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New Zealand**

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New for 2008/2009: English Plus Rugby: An addition to the popular English Plus Activities programme. Morning English lessons, then afternoon training with a rugby coach. Contact us for more information and programme dates.

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LANGUAGE TRAVEL MAGAZINE Star Awards

www.hothousemedia.com/ltm/star.htm

English and sports in New Zealand

English and sports courses attract language learners looking for something extra from their programme as well as sports enthusiasts who decide to do something else while practising their chosen sport, such as surfing or skiing. We find out more about such options available in New Zealand.

Queenstown is the adrenalin capital of the world," boasts Blaise Barnham, Director of Southern Lakes English College, which is located in central Queenstown. He continues, "It's heaven for sports enthusiasts as you can just about do any sport here."

Teaming English language tuition with sports tuition is therefore a logical step to take. Barnham relates that his school offers English plus snowboarding or skiing from June to October as well as English plus adventure sports including sky-diving, jetboating, white water rafting and kayaking.

Many students are reportedly attracted to New Zealand in the first place because of its reputation for adventure sports. This is in part because of the country's unique geography –

about a fifth of the North Island and two-thirds of the South Island are mountainous, and these mountains afford great skiing and snowboarding opportunities while "sunken" mountain ranges have created fjords and bays that lend themselves to kayaking and white water rafting.

Other sports that New Zealand is renowned for include rugby, given the prestige of the national team. Angela Oliver at Unique New Zealand in Auckland notes that their English and rugby course is popular because students choose "to further rugby skills in the country they perceive to have true strengths in that sport".

Most of the English-plus-sports courses offered in New Zealand are, however, dependent on the natural geography or landscape for the sports tuition offered. At Coromandel Outdoor Language Centre in Whitianga, Maurice Kirby points out that the school is "situated in an excellent surfing location" which is one reason for offering this course. Another is the fact that offering a surfing course taps into a market of surfers looking to learn a language, as well as language learners keen to surf.

"The surfing course brings students into our English programme," notes Kirby. "It also encourages some students to extend their course, in order to learn how to surf."

Not all the sports offered by language schools are adrenaline-inducing either. Barnham notes that they also offer trekking in the mountains and horse riding among other options. "Our courses are great for seniors and groups too," he says, pointing out that clients like to learn a language and undertake sports because, "they can have a great deal of fun and learn many skills whilst also really improving their English language skills."

Tricia Lund-Jackson at ABC College of English in Queenstown is keen to underline the convenience of Queenstown on the South Island as a base for sports enthusiasts. "The school is located only a 25 minute drive from the ski slopes so a full morning of English tuition and a full afternoon of skiing/boarding is possible every day of the week during winter," she says, adding that as the school is located in the southern hemisphere, the school offers an opportunity for snow sports fanatics "to ski or snowboard during the northern hemisphere summer while improving their English." The course is popular with snow sports instructors who need to speak English with their clients, she adds.

At Rotorua English Language Academy on the North Island, which is famed for its geothermal activity, golf is one of the sports offered as a blended programme. Chris Leckie explains that this is because, simply, "Rotorua is a great place to play golf. There are a number of very picturesque golf courses and some very good golf professionals to provide coaching."

She says that some international students studying in the area have gone on to become golf professionals. "We decided to offer English plus golf because we realised that golf is so much more accessible, and cheaper, here than in some of the countries our students come from."

The other option available at the school is horse riding, available since the school located "an experienced teacher who loves working with our students." Leckie says that, unlike the typical client on other types of sports programmes, most of their sports course participants are already experienced in their chosen sport. "They come here mainly to learn English but want to keep up their skills in their chosen sport at the same time."



Selection of programmes available

PHOTOGRAPH: COROMANDEL OUTDOOR LANGUAGE CENTRE

Location	Name of school	Min. length of course	Sports tuition offered	Min. hrs. lang. tuition per week	Min. hrs. sports tuition
Queenstown	Southern Lakes English College	1 week	sb, sk, av, hr, r, v	15	6
Queenstown	ABC College of English	2 weeks	sb, sk	15	9
Taupo	Taupo Lang. & Outdoor Ed. Centre	1 week	v	15	v
Auckland	Unique New Zealand	3 weeks	r	15	10
Rotorua	Rotorua English Lang. Academy	1 week	g, hr	15	n
Auckland/Christchurch	Dominion English Schools	1 week	t, g, s, sd	12.5	4
Christchurch/Queenstown	Language Schools New Zealand	1 week	sk sb	15	10
Whitianga	Coromandel Outdoor Lang. Centre	3 weeks	sf	15	12.5

av adventure sports g golf hr horse riding n none r rugby s sailing sb snowboarding sd scuba diving sf surfing sk skiing t tennis v varies