



Take an active approach to improving your English. If you engage actively in learning, your skills will improve much more quickly. There are many ways to use and sharpen your skills beyond just doing your assignments. Here are a few of them.

Strategy	What you need to know
1. Listening	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Use your lecture recordings in LearnJCU to improve your listening skills. If a recording or podcast is not available, ask your lecturer for permission to record your lectures. Once you have understood the content, use the recordings to familiarise yourself with the accent and pronunciation of each of your lecturers.Next time you open a document in PDF format, try listening to it while you read. If you do not know how to do this, search for 'how to listen to a PDF' online.Listen to online radio or podcasts at home or on your mobile phone. The Australian Broadcasting Corporation's Radio National explores a wide range of topics and current affairs daily. Most programs are podcast and many are transcribed. Listen to a program without reading the transcript, make some notes, then check the transcript to fill in any gaps in your listening.You can also get an international perspective by listening to NPR from the USA or the BBC from the UK.Watch some TED Talks, short video presentations on a huge range of subjects. They are also a great place to learn presentation skills.Use online dictionaries to hear words as well as read them.
2. Speaking	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Take every opportunity you can to engage in conversation daily. JCU offers a wide range of clubs and societies you can join while you study.There are also free fitness activities that you can join in both Cairns and Townsville.Both Cairns and Townsville have Toastmasters clubs. These social groups allow you to practise giving short talks and to meet other people.
3. Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Join the public library in Cairns or Townsville for free access to books, magazines, DVDs and CDs. Membership also gives you online access to magazines, documentary films and extra benefits such as language lessons.Test your reading level and practise your reading skills with free online resources like ReadTheory.
4. Writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Keep a diary or a journal, or write a blog. This will let you practice your writing and reflect on your experiences. Regularity is the key, so try to make writing part of your routine. Several free blogging platforms are available online, including WordPress.Use a grammar or writing advice website to get input from learners all over the world. Trying to answer questions as well as asking them will help you to improve.