

GEOS Victoria

Pre-departure Information



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Learn
 English

Canada
 Canada
 Canada

USA
 USA
 USA

Language. Culture. Adventure.



WELCOME

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

Our friendly teachers, administration staff and counsellors are all here to help and support you while you study and experience Canadian life and culture. Our school is located inside one of Victoria's landmark heritage buildings, in the centre of Victoria. We offer small classes and a comfortable, clean facility featuring a student lounge with modern furnishings and computers with free email and 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 flavour in modern facilities. Because all GEOS schools are accredited with National Accreditation bodies, students are assured that educational standards are of the highest calibre, and will be internationally recognised. GEOS Language Academy, Victoria is a member of the CEC and Accredited by CAPLS.

ABOUT GEOS Language Academy, Victoria

GEOS Language Academy, Victoria is located in the heart of the downtown core. We are in walking distance from almost all of the major tourist attractions. Many of Victoria's most famous attractions are just ten or fifteen minutes on foot from the school – The Royal British Columbia Museum, the Empress Hotel (for High Tea), all of the whale-watching departure points, the Royal London Wax Museum, and many more. We have a modern facility including a spacious student lounge and a computer lab with high-speed Internet access. All GEOS instructors are native speakers, highly skilled, caring professionals. Our staff is specially trained to work with international students and we pride ourselves on the high level of personal attention we give to every student.

ABOUT OUR SCHOOL

GEOS Language Academy, Victoria is located in The Sayward Building, classified by the City of Victoria as a Heritage building. The Sayward Building was built in 1910 and has 6 floors. GEOS Language Academy, Victoria occupies 70% of the 2nd floor, which is easily accessible by stairs or one of two elevators.



ABOUT THE CITY OF VICTORIA



Victoria is known as the City of Gardens and is the capital of British Columbia. It is famous for its gardens, whale-watching, and its mild climate. The main industry is tourism, so will have a wonderful opportunity to meet people from all over the world. Named after Queen Victoria, the city still maintains a British atmosphere, easily noticeable in the architecture, pubs, and establishments offering High Tea. Victoria is a mid-sized Canadian city with a population of approximately 300,000 people. As in any Canadian city, there is multicultural feel – 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.

The area surrounding the actual city of Victoria is known as Greater Victoria and is comprised of the West Shore, Esquimalt, Oak Bay, and Saanich. Most of our host families live in these 4 areas, which are all very close to downtown Victoria. Students will travel 20 – 40 minutes by bus to get to the school.

CLIMATE

Victoria has the mildest climate in Canada. Spring and fall is mild, but feels cooler when the wind is blowing. The summers are very warm, and never humid. The winters are cool and snow is rarely seen.

Spring: March – May **Summer:** June – August
Fall: September – November **Winter:** December – February

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Min Temp (°C)	0.3	1.2	1.9	3.8	6.5	9.3	10.7	10.6	8.4	5.3	2.5	.8
Max Temp (°C)	6.5	8.4	10.2	12.9	16.3	19.3	21.8	21.8	19.1	14.1	9.4	6.8
Avg Temp (°C)	3.4	4.8	6.1	8.4	11.4	14.3	16.2	16.2	13.8	9.7	6.0	3.8

CLOTHING

Most people in Victoria dress very casually. Jeans are very popular. We recommend lightweight clothing for summer along with sunglasses and sun-screen. In winter, gloves, hats, scarves, jackets and sweaters will keep you warm. Bringing an umbrella is recommended as it does rain on the West Coast of North America during winter. You may also want to bring a bathing suit as many of our host families like to go swimming at the local pools.

ELECTRIC APPLIANCES

Electricity supply throughout Canada is between 110 - 120 volts AC using a standard 2 or 3 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

Victoria is located on the southern tip of Vancouver Island, which is just off the West Coast of Canada. Victoria is on Pacific Time (PT), which is 8 hours behind GMT. From about early April through to late October, Victoria, along with the rest of Canada, switches to Daylight Savings time, which is 7 hours behind GMT. Victoria is three hours behind Toronto and other East Coast Destinations.

GETTING TO VICTORIA

Victoria is served by one major airport: Victoria International Airport, which is approximately a 40- minute drive north of downtown Victoria. We suggest booking a flight all the way through to Victoria, rather than just to Vancouver. Most flights will fly direct to Vancouver International Airport; you can then transfer and take a very quick 15-minute flight to Victoria Airport, which is about 30 minutes from most of our host families. For those students requesting our Airport Pickup Transfer service, please keep in mind that this service is available for Victoria International Airport.

Flying time to Victoria via Vancouver

Toronto 6 hours

Taipei 12 hours

Tokyo 11 hours

Madrid 13 hours

Bogota 11 hours

Mexico City 6 hours

When travelling to Canada, be careful not to bring plants, fruit or live animals, as these items are either prohibited and/or subject to quarantine. Also, if you are bringing cigarettes into Canada, please remember that there is a limit of one carton per person. If you bring more than this into the country, you will have to pay tax on the cigarettes. The same is true for alcohol; you may bring one bottle of alcohol into the country when you arrive.



For those students who do not need an airport transfer, you can take a taxi or an airport shuttle-bus from the Victoria International Airport to your host family or downtown. Once you collect your luggage, you will leave the airport and see a line of red taxis that belong to the Empress Taxi company. They are the only taxis you can take from the airport (you may take any taxi to the airport). The cost will be

about \$55 plus tip (15~20%) to downtown Victoria. The airport shuttle, called the AIRPORTER is much less expensive, costing about \$15 one way. It is located in front of the Empress taxis.



POST OFFICE

The main Canada Post office is a 1-minute walk from the front door of the school. There is also a branch directly across the street from the school. Canada Post office is open between 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. from Monday to Friday. Some other branch post offices may be open on Saturdays. Mailboxes are located around the city and suburbs, and mail is collected several times daily. There is even one in the building that we are in.

You can receive mail and parcels using GEOS Language Academy, Victoria's postal address:

225-1207 Douglas Street
Victoria, BC,
V8W 2E7
CANADA



You may also receive faxes (\$0.25/page)

Our fax number is: 250-382-1128

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@geosvictoria.com.

SHOPPING



Victoria has 3 large shopping malls: the Bay Centre, located kitty corner to the school; Mayfair Mall, a 10-minute bus ride from the school; and Hillside Mall, a 15-minute bus ride from the school. Most stores are open seven days a week, except for some national holidays. There are bargain sales on all the time, but the day (sometimes the whole week) after Christmas is one of the best times to shop if you are a "shop-a-holic". If you stay in Canada for the Christmas season, you will learn that this day is called Boxing Day and is a great tradition in Canada. Most stores and shops are open from about 9:00 or 10:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m. weekdays and until 9:00 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays.



STUDENT VISAS



It is essential that you have the correct visa enabling you to study at GEOS. If you are in Canada and you came with a tourist visa, you can study up to 6 months. If you would like to study longer than 6 months, you will need a Study Permit.

Students' attendance is closely monitored, and if your attendance falls below 80%, your ability to keep your student visa and remain in Canada will be in jeopardy. Students who arrive in Canada on a Study Permit may transfer to another institution before completing the course they have enrolled in. The course Application Form contains the details of our refund policy.

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Our Comprehensive English Program features Open Admission and has six levels, from Beginner (Level 1) to Advanced (Level 6). 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 430 (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 8:45 a.m. on the first day of school for Orientation and Testing. You should bring:

- Your Passport
- A notebook, pen, pencil & an eraser

In general, the schedule on intake day is:

09:00 – 09:15 Welcome

09:30 – 10:15 Placement Tests

10:15 – 11:15 Interviews

11:15 – 12:15 GEOS Orientation (School Rules, life in Victoria, etc . . .)

12:15 – 13:00 Lunch

13:00 – 13:45 Homestay Orientation (for those students in the GEOS Homestay Program)

13:45 – 14:00 Academic Orientation (materials, testing, presentations, teaching styles)

14:00 – 14:30 Walking tour of the neighbourhood around the school

PLACEMENT TEST

(The Michigan ESL Placement Test)

- Listening – Students will answer 20 multiple-choice questions
- Grammar – Students will answer 30 multiple-choice questions
- Vocabulary – Students will answer 30 multiple-choice questions
- Reading – Students will answer 20 multiple-choice questions
- Speaking – Students have an interview with one of the teaching staff. They will be asked to respond in complete sentences to a series of questions (About 15 minutes).

THANK YOU FOR CHOOSING GEOS LANGUAGE ACADEMY, VICTORIA

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

How to get to GEOS Language Academy, Victoria:

Our school is conveniently located in the heart of downtown Victoria on the main street.
Our school is at 225-1207 Douglas Street. We are on the 2nd Floor.

By Bus:

Virtually every city bus stops either directly in front of the school or within one block of the school.

We look forward to seeing you!

GEOS Language Academy, Victoria
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CANADA
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