a bachelor's degree in Computer Science from Universidad Nueva Esparta in Venezuela.

Anne Montesano is the Executive Director of Immigrant Inclusion at the New York City Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs. Previously, Anne served as the Executive Director of the Office of Refugee and Immigrant Affairs and provided legal services to immigrants, promoted immigrant civic participation and conducted legislative advocacy on immigration reform. Anne graduated with a BA in International Relations from Tufts University and an MPA from the NYU Wagner School of Public Service.

Dieudonné Ndje Bayi Seh is from Cameroon and has lived in New York for two years. In Cameroon, he was an accountant and hopes to re-enter the field in New York. In his free time, he enjoys reading and writing. His poem, "The Outsider," will appear in the 2018 issue of the *NYU Literacy Review*, an annual journal featuring outstanding literary work by English language learners from across New York City.

Graduation Speakers

PROSSPEKT is an electronic-synth pop band originally from Belarus where they won the National Music Award as Debut of the Year. PROSSPEKT's founding band members Nikolay Znaharchuk and Olya Paliushik are both ARNIC alumni. The band is currently based in New York City and performs at festivals and clubs around the US.

Jenifer Rajkumar was appointed by Governor Andrew Cuomo as his Director of Immigration Affairs and Special Counsel in the NY Department of State. Previously, she practiced civil rights law on behalf of the disenfranchised at Sanford Heisler LLP. Jenifer teaches immigration and political philosophy at CUNY's Lehman College and received a BA from the University of Pennsylvania and a JD from Stanford Law School.

Hon. Helen Rosenthal, NYC Council Member (6th District), represents the Upper West Side and is a leading voice on issues such as accessibility, gender equity and civic engagement, affordable housing, education equity and adequate funding for social service providers. As Chair of the Contracts Committee from 2013 to 2017, Helen fought successfully to increase funding for the hundreds of nonprofit social service providers who serve 2.5 million New Yorkers yet are chronically underpaid.

Viktoriia (Vika) Sanzharevskia is from Ukraine and has lived in New York for three years. She arrived without knowing any English and is now comfortable speaking it in her daily life. In Ukraine, she was a teacher and a professional hairdresser. Her goal is to become a teacher here in the US.

Margery Spagnoletti has been volunteering as an English in Action Conversations tutor since 2015. She is a retired preschool teacher and former pharmaceutical writer and holds a BS in Medical Technology from Temple University.

Jan T. Vilcek, MD, PhD, is Professor Emeritus and Research Professor at NYU Langone Medical Center. Born and educated in Bratislava, Slovakia, Dr. Vilcek's research contributed to the development of Remicade®, a medication used for the treatment of chronic inflammatory disorders. Dr. Vilcek and his wife, Marica Vilcek, an art historian, established the Vilcek Foundation, which honors and publicizes the contributions of immigrants to the sciences and arts. In 2013, Dr. Vilcek received the National Medal of Technology and Innovation from President Barack Obama.

Rev. Schuyler Vogel is Senior Minister at the Fourth Universalist Society of New York and holds degrees in religion from Carleton College and Harvard Divinity School. Prior to becoming a minister, Rev. Schuyler led religious education programs with an emphasis on youth and young adult ministry and helped found the Sanctuary Boston.

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3203

May 31, 2018

Dear Friends:

Please accept my warmest greetings and sincerest congratulations as the Andrew Romay New Immigrant Center (ARNIC) at the English-Speaking Union celebrates its Class of 2018 Graduation Ceremony. I am grateful for the opportunity to recognize the exemplary work of the Andrew Romay New Immigrant Center, its leadership, staff and students on this momentous occasion.

Since its inception, the Andrew Romay New Immigrant Center has remained steadfast in its commitment to improving the lives of recent immigrants, asylum seekers, asylees, and refugees. By providing a welcoming environment and educational and cultural opportunities, ARNIC has grown to become one of New York City's most integral programs, serving over 1,000 immigrants from over 90 countries. Through their services, students are able to participate in English language courses, weekly one-to-one conversation practice sessions and cross-cultural exchanges. I applaud ARNIC for its unwavering dedication to supporting the newest members of our community.

Furthermore, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Class of 2018. Hailing from over 50 countries, today's nearly 200 graduates are recent immigrants that have displayed immense dedication and effort towards improving their language skills. As new graduates of the program, I am confident that these students will continue to thrive and become exemplary members of their new communities. I am honored to join the Andrew Romay New Immigrant Center, their staff, and all of their supporters as we recognize the efforts and accomplishments of the graduating class.

Again, congratulations to the Andrew Romay New Immigrant Center's Class of 2018. As you embark on your new journeys, I am confident that you will use the skills you have learned to become productive and contributing members of society. Best wishes on your future endeavors!

Sincerely,



Charles E. Schumer
United States Senator

KIRSTEN GILLIBRAND
NEW YORK



UNITED STATES SENATOR

May 31, 2018

Dear Friends,

It is a privilege to send greetings to everyone attending the 2018 Andrew Romay New Immigrant Center Graduation ceremony, hosted by The English-Speaking Union. I join my voice with yours in congratulating today's graduates on their hard work and achievements.

I am grateful to organizations like The English-Speaking Union for its dedication to aiding individuals in education and cultural opportunities through programs such as the Andrew Romay New Immigrant Center. By providing English language courses, training workshops, and other services, the Andrew Romay New Immigrant Center strengthens the diversity of New York and supports members of our immigrant community from around the world. It is my sincere hope that this continued work, as well as others offered by The English-Speaking Union, inspires others to become as actively involved in community development.

To the graduating class, I hope you continue to do great work and I wish you all the best in all of your future endeavors.

Please accept my best wishes for a wonderful graduation celebration and for many more years of continued success.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kirsten Gillibrand".

Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator

CAROLYN B. MALONEY
12TH DISTRICT, NEW YORK
3308 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-3212
(202) 225-7944
COMMITTEES:
FINANCIAL SERVICES
GOVERNMENT REFORM
JOINT ECONOMIC COMMITTEE
[SENIOR HOUSE DEMOCRAT]



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-3212

DISTRICT OFFICES:
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NEW YORK, NY 10128
(212) 860-6506
 31-19 NEWTOWN AVENUE
ASTORIA, NY 11102
(718) 932-1804
 619 LORIMER STREET
BROOKLYN, NY 11211
(718) 349-5972
WEBSITE: www.house.gov/maloney

May 31, 2018

Andrew Romay New Immigrant Center
The English-Speaking Union
144 East 39th Street
New York, NY 10016

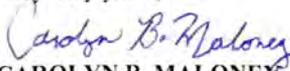
Dear Friends:

I am thrilled to extend my warmest wishes to the friends, families, and graduates of the Andrew Romay New Immigrant Center class of 2018! It is an honor to join you in celebrating the class of 2018 on their hard work and the successful completion of their civics and English language courses.

The English-Speaking Union was founded in 1920 by a group of British and American friends who believed that international exchanges of language and culture will help promote and preserve peace around the world. In 2013, the English-Speaking Union established the Andrew Romay New Immigrant Center (ARNIC), which provides educational and cultural programming for recent immigrants. Over the last five years, ARNIC has helped more than 1,000 new immigrants from 90 nations build their English language skills as they make positive contributions throughout New York City. ARNIC has created not just a place to improve language fluency but a place where civic discourse, goodwill and global understanding can flourish. As a part of the English-Speaking Union, ARNIC is able to work with a wide variety of community partners to support immigrant communities by providing educational and cultural programs as well as access to resources. The members of the graduating class have had the opportunity to participate in weekly one-to-one conversation practice sessions, attend comprehensive English classes, and expand their opportunities through professional development courses.

I am proud to salute all the friends and supporters of ARNIC, and I extend my sincere congratulations to the class of 2018 for their determination and hard work. I wish you all an enjoyable evening and great success!

Very truly yours,


CAROLYN B. MALONEY
Member of Congress

CBM/shg



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

May 31, 2018

Dear Friends:

I am pleased to offer my congratulations to members of the Class of 2018 on the occasion of their graduation from the English-Speaking Union's Andrew Romay New Immigrant Center.

The English-Speaking Union was established in Britain in 1918 and in the United States in 1920, in order to further civic discourse and international goodwill following the First World War. The English-Speaking Union is grounded in the conviction that, given the opportunity to know one another, people who speak a common language can and will discover that they hold many beliefs in common, whatever their differences in nationality or background. A centerpiece of the English-Speaking Union, the Andrew Romay New Immigrant Center assists new Americans in integrating into their adopted city of New York by providing them with English language instruction, community workshops, and networking events. I have long held that dialogue is of foremost importance in the peace process, and applaud the Andrew Romay New Immigrant Center graduates for their participation in such a worthy undertaking.

With heartfelt thanks for all the work you have done and all you will continue to do to promote peace in the world, I extend my best wishes to the English-Speaking Union, the Andrew Romay New Immigrant Center Class of 2018, and all attendees.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jerrold Nadler".

JERROLD NADLER
Member of Congress

REPLY TO:

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BROOKLYN, NY 11219
(718) 373-3198

NADLER.HOUSE.GOV



NYDIA M. VELÁZQUEZ
7TH DISTRICT, NEW YORK

May 31, 2018

Dear friends:

It is an honor to congratulate all graduates of the Andrew Romay New Immigrant Center Class of 2018. Every day, ARNIC improves the lives of immigrants, refugees, asylum seekers and asylees in the New York City metropolitan area.

Over the past five years, ARNIC has offered free English courses to nearly a thousand immigrants from more than ninety countries. You have shaped a welcoming environment where recent immigrants can improve their English, cultural competency, and engage in cross-cultural exchanges that promote civil discourse.

The plight of immigrants is a long and winding road, filled with challenges and adversity. It is through organizations like ARNIC that welcome immigrants with open arms and encourage the diversity that makes America so vibrant and innovative. I am proud of what ARNIC has accomplished and send my best wishes to the graduating class.

Thank you again for all that you have done! I am looking forward to working with you and reading about the success of your graduating class for years to come.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nydia M. Velázquez". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Nydia M. Velázquez
Member of Congress



THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
NEW YORK, NY 10007

May 31, 2018

Dear Friends:

I am delighted to join the English-Speaking Union of the United States in welcoming everyone to the Andrew Romay New Immigrant Center's Graduation Ceremony.

New York is the proud home to residents who hail from every corner of the map, and this remarkable diversity is the source of our singularity and strength. Established in 2012, the Andrew Romay New Immigrant Center exemplifies our tradition of inclusion through its year-long scholarship program for recent immigrants to study English and learn more about the civic and cultural life of the United States. Through a holistic curriculum that includes English language classes, conversation sessions with volunteer tutors, field trips to museums, performing arts productions, and sporting events, and workshops about financial planning, wellness, college and employment readiness, and more, ARNIC is helping many newcomers adapt to their new home and lead productive, fulfilling lives. As you gather to honor the achievements of its latest graduating class, I applaud the Center's staff and supporters for their efforts to foster cross-cultural exchange and empower immigrant New Yorkers. Together, we will ensure the five boroughs remain a vibrant center of opportunity for people of all backgrounds.

On behalf of the City of New York, congratulations to all those graduating tonight. Please accept my best wishes for a wonderful celebration and continued success.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bill de Blasio".

Bill de Blasio
Mayor

In Appreciation

Marietta and Andrew Romay Foundation Challenge

In memory of ARNIC's founder, Dr. Andrew Romay, the Marietta and Andrew Romay Foundation has announced a challenge grant matching dollar for dollar, all new gifts to ARNIC.

We thank the following donors whose generous donations helped the ESU to meet this challenge. All gifts support the programs at the Andrew Romay New Immigrant Center.

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Judge James W. Kerr, Jr.
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Andrew McLaughlin
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Meera Ravi
Charles D. Reaves
Lynn H. Strudler

In-Kind

All Souls Church
Bellevue/NYU Program for
Survivors of Torture
Brotherhood Synagogue
CAMBA
Catholic Charities Community
Services
Center for Jewish History
Central Synagogue
The Daily Show
Flushing Bank
The Fourth Universalist Society
of New York
Grace Institute
HIAS
Hot Bread Kitchen
International Rescue Committee
JCC Manhattan
Marble Collegiate Church
New York Immigration Coalition
New York Junior League
New York University
Per Scholas
Public Theater
RIF Asylum Support
Riverside Language Program
Safe Passage Project
St. Bartholomew's Church
St. Ignatius Loyola Church
SUNY-BEOC (Brooklyn Educational
Opportunity Center)
Temple Emanu-El
The Tenement Museum
Upwardly Global
Walkers Shortbread
World Education Services (WES)



English in Action
The English-Speaking Union

The English-Speaking Union employs English as a catalyst to foster global understanding and good will by providing educational and cultural opportunities for students, educators and members.

Our English in Action educational programs focus on teacher enrichment and immigrant support, international exchange and public speaking.

Andrew Romay New Immigrant Center (ARNIC) improves the lives and integration of recent immigrants through education and cultural programs.

English in Action Conversations pair English language learners with trained volunteers to improve their fluency through a one-on-one cultural exchange.

Luard Morse Scholarships sends students from Historically Black Colleges and Universities to study for a semester at a British university of their choosing.

Middle School Debate builds research, critical thinking and public speaking skills through debate.

National Shakespeare Competition develops high school students' analytical and communication skills through performing Shakespeare at the school, community and national levels.

Secondary School Exchange sends high school graduates to British boarding schools for a gap year abroad.

Travel and Learn Abroad (TLab) provides teachers and lifelong learners educational enrichment programs at Oxford, the University of Edinburgh and Shakespeare's Globe.

Connect with us



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ESU English in Action

For more information on programs and membership, please visit:

www.esuus.org