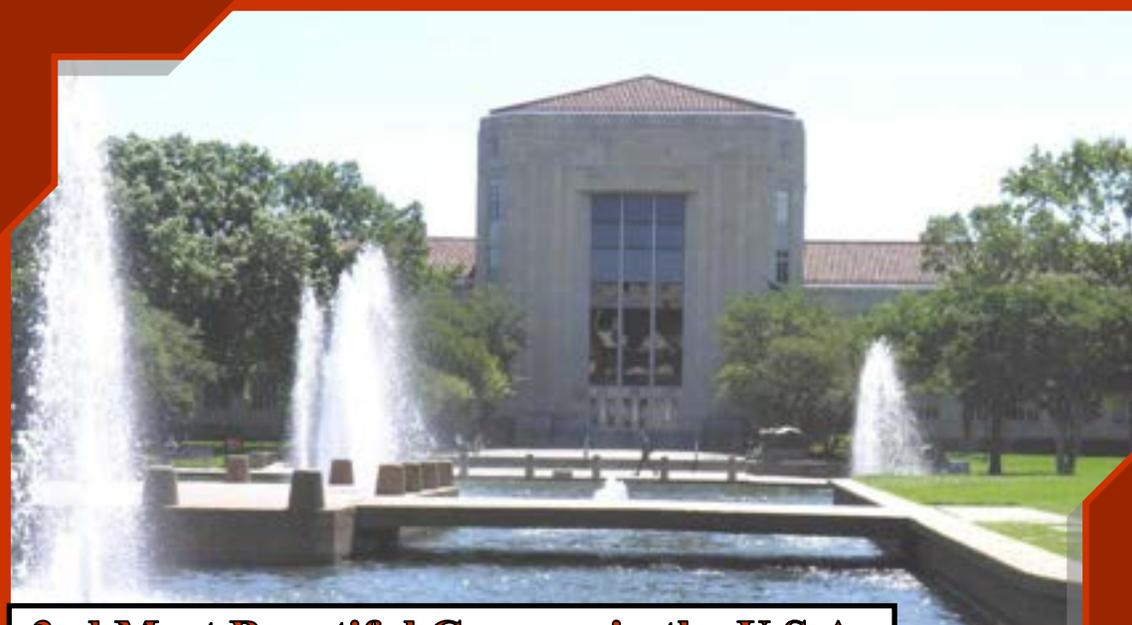




VOICES



3rd Most Beautiful Campus in the U.S.A.



**University of Houston
Language and Culture Center
Spring 2014**

The LCC Team

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Sandy Woodson - Associate Director
Brad Powell - Program Director of Counseling
and Student Services

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Clint Casey
Eriberto (Eri) Calderon
Sagar Rama
Adrianna (Anh) Nguyen
Jonathan Nguyen
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From the Director's Desk...

Congratulations as you complete the Spring 2014 term of study in the Language and Culture Center. You have spent your time in an accredited and respected Intensive English Program with an excellent history and tradition of service to students. You have studied with classmates and friends in a dynamic university, which celebrates and welcomes international students. We hope you have had an excellent experience.

At our First Assembly, I promised you that you would learn far more than English at the Language and Culture Center. As you have worked and studied with students from all over the world in our classes, you have engaged in intercultural communication and you have made friends. These friendships will be important to you throughout your lives. I want you to know that, as I see you gathering in the halls of the Roy Cullen Building and walking around on our beautiful campus every day, I realize how fortunate I am to know you and to work with you. Your teachers and I thank you for choosing to study with us and for giving us the chance to learn about you, your language, your culture, and your country.

In an article in the weekly online newsletter, *UH News Digest*, on March 18, I enjoyed learning that the University of Houston landed a spot on a recent ranking of the country's most beautiful campuses. Indeed, in the top ten campuses on the list, UH was ranked third. I, of course, thought it should be first. The UH campus was the only Texas school to make the list. In the article, there is a picture of the beautiful view of the Ezekiel W. Cullen building across from Cullen Plaza Fountain, and the writer states: "The sights on campus truly make it a remarkable and beautiful place to further your studies." I completely agree. You can tell your family and your friends that you studied English in the very best Intensive English Program on one of the most beautiful university campuses in the United States, and this will be true.



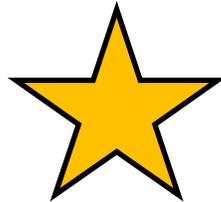
If you are leaving our program for any reason, we encourage you to stay in touch with us through Facebook, email, or through our web site <http://lcc.uh.edu>. We are eager to hear from students who continue their studies at the University of Houston or at another school in the United States or who return to their countries to continue their journey. We invite you to join a great network of former LCC students, now living and working all over the world.

This spring, we have been delighted to have 450 students from 45 countries in our program and on our campus. As the spring term of 2014 closes, we wish you a safe and productive academic break. Spring classes will end at the close of graduation ceremonies on April 24. The LCC office will be open throughout the break. Online registration for the summer term will begin on May 6. We look forward to seeing many of you again in May for the Summer 2014 term in the Language and Culture Center.

Joy Tesh
Director

Belen Barrios, Sekou Kone, Dorothy Sato, and Haw Tzou Receive LCC Scholarships

The Language and Culture Center awards four scholarships each term to returning students who best combine academic excellence and leadership with international awareness and cross-cultural understanding. Traditionally, one full scholarship honors Joyce Merrill Valdes, the founder and first director of the LCC. A second full scholarship honors Joseph O. Davidson, who served as director of the LCC for 22 years before retiring in 2006. These two full scholarships cover the cost of tuition, fees, and medical insurance for one term of study in the Intensive English Program. In addition, the LCC awards merit scholarships of \$1500 each for one term of study in the Intensive English Program. At the fall graduation ceremony on Thursday, December 12, 2013, the LCC awarded the Valdes scholarship to **Belen Barrios**, the Davidson scholarship to **Sekou Kone**, and the two merit scholarships to **Doroty Sato**, and **Haw Tzou**.



Belen Barrios was awarded the Valdes scholarship. **Ms. Barrios** is from Venezuela and is studying in level six after skipping from level four. This is her second term at the LCC. Upon completing her study of English, she will begin a master's degree in Mechanical Engineering. She said, "I feel grateful for the opportunity that the LCC gave to me with this scholarship."

Sekou Kone was awarded the Davidson scholarship. **Mr. Kone** is from Mali. He is studying in level four having skipped from level two. After completing the intensive English program, he plans to major in Business Management. **Mr. Kone** remarked that he was surprised and happy to be a recipient. He said, "My real goal was to make a difference and show my fellow students how good work can pay." He added, "The LCC is like a family for me because the teachers and staff are helpful and hospitable. I don't have the words to describe my gratitude. I just can say 'thanks' to the LCC."



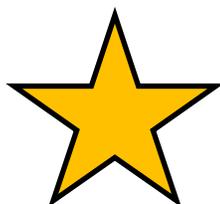
Doroty Sato was a recipient of a Merit scholarship. She is from Brazil, speaks Portuguese, and is currently studying in level six. She intends to complete a master's degree in Human Resources - Training and Development. **Ms. Sato** said, "At the moment of receiving the scholarship, I instantly realized that a new stage of my life was starting and that it would change my perspective of many aspects of life." She added, "I enjoy being surrounded by students from various countries and teachers who guide me in the right direction. Being here is not an obligation, but a pleasure and a gift that I hope everyone can have the opportunity to experience."



Haw Tzou was also a recipient of a Merit scholarship. **Mr. Tzou** is from Taiwan. He is currently studying in level six. This is his second term of study at the LCC. He plans to pursue a master's degree in Geophysics after completing his study of English. **Mr. Tzou** commented, "It was delightful and inspiring to get the scholarship. It gives me a lot of confidence and an advantage in the competitive pool of graduate school applicants. I think the scholarship program should keep going for students at the LCC."



We congratulate **Belen Barrios, Sekou Kone, Dorothy Sato,** and **Haw Tzou** on their outstanding records in the Intensive English Program at the Language and Culture Center, and we wish them great success as they continue to study in the United States. We all look forward to learning who will be the next LCC scholarship recipients at the spring graduation ceremony.



Pictures with Elegance & CLASS...





More Elegance & CLASS...





What I like...

What Kind of Music Do You Like?

Thanh Truong Nguyen - 3E - Vietnam



I love music, and my favorite music is country music. These songs paint a peaceful life or a romantic story of love. Listening to music in the rain with a cup of tea or a cup of coffee helps to take stress out and makes me love my life. I usually listen to music of Adele, who is a famous singer. My favorite song is "Set Fire to the Rain" which is a lesson of perseverance in life and never giving up. Sometimes, I also listen to rock music when I am shocked by something in my life or losing my objective. In that situation, I want to find something new or crazy, and rock music can do it. It brings me to the wild country and desert where I can be free. It is a great emotion. Besides that, music is also used as a tool to share your feelings or your thinking in a way that you cannot describe in words. I usually send romantic songs to my girlfriend to show my love for her. I like English songs, and I have over eighty English songs in my collection. I have saved them on my phone and my computer. Everyday, I spend about thirty minutes listening to music before going to bed or after finishing my homework. Music is my friend when I am lonely, sad, or losing my way in life, so I love music.



Taekwondo and Me
El Hadj Siriki Fofana - 3E -
Ivory Coast

Nowadays, many people are interested in sports due to their advantages. Everybody practices the sport which is most beneficial for them, and that they enjoy the most. Personally, I like most individual sports, especially the martial arts like kung fu, hapkido, wushu, etc. But my favorite martial art is taekwondo. This sport is my favorite for three main reasons. First of all, taekwondo is very helpful to keep people healthy. I have done taekwondo since I was five years old. After practicing, I felt good and powerful. Even my doctor advised me to go on with this sport because it gives me good blood pressure and makes me lose a lot of fat. Second, I made a lot of money in my country because of taekwondo. I got the black belt in this sport when I was thirteen years old, and I became a master. I taught people in my country three times per week, and for each course each student gave me ten dollars, so I was sometimes able to earn two hundred dollars per week. Third, by practicing taekwondo you can defend yourself in any situation. For example, if someone tries to steal your money, you may defend yourself by applying the martial arts you learned. Finally, taekwondo makes people healthy, can be a way to earn money, and permits you to defend yourself when it is necessary. It is my favorite sport to practice.

Dancing - July Johana Buitrago Firigua - 3E - Colombia



Dancing is one thing I can do well. I learned to dance by dancing with my friends and also by participating in school dances. Since I was a child, I have been able to dance. I enjoyed dancing with my friends and family when there was a culture festival. I was raised in a Spanish culture where dancing is common. In Colombia we dance salsa, merenge, cumbia, and vallenato among others. Now that I live in Houston, I still dance very often. I go to clubs, bars, concerts, and sometimes house-parties. When I go to the gym, I sign up for zumba classes. Everything I do has to do with music. Even though I don't live in Colombia now, I continue to practice my dancing two days a week. In conclusion, I love to dance because it relaxes me.

My Favorite Gift

My Favorite Gift
Ke Lyu - 3E - China



When I was a child, I received my favorite gift: a dog. It was my tenth birthday. After school when I went back home, I opened the door and saw a box on the floor. My father, smiling, walked up to me, told me that the box was my birthday gift, and made me guess what was inside the box. I was upset because I felt something moving inside the box. I opened the box very carefully, and I was greatly surprised. It was a small white dog which was quietly sleeping. When it opened its big black eyes, I could see my face in its eyes. My father told me it was just 2 months old and that everything was new and strange for it. The dog seemed shyer than me. I tried to touch it. At first it looked afraid of me, but then it enjoyed being with me. I named it Haha. Since that day, Haha has always played with me. It's smart and quiet. We often say a dog is our best friend, but I think my dog is part of my family. Since then I have not had any better gift than Haha.

My Favorite Gift
Yaser Saeed Abdullah Ba Wazir -
3E - Yemen

My favorite gift was an expensive and beautiful watch that I got from my mother when I graduated from high school. The watch is incredible. It works with the beating of my heart, and it doesn't have a battery, so when I take it off, it stops working. It's an amazing watch from New York, and I have had it since 2012. It's black and silver. Also, it's waterproof, but it's so heavy I cannot wear it when I swim. However, it looks perfect with a suit. Finally, I have got many watches, but none of the others are like this one. It's impressive. It works without a battery, and it looks great. I really love it, and I hope to never lose it.



Stories for my Grandchildren

Rana Al Sulaiman - 4B -
Saudi Arabia

If I have children or grandchildren in the future, I will tell them about my experience in Houston, which has been a significant chapter in my life. I will tell them about my gregarious teachers and my international classmates who have become my friends and family. In addition, I'll tell them how I tried to explain my culture and religion to students from other countries. This has been an important time for me, and I hope my children and grandchildren will also have the opportunity to study abroad.

Randy Kai Pong Nip Xie - 4A -
Venezuela

Many years from now, I will tell my children or my grandchildren that moving to the United States was one of the most important decisions I had ever made. When I decided to come to America, I was thinking of their future; I wanted a better life for them. After I got here, I had a rough beginning and uncountable worries, but I had a few people who helped me to continue moving forward. I will tell them how my mother supported me and worked hard to fund my studies. When I started a new life, the University of Houston became my second home, and I met people from all over the world who became close friends. I will tell my children that despite all my worries and difficulties, I graduated from the LCC, and then earned a master's degree. I will work hard to give my children the life they deserve, and I hope they will do the same for their children.



Omar Enrique Alvarado - 4B -
Venezuela

I will tell my children or grandchildren that coming to the United States was one of the hardest but most rewarding decisions I've made. When I came here, I was already familiar with the culture because I had visited a few times. However, it was difficult to adapt to living here because residing here is extremely different from just visiting.

I'll tell them that I've studied with amazing classmates and friends who taught me about their culture and language. I have found good friends from Venezuela, Angola, Saudi Arabia, Ivory Coast, China, Vietnam, and Turkey, and we supported each other. Despite our different backgrounds and opinions, we have always found that we have some passions in common like soccer. I think my future children will love my stories.

Tam Thi Minh Vo - 4A - Vietnam

One beautiful day, when I am an old woman sitting on a small chair outside on the porch, I will tell my grandchildren the story about the biggest turning point in my life: the first time I came to the United States to study abroad. I will tell them how I had to overcome difficulties in language, food, and transportation. Although everything was shocking to me, step by step, I adapted to an extremely different environment. I will explain culture shock to them and tell them how it took me a long time to get through it. I will also tell them how friendly, polite, and helpful Americans are. I'll tell my grandchildren how my experience in the United States made me more confident. My decision to go there was a difficult one, but it was worth it. I had the opportunity to challenge myself, study, and grow up. I became an independent person who felt more optimistic about the future.

Tin Tu Dao - 4B - Vietnam



I would like to tell my children and grandchildren about stories that happened when I stayed in America. Before I came here, I had never been in a country where people appreciate cultural differences and respect people with disabilities. The United States is a multicultural nation, so almost everyone who comes here from other places can adapt. I hope my children will like hearing about the United States.

Ahmed Yasen E Alshaikh - 4B Saudi Arabia

I'll tell my children or my grandchildren that my time in the United States was a special time. While I was there, I worked hard so I could have a better life later. In the United States, I learned about the world by making friends with people from other countries. I learned about many cultures that I couldn't have learned about in any other place. I have had such a wonderful time in America that I hope my children will come here one day.

Monica Lisette Daniel Gil - 4A - Venezuela

I will tell my children and grandchildren how I learned about the importance of having friends from other countries. I will explain how my new friends in Houston helped me when I felt alone or isolated from my family. Furthermore, I'll tell them that I learned the importance of having a family. Even though we are separated by distance, we still communicate and help each other. I'll tell my children that I became more sociable because some of the activities at the University of Houston helped me improve my English. In fact, I lost my fear of learning English when I decided to speak and meet friends from other countries. My advice to my children will be for them to do what they really want to do, regardless of the distance.

Rakan Ahmad Alghannam - 4B - Saudi Arabia

I will tell my children how my father (their grandfather) motivated me to study in the United States because he had studied in California and was able to get a good job. I will tell them that when I first moved to the United States, it was difficult because I was homesick. However, after six months, I adapted, and Houston became like my second home. The American people are friendly, polite, and helpful. Also, I have met people from all over the world, and even though they have different cultures, they respect each other. That let me have an open mind and learn about several countries around the world.

My hope is that I can inspire my children and grandchildren to study in America the way that my father inspired me. I will show my children my photographs of our LCC classes, our campus, and other places that I have visited in the United States.

Hussain Mohammed Alabushaheen - 4A - Saudi Arabia

When I have children, I will tell them about the time that I spent in Houston and how it changed my life. I will tell them how I had to depend on myself. Then I'll tell them about American culture because it is important to understand and adapt to other people's culture. Last, after I finish telling them my stories about living in the United States, I will challenge them to study abroad and depend on themselves, too.

Group Stories

Academic Love

Helder Alexandre Mandingo -
Hashim Al Abdulmohsen -
Alimata Kone - Muath AlAjlal -
2D

Everybody has a love story. This story happened between a young teacher and a beautiful young student. A long time ago, there was a young Math tutor whose name was Alex. He was a good teacher, but he was also very serious. He was always serious in the class, and outside of class he never talked with students. One day, a new beautiful student called Sophie come to his class, and everybody saw her coming. The teacher saw her too, and he felt something different that moment. If it was the love at first sight, he didn't know. The young lady sat down, and the young teacher continued his lesson. Every day during the lesson she was always looking at the teacher. The teacher was also looking at her but quietly, and he asked himself why the young lady was looking at him that way. The same thing happened every day, and the teacher didn't worry about that anymore.

One day the teacher changed his attitude and started looking at her, too. After the class the teacher warned her that he wanted to talk to her about her grades. The conversation was very different because they talked about their lives and not about her grades. After that, the young teacher began to like her, and she also began to like him. The young teacher began to be kinder and less serious when he was teaching. One day the young teacher told her that he liked her, and she said to him that she felt the same thing. They began a relationship, and they were very happy.

Two years later, the young teacher received a scholarship to get a PhD, and he had to study abroad. The couple talked a lot about that, and she told him that he should accept it because it was a great opportunity. He traveled, and they continued with their relationship. Sometime after, their relationship was very bad because he never had enough time to talk with her. Time after time, their relationship was getting worse, and they didn't see it. They discussed a lot until they decided to end their relationship. The young teacher never taught again until his death, and the young lady never loved another man until her death.

Love Story about John and Mary Nam Nguyen, Sarah Aldayel, Rui Zhang, Turkih Alqahtani - 2D

This is a tragic story that we will never be forgotten. He met her at a party when she was standing next to the door. He was so excited. Then he asked her if he could invite her to go to the coffee shop with him tomorrow. She said maybe she would go with him, but she was not sure. Then he got home. He hoped she would go to the coffee shop with him. He could not sleep because he was worried. After that she said yes, and they went to the coffee shop and sat together in a nice place where there was a stage for people to sing. He asked her if she wanted to hear him sing. Suddenly, he went on to the stage, and he was singing a song for her.

The song's name was Love Forever. When she heard the song, she cried because she was very happy. So she fell in love with him. They were the happiest couple in the world. But they were not happy for long. Unfortunately, Mary died in an accident. John felt so bad that he started drinking. He wanted to commit suicide to be with her. He climbed on the ledge of the bridge and jumped into the water. Before he jumped, he screamed out loud, "Mary, I loved you so much that I cannot go on with my life. I miss you so much. Wait for me, and I will come to you". Everyone heard what he said, but they could not help him. After that, they buried him next to her. They prayed they would be happy. In short, John and Mary fell in love, but they could not live together. This is a tragic story.

Religious Freedom



Emine Canak - 4G - Turkey

As a Muslim, I have seen many historical documentaries that are about killing people whose government has not allowed equal freedom of religion. To force somebody to change their belief or to isolate somebody because of their religious choice is not equal. In my opinion all religions should be allowed equally and all people should be able to profess their religion freely.

First of all, we all have equal rights. Everyone believes in things that come from their religion, traditions or custom. According to the First Amendment, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise of thereof..." Thus, this explains how people are free to believe or do anything that their religious ceremony says, even if some people use blood in their rituals and burn black and red candles. For example, Muslims have a holiday after Ramadan Ceremony where they sacrifice an animal for God. It can seem merciless to some people; however, this is one of the most important rules in the religion, so people should be more understanding of other people's beliefs as much as their own beliefs.

Second of all, if we do not allow equality, it can cause social problems or a clash. For a long time many people were killed or had to migrate to other country because of their religion. For instance, according to Elhamra Decree March 31 1492, in Spain, Jewish were relegated to a post outside of the Spain, and the only reason was because they were Jewish. The Spanish government did not allow them to take any jewelry, money or valuables with them and if they did not leave the country, they would be killed. This is just one example. There are many other examples where people were denied their religious rights. On the other hand, in Ottoman Empire different kinds of people could live together peacefully because the sultans of the Ottoman Empire had provided equal freedom (approximately 72.5 million people) even though they had different beliefs.

Finally, we can't measure correctness. Some people believe that there can be only one truth for all people. Nevertheless, right now there are almost seven billion people all over the world and they all have different beliefs, rules, culture and so on. If someone says there is one truth for all people, could it really be possible? Diversity is cultural richness and a gain for mankind. For example, in ceremonies, according to Turkish culture to kiss elderly women's and men's hand is a way to show respect, but I don't believe that even though I am Turkish. I think the truth varies from person to person, so we can't discuss and measure correctness. This refutes that there could be only one truth for all mankind.

To sum up, I believe that all religions should be allowed equally. All people should be free to choose what they want to believe in. People should support religious freedom to live more peacefully. If we don't allow equality, the clash of civilizations will increase and people will fight even more with each other in the future. We need more peace, understanding and dialog with people who are different from us.



♥ Valentine's Day ♥





Book Reviews



“The Adventures of Tom Sawyer” Hiep Thi Ngoc Nguyen - 2C - Vietnam

Tom Sawyer, the main character in the story, is a boy who had a knack for getting into trouble. He lived with his aunt Polly and half brother in the town of St. Petersburg, Missouri. The Adventures of Tom Sawyer talks about the many challenges Tom faced as he grew up and the lessons he learned. Tom must make it through the many obstacles he faced in everyday life. The obstacles include getting lost in a cave, escaping from trouble, and dealing with his murderous antagonist Injun Joe. Tom convinced his friends to do the tedious job of white washing a fence by pretending he enjoyed himself and didn't want to let them do it. Tom and Huck saw Injun Joe murder Dr. Robinson and then place the knife he used in the hand of Muff Potter who had passed out. When Potter woke up, Joe told him he was the murderer.

After that, Tom ran away to a nearby island with Joe and Huck and they returned days later during their own funeral. During the trial, Tom told how Injun Joe was the real murderer and saved Muff Potter from being hanged. Injun Joe escaped from the courthouse and ran away. Tom and Huck saw Injun Joe and another man find a treasure in a haunted house. Meanwhile, Tom and Becky went on the picnic with their friends. After lunch, Tom and Becky hid in the cave, and it appeared as though they would die. As Tom searched for a way out, Tom heard Injun Joe talking somewhere else in the cave. He knew that if he ever found a way out, Injun Joe would seek his revenge. Tom still needed to get out of the cave. After some more searching, Tom found a small hole at the end of a dark passage. He and Becky escaped from the cave and made their way back to town. Tom revealed that Injun Joe was in the cave.

“A Family Secret”

Harouna Kafando - 2D - Burkina Faso

The Family Secret is a true story that happened between two brothers. The older was Brendan who was twenty one years old and the younger was Patrick who was seventeen years old. Their parents were both from Ireland; they met in 1920 in the United States. They stayed there and formed a family. This story happened during the war in Korea. The two brothers did not have the same thinking; Brendan cared about the war in Korea and Patrick about baseball. It all started at Brendan's friends' party, where he met a girl called Margaret, and they both fell in love. They started to go out together but for a short time because Brendan received a letter to go to the war. Brendan's departure was going to change all things. Margaret felt very sad and stayed in her bedroom for days. However, Brendan was anxious that Margaret might fall in love with another person, so he asked his brother to take care of his girlfriend during his absence and take her out with him from time to time. When they started to spend time together, they fell in love. This love was a surprise for them; also they thought about Brendan and they didn't feel good about it. Brendan, still in ignorance, continued to write to them. However, plunged into anxiety, his little brother and his girlfriend sent him a letter to tell him the truth. When Brendan came back home, he was very upset and wanted to restart their loving relationship, but Margaret no longer loved him. Now she loved Patrick and they both wanted to get married. So, Brendan rejected his own little brother, and they did not talk for nearly 30 years.



“Dian Gorillas”

Nam Kim Hoang Nguyen - 2D - Vietnam



Dian Fossey had been in East Africa for a few weeks and had seen many new animals. She also met Dr. Leakey. He was an anthropologist. Dian told him she wanted to see the mountain gorillas.

After seven weeks, she went back to her home at Louisville, Kentucky. A few months later, Dr. Leakey asked Dian if she wanted to study the gorillas. He helped her return to Africa to study gorillas. Here Dian met Sanwekwe. He was a tracker. He taught her how to find gorillas in the mountain. She worked with a group of people, a photographer, and a tracker. She learned how to make sounds gorillas made when they are happy, playing, or were sad. She divided them in different groups like group 1, group 2, group 3. She studied what the gorillas did in each group, where they stayed, and what they liked to eat. She learned how to get close to the gorillas and played with them. She took care of young gorillas when they were sick. She figured out how to resolve the problem of poachers. She destroyed many traps each day. She talked with a lot of people at meetings about gorillas. She wanted people to know about gorillas. She needed to help and protect gorillas. She set up a special fund for gorillas to get money to protect them. Sometimes, she wrote letters to Dr. Leakey. She told him what she did with the poachers and how she protected gorillas. She went to the University of New York to teach about gorillas. Dian wrote a book about gorillas. She named the book *Gorillas in the Mist*. She went back to Africa again and did her job. On December 27, 1985 Dian Fossey was killed as she slept in her cabin. No one knows who did it; even today it is still a mystery. She had made many enemies as she tried to protect the only mountain gorillas left in the world. Dian was buried in a grave in the mountain of gorillas. The film, *Gorillas in the Mist*, was made about Dian's life in 1988.

“The Secret Garden”

Nesrein Albaeer - 2C - Syria

Mary Lennox was about nine years old. She had a thin little face and was ugly. She always looked cross. She was born and raised in India. Her British parents were working there. Her mother did not want her, so she was taken care of by servants. After her parents died, she returned to England to live with her uncle, Mr. Craven, in Yorkshire. Mr. Craven's house was a strong place. It was 600 years old and it was in the middle of the country. There were big gardens and tall trees around the house. But one of the gardens was closed by Mr. Craven ten years ago when his wife died. Mrs. Craven was killed in an accident in her favorite garden. Mary made two exciting discoveries. First, she found the key and the door of the secret garden, and second, that she had a cousin whose name was Colin. He was about ten years old. He had a thin white face and big grey eyes. His mother died when he was a baby. He was sick and didn't leave his room. Mary asked her servant Martha for garden tools. She was able to get them with Martha's brother whose name was Dickon. He was about twelve years old. He had blue eyes and a friendly smile. She told him about the secret garden. The two children worked in the garden every morning. “The secret garden will be green and beautiful again”, they said. Mary visited her cousin every day and told him about Dickon, his animals, and of the garden. They decided he needed fresh air and the secret garden. Colin was put into his wheelchair and brought outside into the garden. Colin spent every day in the garden, stood up out of his chair, and found out his legs were fine, though weak from not using them for a long time. The children decided to keep Colin's health a secret, so he could surprise his father who was traveling. Mr. Craven had a dream of his wife calling him into the garden, so he came back to his house. He walked to the garden but heard voices inside, found the door unlocked, and was shocked to see the garden was green and his son was running around. There was magic in the garden. Colin grew stronger and happier. Everybody in the house was happy to see that.

Good Advice...

How to Stay Healthy

Ayidh Hussain A Alshahrani - 3E -
Saudi Arabia



The concept of what we think is “healthy” is wider than we think, and the daily practices and habits have a strong influence on our health. We need to identify good habits and maintain them, and also identify bad practices to avoid them. In addition, it is important to get a balance between work, sleep and eating. The exaggeration of any one of these can have a negative influence on our health. I have some good practices like exercising three times in a week. Moreover, I eat vegetables and fruit every day. However, I have bad habits like sitting wrong. Also I wish to leave the “jail” made up of three screens: TV, computer, and cellphone, but I think they are likely a permanent portion of our life.



How to Prepare for a Test

Floriane Seka Bertille Ornella Youzan -
4D - Ivory Coast



Taking a test is a part of our daily lives as we go to school, and our teachers need to evaluate our levels. We all know that it is not very easy to prepare for a test and pass it. This is the reason why we came up with a method to prepare for a test. By following these steps, you will get ready for your next test and pass it.

To prepare for a test, the first step is to review the chapter that you will have a test on. As a matter of fact, you must go over the important points of the chapter and try to understand them. For example, you can read the summary section of the chapter instead of reading the entire chapter. That way you can save time and also understand the chapter more easily. You can also read the notes of your classmate to get more information. In other words you must learn your lessons.

The second step is to do a lot of exercises. Indeed, you must reread the exercises that you have done with your teacher in class and do extra exercises to make sure that you understand the chapter in all the aspects.

The third step is to be relaxed on the day of test by doing some breathing exercises; otherwise, you will lose control and fail the test. You must also think that it is like you were doing some exercises with your teacher in class to eliminate stress.

To sum up, to prepare for a test, you must review the chapter, do many exercises and be relaxed on the day of the test.



How to Buy a Good Used Car

Luis Carlos Montoya Carvajal - 4C - Venezuela



Nowadays, everyone needs a car to commute to work, school or go around town for other activities. If you follow these instructions, you can find your ideal nice used car.

The first step in the process to buy a good used car is checking your budget. You need to go to the bank and check your savings account because you need to know how much money you have available to buy the car. However, if you need extra money you can ask your bank for a loan, or you can also ask your parents for some extra cash.

The next step is that you need to do some research because you should compare many options of cars. First you can check on the internet sites such as eBay, Craigslist or Tucarro.com. Also, you can check The Greensheet, the local newspaper, or you can ask your friends. Maybe they know about a good used car.

Finally, you can go to the dealers and choose the car, but before you buy the car you need to know the conditions of the car. First, you must drive the car and pay attention if you notice a strange sound in the engine. After, you should go to the mechanic and show the car. He must check the engine, the interior, the body, and the mileage.

In conclusion, if you like the car, you can go ahead and buy it, but don't forget that you have to have insurance and fill the car up with gas before you can drive around town and show it to your friends.

How to Prepare a Party

Mustafa Cilkiz - 4C - Turkey



People would enjoy an interesting party for different occasions, for example, birthday parties, graduations, anniversaries, and family reunions. If you want to have a fun party that everyone loves, you need to follow several steps.

The first step is that you should make a list of your guests and send invitations through e-mail or call. This is how you can find out how many people are coming to your party.

Another step is that you should go shopping to buy food or required ingredients, for instance, meat, fish, chicken, fruit or vegetables, drinks, and paper or plastic wear to serve the food if you do not have enough plates, cups or silverware.

The last step is that after the food is cooked according to the taste of the guests, you should decorate and clean your house. Besides, you must take a shower and change your clothes. Finally, you must choose and turn on some music and wait for your guests to come.

In short, a lot of people get together to have fun and enjoy a day off, but sometimes you have a special reason to celebrate an event in your life and you want to have a memorable party and not a boring one. Therefore, if you plan for your party ahead of time, everyone will enjoy it, and it will stay in their memories for a long time.

Someone I admire...

Thomas Isidore Sankara
Oumarou Baguian - 3E - Burkina Faso

Thomas Isidore Sankara, the president of Burkina Faso from 1983 to 1987, is the most admirable person for me because he had strong values. First of all, he fought against imperialism during his lifetime in order to have an independent country. Then he was a smart president. He raised the economy of my country in a short time by building schools, making roads, and making plans to improve the power outage situation. He made social programs a priority for the well being of the people. Finally, Thomas Isidore Sankara was a real upright man because during his lifetime he didn't have big cars or luxurious houses like certain other presidents had because he always thought about the people before making a decision or thinking about himself. To summarize, it will be right to say that Thomas Isidore Sankara was an admirable person and a famous president for the people of Burkina Faso.

Admiration of Sarah

Wilson Erineu Da Silva Augusto - 3E - Angola



I admire my friend and resident adviser Sarah for many reasons. First, she is double majoring. Sarah is studying Psychology and Political Science, she speaks three languages, and she is learning another one. For me it is incredible because it is not easy for young people to have a lot of responsibility. Second, Sarah is one of the best resident advisers in my building, Cougar Village. She always gives us the notices about what is happening in the building. When we have some problem, she is always able to help us. Third, she is patient with me and my friends. She helps us to improve our English and explains to us our homework when we cannot do it. In conclusion, I admire Sarah because she is intelligent and helpful.

Someone I Admire

Lynda Ntangwo Feunie - 3E - Cameroon

My mother is the person I admire the most for several reasons. She is determined, helpful, and patient. Usually my mother doesn't give up in any situation. When my father died, she stayed alone with my brothers and me without financial support, but she worked hard to give us a good education, send us to school, and teach us good habits. Indeed, every June she takes our old clothes and shoes to an orphanage. Sometimes she also cooks for the orphanage. Moreover, when I sometimes made a big mess in our house, she never scolded me. Finally, I think my mother is a good example of how we can behave in our life.





Special Trips...



Important Events

Sarah Jassim M Shakhoor - 1B -
Saudi Arabia

The last day of my high school was an important day. Graduation was on Thursday in the evening, but we went in the morning to practice the procession and song. I got a new dress. In the evening, my mother and my sister were in their seats, and they were happy for me. During graduation, the teacher gave a prize to the best student in school. My friend and I were the best students. My mother and my sister were proud of me. My mother gave me a gift. I was very happy about that. It was a very happy day.

Suely Rossana Luis Paulo - 1B -
Angola

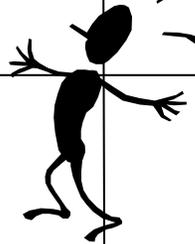
The day of my high school graduation was a good day for me. It was December 20, 2012. I wore a beautiful dress and a pink felt hat that day. My parents and friends were with me. My parents and aunts were already in their seats, and they took a lot of pictures. The principal called the names of the honor students first. I received a Certificate of Merit as the best student of sociology. I was very happy about that, and my family and boyfriend were proud of me that day. It was the best day of my life.

Mohammed I.M Najjar - 1B -
Palestine

My life had a special moment when a bad thing happened to me, but I think a good thing happened at the same time. When I graduated from high school, I didn't get good grades. I finished with 67.1%. That was the bad thing that happened to me. I studied hard for that day, but on the final I didn't do very well. When I went to get my mark, my family and I hoped that I had a great mark, but in the end I felt sad and unhappy. After that, I had some problems with my father. He told me, "no college for you", and he told me to go find a hard job. For a long time, he didn't speak to me. Finally, he said that he wanted me to go out of the country, go to a good college, and study. So, I came to America, and that's a good thing. My dad wants me to become a man who can do things for myself. Now, I am on the road, and I want to finish this plan.

Rabie Yusuf Al Haj - 1B - Lebanon

One important event in my life was when I traveled to the U.S. to study English. It was quick and sudden. I was surprised because I didn't expect everything to be quick. Once I got the visa, I was very happy, and I immediately called my parents and told them. After that I told my friends and my relatives. Everyone was surprised. I felt like I was in another world. I bought clothes, food, and other things I needed. Before I left, some friends and my relatives came and told me good bye, good luck, and take care. Later, I also went with other friends for coffee, hookah, and tea. We took a lot of pictures to remember this important time. After that, I spent some time with my family, and we talked a lot about everything that might happen. On the last night, I packed everything in the bags. I sang a little bit and slept. On my travel day, I woke up early and put all the things in the car. My family took me to the airport. It was a really important event in my life. Now, when I remember this event, I laugh because I am happy.

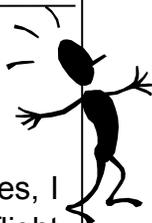


An Important Day Mobarak Obaid M Alharthi - 1B - Saudi Arabia

November, 2013 was an important month for my family because our second child was born. Our baby girl was born on a Friday at 3:00 a.m. I was the first person to hold her because I was in the delivery room with my wife. We named her Rittal. Rittal is beautiful. I think she looks like me. After watching the beautiful dawn of the day, I called my parents, and they were very happy. My son is happy too, and he loves Rittal, but he is jealous every time he looks at her. Rittal smiles all the time at every one. I love Rittal. November 8, 2013 was a very special day.

When I Came to the U.S. Fehaid Muneer B Alhajri - 1B - Saudi Arabia

When I arrived here in the United States, I was so tired and happy that my 18 hours flight was finally over. I was also sad. I knew that it would be a long time before I saw my family again. My friend Mohammed picked me up at the airport to go to the hotel. Before we went to the hotel, we stopped by Whataburger, and we had dinner. Then we went to the hotel, and I slept.



An Important Event in My Life Mortadha A Alnemer - 1B - Saudi Arabia

My last day in high school was good for me. I was 20 years old. I had a new suit and tie for that day. Then I went to a friend's home. Three friends were there. Later I went to the school for social time with my friends. At 7:00 p.m. all the students were in the classroom. I was the best student. I was happy and proud of myself that day.

Life After my Wedding Bashayr Hamad Alqahtani - 1B - Saudi Arabia

Getting married was the most important event in my life. It changed my life. I got married 8 months ago, and I came to America with my husband. I like life here in America, and my life is happy and comfortable. Now, I take care of my husband and my house, but in a few months I will also be a mom. I'm pregnant, and we are expecting a baby. Then I will have a baby to take care of. Every day is better than yesterday. I hope my life does not change except for the better.

An Important Event in My Life Abdullah Ammen Al Ameen - 1B - Saudi Arabia

When I decided to come to the United States, I had a very hard time. In 2012, I graduated from high school. For many days, I thought about where I wanted to study. Then I called my father. I told him that I wanted to study in the United States. My father said it was ok. After that, I searched for a university, and I called my father's uncle because he studies in the U.S. He sent me an I20 from the University of Houston. He sent it to me by FedEx. After the I20 came, I

searched for a date to go to the consulate to get a visa, but the consulate was closed. I did not know why. I waited for it to open, but it did not. I needed to register for the university semester, but I did not have a visa. I called my father's uncle again. He called the university, and they said to come the next semester. I was sad about that, but I got another I20. The consulate opened, and I went for the interview. The man said to go to FedEx after one week to pick up my visa. I got my visa. I took my passport and visa, and I bought an airline ticket. Finally, I came to Houston on December 21, 2013.

American



New and Enriching Experience with an American Family Ana Flavia Patrus de Souza - 3A - Brazil

During spring break, I had a new experience with an American family. I tried to start a conversation in English without a specific aim except to speak English. Moreover, it was enriching because I learned how polite, kind and objective you must be when you want to start a conversation with American people. Hale, my classmate, and I went to the Houston Rodeo to enjoy one of the most famous events in Texas. Around 3 pm we decided to have a snack. While we were having a snack, I saw an American family looking for a place to sit. We were sitting at a big table, so I invited them to sit with us. I tried to start a conversation, but in the beginning it was difficult. The American family, especially the mother, seemed very suspicious. It was so hard to "break the ice." However, I decided to try again, so I asked the mother where she was from. She said that she was from Mexico and from that moment on we could start a conversation because we had found a common situation since Hale's sister-in-law is also Mexican. We explained that we were English students and asked about American culture. In that moment, the American family was more relaxed and we realized we really could "break the ice" and make a conversation with native speakers. That experience showed us how things like education, patience, courage, and persistence are important when you want to talk to American people. Despite all difficulties, learning about the American culture through the contact with this American family was a good way to improve my language skills and understand American culture better.

A Bad Experience About a Car Bo Wang - 3A - China

During my spring break, my friend and I went to Mr. Crank's house where we made a deal with him because he had a used car for sale. I thought that buying this car would be good for me until I had almost had a serious accident on the freeway. On the previous Saturday, Mr. Crank told me that the 2000 Lexus ES300 was old but still worked fine. On the outside the car looked clean and did not have any marks or dents. Then I test drove it on a local road. It worked fine. My friend told me that Mr. Crank was his friend and my friend had driven this car for about two weeks, so I decided to buy it without taking it to a mechanic to check it. After two days, when I was driving to school on the freeway and sped up to 60 mph, the car's engine started to "hiccup"! At that moment I was so scared that I would die because of this. This incident taught me that before I make a serious decision, I have to consider all the aspects.

My American Experience Abdel Aziz Aboubacar Judicael Ouedraogo - 3B - Burkina Faso

During my spring break, my friend and I went to San Antonio where I met a special girl who was very skillful playing indoor games like bowling and billiards. I had an interesting but very surprising and shocking conversation with her. At the beginning, my friends and I went to a night club where we played billiards with some friends around us. We observed a girl who won all the games that we were playing. I was very surprised that she was a girl and so good. I asked her to teach me how to play skillfully. After we finished, she told me she was too tired to play and wanted to sit down near the bar to talk for a few moments. I introduced myself first and she told me I was very kind and friendly, and she introduced herself also. Quickly we talked about music, sports, our hobbies, and studies. After that she asked me if I would be her confident. I was very frightened when she told me a shocking secret about herself that nobody knew. I was shocked but she was very relaxed and wasn't shy about it. Finally, all was good because she promised me she would tell her family about her secret. My American experience was very interesting with a good meeting and conversation even though I was shocked by some revelations and surprised by her not being shy about it. It was a good experience for me.

Experiences



My American Experience Ivandrio Burity - 3B - Angola

During spring break, my friends and I went to Emporio, a Brazilian restaurant. When we were watching the Barcelona and Manchester City soccer game, three older American guys asked to join us. We all had a surprising and interesting experience. That was a really good environment with great music, and watching the soccer game on the plasma TV with my friends just made it better. But I will never forget the moment when the three older guys came to join us at

our table. I didn't expect it, but everything went very well. Some of them were interested to know about me, my country and culture. One guy told me we were very funny and then he asked me where I was from. I replied that I came from Angola, and when I saw he was very interested, I asked why. He smiled and replied "Because you are so funny." Then he asked me if all people in my country are so friendly, happy and have fun like us. I smiled too and replied, "Almost all of us are like this." After that, he said he really appreciated my good humor. I was very comfortable because they were so friendly and helpful. I wasn't afraid of making mistakes because they made me feel so confident, and we had a great afternoon.



My American Experience Jessica Pereira Aires - 3A - Angola

During spring break, my friends and I went to City Center close to Memorial Mall where we had our dinner in an American restaurant. I had a strange but friendly conversation in the restroom with a young American girl. When I went to the restroom, I saw an American girl. It was funny because we were singing the same song, and when we heard each other singing, we stopped and laughed. I asked her if she knew the singer. She said that she did and she suggested a place where I could

find a CD with that song. I told her where I came from and we talked about our countries, music, food, and dance. To my surprise, she said that she didn't like many American dishes but I didn't ask why because she could think I was boring. At the end, she invited me to listen to music or to go to the cinema together one day. All in all, we had an interesting conversation. I learned new things about American culture, I could teach something about my country to another person, and I met a new friend.



Introducing my Background, Experience and Expertise. Ricardo Castrillon Jimenez - 3B Colombia

During spring break, I went to a meeting with the new managers of my company. The meeting was in the main office, downtown Houston. Before the meeting, I thought that the managers would be older, but I was surprised when I saw young people like myself. During the meeting, we were required to introduce ourselves in order to find our strengths to resolve a certain issue. When I introduced myself, I used my new English skills to

explain in detail my experience with the company. When I talked about my field experience, one manager said that I had good experience for a person my age. However, I was also impressed by their background and preparation to deal with complex issues even though they were younger than me. I also used my new English skills to explain my background and expertise. This was a wonderful first experience using my new abilities with my new language. If the opportunity arises, I recommend that students find professional encounters with professionals when preparing for a face to face interview for a future job with an American company.

More American Experiences...

My American Experience Ibrahim Tiendrebeogo - 3A - Burkina Faso

During my spring break, I met a beautiful girl on the way home. We had an interesting conversation about culture and freedom in America. When I left school Friday after class, I met an American on the bus and tried to talk to her. It was the beginning of a friendship. She's a student in nursing at the University of Houston Downtown. In the beginning, she was reticent when I asked her name, her profession, and her country. But after I introduced myself and my situation, she finally answered my questions. She told me that she was from Louisiana. Curiously, she asked for my contact information and when I reached home, she texted me to know if I got home safely and asked to visit me. When she came, we watched movies and during the movie we had a debate about the topic of marriage in America. I told her that in my country, before getting married, you must consult the elders and your family. They will visit the girl's family and try to know if she's honest before celebrating the wedding. She told me that in America it's so easy and you don't even need to meet all the family before you get married. If you both realize that you really love each other, you can decide to get married. After that, we decided to have a barbecue party and all was wonderful. Unfortunately when I tried to start the fire, I got my face burned by the flames. Despite everything, we continued to discuss our educational systems until it was time for her to leave. I promised to visit her soon. I was very happy because we spent good moments together cooking, sharing and talking. I really enjoyed my American experience.

Memories from the L.C.C. Pear (Pichayaporn) Methaiwala - 4B - Thailand

When I leave the Language and Culture Center, I will remember my friends from other countries and what I learned about their culture. I will also remember my teachers who showed concern for me and comforted me when my country had major political problems. My friends from the LCC have become my family, and I am thankful to the LCC for all the memories and for the tools I need to be successful in life.

My Spring Break Linh Hoang Mong Nguyen - 3A - Vietnam

During spring break, I had a party at my friend's house in Katy. Although our cultures were different, I am Vietnamese, she is American, and her friends are Brazilian and French; I really felt enthusiastic about the party. In American culture, people like to be on time because time is money. Although there were some people late, my American friend still decided to begin the party on time. I really felt surprised because, in my culture, we would wait over thirty minutes for guests to arrive because we think that it is polite with our friends. I would rather have my friends come on time than be late because it is impolite when many people have to wait for a few people. In addition, I was interested when I saw all the food and drinks that were put on the table and every person helped themselves. In my country, the host will serve each guest because we think that they are guests and they should not do anything. Although we had some differences, I still felt excited and interested because my American friend was very nice and friendly. The best part was that I had a chance to learn some new aspects of American culture. I think I can use some ideas in my own life.

Surprises in the United States Hussain Mohammed Alabushahee - 4A - Saudi Arabia

Before I came to Houston, I wondered how I would adapt to living alone. However, after arriving here, I was surprised when I ran into friends who were from not only the same country as me, but even the same village. Another pleasant surprise was that Houston is safer than I had expected it to be. Because of my friends and the security here, Houston has been a wonderful place to study.

The Alien Wars Game Hale Laz - 3A - Turkey

During spring break, I went to the new University Center where I met American students who were playing a board game called Alien Wars. They explained the game, but it was too difficult for me. I couldn't learn it very well, but I was interested in conversing with them. I was really interested when I watched the game, so I asked to join them, and they were kind. We introduced ourselves and then they tried to explain how to play the game, but it was too difficult for me because it was my first time to see that kind of game. The game had a lot of rules. First, they rolled the dice and they moved their "space ship" on the board. Everyone had their own land. If someone landed on another player's land, they could destroy that player's ships. The game took a lot of time. When I saw them, they were in the middle, and they said it takes 4-5 hours. Trying to play this game was fun, and I was really happy to meet Americans. I learned a very different game, and I had conversation with real American students. It was a very good and different experience for me.

Challenges in the United States Cedric Lenissongui Yeo - 4B - Ivory Coast

Since moving to the United States, I have had many challenges. For example, it has taken me some time to become accustomed to the food here. Another difference here is the weather. Unlike in my country, where the weather is always hot, the weather in Houston is constantly changing. Because of the weather, sometimes it has been difficult to feel comfortable here. Nevertheless, I feel better because I decided to have an open mind and to take advantage of opportunities that America has to offer me.



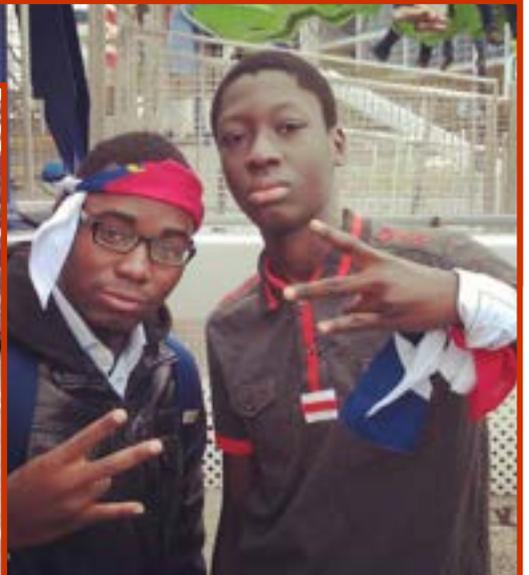
Determination Ahmed E Alshaikh - 4B - Saudi Arabia

I had been planning to move to Houston since I was in high school. After I graduated from high school, I joined Saudi Aramco, an oil and gas company, where I worked for almost three years to save money for tuition and other expenses in the United States. Although it was difficult to quit, I was willing to follow my dream to study in America. I'm confident that I can succeed here, and I look forward to the day when I can throw my graduation cap in the air.

Surprises in the United States Tam Thi Minh Vo - 4A - Vietnam

When I came to America, I felt like the character Alice in Wonderland because of several surprises such as the enormous skyscrapers. I wasn't expecting to see so many cars either; in fact, most people have their own cars instead of using the bus. The streets are always crowded, but they run smoothly, and there are many more road signs here than in my country. The housing structure in Houston is also different from my country. I actually had trouble finding my own house when I first moved here because its design is so similar to the others in my neighborhood. Fortunately, I have been able to adapt to my new environment.

Rodeo! Rodeo!! Rodeo!!!



Delicious Food



My Favorite Restaurant Nuray Aydin - 3E - Turkey

My favorite restaurant is Numura which is a wonderful Turkish restaurant in Istanbul. Before I came here, I frequently went there with my family and my friends. I like it so much because I feel comfortable, and I can eat whatever I want. Especially, I can eat healthy and fresh food. Also I have another reason to like it which is that my mother and my father met there, so it is like our family's place. It is old, but it is modern. It mixes the past and future, so people of all ages can go there. It has light green walls and a lot of wooden tables and chairs. Every table has some beautiful flowers on it. Moreover, it has a big, old piano in the middle of the dining room. In addition, from the windows you can see trees, pretty flowers, and a wonderful small blue lake. That is why it's my favorite restaurant, and I miss it so much.

My Favorite Restaurant Koumba Diarrassouba - 3E - Ivory Coast

"The Trinity Restaurant" in Houston is a beautiful, big, and animated restaurant which makes me think about my country, remember my family, and makes me feel happy. It is a popular restaurant for African people in the USA. At the entrance of this restaurant you can see a glass door with many colorful pictures in white, blue, green and yellow. Inside, there are many comfortable chairs and tables arranged in an orderly way. At the counter where people order their meal, "WELCOME TO YOUR RESTAURANT" is written in big orange letters. The glow of light is red and white. At the entrance, the first thing which captures your attention is the interesting smell of food and the African music that they play. They play music of different African countries, and people are talking and laughing while they are eating in small groups. In one group you can see at least three different dishes on the table because they can be from different countries. I ordered a big fish with "Attieke", a meal of Ivorian people. This meal tasted so good that I ordered another one to take home. "The Trinity Restaurant" is an excellent restaurant I like, and I invite people to go there because it is a special restaurant.



Cooking HaoHang Liu - 3E - China

I think my cooking is very good, especially if it is Beijing traditional food. My grandfather is very good at cooking Beijing traditional food, too. I really like his cooking, so my grandfather taught me how to cook when I was a middle school student. I have practiced for many years so now I cook very well. I often cooked when I lived in Beijing, and now, in Houston, I almost always cook for myself. I am really good at cooking Zha Jiang noodles, a traditional dish, and Sweet Hawthorn Soup, which is a delicious dessert. I have been cooking for about 7 or 8 years. Since I like to eat very much, I have a passion for practicing and studying how to cook.

Who am I?

Jose Teran - 5A - Ecuador

Where is the middle of the world? It is where I am from. I am Ecuadorian. I was born in Guayaquil City which is Ecuador's largest city, but I grew up on a farm near Quevedo. Located in an agricultural area, it is a small town but with a large scale of agricultural production. Our traditions have not been affected by globalization because we have kept celebrating our holidays like our people did in the past. To illustrate, for the New Year we used to build a real human scale doll, which generally resembles political figures, then burn it with fireworks on the New Year night. I grew up in this wonderful country where our personality is formed on the base of family, environment, and professional life.

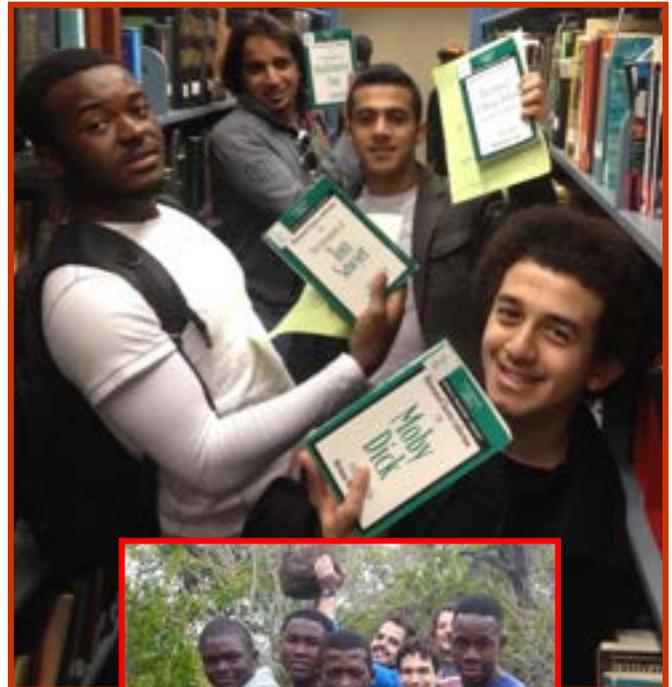
To begin with, my family has had a huge impact in the formation of my personality. They have taught me strong moral values, the importance of a good education, and the importance of being grateful to our Creator. My first recollection is my parents teaching me to respect everybody. They used to tell me that in life you will receive what you give. Then as a child, I realized how important it is to respect everyone. It is the base of any kind of relationship. Next, education has always been very important for my family. They have always been encouraging me to study a professional career; as a result, I got into the program of agricultural engineering and finished it. Also, they taught me to be grateful to God for all the things that He has given us.

Second, I think the environment is strongly related to a person's formation. I am a good example of that. Growing up on a farm, I was captivated by everything around me; the nature, the animals, the freshness of air. Living in such a beautiful place, my curiosity for how nature works grew in me. The only thing that I did not like was the work conditions because it's really hard work; however, I learned how to deal with it later at school. I always remember that agricultural workers used to say "People may need an Architect once in their life, an Engineer sometimes, and a Doctor once a year, but they will always need an Agronomist" and that is true. We need to eat three times every day.

Finally, my professional experience was working in the same farm where I was raised. I worked as an administrator with responsibilities including planning sowing seasons, fertilizing, and harvesting that helped me to better understand how an agribusiness works. In the beginning, I had troubles with the fertilization because it was done only with chemical products that are dangerous for the environment. Therefore, I changed it and started a partial organic fertilization program which enhanced the soil's quality. The products did not look the same, but they definitely tasted better. With all this experience, I began to look for organic production alternatives in the whole plantation and I did. Within one year, I was not using chemicals at all; although the produc-

tion was not the same, the product quality was better. That experience has given me more consciousness about our environment. As a result, I have decided to continue with my education, but this time it will be in environmental engineering. It is my example of how my profession gave me a new direction in my career.

In conclusion, my personality has been defined by my family, environment, and experience. I think that all cultures over the world are defined in the same way. Some cultures are a little different, but people's personalities are formed pretty much in the base of family, environment, and experience. I am a good example. I grew up in a beautiful country with very solid moral values learned from my family, a career that was directed by the environment, and a concern about nature because of my experience at work. Nowadays, I am learning a new language in order to get into University of Houston and improve my knowledge about our environmental problems.



Wafaa Naser Albalawy - 5A - Saudi Arabia

"I don't know who I am. It is hard to describe myself." I used to say that when someone asked me to talk about myself. It is not true; I think I said that because I never think about my ethnic identity. In Saudi Arabia, people usually share some general values which shape a typical image of Saudis. However, we are human beings and everyone has special values that make them unique. There are three things that make me unique: my faith, my parents, and my culture.

First of all, I am a Muslim, and I always thank God who gives me that gift. I consider Islam such a precious quality that has molded my personality. Islam is not only religious practice but also a way of life. I have learned high moral values such as telling the truth always and helping people in need. Reading and studying the prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, has always inspired me to become a good person. I never forget how he treated people gently, even those who hated him. Also, because I am a Muslim I believe there is no God except Allah and that belief makes me strong. I can say that because of Islam, I have integrity; I am honest and I have self-discipline.

Another gift that shapes me is my parents. I had such a great dad who wanted me to be the best of the best. I never forget his words after any award I got from school. He never stopped telling me how special I am. His support has made me confident and ambitious. In addition, my dad was such a good man. He was generous, kind, strong, clever and friendly; he used to open the door of the male section of our house to everyone after he prayed at 5 a.m. until 12 p.m. Every day we offered Arabic coffee, dates, milk and breakfast, even if my dad was not there. Unfortunately, we stopped this custom when his health went down and our neighbors really missed

him; me too. Even though he passed away I feel like he is alive. My dad's generosity, dignity and kindness are mirrored in me. In addition, I am who I am today because my mother raised me well. When I was a kid, I complained about my mother's rules. I felt like she controlled me, but I now found that I was wrong. For instance, being absent from school or work is not allowed in our house. Even if I was sick I had to go to school. As a matter of fact, that rule really helped me to have high self-discipline. I am grateful for having such amazing parents.

In addition to having the best parents, Saudi culture has played an important role in making my personality; Ramadan's custom is one of them. During Ramadan, which is the holy month in Islam when Muslims fast before sunrise until sunset, we used to arrange breakfast with our neighbors. It was a wonderful feeling. We helped each other from cooking to washing dishes and cleaning house. I felt we were a family. That custom manifested the beauty of brotherhood and helping others. I have always loved helping people because it makes them happy. Making other people happy will make you happy, too. Saudi culture is known for generosity and hospitality. They offer the best they have to their guests.

Being a Muslim, having adorable parents and growing up in Saudi Arabia are the reasons that make me proud of who I am. It also gives me responsibility to be a good person. I would definitely raise my child the way that my parent raised me. All of the above reasons have made my ethnic identity; coming here to the U.S to pursue my dream does not change me. When some people go abroad to study, the new culture that they are exposed to makes them change their identity. Be careful; do not let anyone affect your values and never forget where you come from.



Culture Festival



AWESOME PRESENTATION

by Deborah Richardson

LCC Staff Member Shares Personal and American History

As an African American, Deborah Richardson, LCC IT specialist, provides an authentic perspective as a guest lecturer for students on this cool March afternoon. Her first slide is a graphic entitled "Slave Trade from Africa to the Americas: 1650-1860." Students are transfixed by the oversized image showing routes over which an estimated 10 to 15 million enslaved Africans were transported to the Western hemisphere for agricultural labor. As Deborah carefully



explains the spread and legalization of slavery in the United States, the resulting Civil War and the continued aftermath of racial inequality, a heavy silence fills the room as students earnestly try to absorb this critical part of America history. Deborah further includes some of her personal history to illustrate the facts she is presenting. She was raised in upstate New York, but during the summers of the 1960's, she and her family traveled to Texas to visit relatives. As her family drove further and further south, they discovered that white owners of restaurants would not serve them, white owners of motels would not allow them to lodge, and white business owners would not allow them to even use the restroom. Deborah uses these events as a springboard to introduce events from the Civil Rights movement of the 1960's, starting with marches and peaceful protests and culminating in legislation that mandated equal rights. Finally, students are led in a choral reading of several parts of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s famous speech, *I Have a Dream*. Students then form

discussion groups to analyze the information they have not only heard, but which they have also been reading about in their classes. Deborah circulates among the groups to answer questions and expand understanding of the presentation. Finally, students fall silent as they contemplate and write about their first encounter with this period of American history.

Deborah worked for the University of Houston for 32 years providing information technology support and application development before retiring in 2010. She has continued to make her contribution to the UH community by working part-time at the LCC as an IT specialist at the Language and Culture Center. Shortly after joining the LCC in 2011, Deborah was invited to give a short lecture to a class of intermediate level speakers of English. Her clear visual and oral presentation provided a valuable opportunity for students to utilize the academic skills they were developing at the LCC. Since then, Deborah has made similar presentations to advanced students at the LCC. Deborah's willingness to go above and beyond her job description to encourage and connect with students is typical of the dedicated staff and teachers of the University of Houston Language and Culture Center.



Velva Fallin
LCC Teacher

Arranged Marriage vs. Romantic Love

Arranged Marriage

Norah Sulaiman A Aldayel - 4H -
Saudi Arabia

Marriage is considered the most important thing in people's life. People have different opinions about which is the best kind of marriage. Some people believe that arranged marriage is more successful; however, some people believe that marriage has to happen after falling in love. I support arranged marriage for many reasons.

The first reason is having a financial support from the family. If the couple has this support, they will have financial security in their life. For example, parents will spend money on the couple's wedding and other things they need for life. In addition, the father of the husband will give the couple a house. This support will make them have fewer financial problems.

The second reason is that arranged marriage will involve the parents' experience. The parents understand their children and their needs about a life partner. They can make a better decision or judgment about their child's partner using their vast experience. Moreover, they will find a partner who has a compatible religion and social status to theirs. As a result, the couple will have more compatibility and this will help a lot.

The last reason is about expectations. The couple in arranged marriage will not have a high expectation about each other. They will have to get to know and understand each other with time. As a result, they will learn to compromise and accept each other as they are. This lower expectation will positively affect their life because they will not have a big illusion about their partner.

Many people argue that romantic marriage is important because the couple can know each other better. They ask what will happen if they find out their partner has a bad quality in his/her personality that can affect their life after their arranged marriage. However, I believe that this fact can happen either in an arranged marriage or romantic marriage.

In conclusion, an arranged marriage can be more successful because it relies on these three factors: the financial support from the family, the parents' experience, and having low expectation. I believe in arranged marriage not only because it is the best way to marry but also because it is a tradition in my country.

Romantic Love

Christopher Mauricio Gutierrez Escalona - 4G -
Venezuela

Would you like to know why choosing your spouse by yourself is the best option to marry? Well, choosing by yourself is the best choice because if someone else chooses your spouse, maybe you will not like him or her because you will not spend time with that person, and you don't have enough life experience, or you will just end up not wanting to be with that person for the rest of your life. There are three important reasons why it is better for you to choose your spouse yourself.

The first reason is that people should be free to select their own spouse. First of all you are the only one who knows what kind of person you would like to be married to. For example, if I choose your spouse without your opinion, you will be upset or uncomfortable living and spending time with her or him. Second, you should have the authority to select who you are going to get married to. As a result if you pick your spouse by yourself, you will choose someone that you really know, you have been with for a long period, and someone who you certainly would like to be with for the rest of your life. In short, this is the first essential factor why people should be free to select their own spouse.

The second important reason is that a couple should spend a lot of time together before they get married. A couple who is going to get married should pass a long period together like boyfriend and girlfriend to see if they really want to be together and feel comfortable with each other. Most people who get married early or don't have experience with the other person usually end up with a failed marriage because they don't really know how it is to be with a person for a long time. They don't know how to live with other people or they didn't spend enough time together before they got married. Finally they should live together before they get married, so they can get the experience to live with that person for a long period. After that they can be sure they are comfortable with each other and they are ready to get married. In summary, the second essential point is that the couple must spend time together before they get married.

The last important reason is that the couple should be in love and trust each other. First they have to believe in the other person. As a result they will trust the other person and won't upset them. They are going to have a good relationship because the trust and love are special factors in every relationship. Second they should put love first in place of any interest. You can't get married with a person just because he or she has money, or he or she has something that you would like to have because that it is not love. If you put love first, you are going to have a good relationship because no one can build a relationship without love. To sum up, the couple should be in love and trust each other in order to get married.

In conclusion, these are three important reasons why it is better to choose your spouse by yourself. My suggestion to people who want to get married is that they should spend time together before they get married. They should also be in love and trust each other.



The Cultural Adjustment Cycle

Cultural Adjustment

Inoussa Pingdwinde Tiendrebeogo - 4F -
Burkina Faso

Three years ago when I was done with my bachelor degree, I decided to come to the USA to make my English better and attend the university for my master's program. Even though I have been living in the USA since April 2013, I still have some difficulties of adaptation in the USA. There are some reasons for these differences between my country and the USA. First, when I arrived here I was surprised about the cost of living. Everything is expensive here. The money that I spend on one semester at the LCC is similar to my tuition fee during the 4 years that I spent at the university in my country. Transportation is also one of the biggest problems for me. I can't go anywhere without buses, and sometimes I have to wait for 30 minutes at the bus stop. This is not a good deal for me because I didn't used to ride buses in my country. Nevertheless, shopping or paying bills online are things that I like in the USA. I also like when people smile or make interesting conversation with you even though they don't know who you are. At the university, I was amazed at seeing people from around the world sharing their culture with each other. In fact, I am done with mental isolation since I started this semester. I live alone, so during the vacation, I was isolated in my apartment because I didn't have any way to go anywhere. Most of my friends that I know were busy or didn't have a car to go out. Since the beginning of the new term, I have met new friends that I can call any time, or they can come to pick me up to go out. Right now I think I have passed the hardest stage, and now I am

in acceptance and integration. If I have to give advice to someone about passing through culture shock or mental isolation, I will tell him to be patient and comfortable with other people. The new people that you will find here are going to be your family and friends at the same time.

In summary, living without your family and friends is very difficult, but it is also important. When you leave your country, you are supposed to learn new things and make your life better than before. The USA is a country where you can have this experience and understand more how life is hard because nothing will be the same as in your country.

The Rejection Phase of Culture Shock Marie Florence Aya Aka - 4A - Ivory Coast

Starting a new life in a new country is far from easy, especially when we are alone. For somebody who is dealing with the rejection phase, my advice is to be optimistic and just think about your hometown. Second, I would tell you to enjoy life in your new country. Sometimes going out helps if you want to get over something. Furthermore, I would encourage you to meet some friends because spending time with them can help you forget your sadness. Last, I would advise you to "keep cool" instead of being aggressive because the rejection phase is a normal step for a newcomer in a host country.

The Cultural Adjustment Cycle

The Rejection Phase of Culture Shock Mohammed Hammad M Alshammari - 4A - Saudi Arabia



The rejection phase is one of the hardest phases that anyone will face in a foreign country because of depression, homesickness, and language difficulties. My advice is to find some friends from other countries in-

stead of your own. This will let you learn about ideas from other parts of the world. Second, to move beyond the rejection phase, enjoy the new culture around you and find new activities to do. Third, push yourself to speak with people in your new language because practicing it will improve it. Do your best and enjoy your new life.

The Rejection Phase of Culture Shock Fatim (Fatou) Traore - 4A - Ivory Coast

Going abroad to learn about a new country, a new culture, and new people is not easy because you must leave your family and your routine. I know that the rejection phase of culture shock is difficult because I have experienced it myself. Before I found out that it is common for someone to struggle in a new culture, I had thought that I was the only one who felt alone and depressed. Nevertheless, I survived, and now I feel better. My advice is to be patient because after a while, you'll become accustomed to the new culture. You might even surprise yourself by preferring some things in the United States to those in your own country. Although it may seem impossible at times, don't worry. Be strong, and you'll successfully overcome this adversity.



The Rejection Phase of Culture Shock Ayse Nur Kart - 4B - Turkey



Most people who live abroad have similar experiences. At first everything looks so beautiful--so perfect. However, that honeymoon phase ends quickly, and the rejection phase begins. In this phase, people have to deal with transportation, communication, and shopping problems. Because of those problems, the newcomer may feel alone, aggressive, and helpless.

When I experienced the rejection phase of culture shock, I felt sad and thought that only dark days were ahead of me. However, when we talked about culture shock in class, I learned that even though people are from different countries and have different cultures, people's feelings are the same because we are all human. Of course, a newcomer faces difficulties, but everything will get better as the newcomer becomes accustomed to their new life. Time can heal their problems.

The Cultural Adjustment Cycle

Culture Adjustment
Waleed Ahmed R Alsubhi - 4F -
Saudi Arabia

I have been living in Houston for 9 months. What are the differences between the USA and my country Saudi Arabia? There are several things that upset me. In fact, when you change your hometown, it's maybe the worst thing to happen in your life.

First of all, the biggest difference between my life in the USA and Saudi Arabia is that here in the USA, I am responsible for everything such as cooking. I had never cooked when I was in Saudi, so I have been learning how to cook here in Houston. However, I have been losing weight since I came to Houston. When this happened, I decided to learn how to cook, and I forbade myself to eat fast food or spend money at a restaurant. To be honest, since I started, it has not been easy. Until now sometimes I forget to put salt, so you should be careful when cooking.

Second, what I do like about USA – the most important thing is that I can do anything online; like shopping. It is the best thing I do because sometimes I have home-

work, or I don't have time to waste at a mall, so online shopping makes our life easy and fast. I can also pay bills online.

What do I dislike here in the USA? The cost of gas is higher than in my country. Also, you cannot walk on the street at night because it's dangerous here in the USA. The climate here in the USA is colder than my country, and I don't like to live in a cold city – especially in Houston. Here you should have a jacket even if the weather is warm.

Finally, I think I am in acceptance and integration because I have had everything: honeymoon and culture shock, so right now I feel more comfortable to be here in the USA. I understand the culture and I have met new friends. In fact, it has been a good experience to change my hometown. The cultural adjustment has changed my way of life.

All in all, being responsible for my life is the biggest difference between living in the USA and my country, and doing everything online is what I like about the USA; however, I don't like the weather here. When you change your hometown, a cultural adjustment happens for every one.



The Cultural Adjustment Cycle

The Cultural Adjustment Dhiyaa Omar Alsaafi - 4F - Saudi Arabia

Nowadays, the number of people who immigrate to another country has been increasing. No matter where they go or what they do, they will obviously pass through cultural adjustments. When I came to the United States in September, 2012, I passed through all process of cultural adjustment, and now I am in acceptance and integration stage because I feel like I am living at home. At first, it was hard for me to live far away from my family. The first days here in Houston were difficult for me because it was my first time to live far away from my town, family, and friends. Even though there were many things that I knew about the United States, especially Houston, there were still many things that surprised me when I arrived, such as the cost of living, the climate, and the food. Also, there were many situations which I went through; sadness was one of them.

First of all, the cost of living here in the United States is totally different from my country, Saudi Arabia. Here in Houston everything is expensive, even the food.

When I landed here I didn't know anything, and my friends helped me find everything I wanted. It is also difficult to know the exact weather in Houston because it will change every day. For example, last week the weather was clear, no clouds in the sky, and suddenly it started to rain. Arabic food is another things that I miss the most here. When I was in my country I used to eat Arabic food every day, especially for lunch, but when I came here it was not easy to get used to American food.

Sadness is one of the biggest problems that everyone has to face when they change the routine, and living far away from your town, family, and friends. I still remember when I was in culture shock; it was hard for me to go through this situation. The cost of living, climate, and the food were the things which affected my feelings the most. Texting and calling my family are the best ways to avoid sadness and homesickness.

In short, coming to the United States is an exciting experience, and it has benefited me. Living here has taught me many interesting things. Even though there are big differences between The United States and Saudi Arabia, there are a few similarities as well.

My Cultural Adjustment in the U.S. Laureine Ahou Lynda Kouassi - 4F - Ivory Coast

When I came to the United States from Ivory Coast two months ago, I felt like the happiest girl in the world because I thought I would live better without my parents telling me always what I have to do. I had an overview of Americans and their culture and also about the country itself. For me, everything would be easy to do here, but after I came, I realized that my conception was a bit wrong. In the beginning, I was very excited to see the country because it was very different from my country in many ways. I think it was the honeymoon stage. Everything was perfect

for me. I was always running around the city. The only thing that I disliked during this period was the weather, but it was just a little thing because I was so concentrated on the city itself. One week later, I began to take the English course at the LCC and it was a pleasure for me. Then two weeks after the beginning of the course, I became bored and annoyed by everything and everything became strange for me. Sometimes, I did not want to go to the classes, or I was always looking at my watch. It was a hard period for me and I used to talk with my mother. Now, I can say that I am in the period of initial adjustment because I think I am beginning to connect with the new culture even though I still miss my family. I hope I will not pass through the mental isolation stage because it would be hard for me.

Fun Times Together..





Censorship

Yes to the Internet Censorship

Samira Awa Diabi - 4G - Ivory Coast

Nowadays the internet is considered a very important tool of information, communication, and entertainment. People can get news and post and say anything they want with very little or no consequence. However, whereas some people appreciate this freedom, others say there is too much of it, and little kids have access to inappropriate websites. Censorship and the Internet is a controversial debate. For me, the government should be allowed to censor the Internet for three main reasons.

The first reason is pornography and pedophilia. In fact, some websites broadcast pornographic images and videos that are inappropriate for kids and go against moral values. In addition, some people use false identities to sexually exploit children through the Internet. For example, some statistics revealed that there are over 10,000 pedophile websites on the internet. Some adults use false genders and ages, chat with children, and get information in order to have sexual contact with them. For some people, the solution is to create parental control and filtering software to block pornography from particular computers. However, these sites are unpredictable and appear on the screen, sometimes on some cosmetic products' websites, social networks, and they can grab kids' attention.

Cyber criminality is the second reason. The internet should be censored because some people use it to get money fraudulently from innocent people. In many West African countries, for instance, young people who want to get money without making effort, change their identity on the Internet. They pretend to be a woman and to have fallen in love with a man. They say they are looking for a partner to get married. They usually make up diseases or important debts they have to pay for to get money from innocent men. Censoring the Internet could avoid innocent people from being scammed.

Finally, the Internet should be censored to preserve security and moral laws and principles of a country. Indeed, censorship is not new in most developed countries. In 2009, a department of the United States closed 80 websites that did business with Cuba and violated the legislation about economic sanctions of the U.S towards Cuba. Similarly, content related to Nazism and the Holocaust is censored in France and Germany. Although some organizations consider censorship a mean for political leaders to turn public opinion in their favor and control what people have access to, nobody can deny that censorship has been playing an important role in the preservation of stability and peace in many countries since its institution.

To sum up, pornography and pedophilia, cyber criminality, and the preservation of public safety and moral laws are three main reasons to allow the government to censor the Internet. Even though the Universal Declaration of Human Rights consider the access to the information as an undeniable right, we have to acknowledge that censorship is necessary and must be allowed for the future of new generations that depends on political stability and good values.

My Valuable Lesson

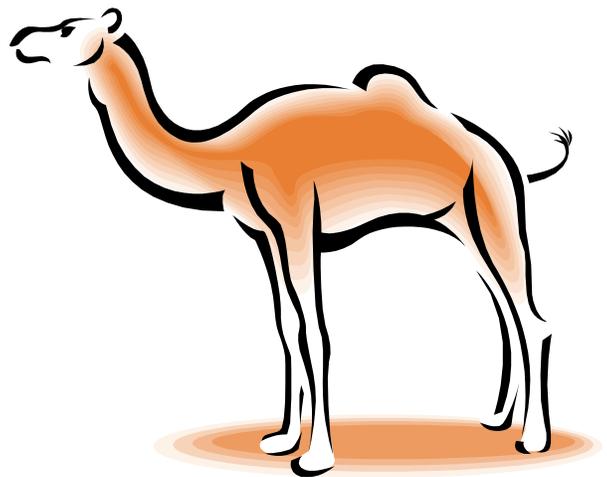
Abdullah Faleh M Alhajri - 6C - Saudi Arabia

Prior to explaining my experience and the valuable lesson that I have learned from it, I should define what value means for me. A value is any object, event, or idea that one holds dear. It could be anything--from beliefs and customs to objects and people. For example, religion is a value. Property is a value. And family is a value. There is no limit to the list of values; however, these are some general points. Let me explain my experience from which I have learned a valuable lesson. Responsibility is a value in life.

I was 15 years old, living in my home city of Khobar, in Saudi Arabia. One day, I joined my family on a family trip to a rural area. Traditionally, once a month, families living in urban areas take a family trip to rural areas for a picnic. Some people who have camels, keep their camels in the rural areas, so they get a chance to visit their camels while enjoying a family picnic. To make a long story short, my family and I went on our picnic and visited our camels. Due to the bad weather, it was predictable that a windstorm would come in and the dust would pick up. My uncle warned me and gave me the task of being responsible for the camels in case the weather got bad. I agreed to take the responsibility. However, I was carefree and slept for a good while. After I woke up, the weather was bad and the camels were gone somewhere. I had taken my uncle's words lightly.

When my uncle asked me where the camels were, I answered that I had no knowledge of where the camels had gone. Of course, he slapped me on my face and asked me to find them, and never to come back home unless the camels came with me. I forgot the pain of the slap and begun searching for our camels. The good news was that I had a car and was able to drive. The search would last for 16 days, until I finally found the camels near the border area with Kuwait, the neighboring country. Of course, someone had found them and kept them at their place near the border area, and throughout my search, I had to ask people and authorities about where the camels might have gone.

Finally, while the camels have great economic value, and my family loves them, the valuable lesson that I learned from this experience (not being responsible) is to be responsible. Indeed, responsibility is a life value. A true commitment to one's work, family, and life itself is a value. Being accountable is a value. I learned from experience that I should respect the words of others, especially elders and take my responsibilities seriously. It taught me these most valuable lesson that helped me become an independent and responsible man.



Migration Causes



Muteb Khalaf H Alanazi - 5A - Saudi Arabia

What is happening in the world these days that people leave their homeland and go to other countries? The reasons could be similar in all migration cases. Many people could say that what immigrants miss in their countries is the main reason that makes them leave. But what exactly are these causes? It can obviously be seen that migration is from poor countries to developed countries. Thousands of people have immigrated to the United States or the United Kingdom during the last decades. There are three main factors that encourage people to emigrate from their countries: finding a suitable place to live, escaping from unsafe situations, and having insufficient life-giving resources such as water and food in their country of origin.

First of all, what developed countries have such as technology and a good environment to live in, has attracted a lot of immigration. Immigrants mostly think about a profitable job and a good house to raise their children in. Places with high standards of education and health care attract immigrants to find a way to be there - they believe that living in these countries gives them the opportunities to teach and take care of their children.

Secondly, if we take a look at the history of migration, we will find that the number of immigrants increased dramatically during the wars, so escaping to find a safe place is another important reason. For example, what is happening right now in Syria is a kind of civil war that is making thousands of Syrians move to other countries, such as Jordan, Turkey, and Iraq. Any type of war results in raising the number of immigrants. The immigrants who left because of war did not have any other choice except to leave their homeland. This is a more serious cause than leaving for a job or a better place.

Finally, some countries do not have adequate food or drinking water because of bad weather conditions in which people continuously face drought. That causes people to think about other ways to live, and that will be leaving their homelands.

In conclusion, looking for a better place, fleeing from a war or a drought are the main reasons for migrations. It seems these problems can not be solved, but might migration decrease if it were possible?



Evangelos Poulias V'asquez – 6F
Mexico

I come from a city located in the gulf coast, so when I came to Houston I immediately went to the Aquarium expecting that it was going to be better than my city's one. But it wasn't. I guess I was expecting something more than a children's place. They can have a nice day with an affordable price. Also, because it is situated downtown, families can get food in a cheaper place. Therefore, I recommend you to visit the Aquarium and then explore the surroundings.

Belen Barrios A. – 6F
Venezuela

The Cockrell Butterfly Center is just one of the wonderful places where you can have fun in Houston. Visitors can interact with hundreds of live butterfly species, and the brochure given allows you to identify the scientific name of each butterfly there. This center is an entertainment and educational butterfly tropical forest habitat which has a 50-foot waterfall making the center a magical place to visit.

Doris Okome Ndoutoume - 6D - Gabon

Houston is a city full of entertainment. As for me, I enjoy watching movies. I get fascinated by the enormous cinema rooms and size of a screen in them. If people like walking, they would definitely find the Town and Country Plaza pretty attractive. There is also a place where people can get food and drinks in the movie theater while watching a movie.

Sofia Gonzalez Soto - 6D
Mexico

One of the places where I always go whenever I feel like going away from everyone and everything is the Museum of Fine Arts on Montrose. I went there last week to check out the Menil Collection. It is an amazing show where I had an opportunity to see Rene Magritte's master-pieces. There was an impressive Magritte's collection presented in several rooms.

Doroty Sato – 6D
Brazil

Houston is a place full of culture and art. There is a Houston Theater District where people can watch a ballet, a play, or an opera. I have been there once and had a chance to enjoy a breath-taking performance. My husband and I went to see Madame Butterfly. Attending any performance in Houston Theater District is not only entertaining, but also informative in terms of culture.



Christian Zavatti – 6D
Venezuela

There are a lot of places that I really enjoy here in Houston, but my favorite one is the BBVA Compass Stadium of the Houston Dynamo. I think this is my favorite place because I really love soccer. The Dynamo's stadium was built in 2011, and it took only two years (2009-2011) to finish. It has a beautiful architecture, and the steel-blue and orange colors give it a modern-futuristic look. Besides the great architecture, the Houston Dynamo is a good team that plays really well.

Ariane Sezikeye – 6F
Burundi

My favorite place in Houston is the Museum of Natural Science. I believe that you can appreciate the visit whatever age you are. Firstly, I liked the mineral collection. They have different kinds of rocks I had never seen before. The dinosaur exhibit is also fabulous! There are hundreds of fossils and dinosaur skeletons, and because of the way they are presented, you can easily imagine how they looked like when they were alive. I also appreciated the Hall of Energy. I didn't know a lot about oil and I can say that I have learned a lot, for example, how it turns into fuel. I really enjoyed the visit and the organization. They make it interactive, so it is easy to understand.



Brad Powell Student Counselor

Student Activities

The LCC went to the Rothko Chapel and the Menil Collection during Check-In Week to allow new and continuing students to meet and mingle with teachers while viewing interesting art pieces. After leaving the museum, we went to the Galleria, the biggest shopping mall in Texas, for lunch. We also stopped by the Waterwall.

In March, we attended the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo and had the LCC Culture Festival. At the rodeo, students had a lot of fun, and many students bought cowboy hats and boots. At the Culture Festival, we shared culture, food, and music. There was a lot of good food from all over the world, but I think everyone especially enjoyed the dancing.

At the time of this writing, we are preparing for the final field trip of the term to Huntsville State Park, where we will have a picnic, play games, and hopefully, go canoeing. I believe this will be the most fun trip of the term, and I hope that everyone enjoys it. After the field trip, we will have our graduation ceremony and reception. I look forward to seeing you all there!



Immigration Update - Sam Long

Students in F-1 student status need to make sure they maintain their immigration status. If you are planning to travel during the break, please see a student counselor so we can update your travel plans in our system. If you are traveling outside the U.S., you must bring your I-20 to an LCC student counselor so we can sign it and give you permission to return to the U.S.

If you plan to study in the LCC for the summer (May 13 – August 7), you must register online for classes beginning May 6th. If you do not register on time, you cannot attend class. Please go to the LCC website for more information about registering for the summer.

The LCC has three terms throughout the year: spring, summer and fall. As an F-1 student, you are required to study in every term unless you are given permission to take a vacation term. If you want to take a vacation in the summer, you must first ask for permission. To ask for permission, please go to the LCC website and log into the LCC Student System to request a vacation. The LCC will check to see if you qualify for a summer vacation and we will contact you with the results.

If you plan to transfer to a new school for the summer or fall, please see a student counselor in room 118 or 120 for more information. You have 60 days from graduation to complete your transfer to the new school.

If you have any doubts or question, please see a LCC student counselor. It is very important that you maintain your student status. It is not easy to get your student status back if you lose it.

Enjoy the break. We look forward to seeing you in the summer!



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***Thank you to all the
LCC teachers
and students for your
contributions!***

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