

## English for Specific Purposes

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**Altres idiomes:** [Anglès amb finalitats específiques](#)

[Inglés con fines específicos](#)

*English for Specific Purposes* or ESP is an approach to the education of English orientated for specific purposes (scientific, technological, economic and academic areas). The ESP is based on the design of specific courses to give response to the needs of students who, beyond the learning of the common language, require a practice regarding certain professional areas. *English for Academic Purposes* (EAP) is also found as *English for Science & Technology* (EST) and *English for Occupational Purposes* (EOP).

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### Explanation

The origin of the ESP is directly linked to the history of the twentieth century. The economic, science and technological expansion of U.S.A after World War II, as well as its privileged position in the economic and commercial system, caused that professionals from various areas required of a common language that would ensure

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and facilitate international communication. The English language became that 'international language'. This meant and still means for the English language some concrete needs that have driven an advance in the field of Linguistics through the study of new theories and ideas about language and learning, and a change in the methodology and implementation of teaching English.

### Stages and approaches in the development of ESP

The ESP over the years has gone through five stages, which, according to Hutchinson and Waters (1987), take shape in five approaches or theories:

**Register analysis:** This stage took place in the sixties. The aim of the analysis was to distinguish between specialized languages and common languages, creating an interest to identifying the grammatical and lexical features of these registers and to design the teaching materials. The main motive behind register analyses was the pedagogic objective of making the ESP course more relevant to learner's needs. The most representative authors of this stage are, Halliday, McIntochs and Strevens (1964), Ewer and Latorre (1969) and Swales (1971).

**Rhetorical or discourse analysis:** It appeared in the seventies. The basic hypothesis of this stage expressed by Allen and Widdowson (1974), spoke about the unfamiliarity of the students with the English use. This fact consequently could not be solved by a course which simple provided further practice in the composition of sentences, but only by one which developed knowledge of how sentences are used in the performance of different communicative acts.

**Target situation analysis:** This approach appears in the eighties and its aim was to relate language analysis more closely to learner's reasons for learning; therefore, the course of ESP was designed through identifying the motivations of the students to learn the language and the situations in which they would use it. From this information, the elaboration of the course would allow students to achieve the goal that had been raised. Its main representative is Chambers (1980).

**Skills and strategies:** This approach also appears in the eighties and concentrates its efforts on reading and listening strategies, which permit the students to acquire the necessary tools that will allow them to deduce the sense of a spoken or written text.

**A learning-centred approach:** Represented by the proposed approach of Hutchinson and Waters (1987), for whom the questions of how to teach and how to

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learn acquire more relevance than the language, its uses and the contents.

### Related concepts

English for Business and Economics (EBE)

English for Science & Technology (EST)

English for Occupational Purposes (EOP)

English for the Social Sciences (ESS)

Lenguas de especialidad

Lenguas de las ciencias

Lenguas de las técnicas

Lenguas de las profesiones

Español con fines específicos(EFE)

Español para uso profesional (EUP)

Español de los negocios (ENE)

### Links

Journals-Elsevier-English for Specific Purposes on line

<http://www.journals.elsevier.com/english-for-specific-purposes/>

### Basic Bibliography

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