

GEOS ENGLISH ACADEMY, COSTA MESA



LANGUAGE



ADVENTURE



California LIFESTYLE



PRE-DEPARTURE INFORMATION

WELCOME

Thank you for choosing GEOS English Academy, Costa Mesa. We look forward to your arrival and to helping you make your stay an enjoyable and successful one.

Our friendly teachers, administration staff and counselors are all here to help and support you while you study and experience American life and culture. Our school is located 50 minutes South of L.A., 20 minutes to Disneyland and only 15 minutes from surfing at world famous Huntington Beach. Our classrooms are located in a very modern office building next to one of the nicest shopping centers in Southern California. We offer small classes and a comfortable clean facility with modern furnishings and computers with free email and wireless Internet access for students use with their personal computer.

To help you be better prepared for your trip, we have compiled the following information which will help you adapt more quickly to a new country, climate, college, customs and lifestyle.

ABOUT GEOS CORPORATION



GEOS was founded in 1973 with the goal of furthering international communication through English language education. The name GEOS embodies this ideal: GLOBAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES AND SERVICES. We have an expanding network of schools in North America. All GEOS schools offer professional accredited language courses of a truly international flavor in modern facilities. Because all GEOS schools are accredited with National Accreditation bodies, students are assured that educational standards are of the highest caliber, and will be internationally recognized. GEOS English Academy is Accredited by ACCET.

GEOS COSTA MESA

We have a modern facility including a spacious student lounge and a computer lab with high-speed Internet with wire-less (WI-fi) access for student use. Our school is located near restaurants, shopping centers, book stores and Starbucks. All GEOS instructors are native speakers, highly skilled, caring professionals. Our staff is specially trained to work with international students and we pride ourselves in the high level of personal attention we give to every student.

ABOUT Costa Mesa

GEOS English Academy is located 37 miles southeast of Los Angeles. Residents enjoy an ideally mild Southern California climate. Our location provides easy access to many of Southern California's major attractions such as great beaches, mountain areas and deserts, Disneyland, Knott's Berry Farm, Palm Springs and LA with its many sports arenas and major league teams. Public transportation is convenient and Costa Mesa has been voted as one of the safest cities in America. From Costa Mesa, planning trips to Las Vegas, the Grand Canyon and San Diego are popular destinations to travel to on weekends.

CLIMATE

Costa Mesa has a sub-tropical climate and is very comfortable. Low Humidity in the summer and in the evening, a light jacket or sweater can be worn.



Spring March - May

Fall September - November

Summer June - August

Winter December - February

Average temperature

Typical Weather for Entire Year

<p><u>January</u> Normal High: 68°F Normal Low: 46°F Normal Average: 57°F</p>	<p><u>February</u> Normal High: 69°F Normal Low: 48°F Normal Average: 58°F</p>	<p><u>March</u> Normal High: 69°F Normal Low: 50°F Normal Average: 59°F</p>	<p><u>April</u> Normal High: 73°F Normal Low: 53°F Normal Average: 63°F</p>
<p><u>May</u> Normal High: 74°F Normal Low: 58°F Normal Average: 66°F</p>	<p><u>June</u> Normal High: 78°F Normal Low: 61°F Normal Average: 70°F</p>	<p><u>July</u> Normal High: 83°F Normal Low: 65°F Normal Average: 74°F</p>	<p><u>August</u> Normal High: 85°F Normal Low: 66°F Normal Average: 75°F</p>
<p><u>September</u> Normal High: 83°F Normal Low: 64°F Normal Average: 74°F</p>	<p><u>October</u> Normal High: 79°F Normal Low: 59°F Normal Average: 69°F</p>	<p><u>November</u> Normal High: 73°F Normal Low: 50°F Normal Average: 62°F</p>	<p><u>December</u> Normal High: 69°F Normal Low: 45°F Normal Average: 57°F</p>

Typical Weather for Entire Year

<p><u>January</u> Normal High: 20°C Normal Low: 8°C Normal Average: 14°C</p>	<p><u>February</u> Normal High: 21°C Normal Low: 9°C Normal Average: 14°C</p>	<p><u>March</u> Normal High: 21°C Normal Low: 10°C Normal Average: 15°C</p>	<p><u>April</u> Normal High: 23°C Normal Low: 12°C Normal Average: 17°C</p>
<p><u>May</u> Normal High: 23°C Normal Low: 14°C Normal Average: 19°C</p>	<p><u>June</u> Normal High: 26°C Normal Low: 16°C Normal Average: 21°C</p>	<p><u>July</u> Normal High: 28°C Normal Low: 18°C Normal Average: 23°C</p>	<p><u>August</u> Normal High: 29°C Normal Low: 19°C Normal Average: 24°C</p>
<p><u>September</u> Normal High: 28°C Normal Low: 18°C Normal Average: 23°C</p>	<p><u>October</u> Normal High: 26°C Normal Low: 15°C Normal Average: 21°C</p>	<p><u>November</u> Normal High: 23°C Normal Low: 10°C Normal Average: 17°C</p>	<p><u>December</u> Normal High: 21°C Normal Low: 7°C Normal Average: 14°C</p>

CLOTHING

The standard of dressing in Costa Mesa varies from California casual, which is shorts, t-shirts and sandals to business casual or formal, depending on the occasion. Casual clothing is generally acceptable in most restaurants and bars. Of course, there are some fine establishments where jackets and ties are required. We recommend lightweight clothing for summer along with sunglasses and sun-screen. In winter, long sleeve shirts or light jackets and sweaters will keep you warm.

ELECTRIC APPLIANCES

Electricity supply throughout the United States is between 110 - 120 volts AC using a standard three pin plug. Some visitors may need an adaptor socket. 220-volt appliances such as hairdryers and electric shavers cannot be used without a transformer.

TIME

Costa Mesa is on Pacific Coast Time of the United States. From about Early April through late October, we change and set our clocks to Daylight Savings time, which is one hour ahead and then in the fall we set our clocks back one hour.

GETTING TO Costa Mesa

Costa Mesa is served by Los Angeles International Airport located 50 minutes from Costa Mesa and John Wayne Airport (SNA) for domestic arrivals here in Costa Mesa which is about 15 minutes from our school.

For those students requesting our Airport Pickup service, please keep in mind that it is important that you send us your arrival and flight information as soon as possible.

Flying time to LA International Airport from:

New York 5 hours
Taipei 13 hours
Tokyo 12 hours

Istanbul 14 hours
Spain 13 hours
Sao Paolo 13 hours



When traveling to the United States, be careful not to bring plants, fruit or live animals as these items are either prohibited and/or subject to quarantine. There are taxis, shuttle buses that operate regularly from the airports to Costa Mesa, and the surrounding area. Currency exchange facilities and Automatic Teller Machines (ATMs) are available in all of the terminals.

For those students who do not request airport pickup, we suggest you take a shuttle van from the airport to your host family or residence. Once you pass through the immigration check point, you will collect your luggage and then pass through customs. Once you leave the customs area with your bags, look for the signs that say "Ground Transportation". Outside the terminal there is a medium with signs that tell you where to wait.

DO NOT accept any offers for rides or taxis from anyone inside the terminal or anyone who is not the official taxi dispatcher. These are unlicensed taxis that charge ridiculous fares and are less than reliable.

BANKING



The US dollar is the basic unit of currency and 100 cents is equal to one dollar. Paper notes come in denominations of \$100, \$50, \$20, \$10, \$5, and \$1. Coins are produced in 25c, 10c, 5c and 1c. There are also \$1 and 50c coins, but these are less common. The most commonly accepted credit cards are Visa and MasterCard. American Express and Diners Club are also widely accepted.

Banking Hours Vary, but in most cases are: Monday to Friday 9.00am - 3.00pm. Friday 9.00am - 5.00pm. Some banks are open on Saturday as well.

If you want to open a bank account, you will need an enrollment verification letter from the school, your passport and I-20 form. Some banks also request a school photo ID, which GEOS can provide for a nominal fee. Most savings and checking accounts come with a plastic "debit card", with which you can access automatic teller machines (ATM) 24 hours a day to withdraw and deposit money. Many of these cards also have the Visa or MasterCard logo and can be used to make purchases as well.

Most people use the ATM to **withdraw cash** or check their account balance. Please note: In the U.S. we generally do not deposit cash into the ATM. Cash deposits are done in person at the bank window. **Do not** put loose bills or any coins into the ATM machine. If you do, you may never see your money again!

CELLULAR TELEPHONES

Your existing cell phone may work in the USA, but keep in mind that it may be costly to use in the US because every local call you make is an international call from your phone. It is also costly for those who call you from inside the US because calling a cell phone with an overseas phone number is an international call as well. If you are planning to be in Costa Mesa for more than a month, you may want to consider getting a cell phone from one of the major telephone companies here. Some of the providers are Verizon, Cingular, Sprint, T-Mobile, etc.

POST OFFICE

The U.S. Post Office has many branches. The post office is open between 9:00am – 5:00pm from Monday to Friday. Some post offices may be open on the weekends. Letterboxes are located around the city and suburbs, and mail is collected several times daily.

There is a Letter drop box in our building on the first floor near the elevator. You can receive mail and parcels using GEOS Costa Mesa's postal address or fax number.

Our postal address is 949 South Coast Dr. #405
Costa Mesa, CA 92626 USA



Our fax number is 1-714-662-7426

Please ask the sender to make sure that your name is clearly marked on your mail.

HEALTH INSURANCE



Medical insurance is recommended for all international students. You can arrange for overseas insurance before departure if you prefer, or we can assist you in obtaining medical insurance upon your arrival. We currently use an insurance company that will pay claims for 80% to 100% of the scheduled doctors' fees and medication, depending on the plan you choose. If you would like the details before you arrive please email us at costamesa@geos.net.

SHOPPING

Costa Mesa has shopping for everyone. You can select from the latest designer styles, metro/club, and of course beach and surf wear.

Most stores are open seven days a week, except for some national holidays.

Most stores and shops open from about 10:00am to 9:00pm.

And we are located just 50 minutes from Beverly Hills, Rode Drive and Hollywood.



STUDENT VISAS



It is essential that you have the correct visa enabling you to study at GEOS. If you are in the United States and you came with a tourist visa, or the visa waiver program, you can study up to 17 hours per week. If you are applying for a student visa, you are required to enroll in a full-time course. Students' attendance is closely monitored, and if your attendance falls below 80%, your ability to keep your student visa and remain in the US will be in jeopardy. The course application form and the enrollment agreement contain the details of our refund policy.

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Our intensive English Course features open admission has six levels, from beginner to advanced. All students will take a placement test on the first day of school to determine their class. Students interested in enrolling in our iBT TOEFL Preparation course must demonstrate that they have a minimum TOEFL level of 420 (PBT) or 115 (CBT) or by providing an official TOEFL score report. We can also provide our in-house placement exam.

YOUR FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL

ORIENTATION AND TESTING PROCEDURE

All students must arrive by 9:30am on the first day of school for Orientation and Testing. You should bring:

- Your Passport and I-20 form (if you have an F1 Student visa)
- A notebook & pen

In general, the schedule on intake day is:

9:30 – 10:00 Welcome and Enrollment
10:10 – 11:10 Placement Test
11:10 – 11:30 Walking tour of the area around the school
11:30 – 11:40 Speaking test
11:40 – 12:30 Lunch Break
12:30 – 1:00 Orientation
1:00 – 1:30 Homestay Orientation



In our Orientation you will learn about studying in our school (academics, materials, teaching styles, etc), and life in Costa Mesa California. (Transportation, banking, shopping, etc). There is also a homestay orientation, for those students who are staying with a GEOS Host family.

PLACEMENT TEST

- Reading/Vocabulary- Students have to answer 60 multiple-choice questions. They are sentences or short paragraphs with a missing word or phrase, vocabulary, grammar and reading comprehension.
- Speaking – Students have a speaking exam with one of the teaching staff. They will be shown a series of picture stories and answer questions (About 10 minutes).

LOCAL TRANSPORTATION

Most students will travel to school by bus. OCTA is the name of the local bus company and it is very modern, clean, safe and accessible for all riders. Please arrive at the bus stop at least 10 minutes before scheduled times. Also, have exact fare because the driver does not make change. You can also buy a bus pass.

Host Families

All host families will meet their student at the school on arrival. They will also bring the student to school on the first day of orientation. All host families are located within 60 minutes or less by public transportation to GEOS and will teach you the bus route to school.

THANK YOU FOR CHOOSING GEOS ENGLISH ACADEMY COST MESA

We welcome you to GEOS Costa Mesa California. We trust you will have an excellent experience with us!

We look forward to seeing you!

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