

ESRA's English Tutoring Program

Chat Away

Taking English out of the Classroom

ESRA Chat Away is part of ESRA's English Tutoring Program (ETP) and offers students from 8th to 12th grades the opportunity to improve their English speaking skills. Students are registered for a series of 30 to 40-minute chats on various topics that interest them, once a week, with volunteer tutors. These one-on-one meetings take place on Zoom, with cameras, after school hours.

ESRA Chat Away tutors are native speakers of English and mainly retirees; they are not teachers, but they receive guidance on basic conversation strategies. For that reason, this program does not benefit students struggling with English (ESRA ETP offers in-school or online individual tutoring for weak students).

ESRA Chat Away is for students who have good grades and are able to hold a conversation but do not have the opportunity to develop their speaking skills. The program does not deal with schoolwork or exams. In 2023/24, we had over 350 fluctuating tutor/student pairs in schools all over the country, with over 50 volunteers living in the US and UK!

Teacher Feedback on students reported over 80% increased confidence and marked improvement in students' oral English.

The program is available for all sectors and requires parents' consent and students' commitment. English teachers choose 5 students for a series of about 15 meetings, but we are flexible on this number. It is our policy to reach as many students as possible, but this is clearly determined by how many volunteers we have available.

ESRA Chat Away Advantages:

- Little ongoing involvement of English teachers (initial presentation, student selection, periodic contact with coordinators, completion of short online feedback).
- Tutors receive pedagogical guidance, together with resource material, to stimulate conversation.
- No need for geographic proximity so that volunteers can operate from different countries.
- Students hear and speak English in a natural setting.

The Procedure:

- Introduce the program to your students and select those who can handle spontaneous conversation.
- Register your students online, including parents' consent and students' details.
- After the registration, an **ESRA Chat Away** volunteer will contact the student via WhatsApp or email to schedule a meeting (please ensure that the students expect a message).

Thank you,

Dr. Helen Osimo,

ESRA Chat Away Program Coordinator

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Founded in 1979 as a non-profit volunteer-based organization, ESRA is Israel's largest English-speaking community network, aiding the integration of immigrants while working toward bridging equity gaps in Israeli society through its Education and Welfare projects.