

# GEOS LANGUAGE INSTITUTE NEW YORK



## PRE-DEPARTURE INFORMATION PACKAGE

## WELCOME

Thank you for choosing GEOS Language Institute, New York. We look forward to your arrival and to helping you make your stay an enjoyable and successful one.

Our friendly teachers and administration staff are all here to help and support you while you study and experience American life and culture. Our campus is located right in the heart of Manhattan in the beautiful St. James building. We offer small classes and a comfortable clean facility featuring a student lounge with modern furnishings and computers with free wireless Internet access.

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 with a significant presence in North America, Oceania, and Europe. 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 Language Institute, New York is licensed by the New York State Department of Education and Accredited by ACCET.

## ABOUT GEOS NYC

GEOS Language Institute's campus is located in the heart of Manhattan. We are in walking distance from all major subway, bus and commuter rail stations. Many of New York's most famous attractions are a short walk away – Times Square, Madison Square Garden, Broadway shows, Grand Central Station, and lots more. We have a modern facility including a spacious student lounge with computers and high-speed Internet access. All GEOS instructors are native speakers, and are 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 OUR CAMPUS



Built in 1886, this building has stunning views of Madison Square Park, the Flatiron District, and Midtown. At the time, it was built in the wealthiest area of New York City. Designed by renowned architect Bruce Price, the building is a striking combination of stone, brick, terra cotta, iron, and copper in the Beaux Arts style with extensive detailing inside and out. One of its original treasures – a lobby mural painted by the famous French decorating firm of Arthur Brounet is maintained in its original glory.

## ABOUT NEW YORK CITY



New York City is known as the Big Apple and is a major center for culture, fashion, entertainment, finance, and business in the world. There are amazing museums, great shopping districts, world class restaurants, and exciting nightlife. New York is a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic melting pot of people from all over the world. In this multicultural society, there are a variety of households which may consist of a single parent with one or two children, a retired elderly couple, or several young adults sharing an apartment or house after moving out from their parents.

New York City is divided into five areas, called the Five Boroughs. Manhattan is the main borough and is an island. To the north is The Bronx. East of Manhattan is Queens and Brooklyn. The fifth Borough is Staten Island, located to the south of Manhattan. Most of our host families live in Queens and Brooklyn, 55 to 75 minutes from Manhattan.

## CLIMATE

New York has four distinct seasons. Spring is warm and breezy and the summers are hot and humid. The fall has cool crisp air, and winters are cold and sometimes snowy.

**Spring** March - May

**Summer** June – August

**Fall** September – November

**Winter** December - February

Average temperature:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Min Temp (°C)	-4	-3	0	6	12	17	20	19	15	9	4	-1
Max Temp (°C)	3	4	9	15	21	26	29	28	24	18	11	5

## CLOTHING

The standard of dressing in New York City varies from casual to 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 needed. We recommend lightweight clothing for summer along with sunglasses and sun-screen. In winter, hats, scarves, jackets and sweaters will keep you warm. Bringing an umbrella is recommended as it does rain from time to time in each season.

## ELECTRIC APPLIANCES

The 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

New York City is on the east coast of the United States and from late October through early April, follows Eastern Standard Time (EST) which is five hours behind GMT. From about early April through late October, New York, along with other east coast states, switches to Daylight Savings time, which is 4 hours behind GMT. NYC is three hours ahead of California and other West Coast Destinations.

## GETTING TO NEW YORK

New York City is served by three major airports: JFK International Airport and LaGuardia Airport (domestic) are in New York and Newark International Airport is in New Jersey State, about 1 hour west of Manhattan. We suggest booking a flight to JFK or LaGuardia Airport, these are about 30 minutes from most of our host families and closer to Manhattan than Newark. For those students requesting our Airport Pickup service, please keep in mind that this service is available *only* for JFK and LaGuardia Airports. GEOS Airport Pickup service is not available for Newark International Airport.

### Flying time to New York City

Paris 7 hours

Taipei 13 hours

Tokyo 12 hours

Seoul 14 hours

Istanbul 8 hours

Bogota 10 hours

Sao Paolo 12 hours

Madrid 7 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. Also, liquids must be stored in a sealed, clear plastic zip-lock bag. New York's international and domestic airports are located about 30 to 45 minutes east of the city center. There are taxis, shuttle buses, and a train system that operates regularly from the airports to Manhattan, Queens, and Brooklyn.

For those students who do not request airport pickup, we suggest you take a yellow taxi from the airport to you 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." There will be a NYC taxi dispatcher officer and a line of yellow colored taxis. Tell the dispatcher where you want to go and they will introduce you to your driver.

From JFK, it is a flat fee of \$40 plus highway toll and tip (15~20%) to anyplace in Manhattan.

From LaGuardia, the driver will use the taxi-meter and the fare will vary depending on the destination. The fare from either airport to other places will vary.



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 taxi drivers who charge ridiculous fares and are less than reliable.

## FOOD



New York City is a paradise for those who enjoy eating! Local favorites include bagels, "dirty water" hot dogs, and of course amazing pizza. There is a wide variety of eating establishments to cater for all tastes and budgets. Just about every cuisine in the world can be found here in the Big Apple. You can feast on Dim Sum in Chinatown, pasta in Little Italy, Kalbi in Korea Town, and Steak in Little Brazil. From

Japanese to French, Indian to Turkish, Thai, and many, many others...New York has it all. The City has everything from street vendors to many world famous restaurants some with amazing views of the New York Skyline, and other famous attractions.

You will discover that most of the restaurants will serve liquor to those over 21. Others will welcome you with "BYO" (which means Bring Your Own liquor). Either way, you can compliment your meal with a drink from a wide range of American and imported beers, wines and spirits. The legal drinking age is 21 years.



## BANKING

The US dollar is the basic unit of currency and 100 cents(c) 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 in 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 and Friday 9.00am - 5.00pm. Some banks are open on Saturday as well.

GEOS New York has a partnership with Bank of America so if you wish to open a bank account, we recommend you go there. To open a bank account at the Bank of America, you will need an enrollment verification letter from the school, your passport and I-20 form. To open a bank account at another bank, you will need a social security number in addition to the items mentioned earlier. 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. It is possible to do so using the proper envelope, but 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 people 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 New York 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, AT&T, and T-Mobile. Please note that you will need to have a social security number to open a cell phone account.

## POST OFFICE

The U.S. Post Office has many branches. The closest post office is on 39W 31<sup>st</sup> Street. The post office is open between 9:00am – 5:00pm from Monday to Friday. Some other post offices may be open on the weekends. Letterboxes are located around the city and suburbs, and mail is collected several times daily.



You can receive mail and parcels using GEOS New York's postal address or fax number.

Our postal address is:  
*GEOS Language Institute New York*  
*1133 Broadway Suite 1520*  
*New York, New York*  
*10010, USA*  
Our fax number is 646-674-0002

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 [info@geosnyc.com](mailto:info@geosnyc.com).

## SHOPPING

From out-door flea markets to designer boutiques; New York City has shopping for everything anyone would want. Most stores are open seven days a week, except for some national holidays. There are bargain sales all the time, but the week after Christmas is one of the best times to shop for bargain hunters. Most stores and shops open



from about 9:00am to 9:00pm. If you like having the experience of shopping for bargains, there are wholesale outlets about an hour bus ride from the city. As it is in most major cities in the world, there are specialty shops which have excellent bargains for certain products like personal electronics, cameras, and the like. If you are interested in making such a purchase, our staff can recommend reputable dealers. Just ask us!

## 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 on 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' attendances are 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. F1 visa students may enter the U.S. up to 30 days before the start of their course.

## VACATIONS AND TRAVELING

For full-time students on an F-1 visa, you must have at least 4 weeks left of your current enrollment and an attendance of at least 80% before you are eligible to take a vacation. Please let us know of your intentions to take a vacation at least 2 weeks prior to the start date.

If you are travelling to another country during your vacation and you are from one of America's Visa Waiver Program countries, you will need to be registered with ESTA (Electronic System of Travel Authorization). ESTA is an application system that authorizes travelers to travel to, or pass through, the United States. As of January 12, 2009, all people from participating countries in the Visa Waiver Program will need to have ESTA authorization.

To get more information about ESTA and/or to register in the system, please visit the website below: [http://www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/travel/id\\_visa/esta/](http://www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/travel/id_visa/esta/)

## ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Our Intensive English Course features open admission and have 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 TOEFL Preparation course must demonstrate that they have a minimum TOEFL level of 500 (PBT), either by providing an official TOEFL score report, or obtaining at least the minimum score on our in-house placement exam.

## YOUR FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL

### ORIENTATION AND TESTING PROCEDURE

All students must arrive by 9:00am at our campus 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) and a notebook & pen.

In general, the schedule on intake day is:

- 9:00 – 9:15 Welcome
- 9:30 – 10:45 Placement Test
- 10:45 – 11:30 Administrative procedures
- 11:30 – 1:30 Lunch Break
- 1:30 – 3:00 Orientation

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

### PLACEMENT TEST

- Listening/Grammar/Reading/Vocabulary - Students have to answer 100 multiple-choice questions. (60 minutes).
- 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).

## SEE YOU SOON!

We welcome you to GEOS Language Institute. We trust you will have an excellent experience with us! Please visit us on the web at [www.geosnyc.com](http://www.geosnyc.com). There, you can see our current social activity calendar, photos of our school and students, and more!

How to get to GEOS Language Institute:

Our school is conveniently located near the famous Flat Iron Building. Our school is located at 1133 Broadway (on Broadway between 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> Street) in Midtown Manhattan.

By Subway:

Take the R/W to 28<sup>th</sup> Street / Broadway and walk 2 blocks south.

Take the F/V to 23<sup>rd</sup> Street / 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue and walk to Broadway and walk 3 blocks north.

Take the 1 to 28<sup>th</sup> Street / 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue and walk 2 blocks east, then 2 blocks south.

Take the 6 to 23<sup>rd</sup> Street / Park and walk 3 blocks north, then 2 blocks west.

We look forward to seeing you!  
**GEOS Language Institute, New York**  
**1133 Broadway Suite 1520**  
**New York, NY 10010**  
**(TEL) 646-674-0001**  
**(FAX) 646-674-0002**  
**info@geosnyc.com**  
**www.geosnyc.com**