

The Pack Abroad Guide

Semester Programs



NC STATE

| Study Abroad Office

Emergency Contact Information

Name	Phone number
NC State Study Abroad Office	+1 919-515-2087
NC State University Police Department	+1 919-515-3000
NC State Counseling Center	+1 919-515-2423
GeoBlue International Health Insurance	+1 610-254-5830

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Academic Year & Semester Pre-Departure Orientation

Our [pre-departure conference](#) provides students with the tools and resources necessary to make informed decisions and preparations for their time abroad.

Study Abroad Contact Information

Name	Email address	Responsibilities
Ashton Croft	aecroft@ncsu.edu	Denmark, Finland, France, Italy, Spain, & Sweden
Lindsay Hughes	lhughes6@ncsu.edu	Asia & Australia,
Mansir Petrie	mmpetrie@ncsu.edu	Africa, Latin & South America, & Middle East
Robin Stewart	rcstewa2@ncsu.edu	United Kingdom, Ireland, Central Europe
Poole Global	poole_global@ncsu.edu	Poole College of Management
Maggie Agnew	ncstateprague@ncsu.edu	NC State Prague Program

Other important campus contacts

Name	Email address	Responsibilities
Heather Minchew	hmminche@ncsu.edu	Study abroad scholarships
Lowell West	elwest@ncsu.edu	Accounting, Billing, and Insurance
Tommy Bilbo	tdbilbo@ncsu.edu	Scholarships & Financial Aid Liaison

General questions may be directed to: study_abroad@ncsu.edu

Important Travel Related Information

US Department of State:

<http://travel.state.gov>

Information on living abroad, travel warnings, U.S. Embassy and Consulate websites, and other important information. Search by country for specific information about entry requirements.

Passports:

<http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/passports.html>

If you have not already done so, you should apply for a passport immediately as standard processing can take 7-10 weeks.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:

<http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel>

Information and guidance on vaccines and health notices by location.

NC State Travel Clinic:

Campus Health - [Travel Clinic](#)

travelclinic@ncsu.edu

Provides comprehensive and personalized recommendations, medications, and vaccinations based on your destination and itinerary.

Please complete the online registration form with the Travel Clinic 6-8 weeks before you plan to travel. Remember, most vaccines take 10-30 days to become effective.

Health Insurance:

<http://www.geobluestudents.com>

Email: customerservice@geo-blue.com

Phone number:

- Outside the U.S. +1-610-254-5830 (collect calls accepted)
- Within the U.S. 1-844-268-2686

Conversion Information

- [Travel Adapter & Voltage Converter Information](#)
- [Currency Conversions](#)

Policies

Prior to submission of an NC State study abroad application, students are required to read and understand all the [Study Abroad Office policies](#), including, the withdrawal and refund policy, restricted travel policy, visitor policy, and international health insurance insurance policy.

Seniors and Graduating Students

Students are advised to review the [eligibility](#) and [credit abroad](#) websites for more information on residency requirements and eligibility to study abroad per your department guidelines.

All students are also required to digitally sign and acknowledge the *Participant Agreement*, a legal document which further informs all students of the guidelines, policies, and expectations concerning participation in study abroad programs.

Questions or concerns regarding policies or the Participant Agreement may be addressed with the Study Abroad Office: study_abroad@ncsu.edu.

Post-Acceptance: Student Checklist

General

- Follow the instructions and guidelines in the Study Abroad email newsletters
- Read all emails and pre-departure information provided to you.
- Attend the [Pre-Departure Conference](#) for semester and academic year students

Health & Safety

- Download the AlertTraveler app on your phone and begin exploring your host country
- Start familiarizing yourself with GeoBlue international health insurance
- Schedule an appointment with the NC State Travel Clinic if needed
- Begin conversations with your healthcare provider, therapist, etc. about medications abroad, and any wellness concerns

Download AlertTraveler App

In your online PackAbroad application, there is information about AlertTraveler which is a risk management mobile application that provides safety and security information for your location abroad. Emergency information and check-ins are available through the app should a concern arise abroad.

International Health Insurance

All students participating in study abroad programs or other university-affiliated international travel are required to be enrolled in the GeoBlue international health insurance policy for the duration of their program. This policy is utilized by all UNC System colleges & universities, and provides comprehensive, low-cost coverage for about \$1.50/day. Prior to departure, you will be emailed information from [GeoBlue](#) on how to activate your student account to access your international insurance card online. You should print this card and carry it with you at all times.

You can also download the [GeoBlue app](#) to:

- Locate qualified providers and hospitals outside the U.S.
- Obtain a list of English-speaking doctors
- Find common translations of medical phrases
- Access Direct Pay
- Access an online ID card

Although arrangements can be made for GeoBlue to pay the hospital directly for very serious and lengthy hospital stays, or for services provided by a GeoBlue approved physician, it is more typical for a student to pay all costs up front and then be reimbursed.

Be sure that you have access to adequate funds to cover a health emergency, and keep all receipts you receive in order to file your claim. If you plan to travel before or after the program dates, you are eligible to purchase [additional insurance](#) through the GeoBlue website after you have been enrolled in the insurance by the Study Abroad Office.

Make Arrangements for Medications

Regardless of the pharmacy situation in any country, it is always advisable to:

- Bring enough medication to last through your program.
- Carry it with you rather than in checked luggage (many frequent travelers bring a double supply of medication and pack each in different bags).
- If needed, keep extra prescription sheets written by your doctor (with the generic names) in case you need refills during your program to show at customs as proof of the medication's identity and necessity.
- Check the expiration dates on all medications, whether they are from home or abroad.
- You may also want to carry an anti-diarrheal medication and/or ask your physician for an appropriate anti-diarrheal prescription as a precautionary measure

Research your host country

Researching your host country is one way to assist in your cultural transition, and to also be a responsible traveler and citizen of the

world. Here are some topics to review in helping you understand the culture of your host country:

- Politics
- History
- Language
- Holidays
- Religion
- Social norms
- Laws
- Family
- Shopping
- Daily life
- Communication
- Food/drink
- Clothing
- Medical care

Resources

- [U.S Department of State Country Profiles](#)
- [CIA World Factbook](#)

Contact the Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid

In general, students receiving financial aid need to be enrolled in at least 12 credit hours for a semester program. If you will be receiving financial aid, it is recommended you set up direct deposit with the Cashier's Office.

Contact Tommy Bilbo (tdbilbo@ncsu.edu) for questions about your individual aid package and other requirements for financial aid/scholarship recipients, including the Enrollment

Agreement Form:

<https://go.ncsu.edu/financialaidstudyabroadeaf>

Failure to maintain full-time status while abroad could jeopardize your enrollment at NC State and your eligibility for financial aid. To maintain full-time status, you must enroll in courses that will satisfy NC State degree requirements.

Budgeting

The amount that students spend while abroad varies greatly. Here is some advice on developing a budget:

- Gather information on program costs. Know what is included in your fees, and what additional costs you may need to pay after arrival (bed linens, personal care).

- Determine how much you and your support network are willing to budget for discretionary expenses (travel, entertainment, laundry, etc.).
- Expect some items to be more expensive abroad. This may include food, books, electronics, and clothing.
- Check the exchange rate and guidebooks for your host country. Guidebooks typically list costs for accommodations, transportation, entrance fees, and other items that will help you estimate for personal travel.
- Look for ways to cut costs. Evaluate your personal spending habits and where you are willing to cut back to afford other things while abroad.

Travel/Immigration Documents

Some students may need to obtain a visa, some may be required to obtain a residency permit, and others may not need immigration documents as these requirements vary by country. Students can consult <https://travel.state.gov/> to learn more about entry requirements.

Pre-Departure: Student Checklist

2-3 weeks prior to departure

General

- Inform your bank and credit card companies of all travel plans
- Identify a Power of Attorney, if needed
- Make copies of all important documents
- Add an alternate email address in PackAbroad
- Establish a communication plan with family and friends
- Continue to carefully read all emails from your Program Director and the Study Abroad Office

Health & Safety

- Enroll in the STEP ([Smart Traveler Enrollment Program](#))
- Familiarize yourself with the closest U.S. Embassy in your host country – consider following them on social media for the latest updates
- Locate the nearest hospitals and pharmacies in your host country in case of an emergency
- Make any updates to your travel itinerary in PackAbroad
- Continue to utilize GeoBlue and AlertTraveler to learn more about your host country

Identify a Power of Attorney

The Study Abroad Office recommends that all students identify someone as a Power of Attorney to sign documents or make bank transactions on their behalf. Assistance is available through [Student Legal Services](#).

Make copies of important documents

Make copies of important documents (passport, visa, credit cards, driver's license). Take a copy with you and keep a copy at home. You may also want to have a digital copy available via email or within your Google Drive. If any important document is lost, it is easier to replace with a copy.

Add an alternate email in PackAbroad

Because you will still be enrolled at NC State while abroad, you will continue to have access to your NC State Gmail

account. The NC State Study Abroad Office is required to send correspondence to your NC State email account. However, there are some countries where Gmail is not accessible (example China). To ensure our office is still able to communicate with you abroad, be sure to add an alternative email address in your PackAbroad online account. Emails will then be sent to your NC State and alternative email accounts.

You can add the alternative email address by logging into your PackAbroad applicant home page (before you click on your program application). Click on the “profile” tab and input your alternative email in the “CC-email address” field.

Establish a communication plan

It is important to set expectations with your support network back home about how often you will be able to communicate while abroad, and how you plan to do so (phone, email, video chat, etc). Make initial contact with family/friends as soon as you can to let them know you have arrived safely.

Update Itinerary in PackAbroad

Make sure to include ALL additional travel you plan to take in the 'Itinerary' section of your study abroad application. This includes personal travel before, during, or after your program dates. This can be added at any time, and will assist the Study Abroad Office in locating you in the event of an emergency. In your program application, click on the “itinerary” tab, input your travel dates/location, then click the red + button to add the itinerary.

Enroll in STEP

The State Department's State Department's Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) gives you access to updated information about areas abroad and makes it easier for the US Embassy or Consulate to contact and assist you if a crisis occurred in your current location.

<https://step.state.gov>

- Register your travel through STEP, if you did not do so prior to your departure.
- Subscribe to receive location specific alerts & warnings

- Follow the State Department on Twitter for regular updates.

The Department of State's travel website is a resource for all current advisories, including worldwide caution, travel warnings, travel alerts, and country specific information. If you are abroad, you can call +1-202-501-4444 . From within the U.S. and Canada you can call 1-888-407-4747.

Familiarize yourself with the U.S. Embassy

Before you depart for your study abroad program, ensure you are familiar with the nearest U.S. Embassy should you need to make an appointment. It is also beneficial to follow the embassy location on social media to stay up-to-date with the latest information for U.S. citizens in that specific country. Embassy locations and webpages can be found at <http://www.usembassy.gov/>.

Locate nearest hospitals and pharmacies

In case of an emergency, it is important to know the location of the closest hospitals and pharmacies. GeoBlue has online resources available (geobluestudents.com) to help you find these locations. You should also review any pre-arrival information provided by your Program Director.

If needed, inform your bank of all travel dates

For your protection, some banks may restrict your account if they see suspicious activity. Be sure to review the international travel guidelines for your bank, and follow their recommendations to prevent this from happening.

While Abroad: Student Checklist

General

- Continue to follow instructions from on-site support staff and the NC State Study Abroad Office
- Notify your family and friends that you have arrived safely. Continue to provide regular updates/check-ins throughout your time abroad
- If you use social media, be sure to tag @ncstatestudyabroad and use #PackAbroad on posts

Health & Safety

- If you get a SIM card or local phone number, be sure to update the AlertTraveler app accordingly
- Update your STEP enrollment and your itinerary in PackAbroad continuously as you make plans to travel either with the program or independently
- Continue to utilize the GeoBlue app to stay familiar with local healthcare providers, locations of clinics and pharmacies, etc.
- Review *Safety Abroad* information in this handbook

Safety Abroad

General Emergencies

The Study Abroad Office, and Campus Police are available 24 hours per day and will accept international collect calls.

If you can only make one call, call NC State Campus Police (+1 919-515-3000). They can accept collect calls, and will get in touch with a member of the Study Abroad Emergency Response Team.

Mental Health Support

A counseling service is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year through GeoBlue Global Wellness Assist. In the GeoBlue app, select “Telehealth” and then “Talk to a Counselor”.

Tips for newer travelers: *Do's and don'ts*

- DO pay close attention to all information provided to you by on-site support staff especially during orientation programs upon arrival.
- DO carry a copy of your passport, emergency contact information, and international insurance card on you at all times.
- DON'T carry your actual passport on you at all times unless you absolutely need it or are crossing international borders.
- DON'T carry large amounts of cash, and don't carry all of your money and important documents in one bag - separate them out.
- DO carry a cell phone with GPS turned on to best utilize the AlertTraveler App.
- DON'T wear headphones when you need to be aware of your surroundings.
- DO be alert in crowds, especially in train stations, airports, and tourist attractions. Frequently, these can be locations for pickpocketing.
- DO act like you know where you are going and what you are doing. If you are lost or need to check a map or your phone, step into a café, shop, or other business to do so.

- DO keep your wallet in your front pocket, rather than your back pocket. Keep purses, backpacks, etc. close to your body.
- DON'T travel alone. Always travel with a friend and let someone else from your program know where you are.
- DO make a plan in case you become separated from your travel companions - especially on metros/buses.
- DO value safety over costs. There are some means of transportation such as overnight trains and buses that may be inexpensive, but may also come with a greater degree of risk.
- DO verify with hotels, hostels, and other accommodations before booking a room to make sure your items can be secured in a locked room, safe, or locker.
- DO stay informed about ongoing developments in your host country or region. Read local newspapers, watch the local news programs, and follow any updates or guidance from your study abroad program, the Study Abroad Office, and the U.S. Department of State.
- DO ride in the back seat of taxis.
- DO stay away from all public demonstrations and protests.

More information on safety abroad will be reviewed at the Study Abroad Office's pre departure conference – be sure to attend!

Staying Informed

U.S. Embassy Assistance

You should locate the U.S. Embassy closest to your location by visiting <https://www.usembassy.gov/>.

U.S. Embassy staff provide routine citizenship services and emergency assistance for American citizens abroad, such as passport replacement and certain legal services.

Consular Officers CAN

- Provide visits to jail
- Provide a list of local attorneys
- Notify relatives of arrest
- Relay requests for money or other aid
- Intercede with the local authorities to ensure humane treatment and that rights under local law are observed
- Assist in cases of death and serious medical emergency

Consular Officers CANNOT

- Get you out of jail.
- Represent you at trial or give legal counsel
- Pay legal fees/fines with U.S. government funds.

Foreign Laws

Each foreign country has its own laws, regulations, and standards of acceptable conduct in the areas of dress, manners, morals, religion, social customs, politics, alcohol use, drug use and behavior.

Behavior or conduct which violates those laws or standards could harm the program, the University's relations with countries in which the program is located, your own health and safety, or the health and safety of other participants in the program.

Many practices that are considered illegal in the U.S., including extraction of a confession, entrapment, police searches without a warrant, etc., could be allowable practices in other countries.

Some governmental systems do not have a requirement for bail, a jury trial, and the burden of proof may be on the accused to prove their innocence.

You are fully responsible for any legal issues, encounters with any foreign government, or any individual. NC State University is not responsible for providing any assistance under such circumstances.

Sexual Harassment and Misconduct

Sexual harassment and misconduct

NC State's [*Code of Student Conduct*](#) defines sexual harassment as any unwelcome conduct directed toward a person which is based on a person's sex or is of a sexual nature. Sexual harassment can include unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal, non-verbal, or physical harassment of a sexual nature. Sexual harassment also includes sexual assault, stalking, and interpersonal/dating violence.

Sexual misconduct, as outlined in the *Code of Student Conduct*, includes sexual harassment, sexual exploitation, sexual contact (without consent), sexual intercourse (without consent), and retaliation against a person because they filed a complaint alleging misconduct, or participated in a procedure involving charges of sexual misconduct.

All study abroad students are required to understand and adhere to all definitions and policies outlined in the *Code of Student Conduct*, including the relationship/interpersonal violence and sexual misconduct policies while abroad.

Cultural and social attitudes toward sexual harassment and misconduct victims vary greatly in different countries. However, respecting and adapting to cultural differences does not mean that you need to tolerate behaviors that make you feel unsafe or uncomfortable.

Researching sexual harassment, misconduct, and gender expression in your host country can empower you to make safer choices. We encourage you to talk with the Study Abroad Office and campus resources such as the LGBTQ Pride Center & Women's Center to better understand and prepare for these differences.

Support if you have been harassed or assaulted

Remember, if you are sexually harassed or assaulted, it is not your fault. We encourage you to reach out to someone you trust and contact your on-site director or the Study Abroad Office. Your

on-site director and the Study Abroad Office can provide you with support and resources, including connecting you to medical and legal services.

The following offices at NC State are available to support you while abroad:

- Study Abroad Office emergency number - call 919-515-3000 24/7 and let them know you are currently abroad. The NC State Police will connect you with a Study Abroad staff member.
- [NC State Counseling Center](#) emergency number - call 919-515-2423 and choose option #2 to be connected to the on-call counselor.
 - Due to state licensing requirements, the assistance the Counseling Center is permitted to provide may be limited. Students can utilize mental health resources through Global Wellness Assist through the GeoBlue app.
- [NC State Women's Center](#) - call the 24/7 Sexual Assault Helpline at 919-515-4444.
- Office of Institutional Equity and Diversity [Safe at NC State](#)

Outside of NC State resources

- GeoBlue International Health Insurance (1.610.254.8771). Can assist in finding medical support in-country.
- [RAINN](#) has a National Sexual Assault Hotline with either phone (1.800.656.4673) or [online chat](#) options available
- [1in6](#) – resources for male survivors (1.800.656.4673)

Identity Abroad & Cultural Adjustment

Learning and Mobility Differences

Students with learning and/or mobility differences are increasingly participating in study abroad programs. As with other identities and topics mentioned throughout this handbook, advanced planning and research is key. Accessibility and availability of certain accommodations may vary depending on location. It is imperative that students work with the Study Abroad Office, Program Director(s), and the Disability Resource Office well in advance of their program start date.

Gender

Gender, and the various cultural norms, behaviors, and attitudes associated with it, significantly shapes one's experience. All students, regardless of their gender identity and/or expression, may encounter differences around gender that are unique to their country and/or location of study. Some locations may be similar to the U.S., where others may differ significantly. Students are encouraged to keep an open mind when evaluating any gender differences, as they can be used as an opportunity to gain insight into another culture.

Students should be aware that many cultures around the world have been exposed to American media, such as movies, television, magazines, and internet content, that may portray stereotypical representations of gender and sexuality in the United States. It is advisable that students take social cues from locals, and follow the advice of their in-country support staff on ways to best adjust/acclimate, if needed.

LGBTQIA+

You may already identify as LGBTQIA+ or you may still be exploring these identities. You may find that the social climate, laws, and personal interactions of your host culture are different. Keep in mind that some ideas held in the United States about sexuality and sexual orientation are culturally-based, and may be different in your host country.

For example, in some cultures, Western understandings of “gay” and “straight” do not exist, or do not carry the same societal importance. In other cultures, there may be more active social movements for civil rights for sexual minorities.

In preparing to study abroad, the Study Abroad Office recommends that students research the LGBTQIA+ climate of their host countries. Your research may lead to potentially affirming or challenging information, which will help you be better prepared in your new environment abroad. Even if you do not plan to be open about this aspect of your identity while abroad, you should be informed about specific laws pertaining to sexuality, gender, and the LGBTQIA+ community.

Race and Ethnicity

Racial and ethnic perceptions and experiences may vary by culture and country. While abroad, you may find that you are an ethnic and/or racial minority or majority for the first time in your life, or may find that the ethnic and/or racial identity you have always felt to be an integral part of yourself is viewed in a different way in your host country. If you are visiting a country where you have ethnic or racial roots, you may find you are expected to behave according to the host country norms in a way that other Americans of a different background are not. Conversely, you may find that you are considered an American first, and your ethnic or racial identity may be considered secondary.

In many countries, there may be existing ethnic and/or racial conflicts, and you may find you are identified with one group or another because of your physical features. It is unlikely that any of these situations will involve the threat of physical harm to you as an international student. However, by researching the cultural landscape and current issues of your host country, you can be better prepared for situations you may encounter abroad.

If interested, Study Abroad Office staff may be able to put you in contact with a student or staff member at NC State who may have experience in your host country and can share their perspective with you.

American Identity Abroad

For some students, studying abroad may be the first time they have thought critically about their identity as an American. While abroad, students will encounter many views and opinions of the United States that will vary widely based on their region, host country, and the individuals they encounter. Students should keep an open mind when navigating conversations or situations in which Americans or the United States are being discussed. In some locations, Americans may find themselves welcomed, and in other locations, they may be at increased risk for theft/crime. Please review the general safety tips provided in this handbook.

Religion/Faith/Spirituality

In many countries, religious beliefs, practices, and traditions, or lack thereof, play an important role in defining a nation's history and informing its present. In preparing for your study abroad experience, be sure to research what religions or faith-based communities have an active presence in your region or country, and how they may have evolved or changed over time. If the religious practices or traditions differ from your own identity or background, doing some initial pre-departure research may prepare you for better acclimating to what you may experience overseas.

If practicing your religion is an important part of your identity, it's advisable that you begin to locate local churches, temples, mosques, or community centers in your host city or neighborhood to gain an understanding of the opportunities that may exist abroad.

Identity-Based Resources

There are many additional online resources for students from historically underrepresented backgrounds and identities to further explore. Visit the [Identity-Based Resources](#) page on the Study Abroad Office website to learn more or contact your advisor.

You should immediately contact a staff member from your host program or the Study Abroad Office if you find yourself in an uncomfortable or threatening situation abroad based on your identity or background.

Cultural adjustment

Cultural adjustment, often referred to as “culture shock”, is the disorientation a person may feel when experiencing an unfamiliar way of life due to being in a new country or environment. Common problems include cultural understanding gaps, information overload, language barriers, and homesickness. Culture shock is common and affects each individual differently. Below are the primary phases associated with culture shock:

Honeymoon

During this period, the differences between the old and new culture are seen in a positive way. During the first few weeks, most people are fascinated by the new culture.

Negotiation

Differences between the old and new culture become apparent and may create anxiety. Excitement may eventually give way to unpleasant feelings of frustration as one experiences unfavorable events, which could be perceived as strange or challenging to one's cultural attitude. Language barriers, differences in public hygiene, traffic safety, and food differences may heighten the sense of disconnection from the surroundings.

Adjustment

Strategies are developed to cope with challenges, make new friends, and to learn to adapt to the host culture. Finding enjoyable activities is important in building a routine.

Adaption

Individuals are able to participate fully and comfortably in the host culture. Cultural differences are embraced and accepted. The host country is seen as a new, yet different home.

“Reverse culture shock”

Many returning study abroad students report feelings of “reverse culture shock” in which they may experience unexpected challenges returning to life in the U.S. Many of the phases of reverse culture shock are similar to those of culture shock

discussed earlier (honeymoon, adaptation, etc.), and they are an expected part of the re-entry process.

Suggestions for combatting reverse culture shock include:

- Participate in the events and programs for returned study abroad students offered by the Study Abroad Office
- Connect with international students on campus
- Join [Pack Abroad Ambassadors](#) to build community with other returned students
- Think about the ways you coped with culture shock abroad. Use similar strategies to assist you in your transition back to campus
- Consider exploring the resources provided by the NC State Counseling Center

For more information, check out reverse culture shock resources through [GoOverseas](#) and [Diversity Abroad](#).

Back On Campus

General

- Review resources offered through the [After Study Abroad](#) website
- Check out email newsletters from the Study Abroad Office with various events and opportunities to share your #PackAbroad experience once back on campus

Getting Involved

Pack Abroad Ambassadors

Connect with others who have studied abroad and would like to share their experience with other NC State Students. Members of Pack Abroad Ambassadors give presentations, table at colleges and information sessions, plan social events, and more.

Volunteer at the Study Abroad Fair

Held each fall semester, come represent your program and share your experiences with interested students.

Volunteer at the Incoming Exchange Student Orientation

Held shortly before the beginning of each semester. Help welcome new exchange students from around the world to the Wolfpack!

Developing Cultural Competence Certificate

The DCC program helps students continue their international engagement on campus by teaching them how to promote cultural awareness in both personal and professional settings. This training also allows students to implement strategies for working effectively across cultural differences in order to continue facilitating these necessary skills after a study abroad experience.

English Conversation Club

Student volunteers are needed to help international students practice English and learn American slang and idioms.