

**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH**  
College of Humanities and Social  
Sciences  
Carnegie Mellon University  
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15213  
(412) 268-2850  
FAX: (412) 268-7989

May 30, 2008

Dear Student,

If English is a language you speak, but not your primary language or mother tongue, then you must take a placement test that will be administered online over the summer.

If you took the TOEFL, you still need to take this placement test. Regardless of whether you attended an American high school, if you consider a language other than English as your mother tongue, you must take the placement test.

This test does not affect your academic record at Carnegie Mellon University. The results of this placement are simply used to identify which First-Year English course is more useful for you. You should feel comfortable to honestly answer test questions, as well as to write your own essay without getting help from other people. ***In fact, you should not seek any help at all for this placement test.*** A true estimate of your academic literacy skills in English is important so that you can begin your Carnegie Mellon coursework from a strong position.

You may take the test at any time after June 2 and before July 26. Your academic advisor can give you your college's deadline for completing the test. ***All students must take the test before arriving on campus for orientation.*** Once you arrive on campus, you will not have time to complete the placement tasks.

### **How can you register to take this online placement test?**

- If you identified yourself as a nonnative English speaker on your Carnegie Mellon admissions application, you will be registered automatically for the online placement test. You'll receive messages about the test through your Carnegie Mellon e-mail account. Or, once you've received your Carnegie Mellon user id and password, you may go to this url to access the test and appropriate instructions: [www.cmu.edu/blackboard](http://www.cmu.edu/blackboard). Please read the list of instructions located on the second page of this document to continue.
- If you did not identify English as your second language on your admissions

application, and you do consider a language other than English as your “mother tongue,” then you must e-mail Dr. Danielle Wetzel ([engfirst@andrew.cmu.edu](mailto:engfirst@andrew.cmu.edu)) your full name, your home address, and your Carnegie Mellon e-mail address so that you can be registered.

Once you are registered for the test, please follow these instructions.

- This placement test, called “F-08 English Placement Exam,” is administered online through a secure website. You will need your Carnegie Mellon user id and password, which you’ll receive from your advisor, to enter the site and complete the test. All students must complete the tasks in the placement process within a 24-hour time period. ***Therefore, do not begin the test unless you have planned to complete it within 24 hours.*** Based on reports from last year’s incoming first-year students, you should expect to spend a total of approximately five to six hours on the test.
- To enter the site, click on the “Login to Blackboard” link on the left of the page. Use your Carnegie Mellon user id and password to log in. Under the menu “My Courses,” find and click on the link “Fall 08 English Placement Exam.” The 24-hour countdown will not begin until you complete the first task in the process.
- The test is comprised of three tasks that you must complete to be registered for First-Year English at Carnegie Mellon University:
  - (1) Step 1: a "quiz" that asks you to pledge your compliance with the instructions and conditions of the process.
  - (2) Step 2: a self-assessment that asks questions about your history with reading and writing in both English and your first language or mother tongue. There are also questions that ask you to assess yourself as a reader and writer of academic English.
  - (3) Step 3: a placement essay that you will write about two readings. You will find these readings by clicking the link, "Step 3: Writing Task."

More detailed instructions will be e-mailed to those who are registered for the test.

We are eager to read your written ideas, to learn more about you, to welcome you into the Carnegie Mellon University community.

Sincerely Yours,  
Dr. Danielle Wetzel  
Director, First-Year English Program  
Carnegie Mellon University