The ESOL Ambassador

The ESOL Ambassador is a quarterly publication of the Sylvania ESOL Department. Essays are written by students at all levels of the program and submitted for publication by ESOL instructors.

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Special thanks to all teachers who contributed student work.
ESOL Level 1 Students introduce themselves

My name is Mariane. I’m a student. I study English Language. I study on Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday. I study at PCC. I like my class. I learn English.
Written by: Mariane Castro

My name is Orlando. I’m a painter. I work different places. I paint homes. I work five days a week I like my job. I’m happy. I work from 7 am - 7 pm.
Written by: Orlando Arroniz

ESOL Level 2 Students write about their childhoods

When I was a child, I lived in Somalia and grew up in Kenya with my parents and my siblings. I was very stubborn. I didn't listen to anyone and I would fight with boys. As a child, my family ran a business. I would help out with the business by selling items. Without my parents knowing, I would also give items to the poor families who lived in my neighborhood. My family was the best!
Written by: Sadia Sharif

When I was a child, I lived in Somalia with my cousin and her children. I was scared and I was very shy. All the kids went to school, except me. I just stayed home doing nothing. I was separated from my family. I lived with my cousin, and I never had fun. My cousin's father who owned a restaurant brought the leftover rice and pasta. I ate pasta for dinner every day. I didn't have any friends at all. I was lonely. I didn't love my childhood. I had a very bad childhood.
Written by: Yasmin Abu
When I was a child, I lived in Iran with my parent and siblings. My father liked flowers and loved birds. We had a big house. There were beautiful flowers and bird cages around the house. When my father filled the food and water, I helped my father. One day, I forgot to close the door of the cage and two birds ran away. I cried. My father gave me a small part of the garden and I planted beans and every day I gave water and saw them grow. This was my childhood memory.

Written by: Akhtar Toossi

ESOL Level 3 Students write about their experiences moving to the United States

Leaving China

I left three important things in China when I came to the U.S. They are my parents, my job, and my sister. Last year, our family came to America. I want my son to study in America. In this period, I must accompany my son. I left my parents. They are too old to come to America. I sometimes worry about their health. We talk through video. Through video, I see they are healthy, and I am relieved. I left my job. I loved my job. I was a dental assistant in China. In America, I don’t have a job. If I learn English well, maybe I can find a job. I left my sister. I miss her very much. We went shopping and traveled together in China. We never argued. We were so happy. These are the three important things I have left in China.

Written by: Sun Wei
Things Left

I left three important things when I came to the United States from Iraq. The first thing I left was my job. I don’t work now. I was a nurse. After that, I gave lessons to newly employed workers. The lessons were about self-development. I loved my work. The second thing was my friends. My best friend’s name is Saran. I really miss her. The third thing was my family. My family includes my father and my mother. I have three brothers and two sisters. I miss my family but can’t travel because I don’t have a green card. However, now I am happy because I study and learn English at PCC.

Written by: Ashwaq Albattat

The Migration from My Country

When my husband and my son and I came to the United States from Syria, I brought two suitcases with me. They had some clothes for us and medicine. I brought also pictures of our wedding, but I didn’t bring my son’s pictures from when he was small. I am very sad because I didn’t bring them with me. I brought with me the most important documents and papers for us. I brought some delicious foods, such as cakes, mortadella, and spaghetti. I brought my favorite blanket. When I use it and put it on myself, I remember the sweetest and most beautiful days of my life and longing for my country.

Written by: Falak Akta

Part of Myself Left in Ukraine

My name is Iryna, and I lived for many years in Kiev in Ukraine. When I came to the USA, I left part of myself, my daughter Yana, in Ukraine. She studies at university, and she loves her father and her country. If she is happy, my heart is calm. I also left the business and the people with whom I worked for over 16 years. I am grateful to these people. They did the main work, I was only an investor. I have many friends. I left them in Ukraine. I hope we will fly and meet. I left my daughter, business, and friends. They are the most valuable. Now I have a new family in another country, and it is important for me that I am happy. My friends were not in the USA. They didn’t want to let me go!

Written by: Iryna Petrychenko
Miss Yes, Not Sad

I moved to the United States from Brazil 8 months ago. I left in my country the most important things to me which are my family, friends, and career. First, my family has always been my base of everything that I am. Today I owe them much as a human being. I learned how much I’ve already made a lot of mistakes, but I never gave up on my dreams. Also, my friends are people that I can always count on. Another thing I miss is my career. I studied at the university law school for 5 long years. As I devoted myself to studying, I was able to pass the national Examination of the Brazilian Bar Association. It’s a very difficult examination. I’m so happy for this achievement.

Written by: Tiago Duarte Dos Santos

Travel Bag

When I came to the United States from Iraq, I brought many things. My best perfume, hairbrush, light clothes, and a special blanket from my grandmother. I like and respect her too much because she is really kind with me. She is my best old friend. I miss her too much. I wish she came here in order to live with me. She is a really skilled seamstress and wears very elegant clothes. I learned from her to be an elegant young man. In addition to her character, she is a really good cook. She makes delicious Iraqi food like kebab, kibbeh, and dolma. She is the best gardener. She has got a big green garden with lots of trees and flowers. I picked clove flowers from her garden and dried them, so I still keep them in a special wooden box my girlfriend gave to me to keep our special things. She is the most beautiful I have ever seen. She is a smart classy dentist. I love her so much.

Written by: Yasir Alshakarchi
Hamid and the Tiger Bite

What happened when we went to the forest?

My friend Hamid and I met in college. I was new in town and going to English class. I met him in the class. When I knew more about Hamid, I discovered his passion for hiking. He told me about his favorite place, Opal Creek.

Hamid and I planned to go hiking on a Saturday morning. We drove one hour to get to the hiking trail. We parked in the parking lot, and we started walking. After 45 minutes we stopped to swim. After a few minutes we started walking again going back to the car.

On our way to the car Hamid was tired so we stopped to rest and drink water. We didn’t realize we were being watched. We heard some noises but we didn’t care about it. When we were about to start walking, a tiger was behind us and the tiger bit Hamid! I reached in my backpack for my pepper spray to help Hamid. The tiger left right away.

I ran to my backpack to find my iPhone and call 911. Thankfully, I had a signal and was able to talk to 911. I explained the situation and they helped me right away. They sent a helicopter to bring Hamid to a hospital fast.

Thankfully, Hamid will be able to walk but he has to go to physical therapy for a few weeks. He didn’t come to school during his recovery. He sent an email to Penny to tell her the crazy story we lived that day.

Written by Irfan Kizilelma
What would I do if that person showed up?

One night eight years ago, I got a call from my mom's neighbor. She told me that my father was badly hit by a car and told me to hurry home. I didn't believe my ears. It was too sudden for me.

I dammed back my tears and picked up what my one-year-old daughter needed. With the help of my husband, he drove home quickly with me and our young kid. I wished my dad was okay, just a minor injury. More than an hour's drive had never felt so long.

The road outside my mom's house was already crowded. I heard my mom and sister crying from a distance. As I ran over, I saw dad lying on the ground covered in white cloth. I didn't hold back my tears. I cried. My father was dead and the driver had run away.

I heard the neighbor's say they had called the police. But there weren't streetlights on the village road, also no monitoring. It was raining and hardly anyone else passed on the road. So, to this day, we have no information about the hit-and-run driver.

Written by Eunice Chen

ESOL Level 3 Students Introduce Themselves Using Simple Present Tense

My name is Jose Schaus, but my friends call me Joss. I am from South America, Perú. I came here three months ago to visit my cousin Belko and this nice country. I like Portland, Oregon a lot – the people, the landscapes, and the sunny weather. I miss my family and friends a lot in Perú.

In my country I worked 5 years in a motorcycle mechanic shop. I like to do that but here I can't work because I have only tourism visa. Either way I help my new friends to fix their bikes on the weekends.

My favorite hobby is listening to music, music that inspires me to chase my dreams. My other favorite hobbies are to ride motorcycles, fix my own motorcycle with a cold beer, and make photos and videos from my adventures for my friends in Perú.

In this moment my goals are to learn English for better communication with the people around and so when I come back to my country, I can have a better job and much money.

I know wonderful places in Oregon, wonderful people and am learning English to come back to my country and get a better life.

My philosophy is “Work to live, don't live to work.”

Written by Joss Schaus
My name is Karen and I'm from Chihuahua, Mexico. I came to the United States 4 months ago. My sister was here with me 3 months ago, but my parents and my other sister live in Mexico. I miss them a lot, but we talk all the time.

I'm an Au Pair. My schedule changes every week because my host parents are doctors. I take care of 3 kids; 2 girls and a little boy, they are 9, 7, and 5 years old.

I have much free time, because the children go to school in the mornings and I go to the gym. Also, I am free on the weekend.

Right now, I'm studying English at PCC Sylvania because I need to improve my English. When I come back to Mexico, I want to work on my career. My degree is in International Business. I would like to live in Guadalajara, Mexico and have a family.

Written by Karen Chavez Pineda

My name is Nataliya. I am from Ukraine. I, my son and my husband came to the United States 1 year ago. My brother Dimitri and my mom live in Ukraine. My son Andriian went back to Ukraine to finish his studies in the University.

I work full time at a Ukrainian company – I create for the Ukrainian magazine «Канон». Sometimes I volunteer in a program for Ukrainian radio.

I do not have much free time, but I enjoy cooking, especially new dishes from other national cuisines. We meet with friends to paint paintings, to study the Petrykiv’s painting or to decorate eggs before Easter. Twice a week I run in the park or do physical exercises at home. The nature is very beautiful in Oregon, I love to visit new places and walk in parks. Portland has an interesting and rich cultural life. There are good opportunities to visit concerts, national festivals, art exhibitions and museums.

Right now, I am studying English. I want to have the possibility to understand the USA, different cultures, traditions, and characters. At the volunteering fair, I met a wonderful organization that helps families in need. I would like to join them, but unfortunately, I am lacking language knowledge. I hope I can do it soon. I have many dreams. But my main dream is about my son. I want him to realize himself, to use all his knowledge and talents in the United States. I believe he has a great future in the United States.

Written by Nataliya Sereda
To Be a Good Student

If you think that you are a good student, you should have some good qualities. One of them, the good student are responsible. They know their homework, and they always do homework on the time. They listen to their teacher carefully and take notes. Secondly, they are respectful to teacher and other students. They don’t interrupt other people’s speaking while somebody is speaking. They don’t act badly to other people. Finally, they are curious. If they don’t understand something about the lesson, they ask teacher. Also, when they have not a good result on their exam, they always try to find what is the problem for not doing the same mistakes again. These are some good qualities for being a good student.

Written by: Buse Basarslan

The Best Qualities of a Good Teacher

Because the teacher is a very necessary and important profession, teacher must have many good qualities. The most important qualities of a good teacher include patient, responsible, and good teaching skills. For example, some of the students just can’t grasp the subject, and good teachers take pains to explain each and every point to the students. It is very important to be patient with such kids or students. Teachers are responsible to ensure that every student in their care receives a quality education. Also, a responsible teacher should always be punctual in any situation, but teachers also grade exams, homework, and gives feedback. Finally, a good teacher should have good teaching skills. The students should easily understand their teacher, and the teacher should practice review and explain all things. I think that this is the most important qualities of a good teacher.

Written by: Oksana Syrotenko
My Lovely Japan

There are a lot of excellent things in Japan. First of all, I love Japan which has so many convenient things. Especially, I like Japanese vending machines because we can buy not only beverage quickly but also snacks, fruits, and food and so on. Secondly, I also love Japanese food. When I walk downtown in Japan, I am surrounded by the smells of food. It makes me hungry, and I can't help but eat something. Finally, I love Japanese people who are kind to others. In my friend’s experience, my friend forgot to bring his wallet from the train, but someone found it and returned it to my friend the next day. I was surprised by their kindness and honesty. That's why I really love my country.

Written by: Shota Yajima

A Funny Introduction

I have had to do a few introductions in my life, but I’ll never forget the first time I introduced myself in an English class. Three years ago, my friend told me about an ESOL class at the Sixth Avenue Goodwill store with a teacher who has good teaching skills and is responsible. I decided to take the ESOL class because I wanted to improve my English skills. That day as I was driving my car from Beaverton through downtown Portland past Hawthorne bridge to SE Portland, I appreciated the beauty of Portland. When I arrived, my teacher started class by saying, “We have two new students. Please introduce yourself with your name, where you’re from and why you came to the U. S.” The other new student said, “My name is Johnny. I’m from Korea, and I will study dentistry for two years at OHSU” My teacher said, “Good! OHSU is high level. A school like PSU is low level.” Then, he called my name. I said, “My name is Nina, I’m from Taiwan. I came to the U.S. because my daughter studies biology at PSU It is low level.” My classmates were all laughing at that moment. My teacher couldn’t say anything, and his whole face became red. This is a funny introduction in my life.

Written by: Nina Chuong
ESOL Interview

In the fall of 2018, PCC Instructor Patty Berger will be retiring from her work at the college. Patty Berger currently works as an instructor, as coordinator of the ESOL Tutoring Center and coordinator of Placement Advising and Testing at Sylvania Campus. Thank you Patty, for your service to PCC! We will miss you.

We asked Patty a few questions about her experience as an instructor and about her plans for the future.

Her interview is below:

Where are you from originally?

I’m from Kennewick, Washington, which is in eastern Washington

What inspired you to start teaching English as a Second Language?

I taught high school in Alaska right after college and enjoyed working with Indian, Aleut, and Eskimo students. I loved learning about their cultures, and decided that this would be a great field to pursue after getting my Master’s degree.

What have you learned as an instructor?

I’ve learned how rewarding it is to work with students and see them understand the concepts I’m teaching and then see what confidence this brings as they’re ready to try the next idea.

I’ve also learned how much I can learn from my students.

What advice would you give English learners?

Thomas Edison said, “Our greatest weakness lies in giving up. The most certain way to succeed is always to try just one more time.”

I agree with this 100%. English learners need to just keep making small improvements and eventually they will reach their goals!
What do you plan to do in your retirement?

It’s going to be a new chapter for me. My husband and I plan on traveling more. Also I’m looking forward to getting involved with some volunteer opportunities. It will be fun to have more free time – to even just sit in my chair and read some great books!

ESOL Level 5

Silin Beach

My favorite place in the whole world is the beach called Silin beach in my hometown of Khums, Libya. My family and I used to go to the beach in the summertime. Early in the morning, we drove during sunrise. After two hours of driving we arrived to the beach. The water was very blue and clear. The beach was very beautiful. When I touched the water it was not too cold or hot. I felt relaxed when I was there. The air was so clean, and I smelt fresh salt water. I swam with my children. We saw fish under our feet. The beach did not have many people. I felt like it was just me and my family. Around noon, my husband made grilled fresh fish. I used hot sauce, tomatoes, and fresh bread. It was a very delicious. The grilled fish sandwich tasted so fresh, and spicy. When we finished eating, I took a nap on the sand. I felt like the sun was touching my face. I was so happy because I saw my children playing in the water and having fun. The sun was going down, the colors were so beautiful. I saw yellow, red, orange and the water was dark blue. Silin beach is my favorite vacation spot in my country because the fresh air, clear water, the food, the white sand, and the hot sun all came together at Silin beach. It was picturesque at sunset. We enjoyed spending a day at Silin beach.

Written by: Heba. J. Abourgega
My Favorite Park in Portland

My Favorite Park in Portland is Tryon Creek Park. It has many trails for hiking, so I like to go there with my trekking poles. The park is big, therefore you can get lost easily there. Fortunately, it has a Nature Center with free maps of the park for all visitors. The park has some beautiful little bridges over Tryon Creek and many other picturesque places. For example, one of countless diverse trees looks like an elephant with tusks and a raised trunk. I like this unique tree, and I greet it every time I see it. I recommend the nice and romantic Tryon Creek Park to all my friends in Portland.

Written by: Leonid Sapozhnik

My Favorite Park

My favorite park in Beaverton is Magnolia Park. I spend a lot of time in this beautiful place. In the center of this park, there is a large playground, and there are many children all the time. In the spring, this place has a lot Magnolia flowers around the playground. I like to sit on a bench across the playground. On the left side of my favorite bench is a tennis court on which it is pleasant to play in the evening. Especially in the evening, I smell a strong aroma of the surrounding flowers. The playground, Magnolia flowers, my favorite bench, and the tennis court all come together to make me happy.

Written by: Anna Kuznetsova
Best Friend

In our daily life, we call a lot of people friends, but do we really mean it? What does friend mean to you? I have experienced a lot of friendships in my life. I've had a lot of great friends around me, but there are two friends that are most important to me. I grew up in Saudi Arabia, in a neighborhood where we were all close to each other, so I thought people that I had been around were all my best friends. However, the moment that I met my best childhood friend, Badran, I realized what a real friend means. A best friend doesn't just mean helping or lending money. It's a good time, trusting, loving, sharing, caring, and many other things. In my experience, there are a lot of differences and similarities between my best friend in childhood and my best friend right now.

Badran has a unique personality that makes him friendly. Also, our personalities matched. As a person, I always saw him helping poor people by giving them money or food, and he always enjoyed doing that. Badran had a big heart, so every time I made him mad, I knew he would just forgive me right away. We both liked going to the beach every Friday. If he didn't come, I would just stay home and do nothing. He was and is a great soccer player. We used to play on the same team for several years. Also, we are both fans of Inter Milan, F.C... One day, we were swimming at the beach, and Badran was about to drown. Then I saw myself just running crazy in the water to help him. That day, I realized that I really do care about him, and he's my best friend. Even though Badran is a good person, he had moments when I saw him losing his temper. That was something I always wanted to help him with. Another negative point is that Badran doesn't like school at all. Even though he is smart, he used to skip classes many times. Every time I would tell him to come to study with me, he would change the subject and ask me to join him to go to a soccer game. However, since I came to the United States, I have not seen Badran, but I wish that one day we will bring those good moments and share them again.

On the other hand, Hermon is my best friend in the U.S.A.. He's a successful person. He always thinks about the future. Also, he goes to college for Accounting. Most of the time, I see him doing his homework and studying. However, he always encourages me and supports me to continue my studies. When I came to the United States, I couldn't speak English, so I've been doing my best to learn, and Hermon has helped me with learning and communicating. Also, he helped me to get a good job in the company that he works with and to get my immigration papers to stay legally in the United States. I always feel that I owe him because of all things he helped me with. Hermon is not a free active person.
He likes to spend his free time in his apartment cleaning, watching TV and playing video games. He doesn't like to do outdoor activities. Even though Hermon is a quiet person, he's a moody person. Most of the time, he's in a bad mood or feels lonely, and I'm trying to do my best to get him out of this feeling.

As shown above, Badran and Hermon are both my best friends. They're both independent, and both of them have pros and cons in their personalities. They both stand by me and helped me to become the person that I'm today. Both of them added a value to my life.

In the end, for anyone who has not found or experienced having a best friend yet, I've shared some of the differences and the most common things between my best friends in the childhood, Badran, and my best friend now, Hermon and these people are the most important to me.

Written by: Ammar Ghilan

My Flight to Oregon

When I was a teenager, I always dreamed that I was lost somewhere. I was afraid during those moments. I didn't imagine that would happen when I came last year from my country Iraq to the United States. Moreover, I was worried about this trip because I would travel alone. My flight took 36 hours. I was going to stop in Turkey, New York, and Oregon. It was too arduous for me, but honestly I enjoyed this trip which gave me much expertise in my life.
In the morning, I woke up early and went to the Iraqi airport to take the first flight to Turkey. They checked my bags and told me I should receive them at the first stop in the U.S. After I reached the Turkish airport, I waited for two hours for the second flight to New York. This flight was delayed approximately 30 minutes, but I didn't care because I had 3 hours at New York airport. This flight took 13 hours. Imagine how difficult it is to sit for a long time. When I arrived at the New York airport, I became fatigued and started to look up where I would get my luggage. I had four bags. The first three bags I found easily, but I had to wait for the last bag for about 30 minutes. I rented a cart to move easily with my luggage. I tried to read all the signs in the airport, but I didn't know how to reach my gate. I saw a policeman who advised me to go downstairs and ride the train. When I reached the stairs, I recognized that I couldn't go down with my cart, and I should use an elevator. After 5 minutes, I found the elevator and I rode the train. The New York airport is international, huge, and needs you to walk in it for a long distance.

Finally, I saw the Turkish flight where I should take the third plane to Oregon. Unfortunately, I reached the gate too late and couldn't get to the plane. I felt frightened and frustrated when the ticket agent told me to wait for another plane on the second day. I asked myself “What should I do, and who do I ask?” I didn't know. At this moment, one woman had the same trouble that I had, but her English language was better than mine. She was from Iran. She helped me and spoke with the agent. After that, she told me we would sleep in a hotel which was near the airport. We went to the shuttles and stayed in the hotel for the next day. We ate dinner together and spoke about different cultures. On the second day, we ate breakfast and went together to the airport. We rode the airplane which went to Arizona and then to Oregon.

In conclusion, I promise myself to enjoy every moment of my life. On this trip, I visited four states in two days. This gave me experience on what to do when you miss your flight. Also, I learned that I shouldn't be frightened and becoming more confident and strong. I should be useful and help any person who needs my help.

Written by: Suhair Alkallak
The First Day I left Home

I remembered it was a sunny day, but I felt it as a rainy day, because I was very blue. In the morning, my parents took me to the busy Taipei International Airport which is the largest airport in Taiwan. On the way to the airport, I was very nervous, because I didn’t know if Portland was a good place or not. And I didn’t know how to change the airplane that I needed to transfer in Tokyo. Would I miss my flight? I really missed my friends who I hung out with every day two weeks ago, and I thought if they were there, they would help me. But I forgot that I hadn’t spent much time with my family.

When we arrived at the airport, my parents helped me a lot, such as carried my two large, heavy suitcases. Also, they waited for me to check in, and waited for my delayed flight with me. They did almost everything, except come here with me. But at that time, I even didn’t express thanks to them. I took them for granted. Finally, it was time to leave. My parents didn’t say too much to me, they just reminded me that I should take care of myself and keep in touch with them. They gave me several hugs and kisses, then just turned around and left. “Okay, now my flight adventure started,” I thought.

After they left, I did every complex procedure by myself. “That was ok, but I really need somebody who can talk with this lonely girl.” I begged in my mind. Because that was my first time flying by myself, and I was so tense. Suddenly, I ran to a secluded restroom which was not very crowded and cried. Then I didn’t know why, but I thought of my family. They were in my mind, so I asked myself “Why didn’t I spent my time with them? And why am I just thinking about my friends?” Yes, I missed my family. They always support me to do anything that I want to do. They taught me how to walk and talk, and they gave me a chance to come here to study.

At first, I thought I would miss my friends more than my family, but I didn’t. I have been here around three months, but I still often recall the day I left home. Because that probably was the last time I can see my family until I go back to Taiwan. Now, I truly know that I shouldn't take my family for granted, and I must cherish them more. When I go back to Taiwan, I promise I will be a better daughter than before and I will say thanks to them. Thanks for everything they did for me. I have a wonderful family, and I really love them so much.

However, after that day I learned a lesson, and it is quite an important lesson in my life. I will remember this in my whole life.

Written by: YiTing Chiang
ESOL Level 7

This term, Writing 7 students met with PCC Intercultural Communication students to compare and contrast different aspects of their cultures.

Here are some essays the ESOL students wrote about their experience:

This Monday, students from my class and I talked with PCC students who are not in the ESOL program. Some of them were Americans and others moved to the US from different countries, or their parents moved to the US before they were born. We had a nice conversation about the differences in our cultures, especially about the cultural differences in education and birthday parties.

In our conversation, everyone talked about how important education is in their countries. For example, in Ukraine children start grade school when they are six years old. Children are at school usually from at 8:30 A.M. until 4 P.M. five days a week. In my conversation with Madiba Sutton, who is Korean, he said that Korean children start grade school when they are five or six years old and they are at school from 7 A.M. to 8 P.M. six days a week.

The second interesting topic we spoke about was birthday parties. We discovered almost every country celebrates birthday parties a little bit differently. In my country, Ukraine, we invite guests and we have cake with candles. In my conversation with Jude Smith, who was born in Mexico, he told me that instead of blowing out candles on a cake, they have the tradition to celebrate a birthday by breaking a Pinata, filled with small toys and candies, with a stick.

It was very interesting to learn about the cultural differences in education and birthday celebrations. It was informative to learn how different cultures handle the same events, but in a different way. I really enjoyed this learning experience and the cultural exchange.

Written by: Inna Yanok
Recently, I had the opportunity to meet non-ESOL students and to ask them about their culture and the cultures of other countries with which they are familiar. I chose two questions that are the most interesting to me: one question was about American food culture and the other question was about the terms of endearment that they use in their family or with friends.

I have found that many Americans cannot cook even simple dishes, such as an omelet or pasta. I was very interested to find out why so many Americans do not like to cook. In Ukraine, I have helped my mother and grandmothers in the kitchen since I was a child. We cooked large dinners for birthdays and Christmases and small, every day, family meals. Ukrainians mostly eat at home, and perhaps that is why we become acquainted with recipes in childhood, making cooking a daily habit. In America, however, many people eat in restaurants more often than the people do where I am from. According to Kenny Moore, who was born and raised in America, American food culture is quite poor. Cheap, fast-food restaurants and ready-to-cook food made life easier because there is no need to spend so much time cooking. Now, it is more common to find a can of soup in an American kitchen rather than grandmother’s old recipe book.

Another interesting aspect is that, from country to country, people use different affectionate names to address each other. For people from different cultures, some words seem funny and illogical. An American, Liam Krasowski, who studied in France, finds it hilarious that the French, in order to say-something sweet, call each other “mon chou,” which means “my cabbage.” In Ukraine, for example, guys often call their girlfriends a “crumb,” which sounds humorous for foreigners, too. Americans, trying to be sweet, call each other “pumpkin,” which does not make sense to me, as to call someone “pumpkin” in Ukraine is rude and equivalent to “stupid.” Hence while abroad, people should be careful to use certain words, as they could be misunderstood, or, worse, they could offend someone.

It was very instructive to hear other students’ opinions on American food culture and affectionate names and to tell them about my culture, as well. I learned that each country is unique with its own values, social norms, and terms of endearment. Learning about a new culture is exciting, and it is a good way to learn more about your own culture.

Written by: Mariia Romanchenko
ESOL Level 8

How Parents Protect Their Children on Social Media

Nowadays, with the development of the internet, social media has become very popular. People can access social media anytime and anywhere by phones, tablets, computers or smart TVs. Using social media has many advantages and disadvantages, especially for the kids. According to the "Parent's Guide to Protecting Teens on Social Media", the website SafeSearchKids.com wrote “Raising a teenager is no picnic.” It seems more difficult for parents to teach their children in the modern life because children usually spend most of their time on social media. Parents have to figure out the best methods for their children to use social media safely. There are three ways that parents can control children's social media use, which are explaining, monitoring and protecting.

To help children understand about social media, parents should explain to their children about negatives and positives of using social media. Vietnamese people usually say "a child's mind is like a sheet of white paper". It means children's minds are very easy to be "painted" by what they are influenced with. Because, by themselves, children don't know what is useful or what is harmful; parents need to teach their children about the advantages and disadvantages of using social media before their children start using it. Children need to know that social media can be used by everyone, and any age group, so it is not only made for children. They need to choose programs which are suitable for their age. For instance, parents can advise their kids to use YouTube Kid App because it is suitable for their age. When children find the program that matches their age group, they will feel happy and can learn many useful things. On the other hand, children also should know the effects of social media has on them. Social media not only affects their character, but also their health. Parents should limit their kids’ time on social media every day. If children spend too much time on the screen, they might have trouble with their eyes or with their mental health.

Parents should monitor their children's social media use. They could create accounts in any applications where their children are using social media. Parents should become friends with their children on social media. According to "Parents Guide to Protecting Teens on Social Media," when parents become a friend online, they have the opportunity to follow and see their children's posts. It is good for parents to know more about their children's world. Furthermore, parents should participate in their children's activities online. For example, when my children watch video clips on their computer, I usually join them. This is a good way for me to connect with my children, and check what they are watching. If
that video clip is not suitable for their age, I will explain to my children in order to help them make a better choice next time. According to “Parents Guide to Protecting Teens on Social Media”, the author wrote "Keep computer in a ‘public’ location, rather than in their bedroom". Parents might encourage their children use computers more than tablets, and put the computer in the living room. It helps parents to check what their children are doing easily. It is also convenient for parents to check history of use on the computers, if necessary.

Besides monitoring how children are using the social media, parents also could protect their children from inappropriate content by using parental control tools. Those tools can be add-ons or applications, and they can work on most devices. When parents install parental controls, they can control the amount of time children spend online, block games, or filter websites that have inappropriate content. For example, Firefox has many parental control add-ons that can block pornography websites. For tablet use, Apple iOS or Android also have built-in or third party parental control tools which not only filter the content but also prevent downloading or purchasing. For example, on my kids' tablets, I put some controls on Google Play Store, so my children can't download and purchase from Google Play on their tablets.

In conclusion, there are many ways for parents to control their children's social media use, but these can be categorized into three groups, which are explaining, monitoring, and protecting. By talking about the good sides and the bad sides of social media, parents give their children an orientation on how to use the social media safely. In addition, parents can keep monitoring to make sure their children are on the right track while using social media. Moreover, using parental control tools may help parents build the fences to protect their children against the bad sides of social media. Because children are different, parents might apply those three categories in various ways to bring the best to their children.

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