

GETTING STARTED IN SECOND LIFE

Second Life (<http://secondlife.com/>) is a three-dimensional virtual world created by Linden Research, Inc. Inhabitants may buy property, build environments, construct or buy objects to use. You may have heard about politicians holding meetings in Second Life; many academic conferences now hold virtual sessions there as well. Second Life has very recently incorporated voice chat, which makes it far more useful for language learning and cross-cultural exchanges.

Caution: Second Life has many wonderful features, but you may also encounter many things you find objectionable. There is a special version of Second Life for teens (<http://teen.secondlife.com/>) that some K – 12 educators are using.

What You Need

1. You need a powerful computer and a fast (broadband) Internet connection. Pay particular attention to the minimum specifications for graphics cards.
2. For voice chat, you need a microphone and speakers; a headset is best to avoid feedback loops.
3. You need an account.

Getting an Account

On the MMLL computers, Second Life is already installed. You can create an account by following these instructions. On your own computer, you can create an account on the Web (go to <http://www.secondlife.com> and click Join) and then download the software.

1. Go to Start > All Programs > Language Lab Applications > Second Life and open the application.
2. Click **New Account** and then click **OK** when asked to go the www.secondlife.com to create an account.
3. You may be taken to the "Select a Community" page; scroll down and click **Skip this step** to get to the account creation screen.
4. Follow instructions to choose a name and avatar.

Logging In for the First Time

The first time you log in, you will be on Orientation Island. Explore it to learn how to function within Second Life.

If you right-click on your avatar, you will see various menu items. If you click on **Friends**, you can search for people you know and add them as friends. If you click on **Groups**, you can search for and join groups that interest you.

Resources within Second Life

Help is available from the Help menu on the application's tool bar. Second Life Help takes you to the Web; In-World Help lets you stay in the application.

There are many groups in Second Life that offer opportunities for learning about Second Life for specific purposes. One to try is Real Life Education in Second Life.

Resources outside of Second Life

<http://www.secondlife.com>

There are a number of Google Groups about Second Life, e.g.:

Second Life for Educators

Open SLedware

Professional Educators and Trainers of Second Life

There are a number of Facebook groups about Second Life, e.g.:

Second Life for Educators

Second Life English

Second Life for Research (EFL/ESL, etc.)