

STUDENT.COM®

ULTIMATE GUIDE FOR PREPARING TO STUDY IN THE UK

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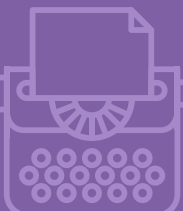


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How to find your ideal student accommodation in the UK

Most students in the UK choose to live in either university-owned accommodation, privately-rented house shares, or increasingly; privately-owned student halls.

University owned accommodation (usually halls) can be found through your institution of choice, and you'll usually be asked if you would like a place as part of the application process.

Privately-rented accommodation can be tougher to find and is less popular with

international students, particularly in the first year of study. But if you do decide to go down this route, the [UKCISA](#) website has advice on how to do so.

Most UK cities also have a choice of purpose-built student accommodation, which tends to be popular with international students.

Whichever type you choose, following these five tips will ensure you make the best choice for you:

1

THINK ABOUT LOCATION, LOCATION AND YES - LOCATION

First thing to consider is travel time to your university - obviously you don't want it to take too long. But it also depends on what's important to you. Maybe you want to walk or cycle to university? Or perhaps you wouldn't mind taking a bus if it means you can have a bigger room or live in your favourite area. Student.com shows the travel time to your university from different student properties. It also has guides for the different areas that they're in, to help you decide where's right for you.



2

LIVE WHERE STUDENTS LIVE

Living where other students live means you're with people that are pretty much in the same boat as you. You're all in a new place, looking for new friends and eager to explore your new city. This means you get extra support from the community and facilities around you.

Most of the UK properties on Student.com only have students living in them and are designed specifically for student life.

3

DON'T DELAY!

This tip is pretty simple. The best student properties fill up fast in the UK - especially in bigger cities that are popular with students.

The sooner you find (and book) a student home that's right for you, the better. It also means you can get on with preparing for university with one of the main things already sorted out.

4

USE GOOGLE STREET VIEW AND GOOGLE IMAGES

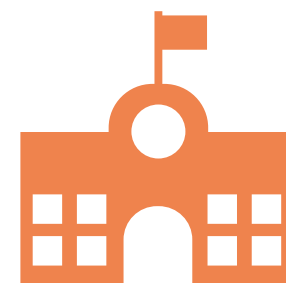
If you want to find out what it's like near a property, just take a little wander through the streets around it using Google Street View.

Also, searching the names of parks, shops, bars and areas in Google images gives you a pretty good idea of a place too.

5

MAKE IT SIMPLE

Life at university is fun, full and active. So it's really helpful to simplify it wherever you can. Check that your property has broadband (getting it installed from scratch can take a while) and that it's reliable and fast (ask the previous people in the property about this, if you get the chance). Also, where possible look for places with bills bundled in with the rent. Then you can get on with enjoying your adventure studying in the UK.



Find your perfect student home in the UK today with Student.com

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**PACKING &
TRAVELLING**

Useful things to take to university

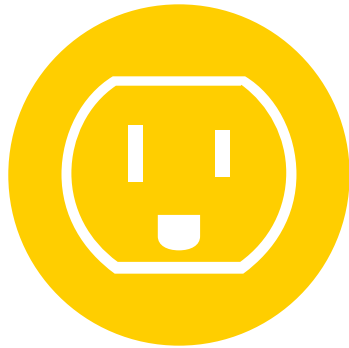


The main thing to remember when packing for university is not to worry too much. You'll be able to get most items after you arrive in the UK. However, there are some small but useful things that can make a big difference to your life at university. And they won't take up too much room in your suitcase!

1 **BACKUP ALARM CLOCK**

The key to university life (and actually life in general) is **getting out of bed on time**. Sort that out and the rest falls into place.

Yes, you have your phone. But phones get lost, broken, or run out of battery. Plus it's too easy to snooze or turn off when faced with an early morning lecture. You need to set your backup alarm as well, and it needs to be the other side of your room. Preferably somewhere hard to reach.



2 EXTENSION LEAD

You have lots of gadgets and they all have the wrong plug for the UK....

Don't worry - all you need to do is take an extension lead and just ONE adapter - and then you've got the equivalent of LOTS of foreign adapters for all of your devices! Good, huh?



3 EAR PLUGS

If you've ever been travelling you'll know the value of these. They give you peace, quiet and undisturbed sleep. At university, when you might need to take naps or go to bed when other people are up, they help avoid all the complaining, negotiating and frustration. The wax ones are the most effective.



4 SLIPPERS/ FLIP FLOPS

Really useful if you need to venture outside of your room to shower - they allow you to keep your feet clean on the way back. But even if you've got an en-suite shower, your university days will be some of the greatest slipper/ flip flop-wearing days of your life (at least until retirement). Think fire drills, lazy mornings, going down to collect your mail...the list goes on.

5 CORK SCREW/ BOTTLE OPENER

There are never enough of these at university. If you bring one you will be admired for packing such a useful tool and receive endless gratitude for allowing others to borrow it. Just make sure you get it back. They can go missing very easily.

6 PLAYING CARDS

Playing cards are a great tool for breaking the ice, making new friends and simply having lots of fun. Playing games where the loser has to do a dare, or everybody has to buy the winner a cookie (or something) provide endless entertainment.

7 HDMI CABLE

An HDMI cable basically allows you to watch what's playing on your laptop on a TV. This means you have the ability to watch videos on a nice large screen, perfect for film nights in with friends. Cosy downtime is important at uni, and this creates a great opportunity for bonding and relaxation.

8 DOORSTOP

This one's a classic. Extremely useful for when you're moving all your stuff in (or out). Also, wedging your door open is a brilliant way of showing people you're happy for them to drop in and say hi. So, not just a doorstop, but a tiny friend-making device as well.

ESSENTIAL STUDENT AIR TRAVEL TIPS AND AIRPORT HACKS

1. BOOK AROUND 50 DAYS PRIOR TO FLYING FOR DOMESTIC FLIGHTS

Skyscanner says seven weeks in advance is the best time, while Expedia suggests you book roughly 57 days in advance to get the cheapest ticket. As a rule of thumb, the further you're flying, the more you should plan ahead. Secure the cheapest prices for long haul flights by booking five to six months ahead.



3. CHECK FOR STUDENT DISCOUNTS

The number one mantra for any student: always check if there's a student discount. Websites or agents such as StudentUniverse and STA Travel specialise in bookings for students, so they might guarantee to **beat the price of competitors** and are good at being travel-savvy on a shoestring budget.

2. GO UNDERCOVER ON THE WEB

Though unproven and often denied by airlines, many experts and travellers suggest browsing incognito or in private mode to find the lowest prices for flights, so your browser can't track and target you with inflated prices. So make sure you clear your cache and cookies when you're booking your flight online just in case the theory is true.

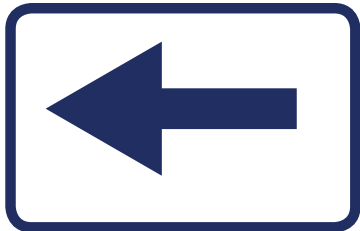
4. USE A RANGE OF PRICE COMPARISON WEBSITES FOR THE BEST DEALS

Skyscanner is great for checking prices at different times, Travel Supermarket takes into account charter flights that often go unchecked on many other comparison sites, and, for flexible travellers, Momondo displays the cheapest days to travel in a selected time period.



5. GET UNLIMITED FREE WI-FI IN AIRPORTS

When you're using the internet on a laptop at the airport, you usually only get allocated an hour to use the Wi-Fi at a time. To get around this, set the system clock on your computer back one hour whenever it's about to run out – you can get another hour for absolutely free! Wi-Fi passwords are also sometimes listed on websites like Foursquare, and an older trick is to type “?.jpg” at the end of the URL to get around the Wi-Fi restrictions – bear in mind that this one only works at some airports, though.



7. TURN LEFT

It may sound strange, but you should always pick the checkpoint or security point to the left when you're in a queue. Research shows the majority of people always pick a line on the right due to being right handed, so options on the left tend to be quieter, and therefore quicker.



6. MARK YOUR BAGGAGE AS FRAGILE

While this is of course not foolproof, this is a simple way to ensure your luggage is handled with the care and attention it deserves. It's likely your bag will be put on top of the pile of bags and stowed for safety, so you might also be the first to receive your bag after landing too – just a little extra bonus!



8. LEARN WHERE TO GET SOME SHUTEYE

If your flight gets delayed or you've just really over-estimated the time you need in the airport, it might be a good idea to take a nap. If you're looking to get comfortable in the airport, check out [The Guide To Sleeping In Airports](#) to find the very best sleeping spot available!

STUDYING IN THE UK ESSENTIALS CHECKLIST

Your university will offer you lots of advice so it's always worth checking its website and getting in contact with them if you have any questions. The British Council also runs pre-departure briefings for students around the world.



KEY ITEMS

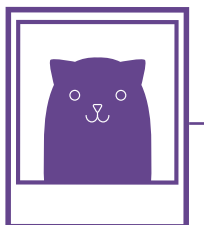
Check with your airline to find out how much you can carry on your flight, and remember that most things can be purchased when you arrive.

The weather in the UK is very changeable - it's part of the reason British people are so obsessed with talking about it. In the summer (June to August), average temperatures can be from 10° to 30°C and in the winter (December - February), average temperatures are between 1°C and 5°C - but it can get even colder than that!

- ☐ Clothing and shoes for all weather
- ☐ Thick coat for winter and lighter waterproof coat for the rain
- ☐ Umbrella
- ☐ Decent walking shoes
- ☐ One nice outfit for special or formal occasions. For guys this doesn't necessarily mean a matching suit, but a blazer or suit jacket and a tie will be useful



- ☐ Adaptors for electrical items
- ☐ Items to make you feel at home in your new room: posters, photos, cuddly toys!
- ☐ Books that may be useful for your new course
- ☐ Enough prescription drugs for the length of your stay (you need to make sure you are allowed to bring them into the country and that you have documentation, either the prescription or a doctor's note)
- ☐ Day bag or backpack (smaller one for day use and a larger one for weekends away)
- ☐ Contact lenses, solution and case (make sure you have all you'll need for your time abroad, or check that the ones you need are available in the UK)
- ☐ Glasses and glasses case (including spares)
- ☐ Camera
- ☐ Chargers
- ☐ Laptop
- ☐ Cables
- ☐ Language dictionary or app





IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS

Keep these in your hand luggage and be sure to make scans or photocopies of these!

- ☐ Flight tickets
- ☐ Passport
- ☐ Visa
- ☐ Birth certificate
- ☐ Home driving licence (if you've got one)
- ☐ Offer letter
- ☐ All other correspondence from your university
- ☐ Accommodation contract letter
- ☐ Evidence of funding for your university fees and living costs and a sponsor letter, if applicable
- ☐ Health certificates, vaccination records and any important x-rays
- ☐ Insurance documents
- ☐ Cash in pounds sterling or travellers cheques (enough for your first two weeks, in case of issues with bank accounts)



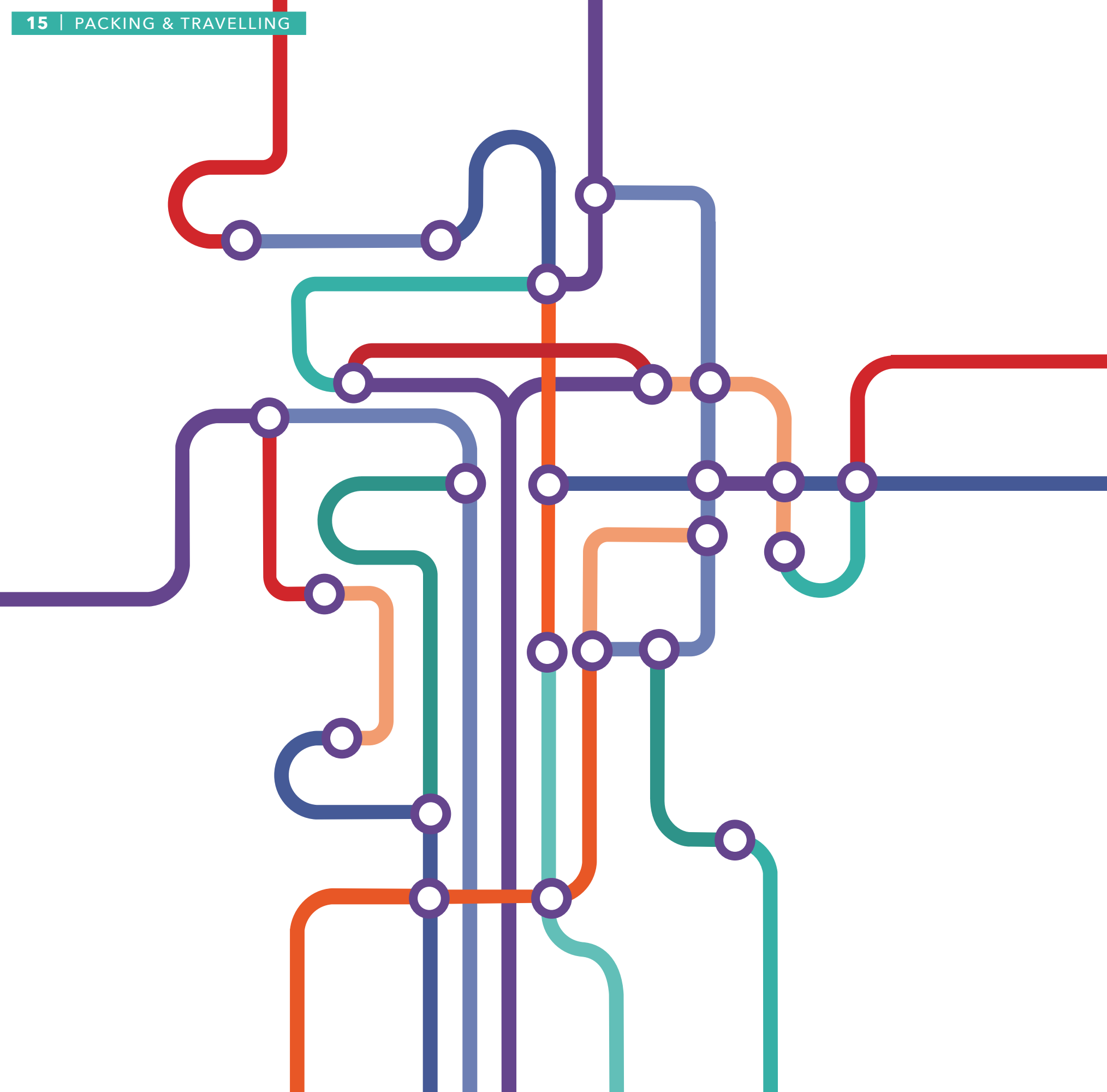
DON'T PACK

- X** Food – there are strict rules for importing food from overseas.
- X** Most airports have restrictions on sharp and flammable objects in your hand luggage. They also require liquids to be in containers of 100ml or smaller, packed in a clear plastic bag. Check with your airline before travelling.

THE BIG 5 TO ORGANISE

- 1»** Firstly you need to apply for your visa. You can find how to do it (or whether you need to) on the [UKCISA](https://www.ukcisa.org.uk) website.
- 2»** Apply for a room in halls of residence, or like many international students [find a room in private student accommodation](#).
- 3»** Plan your budget and organise your bank account. You can find out how later on in this guide.
- 4»** Plan your journey from the airport. See the section on student travel later on in this guide (it's also worth checking whether your university offers an orientation programme which might include picking you up from the airport).
- 5»** Consider taking out travel or health insurance.





Transport in the UK

Learning to navigate a new public transport system in any country is tricky. Fortunately, travelling between towns and cities in the UK can often be quick and easy.

Though locals love to complain about transport services, they are generally reliable and – with a little forward planning – affordable. Here are our top transport tips for students in the UK.



TRAINS

There's a really efficient rail network across Britain. Anyone in full-time study qualifies for a **16-25 Railcard**, which saves you a third on most journeys. It costs £30 a year, which should make it worthwhile, even if you only make occasional journeys.

You should also try and book trains as early as possible, as tickets bought in advance are usually heavily discounted. **The Trainline** will help you find you the cheapest deals available, but you can dodge the £1 booking fee by buying direct from the operator of the line you're travelling on.



COACHES

Coaches are a good choice for students, especially for long distance journeys. While slower than most trains, coaches are usually significantly cheaper than most other modes of transport. The two main providers in England are **National Express**, where comfortable seating and free Wi-Fi are the norm, and **Megabus**, which is usually a slightly more basic service.

Both offer students a discount: an annual £10 **Young Persons Coachcard** will save you a third on all standard fares with National Express, while an **NUS Extra card** will see your Megabus ticket price reduced by 10%. As with trains, book in advance and compare prices to get the best deals.

Note that if you're studying in Scotland, **Citylink** is the main coach provider, and in Northern Ireland, it's **Translink**.



BUSES

Travelling by bus is usually great value, especially as a student. You can get discounts with your weekly, monthly or annual passes, which will save you money throughout the year. In London, you'll need an **Oyster card** or contactless bank card to register your bus fares, but across the rest of the UK, tickets are normally bought on the bus.

Watch out for SMS numbers and QR codes at bus stops, which will help you access timetables to find out when your bus is arriving. Or download apps like **UK Bus Checker** to get real-time journey information from your local service. Another app, **CityMapper**, can also help you plan your bus route and fares in advance.



FLIGHTS

There are more than 40 commercial airports in the UK, which makes it easy to take short, internal flights, often with regional carriers. Flying can often be one of the more expensive options but for long trips around the country, such as London to Edinburgh, it can be the quickest mode of transport if there are no delays (and depending on how long it takes you to get to the airport). Prices on budget airlines can sometimes be cheaper than train tickets too.

International flights are available to most major airports around the world – use comparison site **Skyscanner** to find the cheapest tickets.



TAXIS

In all cities around the country, you should be able to flag down a taxi easily. They are a convenient way to travel, but depending on the city and the traffic on the day, they can be expensive. Unless you're splitting the cost with other students, your wallet will thank you for not using them regularly! Tipping drivers is customary, but not essential.

Private hire taxis (booked in advance) are generally better value, so save the number of a local service on your phone in case you get stranded on a night out. Check if the popular ride sharing app **Uber** is available in your new city as it is often the cheapest and most convenient way to travel by car.

Stay safe by ensuring any taxi you get into displays a license from the local council.



CYCLING

If you can put up with the British weather, cycling can be a cheap and effective way to travel.

You'll need to stay off the pavements, and adhere to all road signs and traffic lights. Wearing a helmet is highly recommended. A full set of safety rules can be found in the **Highway Code**.

There are bike shops in most towns that sell and repair bikes. Increasingly, universities offer cycle hire schemes to their students at a low cost - check with your institution. A lot of cities have public bike hire schemes too - like **Santander Cycles** in London



DRIVING

If you want to drive in the UK, you'll need to hold a valid driving licence. If you hold an **non-GB driving licence**, you will need to check to see if it allows you to drive in Britain.

Students who have passed their test abroad, or who are taking their test in the UK, should familiarise themselves with the **Highway Code**, which contains all the laws and rules for driving safely in Britain.

While the freedom of driving is appealing, the expense of running a vehicle (and high insurance costs for young people in the UK) puts many students off car ownership while at university. If you are heading for London, consider setting up a **Zipcar** account, which will allow you to hire cars by the hour, at just a few pounds and with fuel included.



GETTING TO THE UK

If you're flying to the UK, your university will be able to advise you on local transport, and how best to get there from the airport when you first arrive. If you're arriving by car, the **Eurotunnel** and ferry are both good options. Don't forget your passport!



LIFE TIPS & TRICKS



HOW TO MAKE FRIENDS WHEN STUDYING ABROAD

Make local friends and your experience becomes culturally richer, plus your language skills improve rapidly.



1. DON'T BE SHY

Most UK students are overwhelmingly welcoming towards international students, and are very open to learning about other cultures. So don't be afraid to talk to local students – chances are they're looking forward to making friends with you too. Because UK universities are very international, you're also bound to meet loads of students from other countries too.

2. VISIT FRESHERS' WEEK

Don't miss out on the first week of the academic year, called Freshers' Week, where events take place to introduce new students to each other and help them settle in. Attend lots of events, and don't be afraid to talk to local students – they may not have travelled quite as far, but many are living away from home and are as eager to make new friends as you are.



4. SIGN UP FOR A BUDDY SCHEME

Many universities have established mentoring schemes, where freshers are paired with older, more experienced students. Your buddy will show you around the university campus, answer your questions, share study tips and organise social events with other first years.



3. THROW A PARTY

Throwing a party in your own home is an easy way to get to know lots of new people – just make sure you check the rules in your accommodation first. Team up with your neighbours, buy some food and drinks, and spread the word among your classmates and neighbours.



5. JOIN A SOCIETY

Go along to the events that sports clubs and societies put on early in the term to get new members. If you decide it's for you, sign up! Joining lots of clubs and 'socs' is a great icebreaker – you'll instantly have something in common with people, and no-matter what its purpose is having some fun is usually a key element.



6. WORK TOGETHER

Try to not only work with students from your home country when it comes to group work. By interacting with other students through a joint project, you'll also gain lots of time to chat, brainstorm over coffee meetings and celebrate your hard work together when it's done!

7. SHARE YOUR LANGUAGE SKILLS

There are usually lots of exchange programmes at universities that can put you in touch with local students who are studying your native language - you can get together, help each other improve your language skills and make a friend too!

8. GET TO KNOW YOUR CLASSMATES

Make it a habit to sit next to someone new every now and then in lectures, seminars and tutorials. There are lots of opportunities to chat, perhaps about parts of the course or assignments that have been set. You'll get to know more and more people this way, and it opens up more opportunities for study groups, chats in the library and more!



9. SHOW OFF CUISINE FROM YOUR HOME COUNTRY

The best way to someone's heart is through their stomach, or so the saying goes. Invite your classmates or neighbours over to your home and whip up a delicious speciality dish from your home country. Students aren't renowned for their cooking, so hopefully they'll be excited to dig into a tasty meal and learn a bit about your culture in the process.

10. GO ON EXCURSIONS

Sign up for trips hosted by your class as well as the societies, clubs and student unions you're a member of. It's a great opportunity to get away from the university atmosphere for a short while and explore new places away from your daily routine. What's more, you'll make lots of new friends in the process. Some societies even organise trips abroad.



11. LEAVE YOUR COMFORT ZONE

University is all about new experiences and gives you the chance to meet people from all walks of life. So put yourself out there, and start doing things that are a bit outside your comfort zone. Try windsurfing, yoga, ballroom dancing, volunteering, saying 'hi!' or asking 'how's your day been?'. Join the Quidditch team, take up a cookery course or attend a meeting of the Viking Society, anything! Students are a sociable bunch, and you'll be surprised by how easily you'll make friends for life - once you've given yourself a little push. Don't be shy.



STUDENT LIFE HACKS FOR A BRILLIANT YEAR ABROAD



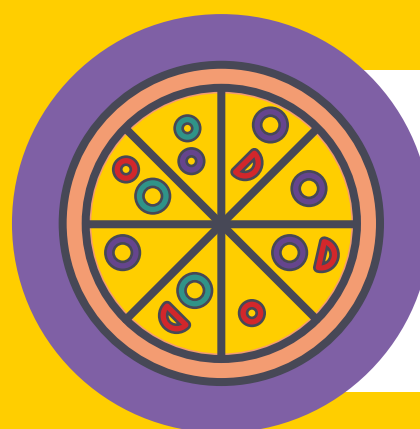
Keep your timetable front of mind - take a snapshot of it and save it as the wallpaper on your lock screen.



Avoid sleeping through your alarm. Pop your phone into an empty glass, and the sound will be amplified so you'll get a really loud wake-up call.



Take your notes using a different colour pen for every module or topic. They'll be easier to find and organise for revision plus it helps to recall the information in a categorised way!



Put a glass with a little water in the microwave when you're reheating leftover pizza - it'll taste almost as good as new and you'll avoid those dreaded chewy crusts...





When giving a presentation get a friend to ask you a question that you know the answer to. You'll look really clever.



Typing something into Google followed by 'filetype:ppt' will bring up PowerPoint slides on the topic, free for you to download. Brilliant for helping you structure your own revision, presentations and notes.



Yes, you shouldn't use Wikipedia pages directly for research, but click into the handy list of references at the bottom of the page and benefit from all the related original sources.



Put a blue ink cartridge in a red pen outer case - because, apparently, nobody steals a red pen!



Use an app called Foursquare to get the Wi-Fi code for most places (and loads of other useful local information too!)



Rub the sticky side of a post-it note across your keyboard and between the keys to collect all the dust and dirt.



Type your Times New Roman size 12 - studies have shown it's fastest to read!





APPS THAT WILL IMPROVE LIFE WHEN STUDYING ABROAD



CityMaps2Go

7,000 maps are available for download and once stored on your phone you can access them offline so you don't rack up any roaming charges.

Each city map comes with a discovery feature, which tells you about popular restaurants and cafés, as well as top attractions. You can download a travel guide for extra info and automatically save your favourite locations.

Click here for the [iOS version](#), or here for the [Android version](#).

Memorise

Remember things on the go with a really fun game-like app where you can compete with other users. On top of that, there are thousands of courses available adapted things you might want to learn - like a new language.

Click here for the [iOS version](#), or here for the [Android version](#).



Converter Plus

This free app is easy to use and incredibly handy when you need to convert currency, weight, temperature and whatever else you might need.

Click here for the [iOS version](#). Unavailable on Android currently, but [Unit Converter](#) is a good alternative.

Wi-Fi Finder

Particularly handy when you've only just arrived at your new destination to avoid roaming charges. The app has a directory of hundreds of thousands of Wi-Fi hotspots in more than 140 countries. You can search for them by closest location, whether they're free or paid, in what type of establishment they are located or even by the provider. Most importantly, the app also works when you're offline.

Click here for the [iOS version](#), or here for the [Android version](#).

DocuSign

With DocuSign, you can take care of all that paperwork international students have to deal with and avoid having to print or scan. Sign documents directly in the app, save them or send them on via e-mail.

Click here for the [iOS version](#), or here for the [Android version](#).

Doctoralia

You may have a medical centre on campus but if not, Doctoralia can help you find a professional near you. You can search for doctors by name, specialty or city, and even book appointments via the app. The service is available in 20 countries and to help you make your choice, you can access reviews written by patients.

Click here for the [iOS version](#), or here for the [Android version](#).

InClass

It's a free app that aims to help students keep track of their schedules. Enter your classes and the deadlines of your assignments, and InClass will keep them all in one place. There's an alarm function, which will remind you when your homework and other assignments are due, plus the option to add written notes or audio recordings to the app.

Click here for the [iOS version](#).



Linguee

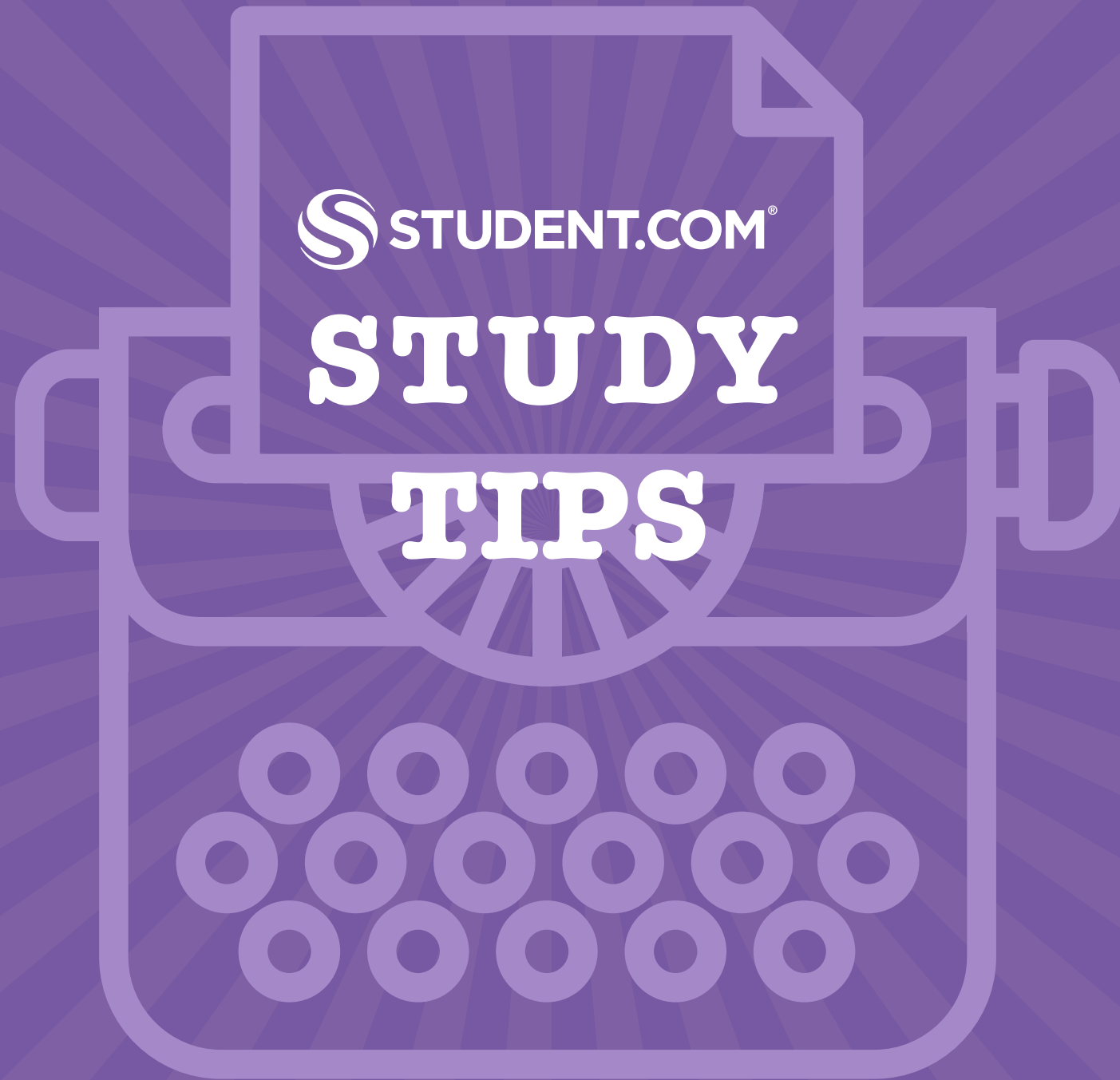
Linguee is a great tool for students that have to do coursework in a foreign language. You can use it as a regular dictionary or to translate sentences, idioms and expressions. The app's search engine uses a database of a billion bilingual texts, so if you're struggling with finding the right phrase, you can type it in the search bar and the app will come up with multiple translation examples. Since the app is not translating your sentence word for word, the results are usually idiomatic and grammatically correct, so you won't have to deal with any of that gibberish you can get with other translation apps.

Click here for the [iOS version](#), or here for the [Android version](#).

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STUDY TIPS





TOP TIPS FOR WRITING ESSAYS IN ENGLISH WHEN IT'S NOT YOUR FIRST LANGUAGE.

UNDERSTAND THE QUESTION

It's crucial to have complete clarity on the essay question before you begin researching and writing.

Read it carefully, twice, and highlight any key words. Use a dictionary to translate any words you don't recognise, or ask a native speaker friend for help. Also, discuss the question with your lecturer or tutor if you have any doubts at all - you can even ask them if your plan for answering it is correct. Once everything is crystal-clear, you can get to work!

DO YOUR RESEARCH

Gather information on the topic you are writing about and read as much as you can from a variety of different sources, including books, journals, interviews and newspaper articles. This can even include carrying out background

reading in your native language, to make sure you fully understand the material. This might even save you some time in the long-run, if you're writing about a complex topic.

Top tip: Make notes from your reading under full bibliographic reference headings (see point eight, below) - this will save you a lot of time when it comes to writing and putting the finishing touches on your essay later.

DON'T STRESS OVER STRUCTURE

Once you've got a rough idea about what you want to say in your essay, you can start to plan it and think about its structure. Essays written in English usually follow the same three-step format: introduction, body and conclusion.

The introduction should present the topic of your essay to your reader – this is often done by making a thesis statement and clearly explaining how your paper will be organised.

In the body of the essay, you support the thesis with several arguments which are backed up using evidence drawn from your research.

The conclusion is the final part of your essay. It should not only summarise the points you have made throughout the essay, but also tie all of your arguments together to further support your initial statement or thesis.

Always remember to **PEEL**:

Point

Make a point

Evidence

Back it up with evidence (a quote, a statistic, a theory from your research)

Explain

Why or how is this relevant to your argument?

Link

Use a connective so that your argument flows from one paragraph to the next and is structured in a logical way.

Top tip: Ask your professor for examples of previous students' essays. Reading these will aid your understanding of how a good essay is structured, and make you a better writer.

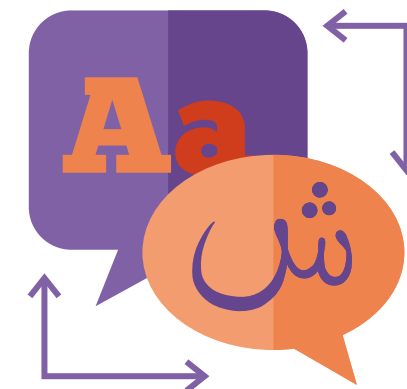
GET THE HANG OF HOMOPHONES

We know the English language can be complicated, and it is made all the more difficult because of sneaky words that sound the same but in fact have different spellings – these are called homophones.

Try reading this sentence out loud:

“They're annoyed because their train was late in getting them there”.

The three variations of 'there' sound the same, right? But they have totally different definitions! Homophones are really easy to get the hang of, you just need to know how. To battle any uncertainty on this topic, read over websites like [Homophone.com](https://www.homophone.com/), which will help clear up any confusion and make sure you **write** the **right** words in your essays.



ABANDON ROGUE APOSTROPHES

There are only two instances where you need to use an apostrophe in the English language: to show possession (e.g. Mike's apostrophe belongs to Mike) and in contractions (e.g. don't – or do not misuse apostrophes).

AVOID OVERLY COMPLICATED LANGUAGE

When writing in a foreign language, it can be tempting to use a dictionary or thesaurus to find a more 'intelligent-sounding' word. The real key to writing good essays in English is to use plain language, which will convey your points clearly, using linking words to balance your argument.

Linking words allow you to connect ideas, sentences and paragraphs to make your writing more fluid and logical. Examples include words like 'therefore', 'however', 'furthermore' and 'thus', or phrases like 'on the one hand', 'in contrast', 'this shows that', or 'in conclusion'. You can find extensive lists online, so be sure to use them when writing your essay.



AVOID TRANSLATING FROM YOUR NATIVE LANGUAGE

When you're struggling to express an idea in English, you may start trying to translate literally from your native language. The problem with translating is that the syntax (word order) used in your native language can be very

different to English, and the resulting sentence will end up sounding awkward and unnatural, or just not make any sense at all.

Instead, ask a native English speaker for help. Try to explain to them what you want to say and see if they can come up with a phrase in English that encompasses your idea.

USE THE RIGHT REFERENCING SYSTEM

Depending on which system your university uses, you can find a detailed guide on the Harvard System [here](#) and the quick guide to the Chicago Manual of Style [here](#).

These days, it's becoming increasingly popular for students to use built-in tools on word processing applications like **Microsoft Word** to help with their references, or free tools like [Cite This For Me](#). Just remember to double-check your references and bibliography before handing in any piece of work.

DON'T PLAGIARISE

If you forget to reference where you took an idea, quote or figure from, this can count as plagiarism. If you're suspected of having plagiarised parts or all of your essay, consequences can range from deduction of marks to expulsion from university.

At times you may also copy parts of a text unintentionally. So before you submit your essay, run it through

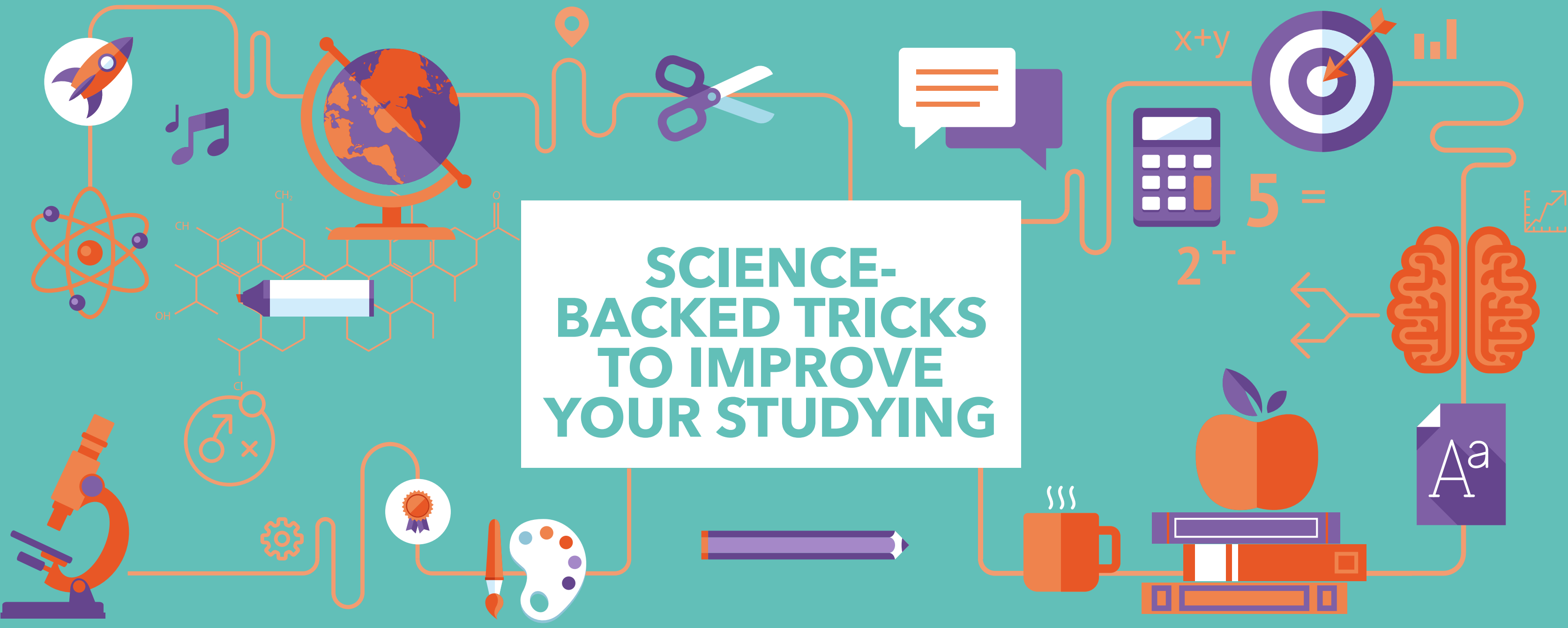
plagiarism detection tools like **Plagtracker**, which compares your writing with websites and academic works and alert you if there's any identical content.

TAKE A BREAK FROM YOUR ESSAY

Finish your essay early enough to leave it for a day or two. When you come back to it, you'll be able to read through it with a fresh pair of eyes, making it much easier to identify spelling or grammatical mistakes, or even flaws in your logic and structure.

Then, once you've made the final changes, hand it over to a native English speaker for proofreading. They'll be able to spot errors you may have missed, which will hopefully take your essay to the next level.





TAKE A HIGHLIGHTER HIATUS

Many students rely on highlighters to mark important parts of text, whether it's in weekly seminar readings or their own notes. But studies have shown that this method may actually hinder revision progress. According to **Professor John Dunlosky**, students are more likely to focus on one concept at a time if they identify phrases and words with a brightly coloured pen, making it harder to absorb the information as a whole or link key concepts together.

Instead of using highlighters, grab a big piece of paper and try to mind map the most significant points of the key texts you've read. Creating a visual map will help link the ideas together, and the physical action of writing and drawing will trigger your **kinaesthetic memory**.

GET INTO A STUDY ROUTINE

Pulling all-nighters may work for a very small handful of students. But unfortunately for the majority of people, all-nighters generally equal lower grades. Research has shown that getting into a routine and setting yourself up to study at specific times of the day actually trains

your brain to learn in those moments, making each and every revision session really count.

Some students work best in the morning, others in the evening – there is no right and wrong here. So find the routine that suits you, then make a study timetable and stick to it over the exam period. Your grades will thank you for it!

DO PRACTICE TESTS

Not only do practice tests increase your **confidence** before heading into the

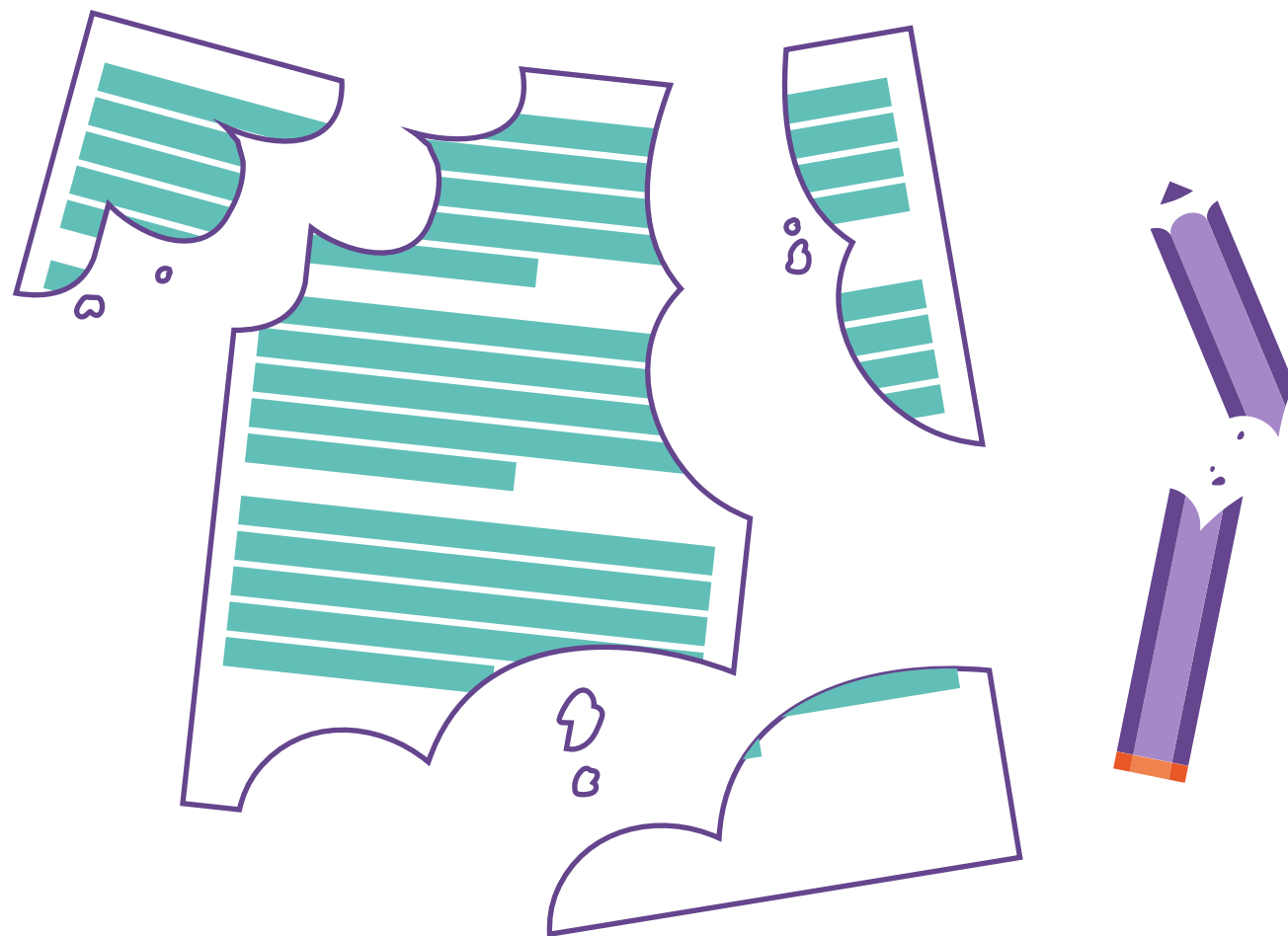
real exam, which in turn helps lead to better performance, they also improve your overall exam technique because you learn good pacing skills. By sitting down and taking a practice paper in exam conditions (that means no mobile phones, music or computers – just you, the questions, a pen and a clock to keep track of time), you'll get a good idea of how the exam will be on the day and how you'll divide your time. If a whole century of research proves that repeated testing works, the experts can't be wrong.

USE FLASHCARDS

Flashcards have been a fashionable study tool since a simple yet effective method was developed by German science journalist Sebastian Leitner in the 1970s. The **Leitner system** makes use of multiple flashcards organised into a box; if you manage to answer a card correctly, you file it into a section that will be revised less often, but if you give the wrong answer, the card is moved into a section to be revisited more frequently. This system is a highly effective way of prioritising your study topics in a logical manner and, better yet, means you can practise just about anywhere!

BREAK YOUR WORK INTO CHUNKS

Scientifically speaking, cramming is never constructive. Instead, it is much better for you to break your workload down into bite-size chunks. Research has proven time and time again that studying for shorter periods of time with regular rest intervals improves both concentration and memory capacity. Your brain is much better at encoding information into the synapses in short, repeated sessions, rather than one large one.

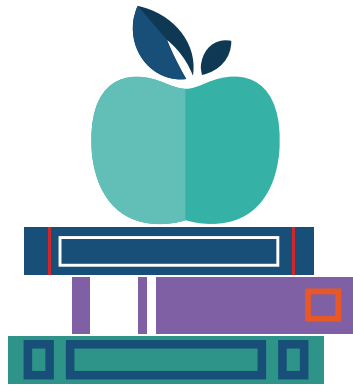


DON'T LET HEALTHY HABITS SLIP

It's always tempting to binge on junk food around deadlines, so you can spend more time studying and not cooking. But in reality, this is only going to have a negative effect on your brainpower. Taking the time out to cook is both a great way to give yourself a break from the books, and also to ensure your body is getting the nutrients it needs at this stressful time.

Top nutritionist **Jo Lewin** recommends opting for whole grains for a steady supply of energy, oily fish for healthy brain function, antioxidant blueberries and tomatoes for improving short term memory, and vitamins C and K, in the form of blackcurrants and broccoli, to increase mental agility and enhance cognitive function.

And don't forget to drink plenty of water to keep hydrated and help your brain work faster. Goodbye vending machines, hello straight A student!



DITCH THE DISTRACTIONS

It has long been noted that listening to classical music while studying can have a very positive effect on students' outcomes, with research carried out in France showing a huge difference in test results between students who listened to classical music during a one hour lecture and those who didn't. But this doesn't ring true for all types of music, which can in fact be quite distracting.

Research by **Nicole Dudukovic**, a psychology professor at Trinity College, Hartford in Connecticut, has shown that listening to music or texting friends while studying does not make you study better (despite the claims of many students).

So while you can boost your grades by listening to classical music, listening to Kanye West while studying just won't have the same effect. Avoid distractions by switching off mobile phones and social media notifications during your designated study period to improve concentration.

STUDY IN YOUR SLEEP (NO, REALLY!)

Scientists at **Northwestern University** carried out an experiment to find out if playing sounds to sleeping participants

would increase their memory of information learned listening to the same sounds while awake – and it turns out it really does work! If you want to follow this method, try associating sounds with revision cards during waking hours, and then playing those sounds back while you sleep to strengthen the memory.

Other studies have also shown that by reviewing the most difficult topics just before sleeping the night before a big test makes them easier to recall on the day. But be warned, not getting enough sleep can lead to lower grades and impaired reasoning and memory for up to four days – yikes!

EXERCISE BEFORE YOU TRY TRICKY EXERCISES

Your brain, like the rest of your body, changes and develops as you grow, and can decline if it's underused. Studies have shown that even just 30 minutes of moderate aerobic exercise a day can improve cognitive function by more than 500% in adults. Not only is exercise also beneficial for attention span and information processing, but endorphins that are released during physical activity improve mood and sleep, and reduce stress and anxiety.



Best of all, the exercise you do doesn't need to be exhausting, as many of the studies carried out were based on participants walking briskly. So whether you put on your running shoes, roll out your yoga mat or throw on your swimming costume, just half an hour of exercise a day is all you need to keep your brain in good shape.

COMFORT ZONE? CHANGE IT UP

Of course it's important to have a routine, and a big part of that routine should be when it is you decide to study. However Research shows that if you study the same material every day, but change where you study, you're more likely to remember it because your brain will be forced to form new associations with the information, strengthening the memory of it in the process.

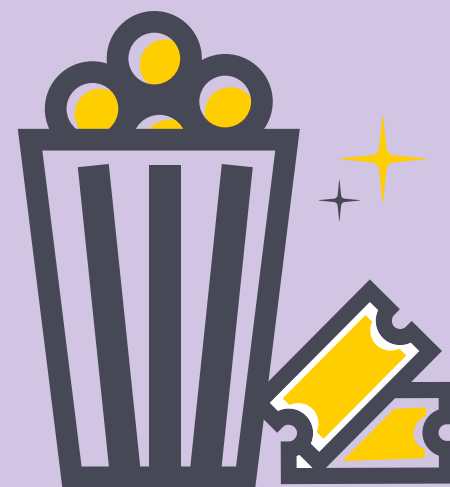
So don't stick to your bedroom desk, or even restrict yourself to studying in the library for that matter. Discover new places on campus to study like empty seminar rooms, or head to a (quiet) local café, libraries in town, or even a friend's house to mix it up.

TOP TIPS FOR STUDYING IN ANOTHER LANGUAGE

Studying in a language that isn't your own is a challenge, but you'll be amazed at how quickly you'll improve with these top tips.

WATCH MOVIES (YES, REALLY!)

Watch your favourite TV shows and films in the language you're trying to learn. Turning on the subtitles and reading along is especially helpful when actors are speaking with a heavy accent. Plus, hearing the words and reading them at the same time will make it much easier to remember them.

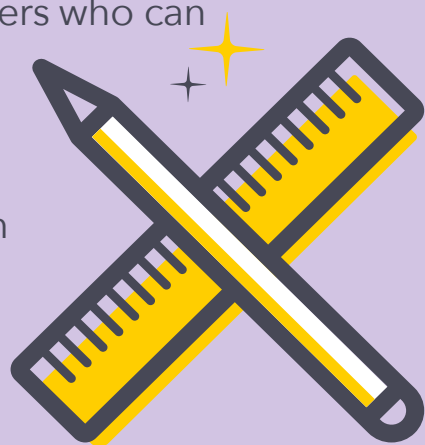


BECOME PART OF A LANGUAGE EXCHANGE PROGRAMME

Ask your university about language exchange programmes these are very popular among international and local students alike. You create an online profile, which lists your native language as well as the language you would like to learn. You will then be paired up with someone who matches your profile. Everything is completely voluntary so you and your partner can decide how often you want to meet up in person to chat in your respective native languages.

FORM A STUDY GROUP

Ask your classmates if they're interested in forming a study group. Not only is studying together more fun than being by yourself but you're also working with others who can help you make sense of things you might not fully understand. A distant, second to human interaction are services like **Studypool**, an online marketplace for paid tutoring.

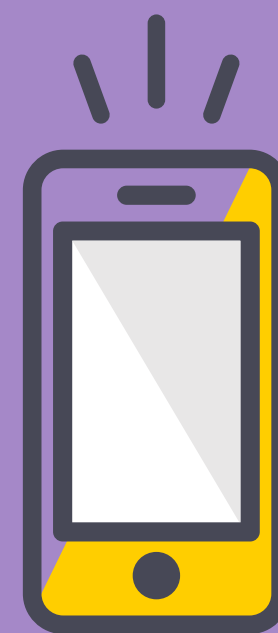


ATTEND A PROFESSIONAL COURSE

Many universities offer professional language courses during the summer, focussing on language learning as well as skills needed for academic studies. They're not free but they'll help you settle in and prepare you for the start of the academic year. Depending on your visa status and your language level you might even be required to take one. Other than that, be sure to browse your university's website to find out if free language classes are held during the semester.

DOWNLOAD A LANGUAGE APP

Practising a foreign language a little every day goes a long way, and the many free learning apps are a great way to do just that. You can solve some grammar exercises while waiting for the bus or pull out your phone during an especially boring lecture to study some vocabulary. **Duolingo** and **Memrise** are two great examples, although there are plenty of others available for iOS and Android.



MAKE FRIENDS FROM OUTSIDE YOUR OWN COUNTRY

Settling into a new foreign place can be daunting and you'll probably instinctively flock to people from your own country who are going through the same experience. While there's nothing wrong with having a few friends from back home, you should try to make friends with people from different countries too.



ENGAGE IN YOUR COURSES

Don't be afraid to participate in lectures and tutorials and to speak up when there's something you don't understand. When your language skills aren't as strong as you'd like them to be, it can be easy to keep quiet. However, your classmates and tutors should be happy to explain things in simpler terms or elaborate a little.



GET A PART-TIME JOB

You'll make new friends with your co-workers, be forced to speak to customers in their language, and be left with some extra money in your pocket.

An alternative to a part-time job could be voluntary or charity work, both excellent ways of getting involved with your local community and practising your language skills.



PICK YOUR ACCOMMODATION CAREFULLY

International students often end up housed together, but, if possible, you should ask to be placed with local students when applying for accommodation. You'll be interacting with them on a day-to-day basis and the more you speak the faster you'll improve. Even if it's just a quick chat about whose turn it is to do dishes.



RECORD YOUR LECTURES AND TUTORIALS

It can really stress you out if there's a part of a lecture or seminar which you don't understand. As you're trying to work it out, you miss the next part of what's going on, then you're out of sync!

If you record your lectures or tutorials on your phone, then you can go back and review any parts you're not sure about (just write down the time in the recording you want to review). This is also great for tidying your notes up and refreshing yourself on the topic at exam time.

RELAX, ENJOY THE CHALLENGE AND LET THE FRIENDLY PEOPLE AROUND YOU HELP!

The biggest enemies of improving your language skills are being afraid of making mistakes, not just 'going for it', not enjoying yourself and not asking people to help you out. People love to teach what they know. They don't think you're silly for not being able to speak a language perfectly, they're amazed at how much you do know and admire you for putting yourself in a position to learn lots more. Smiles, laughter and learning together are all you need.



Language & Culture

GOBSMACKED

(shocked)

*Brass
Monkeys*

(very cold)

HUNKY
DORY

(all's well)

BITS'N'BOBS

(assorted stuff)

Chin Wag

(in depth chat)

KERFUFFLE

(a fuss, confusion & disorder)

LANGUAGE
& CULTURE

To learn even more about the
British language you can try [10 British
Phrases To Get You Talking Like A Local](#)
or [Unusual English Phrases You
Won't Learn In Language School](#)

LURGY

(contagious illness)

Spend a Penny

(urinate)

Ticky-Boo

(just fine)

GOBBLEDEGOOK

(nonsense)

Kip

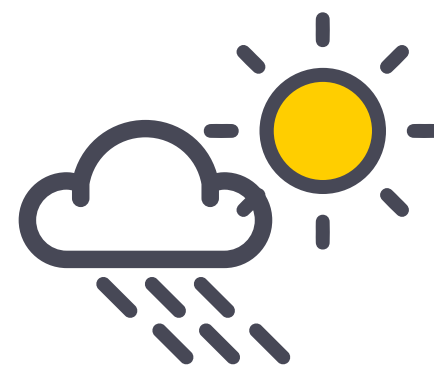
(sleep or nap)

THINGS INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS DON'T UNDERSTAND ABOUT THE UK EXPLAINED



1. TEA IS LIFE

For pretty much every British person, tea is the ultimate comfort. Whether you're deep into a late-night study session, on your way to a lecture in the morning or just relaxing with friends in the evening, tea is at the core of all life in the UK. You might not take an immediate liking to the milky, sugary version that most Brits drink, but give it a go and you'll soon be reaching for a 'cuppa' whenever there's a spare moment in the day. Just note that you will become addicted. Don't say we didn't warn you!



2. EVERYONE TALKS ABOUT THE WEATHER

Bring two British people together and, within minutes, you can guarantee the weather will be mentioned. Warm, sunny and fresh, or cold, rainy and grey – it doesn't matter! A huge amount of conversations you'll have in the UK will revolve around the weather. This doesn't mean that everyone's obsessed with rain, though. Chatting about the climate is just how people in the UK get talking to a stranger. So join in and you'll be making new friends in no time!

3. 'SORRY' IS THE MOST IMPORTANT WORD

'Sorry' is the word you'll hear most of all in the UK. British people are incredibly polite and will go a long way to avoid insulting or upsetting someone. This can be quite extreme though. Imagine you accidentally bump into someone in the street, they'll almost certainly say sorry to you first. Even if you manage to really hurt or annoy someone, 'sorry' will be the first thing to their lips despite you being wholly in the wrong. It's an infectious habit Brits have, and you'll soon be doing just the same... Sorry!

4. THERE'S NO 'BRITISH' ACCENT

Everyone knows the British accent: Mary Poppins, the Queen and Harry Potter, right? Wrong. For such a tiny island, the UK has an amazing range of accents. From the Welsh sing-song to the friendly Yorkshire accent, it can be easy to lose track. Although this may seem confusing at first, don't worry! You'll quickly get used to and even love the variety of voices you'll hear all around you. Before you know it, you'll have picked up the local accent from where you live and you'll be speaking like a true Brit!



5. THE FOOD CAN BE REALLY GOOD

With a northern European climate comes the need for true comfort food, and nowhere does it better than the UK. There's nothing better than a good roast

dinner on a Sunday afternoon, or fish and chips served in newspaper, to make you feel warm inside. And a full English breakfast has magical healing properties when eaten after a big night out. Don't forget that **the UK is also home to more varieties of cheese than France**, so make sure you sample plenty of these whenever you can.

6. THERE ARE SOME WEIRD TRADITIONS

Whether the locals want to admit it or not, the UK is built on a love of tradition. This is obvious in the glamour of the royal family and the iconic red telephone boxes that you still see everywhere, but it's the stranger traditions that really make the UK special. For example, every 5th November is Guy Fawkes night, a commemoration of a failed attempt to blow up the Houses of Parliament in 1605. The evening involves plenty of fireworks and, oddly, burning effigies of the main plotter on outdoor fires. Some British students love these traditions so much, they've invented **societies** for them!

7. QUEUING IS AN ART

Next to tea and talking about the weather, queuing is a skill people in the UK have really mastered. Whether it's for the latest pop-up restaurant or simply at a bus stop, polite queues form everywhere you look. This is far from being a formal rule, but accidentally push in a queue and you'll get nothing more than a few annoyed stares from those behind you. **British etiquette** is to be terribly polite, after all!



8. SLANG IS EVERYWHERE

Chuffed. Knackered. Kerfuffle. None of these are words you're likely to have learned in language school, but they make up a huge part of conversation in the UK. If there's something you don't understand, just ask – English is bursting full of interesting idioms that Brits will be more than happy to explain to you!



9. EVERYONE IS GLAD TO SEE YOU

Ultimately, even if everything seems a little strange at times, studying in the UK is a fantastic experience that's made even better by the welcome you receive. Even if people may seem quiet or excessively polite at first, you'll soon realise that everyone is really pleased to see that you've chosen to call their country home. So, get out there, meet some new people and have the time of your life!



TOP 10 SECRET GEMS IN THE UK

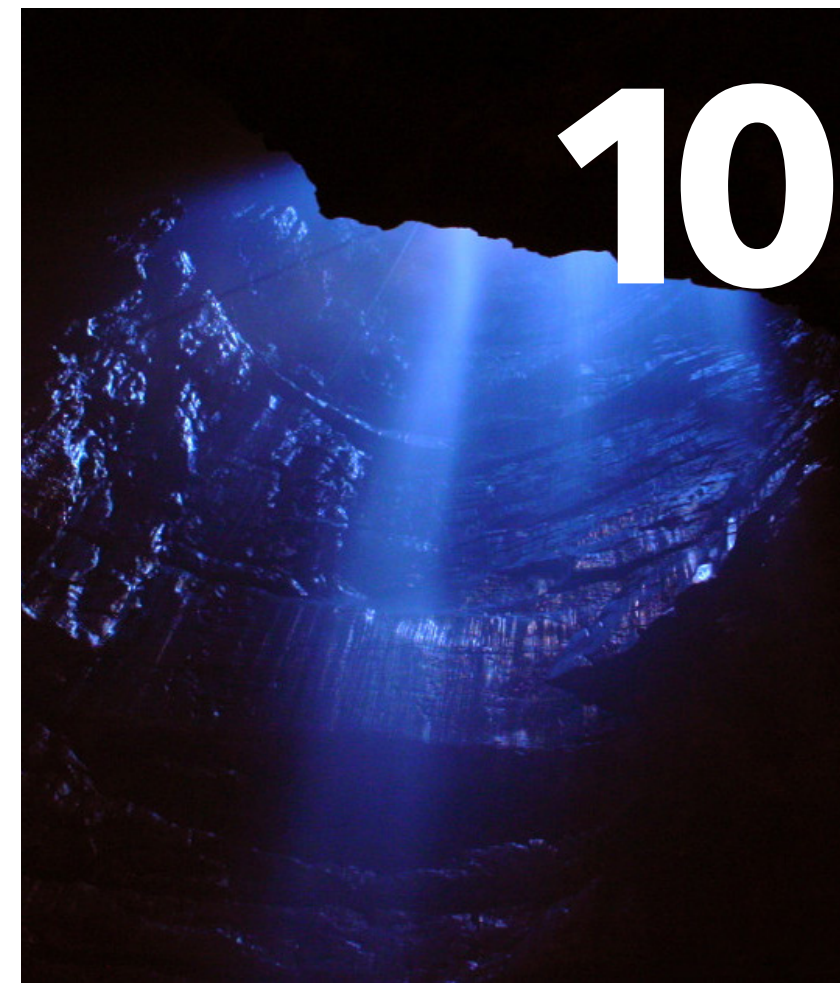
VISIT AN ANCIENT LONDON PUB

Ye Olde Cheshire Cheese in London was rebuilt in 1667 following the Great Fire of London but it's full of twisty passageways, dimly lit rooms and roaring old fireplaces. The world-famous author Charles Dickens used to drink here in one of the oldest pubs in the city.



EXPLORE AN UNSPOILT FISHING VILLAGE

The tiny seaside village of Clovelly in North Devon is so rustic that cars aren't even allowed. You'll pass picturesque English cottages with flower-filled window boxes on your way down to picturesque shingle beach, where you can watch locals fishing for the catch of the day.



DISCOVER AN IMMENSE CAVE - WITH A WATERFALL!

Gaping Gill cave houses the largest unbroken waterfall in England, which is twice the size of the world-famous Niagara Falls. Members of the public can't usually enter the system, but every year in May and August you can be lowered 340 feet into the main cavern for a guided tour.

Once your feet hit the bottom, you'll be able to look up at the immense dome of the cave's ceiling rising up above your head.



BUY SECOND-HAND BOOKS IN HAY-ON-WYE

Hay-on-Wye in South Wales is recognised all over the world as the ‘Town of Books’. Filled with specialist bookshops it hosts the world famous literary event, the Hay Festival, every year. Students get free entry, so there’s no excuse not to go!

There’s also lots to see and do after you’ve had enough of books. Wander the halls of medieval Hay Castle, go for a hike up Hay Bluff, or refuel with a coffee in The Old Electric Shop.



MARVEL AT SECRET CEILING ART

Legendary artist and author Alasdair Gray’s work can be found all over his hometown, Glasgow.

One of his most impressive works can be found in the auditorium upstairs at the Oran Mor arts centre, a converted church which regularly hosts gigs by international rock and pop bands. On the ceiling, you’ll see an incredibly detailed mural depicting the 12 signs of the zodiac. Gray has been working on it for over 10 years, and it’s still not yet complete...

EXPERIENCE ITALY IN WALES

This quirky, somewhat surreal little village was used as the set for cult British 60s TV show The Prisoner. It was built by the architect Sir Clough Williams-Ellis to look like an Italian town, complete with Riviera-inspired architecture and quaint, pastel-colourful houses.

Unsurprisingly, the whole remarkable area is now heritage-listed.



HUNT FOR RETRO WARES

Nestled in the North Laines of Brighton - an area of town known for its cobblestoned streets and unusual one-off boutiques - you’ll find Snoopers Paradise.

Wander its dusty aisles and discover ancient taxidermy amongst other cool relics of British culture. Upstairs is Snoopers Attic, where independent designers set up shop.



3

DIVE WITH SHARKS IN CORNWALL

Every year, these gigantic, yet completely toothless and harmless, sharks swim to the coast around Penzance in Cornwall. You can head out on a tour to scuba dive and snorkel alongside them. If you're lucky, you might also see some of the bay's resident dolphins, seals and whales when you head out for a swim!

TOUR A STATELY HOME

Hundreds of elegant stately homes are open to the public each year in the UK – look on the [National Trust](#) or [English Heritage](#) websites for more info. Our pick of the bunch is [Audley End House and Gardens](#) in Essex, which was built by the first Earl of Suffolk in the 1600s.

Becoming a royal palace, when King Charles II bought it in 1668, it's decorated with lavish furniture and priceless art. The beautiful grounds around it were designed by one of the world's most famous gardeners, Lancelot 'Capability' Brown.

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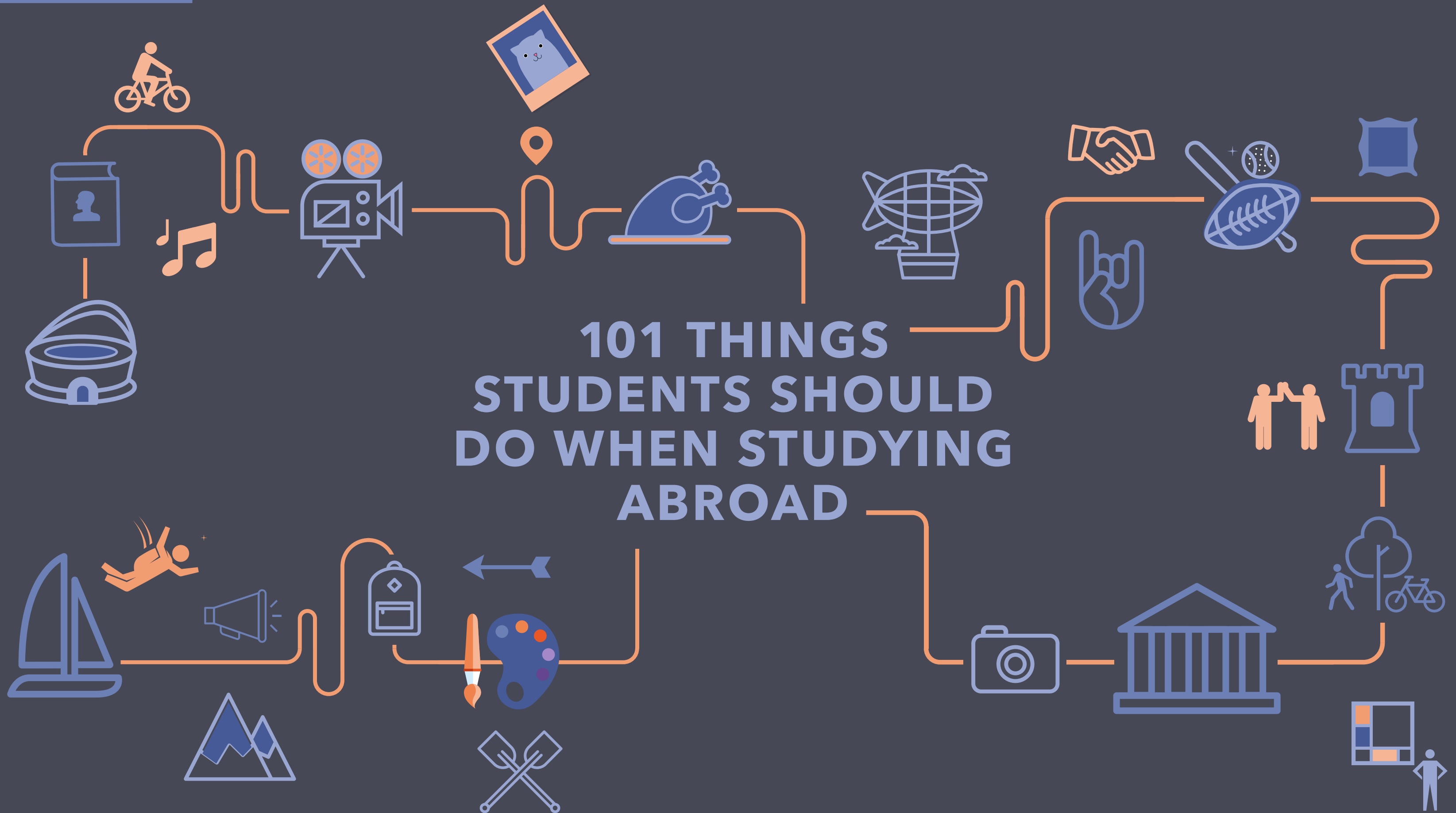
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DISCOVER THE CHEDDAR GORGE

Famous for its cheese, the town of Cheddar in Somerset is home to a striking, narrow, limestone cliff valley known as Cheddar Gorge. The gorge is home to an intricate cave systems full of ancient stalagmites and stalactites that will take your breath away. And it's here where 9,000-year-old Cheddar Man, Britain's oldest known human skeleton, was found.

101 THINGS STUDENTS SHOULD DO WHEN STUDYING ABROAD



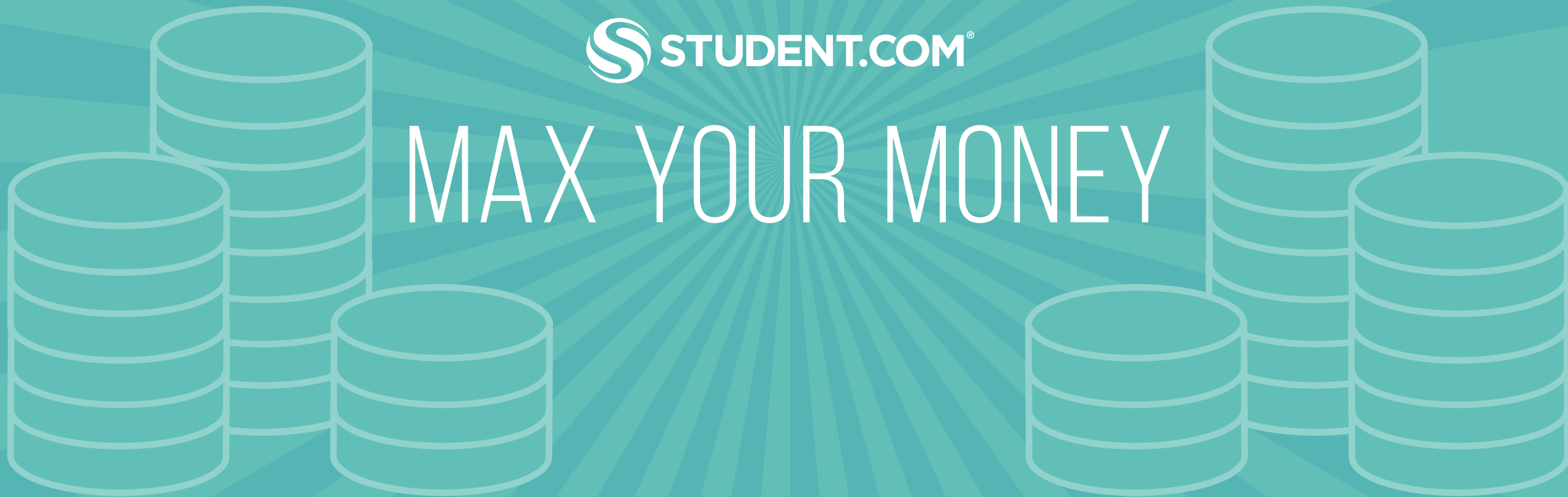
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|--|--|---|---|---|
| 1 <i>Get lost</i> | 8 Explore countries nearby | 16 Read a book that isn't study related | 22 Find out what working in your country of study is like | 27 <i>Explore all the buildings on campus</i> |
| 2 <i>Go on a trip to the nearest beach – even if you have to sleep over. Swim.</i> | 9 <i>Call mum on her birthday</i> | 17 <i>Tell someone your life story</i> | 23 GO AND SEE THE ART DEPARTMENT'S SHOWS | 28 HIRE A BIKE |
| 3 Make friends with someone from a country you've never been to | 10 CALL DAD ON HIS BIRTHDAY | 18 HAVE DINNER WITH A TUTOR | | 29 Get really into what you're studying |
| 4 Go camping – in the deepest, remotest countryside | 11 <i>Send lots of postcards</i> | 19 Go to a university sports match. And support them like crazy. | 24 <i>Go to a play put on by your university</i> | 30 Sample the local drinks |
| | 12 SEND SMALL, SILLY GIFTS HOME | 20 SIT IN ON A FRIEND'S LECTURE (ONE WHOSE DEGREE HAS ALWAYS INTERESTED YOU) | 25 Spend an afternoon making a video of all the great places you go and things that you do for your parents (they'll love it – and it will make them feel happy whenever they think of you studying abroad) | 31 SHOP IN A FOOD MARKET |
| 5 EAT EVERY LOCAL SPECIALITY | 13 Do some things you're scared of | | | 32 <i>Support a locally focused charity</i> |
| 6 <i>Feed someone food from your country</i> | 14 Join some university clubs and societies | 21 <i>Try and instigate a standing ovation at the end of a lecture (if it was a good one)</i> | 26 Get into an in-depth discussion with your tutor about an area of your degree that you love | 33 DRESS UP IN SOMETHING SILLY FOR CHARITY |
| 7 EXPLORE THE REGION | 15 JOIN SOME NON-UNIVERSITY CLUBS AND SOCIETIES | | | 34 DRESS UP IN SOMETHING SILLY FOR FUN |


| | | | | |
|---|---|--|---|---|
| 35 Have an international karaoke night - where everyone has to try and sing a different nation's songs... | 41 Go and have a chat with the people at the careers office | 48 Bring 'weird' sweets from home for your university course and flat mates | 55 Impress friends with your local wildlife knowledge | 62 EAT SOMETHING YOU'VE NEVER HEARD OF |
| 36 CELEBRATE LOTS OF NATIONAL HOLIDAYS YOU HAVEN'T BEFORE | 42 <i>Try a new sport</i> | 49 HAVE LOTS OF VISITORS | 56 GO ON A ROAD TRIP | 63 Reach the highest point of your city and work out where you live |
| | 43 Say yes if you're invited to eat in the home of one of your university friends | 50 <i>Be a tour guide</i> | 57 Go to a few places not in the guidebook | 64 <i>Learn the history of your city</i> |
| 37 <i>Teach people how to celebrate your national holidays</i> | 44 Watch local live music | 51 BRING 'WEIRD' SWEETS BACK TO YOUR FRIENDS AND FAMILY AT HOME | 58 DO THE TOURIST THING | |
| 38 Learn a traditional dance from your host culture | 45 Mime a restaurant order | 52 Learn how to sing your favourite local pop song | 59 <i>Learn how to cook a local dish</i> | 66 Ask for great tips and advice (most people love to give them) |
| 39 LEARN A LOCAL HANDSHAKE OR SPECIAL GREETING | 46 <i>Mime your way to a whole new friend or two</i> | 53 Stroke an animal they don't have in your home country (if it's friendly!) | 60 COOK IT FOR YOUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS WHEN YOU VISIT HOME | 67 <i>Learn a new saying or two</i> |
| 40 <i>Visit every market in your university city</i> | 47 Go to a sporting event between rival local teams | 54 LEARN ABOUT THE WILDLIFE OF YOUR LOCAL AREA | 61 <i>Be grateful</i> | 68 Teach someone your language |

| | | | | |
|---|--|---|--|---|
| 69 Buy something you love, that will last a long time, which will remind you of your place of study | 75 Learn some unique local words and phrases like these | 81 <i>Explore by foot, bike, boat, train, plane and any other methods of transport you can find</i> | 89 Help out some tourists or new students with your insider knowledge | 95 Go on a coffee shop grand tour of your town |
| 70 <i>Connect with old people in your town of study who speak your native language</i> | 76 USE THEM IN A TUTORIAL TO SURPRISE EVERYONE | 82 Organise picnics | 90 VISIT THE PLACES FAMOUS FOR THEIR FLOWERS AND GREENERY WHEN EVERYTHING'S IN FULL BLOOM (MARK IT IN YOUR CALENDAR) | 96 <i>Take part in a protest and actively support something that's important to you</i> |
| | 77 <i>Read a classic book or two from your host country</i> | 83 SLEEP UNDER THE STARS | | |
| 71 <i>Stay with a local family for the weekend or over a holiday period</i> | | 84 FLOAT ON WATER | 91 DANCE | 97 <i>Organise film nights at home</i> |
| | 78 Give someone the gift of a classic book from your country (translated if they can't speak your language!) | 85 <i>Float in water</i> | | 98 MAKE A FIRE |
| 72 LEARN A LOCAL JOKE AND TRY AND TELL IT TO YOUR HOME FRIENDS | | 86 BE THERE FOR SOMEONE FEELING HOMESICK | 92 <i>Dance outside</i> | 99 COOK SOMETHING ON IT |
| 73 TAKE GROUP PHOTOS (LOTS) | 79 Buy a painting (or illustration) | 87 Keep a diary of what you've done (or blog) | 93 GET SOMEONE TO PROMISE THAT THEY'LL COME AND VISIT YOU BACK HOME | 100 Be in the moment |
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MAX YOUR MONEY





HOW TO OPEN A STUDENT BANK ACCOUNT IN THE UK

If you're going to study in the UK for more than a few months, opening a bank account is a good idea. You can use it to pay your rent, take care of your tuition fees or manage other daily expenses, without incurring any extra charges as you would if you were using your bank at home.

YOUR OPTIONS

One option is opening a basic bank account, which will allow you to pay money in and take money out, and will also give you an ATM card to withdraw money from cash machines. These won't usually give you any form of credit, though, so you won't get an overdraft or credit card. You may get a debit card, but this varies depending on the account you go for.

Another option is opening an international student bank account, which will be specifically aimed at people coming to the UK for their studies. With these, you'll have more flexibility than a basic account, but there may be a monthly account fee or a minimum balance requirement. In return, you could get perks like free international money transfers or foreign cheque deposits. But with this option, it's still unlikely that you'll get any form of credit.

THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND

OVERDRAFTS

If you're eligible for an interest-free overdraft, you should go with the bank that offers the largest one so you'll be okay if you run into trouble later. But when you're doing your research on bank accounts, pay close attention to how the information on overdrafts is worded. Some banks will try to reel you in by promising an overdraft of 'up to' a certain amount, which means you can't be sure whether you'll actually ever get it in full. Instead, pick a bank that offers a high 'guaranteed' overdraft.

FREEBIES

While free things aren't generally as good as a large interest free overdraft, some banks do offer perks that might considerably sweeten the deal. Shop around, and think about the kinds of perks that will be most beneficial to you.

LOCATION

While you won't get charged if you want to take cash from another bank's ATM in the UK, it can be good to have your bank close by in case you need to make a deposit or sort out a problem.



OPENING AN ACCOUNT

You should aim to choose a bank account before you arrive in the UK, or see if you can start applying for one online before you leave. It's a good idea to bring travellers' cheques or small amounts of cash with you in case of delays with opening your new account once you arrive.

The main banks in the UK are **HSBC**, **Barclays**, **Lloyds Bank**, **RBS**, **Natwest**, **Nationwide** and **Santander**. Once you've chosen a bank account, you should set up an appointment to open one in your local branch. As well as your UCAS letter, you'll be asked to bring along a number of other documents.

First, you'll need some form of identification, like a passport or

ID card, and your visa. You will also be asked for proof of a UK address, which can be an original utility bill or, if you don't have that, your tenancy agreement. It's also a good idea to bring along your original university offer letter. Different banks may want to see different documents, so check their websites or give them a call to make sure you've got everything you need.

You will need to have arranged a permanent place to live before you can set up a bank account. If you haven't found a place to live yet, Student.com can help you find and book accommodation.

GREAT ACCOUNTS FOR STUDENTS

Some of these accounts have great overdrafts, others offer incredible freebies, and a few offer international students greater flexibility. But be sure to do your research and find the best option for you.



NATWEST: INTERNATIONAL STUDENT BANK ACCOUNT

Natwest is the only international student bank account that offers a freebie, and it's a good one too - a third off coach travel for four years. You get all of the regular bank account features too.



HSBC: BASIC BANK ACCOUNT

Apart from the overdraft, you get all of the features of a regular bank account - a debit card, no monthly fees, mobile banking, paying bills by Direct Debit, 24/7 internet and mobile banking services and easy money transfers.



BARCLAYS: INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ACCOUNT

With this international student account, you won't be charged monthly fees, you get to use Barclays' award winning mobile app, and you can earn cash-back with leading retailers.

HOW TO EAT OUT ON A STUDENT BUDGET



Even when you're on a tight student budget, eating out can be hard to resist. But there's no need to be too frugal – you can still treat yourself every now and then. And here's how...

LOYALTY SCHEMES

Every time you visit, you'll earn points towards food and drink rewards, which can range from a free starter right up to a whole meal on the house. Download the apps or get hold of the cards and get earning rewards!

DISCOUNT WEBSITES

Before you head out for a nice meal anywhere, check websites like [Groupon](#) and [Money Saving Expert](#). You can get huge discount off your bill or even two meals for the price of one.

DISCOUNT APPS

If you're often on the move, you can download various discount apps to search for offers on the go. A good

place to start in the UK is with the [VoucherCodes](#) app, which lets you search nearby restaurant deals on a map using your phone's location function – great if you need a bit of dinner time inspiration.

DISCOUNT MEMBERSHIPS

If you eat out regularly in the UK, it might be worth investing just under £80 in a [Tastecard](#). Armed with one of these, you'll get a whopping 50% off your food bill or two meals for the price of one in thousands of UK restaurants. You can even sign up for a trial period if you're not sure whether you want to commit.

GO AT THE END OF THE DAY

Closing time rolls around by 6pm at most popular lunchtime eateries, and just before the doors close, a few restaurants significantly lower their prices to ensure nothing (or very little) is wasted. Swing by an Asian-inspired **Itsu** restaurant an hour before closing, for example, and you'll be able to eat your fill of sushi and Japanese hot pots for half the usual price.

DON'T GO AT THE WEEKEND

Restaurants are typically busiest at the weekend, so prices occasionally go up at this time and special offers are considerably harder to find. As a student, your timetable is a bit more flexible, so why not take full advantage of all

the midweek deals and enjoy a leisurely dinner after your lectures? You can start by checking out restaurants like **La Tasca** and **Chimichanga**.

SOCIAL MEDIA

There are tons of offers and discounts floating around on social media – you just have to go out and look for them. Follow your favourite bars, restaurants and pubs on Facebook or Twitter and be among the first to know when there's a new deal. Liked their food? Why not tweet them and tell them so? They might reward you for spreading the word.

TAP WATER

Restaurants make a lot of profit on drinks and they can add significantly to your bill. You can just order tap water – even though you won't find it on the menu. Tap water is completely

free, which makes it a great option if you're eating out on a budget. Just make sure you specify that you want it from the tap, or you might end up with an expensive bottle of mineral water.

BYO RESTAURANTS

Some restaurants called BYO (bring your own) let you bring your own drinks. You might have to pay a corkage charge, but this will be a fraction of what you'd pay for the actual drink. Just type BYO and the name of your town into Google to find them!

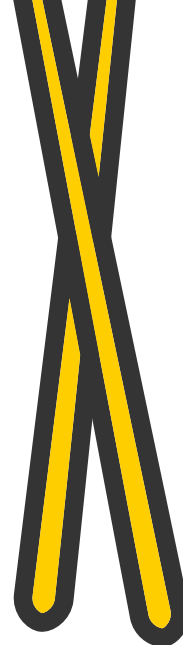
TIP ONLY IF YOU WANT TO

We're not saying you shouldn't leave a tip after a great meal (in the UK it's normally around 10%) but if the service was bad, you don't have to. You can also

leave less than 10% if you don't have much cash, anything will be appreciated. Remember to check if the bill includes a service charge – if it does, then that's the tip, so don't leave one! It's also completely fine to ask to take this off if you don't feel the service was good enough.

MYSTERY DINING

If you sign up to be a mystery diner with companies like **The Mystery Dining Company**, you'll be hired to go out to eat and write a report afterwards. For this you'll have all or part of your meal refunded.



START WRITING REVIEWS

If you don't like the idea of going undercover, why not become a food critic? You can start by jumping onto your university's newspaper and writing a regular column. Most restaurants should, in theory, be keen to attract more student customers, so you might be able to wrangle a free meal in return for a widely read review.

USE YOUR STUDENT DISCOUNT

Make sure you whip out your student ID at every opportunity, because lots of places like **Gourmet Burger Kitchen** and **Zizzi** in the UK will offer you a discount. Often student discounts aren't advertised, so it's always good to ask. You can check out **NUS Extra** for more info if you're based in the UK, or the **International Student Identity Card** website.

GET A DOGGY BAG

Are your eyes bigger than your stomach? Not to worry. Don't let anything go to waste: ask for a doggy bag. It's perfectly okay to ask for a takeaway box because you've already paid for the food – it's all yours, to do with as you please with. And then you can enjoy your leftover duck pancakes for breakfast (we certainly won't judge you).



SIGN UP FOR NEWSLETTERS

Lots of restaurants have newsletters, which you can use to keep up-to-date with the latest news and offers. Are they worth filling your email inbox up with? We reckon so. In the UK, **Pizza Express** will give you a complimentary bottle of wine or prosecco to toast if you pay them a visit on your birthday.

ASK FOR GROUP DISCOUNTS

You need to be brave for this one, because there aren't any set rules. If you're dining with a lot of friends, whether it's for a birthday bash or a post essay deadline treat, there's really no harm in asking for a group discount. After all, you're bringing in a lot of business for them, and they might be feeling generous. Just don't be offended if they say no!

COMPLETE SURVEYS

After you've eaten, there are still ways to save. Stop shredding your receipt and take a good look at what's in your hand. Is there an online survey? If there is, you can fill it out to give the restaurant feedback on your meal. In return, they might give you a free drink, or even a discount for next time around.



MAX YOUR JOB PROSPECTS



WAYS TO BOOST YOUR CV AT UNIVERSITY

Depending on your visa category, you may not be able to work during your studies. However, there are plenty of other ways to boost your CV.

1 WRITE FOR THE STUDENT NEWSPAPER

If you're thinking about pursuing a career in journalism, you should definitely consider joining your university's student newspaper. When applying for jobs in such a competitive field, having practical experience is crucial. As a student journalist, you'll gain plenty of skills that will make you stand out among all the other graduate job seekers. Even if you're not interested in being a journalist, writing for the college paper will give you great experience in researching,

interviewing and being very resourceful. And most importantly, you'll also have lots of fun finding new stories.

2 JOIN THE STUDENT UNION

Having a take charge attitude is a trait that's highly valued by employers. As an active member of the student union, you show that you take matters into your own hands instead of sitting around and waiting for things to change. Make sure you highlight what you've achieved on your CV, be it launching a campaign or running for a high profile university role.

3 TAKE ON A LEADING ROLE IN A SOCIETY OR CLUB

Simply being a member of your university's football team probably won't give your CV much of an edge over your peers, but taking on a leadership role within the organisation definitely will. As a committee member of a society or sports club, you'll gain valuable skills that are bound to impress employers.

4 PARTICIPATE IN VOLUNTEER WORK

Not only is volunteering a rewarding experience but it also makes your CV stand out. The cause you choose to support may be completely unrelated to your dream job but you gain important experience and show that you care about improving the lives of others. Most universities advertise volunteering opportunities online, so take a look and get involved!

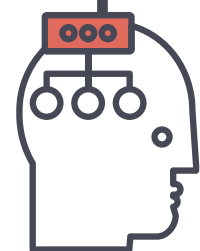




5

WRITE YOUR OWN BLOG

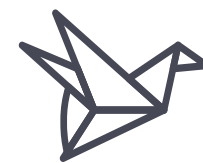
Having your own blog is a great way to show where your interests lie. Whether it's about travelling, technology or beauty, you'll score bonus points for being passionate about something. What's more, lots of successful bloggers have turned their blogs into great platforms for a career. Blogs are great places to showcase your interest and experience in a certain field and may even turn out to be your full time career if you work hard enough.



6

LEARN A NEW SKILL

Use your free time to learn a useful skill that looks good on your CV. Sign up for a language course, become an expert in using Photoshop or learn how to design a website. Such courses are often offered by your university and are a lot cheaper than they would be elsewhere, so make the most of your student discount to widen your skill set.



7

FIND A PART-TIME JOB

In most countries, you're allowed to work a certain number of hours on a student visa. Even if you take on a job that's not related to what you want to do later on, it shows that you're capable of juggling different things at once and have a good work ethic. Plus, you gain an immediate advantage over all the students who finish their degree without any practical experience.

8

GET SOME WORK EXPERIENCE

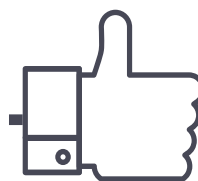
Many companies offer short work experience placements to give students an insight into day-to-day operations. Contact the company you're interested in and ask if they will take you on for a week or two. While these placements are usually unpaid, you learn lots of new things, meet people in the industry, and prove to future employers that you're committed to the career path you've chosen.



9

BE ACTIVE ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media is becoming more and more important, and knowing how to use it is considered a big plus by employers. Build up a strong social media presence across different platforms and include the links to your accounts in your CV so your potential employers can get an insight into your interests and social media skills. But always make sure there is nothing on your profiles that you wouldn't want your boss to see!



10

LAST BUT NOT LEAST, FOCUS ON YOUR STUDIES

When putting in all this extra work to boost your CV, don't start neglecting your studies. Having lots of work experience will make you stand out when applying for jobs but employers also care about your grades, so don't forget to study.



HOW TO WORK IN THE UK AFTER YOUR STUDIES

Whether you are already studying in the UK, or simply considering it, you may be looking ahead at your options once you graduate.



Among the big draws for international students is the high quality of life and good employment prospects after graduation. But, depending on which country you are from, you may need to jump a few hurdles to remain in your new home once your course finishes. Put simply, you'll need to find paid work, which isn't always easy for fresh graduates.

As soon as you graduate, you may need to apply for a completely different visa in order to extend your stay and work in the UK. See the next page on visas for more information.

"Job hunting after university was tough," says Frank Van Den Berg, 23, who grew up in Holland and moved to the UK to study history at University College London. "It took me almost six months to find a good graduate position here, it's so competitive. Fortunately I was able to survive by working in bars while I looked for work." He adds that the freedom to stay and do casual work for as long as he wished was a huge help.

THE VISA OPTIONS EXPLAINED

There are several options available when applying for a visa, and you should read through them carefully before deciding which is right for.

Although you'll normally have to complete your course before applying, you should plan in advance where possible.

TIER...?

Visa requirements are subject to change, so it's always worth checking the latest guidelines before you start preparing to apply.

A full list of work visa categories can be found on the [UK government website](#).

The [UK Council for International Student Affairs website](#) also offers detailed advice on the various possibilities available to international students at the end of their studies.

There's no denying that obtaining a visa after your studies can be a challenge, as **Mia Chen, 25, from New South Wales, Australia, discovered. Mia says that she intended to stay in the UK after she graduated from Durham University, but felt she had almost no chance of finding work.**

“I got the sense that many employers wouldn't even consider an international student. Most of the companies I applied to didn't even reply to me.”



“It was worth the hours of stress and job searching, but I wish I'd prepared more in advance so I wasn't scrambling around at the last minute.”

IMPROVING YOUR CHANCES OF GETTING A TIER 2 VISA

There are plenty of things you can do to improve your chances of successfully finding a certified employer to sponsor you for a Tier 2 visa after you graduate. For example:

Part-Time Job/Placements

Most graduates need to obtain work experience alongside their degree to be successful in the UK graduate job market. Seeking part-time work or an internship placement that's linked to your degree can help you develop real-life skills and industry contacts. If opportunities are scarce, consider approaching companies and offering to volunteer in your chosen industry. Volunteering can be a great way to gain experience while doing something you are interested in.

Entrepreneurial skills

Business knowledge isn't just useful for would be business owners: employers value them too. Most universities will have opportunities for you to pick up experience in this area through various programs, and you can be proactive by taking the lead in university societies. It'll all make for impressive reading on your CV.

Language skills

As an international student, you may already speak more than one language, which will help set you apart from other candidates. However, if you do not have a native level of English proficiency, be aware that you'll most likely need a high standard of English to stand a chance of landing a job in the UK. Work on your skills while studying for your degree, and take additional classes if you feel you need to.

TIER 1 (GRADUATE ENTREPRENEUR)

UK graduates with a credible business idea can apply to stay for one year on a Tier 1 Graduate Entrepreneur visa.

You'll need to find sponsorship, which you can gain either from an authorised UK university (which does not have to be one where you have already studied), or by taking part in the Sirius Programme, which supports final year students and recent graduates with advice on funding and immigration. In addition, you'll need to be able to prove you have strong English language skills, and at least £945 in savings.



TIER 5 YOUTH MOBILITY SCHEME

If you move back to your home country after you graduate, you may be eligible for the Youth Mobility Scheme, which will allow you to work in the UK for up to two years.

To qualify, you'll need to be aged 18-30, and be from either Australia, Canada, Hong Kong, Japan, Monaco, New Zealand, Republic of Korea or Taiwan. Places are limited, and you'll need at least £1,890 in savings to apply.

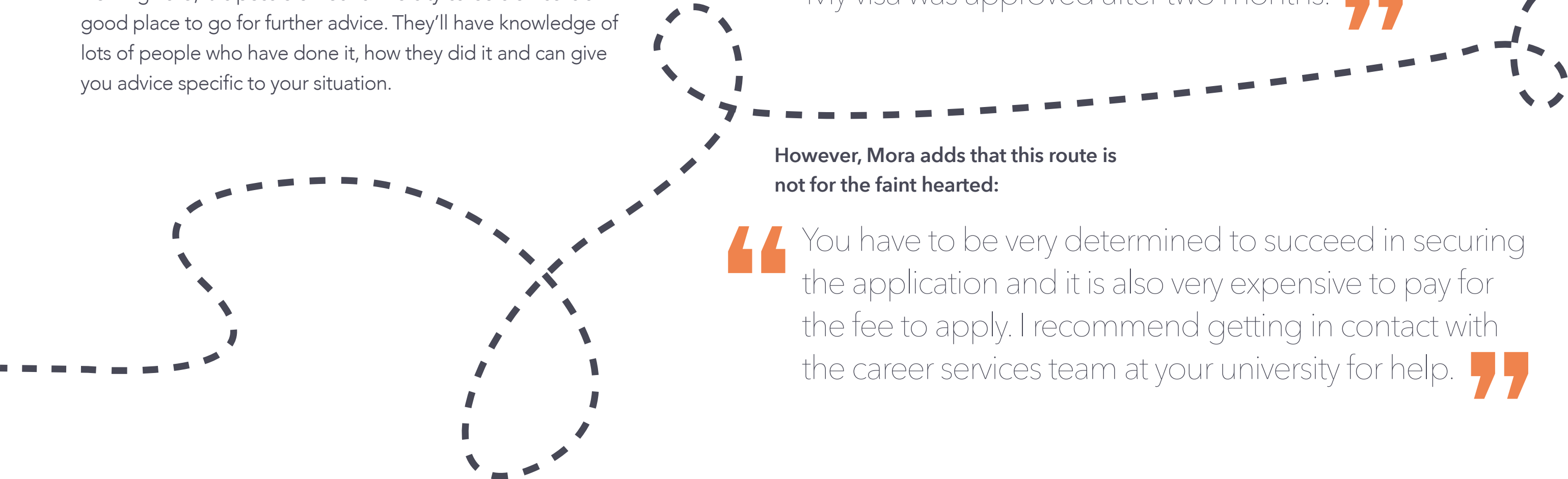
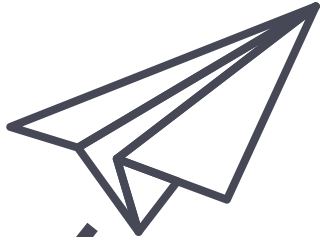
There's no denying that staying and working in the UK after you've studied there is a tough challenge. But we've also seen with the right preparation, exploring all your options and working hard, it is possible. Your university careers office is a good place to go for further advice. They'll have knowledge of lots of people who have done it, how they did it and can give you advice specific to your situation.

Juli Mora, 26, moved to Edinburgh to do a Master of Fine Art (Glass), after gaining a BA in Graphic Design from Veritas University in San José, Costa Rica. She says she gained a Tier 1 Graduate Entrepreneur visa to pursue turning her glass collections into a business.

“ I had to get a sponsorship from the **University of Edinburgh** by writing a business plan, and in turn the university helped me apply for the endorsement. Once secured, I got together the documents required and submitted the application. My visa was approved after two months. ”

However, Mora adds that this route is not for the faint hearted:

“ You have to be very determined to succeed in securing the application and it is also very expensive to pay for the fee to apply. I recommend getting in contact with the career services team at your university for help. ”





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