**Differences between English for specific purposes and general English**

The most important difference lies in the nature of learners and their purpose for learning English. ESP students are usually adults who already have some acquaintance with English and are learning the language in order to communicate a set of professional skills and to perform particular job-related functions (If the learner’s proficiency level is very low, a great deal of course content will probably be of a general English type with emphasis on survival situations). It concentrates more on language in context than on teaching grammar and language structures, it covers subjects from accounting or computer science to tourism and business management. The ESP focal point is that English is not taught as a subject separated from the students’ real needs; instead, it is integrated into a subject matter area important to the learners.

In EFL classes all four language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing are equally stressed. In ESP, focus in placed on the needed language skills, an ESP program might emphasize the development of reading skills in students who are preparing for graduate work in business administration. Or it might promote the development of spoken skills in students who are studying English in order to become tour guides.

The following table presents a summary of the major differences between ESP and EGP:

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| ESP | EGP |
| Nature of learners : Age : adults Level : intermediate or advanced ( in general English)  | Nature of learners : Age : young ( or adults in some situations) Level : from beginner to advanced  |
| Purpose for learning : For study related needs or work related needs  | Purpose for learning : Using English in every day speech or for educational aims  |
| English is considered as a tool to be used for specific purposes ( it is not taught for its own sake)  | English is taught for linguistic purposes  |
| Specific grammatical structures, vocabulary items, and language skills are targeted  | Focus is placed on all the grammatical structures and language skills ( gradually)  |
| The process of needs analysis is necessary for designing the ESP course  | Investigating learners’ needs is not always necessary  |