

Portland Community College: Sylvania Campus

The ESOL Ambassador



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Mahmud

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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who contributed
student work.*



ESOL Level 1 Students Write About Their Cities

I am from Guatemala, it's in the south. My city is Huehuetenango. It is in the North. In my city there are many mountains. My city is dirty. In my city there are many friendly people. My city is small. My city is dangerous.

Written by: Candelari Miguel

I live in Beaverton, Oregon. Beaverton is in Oregon. It is in the Southwest. It is not near the ocean. There are many shops. It is beautiful and interesting. It is a clean city. It is so expensive

Written by: Samia Sahak

I live in Tualatin. It is in Oregon. It is in the Northwest. It is not near the ocean. I like Tualatin, because it is beautiful and because it is safe. There are many parks.

Written by: Katerina Kovalenko



An ESOL Level 2 Student Writes About His Work

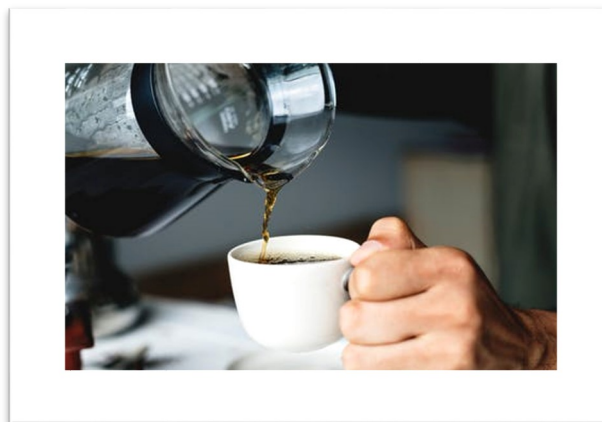
My Job

My brother and I work in construction. I remove dead grass or cut grass, but I don't wash the driveways. My brother picks up grass rolls (sod) and gets new grass seed in the store. My boss never works with me.

In the morning, I drink coffee or sometimes drink tea. My brother never drinks coffee. He drinks Rockstars or Red Bull.

Our schedule is from 6:00 am to 4:30 pm. I go to school in the evening. My brother watches TV or sleeps.

Written by: Mauricio Gonzalez



ESOL Level 2 Students Describe Important Rooms

My Bedroom

This is my bedroom. There is a queen bed in the bedroom. On the right and left side, there are two night tables. Two lamps are on the night tables. Across from the bed, there is a dresser. I put a picture on the dresser. It's a wonderful painting of flowers. Near the dresser, there is a large window. I can have a good view from the window. There is an armchair between the window and the dresser. I often sit here and look at the park outside.

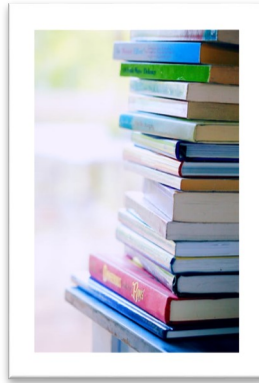
I like this room, because it is very comfortable.

Written by: Ling Cao

Living Room in My House

This is my living room. In the middle of the room, there is an average-sized cabinet. There is a large flat screen TV on the cabinet. There is a vase next to the TV. In the vase, there are lots of flowers. On the right side of the room, there is a fireplace. There is an armchair between the cabinet and the fireplace. There is a pillow on the armchair. In the front of the room, there is a sofa. There is a bookcase near the sofa. There are lots of books on the shelves. And next to the bookcase, there is a lamp. To be honest, I think this living room is simple, but I like my living room because I installed the wooden floor myself.

Written by: Qiang Wang



My Living Room

I love my living room. It is not large but it's where we spend the most time of the day. The TV is near the window. To the right of the TV is the fireplace. There is a mirror over the fireplace. We also have family photos on the fireplace. The coffee table is in front of the fireplace. There is a vase on the coffee table. There are many flowers in the vase. The sofa is across from the coffee table. There is no armchair in my living room because I want to give my son more space to move around. To the left of the living room is my son's living space. There are lots of Legos and a tent at his secret base.

The living room is often filled with laughter. This is my most relaxing place.

Written by: Sherry Lai

My Bedroom

My favorite room is the bedroom. It is connected to the bathroom and the walk-in closet. In my country this is not usual. Our bedroom can be found upstairs. This is a big room and there is a bed between the two night tables. There are two lamps on the two tables. There are many pillows on the bed. The picture is over the bed. The room has a window. There are beautiful curtains on the windows.

It is a perfect place for relaxation.

Written by: Anita Kiraly

ESOL Level 3 Students Compare Countries

Portland and Senegal

I will describe the differences between Portland and Senegal. Portland is more beautiful than Senegal. There are many trees in Portland and many beautiful houses. In Senegal we don't have many trees. The weather in Portland is less beautiful than the weather in Senegal. In Portland it rains every day except in the summer and in Senegal we have 3 months or 4 months of rain. Portland is richer than Senegal. In Portland we see many beautiful cars which are expensive and in Senegal the cars are not new. The colleges and Universities are bigger than the Universities in Senegal. For example, in the University of Portland they have a swimming pool, a gym, a big bookstore and library and the universities in Senegal we don't have a swimming pool, we have only a basketball court and soccer field.

Written by: Mbagnick Mboup



Mexico and Oregon

Mexico, my home country, is more dangerous than Oregon. In Beaverton, the spring is more beautiful than Mexico City because here there are many trees and forests and in Mexico there are more buildings. In Oregon, the traffic rules are stricter than Mexico City. I like to drive here because the highways and the streets are bigger than in Mexico. But sometimes I don't like Oregon because the stores or places are too far away. Another thing that I don't like is that most part of the year is raining and is colder than Mexico.

Written by: Stacy Godinez Garcia

Istanbul and Portland

Istanbul is more crowded than Portland. Portland isn't more beautiful than Istanbul. I went to Istanbul for an internship four years ago. Traffic was so bad. Istanbul's traffic is worse than Portland's traffic. There are many lights in Istanbul but in Portland there are many trees. Istanbul isn't more natural than Portland. Istanbul's apartments are higher than Portland's apartments. Istanbul is a bigger city than Portland. Turkish culture is more different than American culture.

Written by: Gozde Sivka

Casablanca and Rissani

Some people like to live in Casablanca, but other people prefer Rissani because Casablanca is bigger than Rissani. When I went to Casablanca, I saw gorgeous locations such as the Hassan 2 Mosque near the Atlantic Coast. It's the second largest Mosque in Africa. Casablanca is the economic capital of Morocco that's why it has a lot of traffic and there are a lot of noises and factories that cause pollution. Also, this city attracts more people, due to the availability of job and the institution. On the other hand Rissani is a smaller city. In Rissani there is no crime, and it's a peaceful place. Also, it does not have any pollution. In fact that there are no factories that cause pollution. This city is suffering from drought, because there is not enough rain. Although there are not any farms, the farmers produce more organic healthy food.

Written by: Hanane Bouramdane

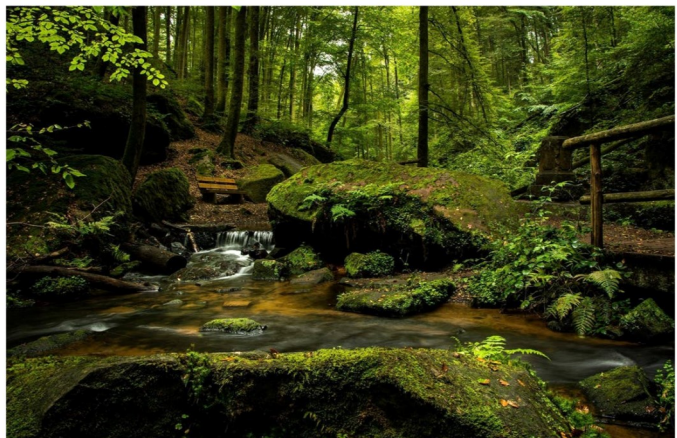


ESOL Level 4

A Place Where I Like to Go

The National Park is a place that I like to go. First when you go to the forest, there are a lot of things to see. You can see wild animals like bears, deer, and beasts. You can see a lot of trees and breathe fresh air. You can smell many things like trees and other plants. The second thing to see is near a volcano. The volcano makes hot groundwater with some kind of chemical. In Japan, they wash themselves with that groundwater in the past. I think you can wash yourself with ground water sometimes. Hot water and that chemical make weird nature like a hot river and makes water pop up. They make weird colors in the water too. Those things make a new ecosystem. New animals or other hot rivers can be found. Now I'm going to talk about the river. You can see many kinds of fish, and you can ride a boat to see them. There are a lot of caves near the river. You can see inside of the cave and it's very beautiful. The National Park is a very good place to see nature.

Written by: Won Ko



My Favorite Room

My favorite room in my house is the living room. There is a big TV on the TV console. I watch movies and news. I also watch Persian news and my favorite Persian music and movies. There are a lot of pictures of my family on the wall. There is a big plant in the corner. There are two dark blue sofas and a white armchair. There are a lot of red and white pillows on the sofas. There is a coffee table between sofas and the armchair. There are always fresh flowers on it. There is a big picture window at the end of the living room. There is a small park in front of my house and I can look outside from the big picture window. There are many tall green trees and a lot of bushes. I sometimes drink tea and eat cake with my family in the living room. I see many birds such as crows and sparrows from my living room window. I hear their voice and enjoy, and I get relaxed. My living room is quite comfortable, and it has a beautiful view.

Written by: Peimaneh Fatehnejad



ESOL Level 5

My Mother

Everyone has someone they admire most. I admire most my mother. First of all, she is an ordinary person, but in my heart, she is a great and excellent mother. My mother was an accountant. She was busy with her work and worked very hard. When she finished her work, she went home and also had a lot of housework. She never complained. At night she helped my sister and I with homework. She used to say, “Don’t be afraid of the pressure. If you find the fun in study and find the way to it, you will feel very happy.” Because of her encouragement, we love to study. Second, my mother likes to do charity work. She donates money and clothes to poor people. She said to me, “We should try our best to help people in trouble.” After she retired, she took part in social and volunteer activities. She loves life. She likes to travel and takes pictures. Now she is 77. She looks young and healthy. For these reasons, I’m proud of my mother. I really admire her.

Written by: Wei Sun

My Great Grandmother

I admire my grandmother Carlota because she is a very important person for me. First of all, she is hardworking. She was at the farm every Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday at 6:00 a.m. to work in the production of vegetables. When she returned at 12:00, she cooked food for her children. Second, she was a single woman. She lost her husband, but she proceeded to raise her 9 children by herself. Last of all, she was creative with money. She sold her vegetables every weekend in the square. She always did anything to see her children happy and comfortable. For these reasons, I love and look up to my grandmother.

Written by: Josin Miranda



Hai An Nguyen

“Mom, I will give light from my eyes to other people.” Hai An Nguyen said that before she went to corneal donation surgery. I admire her for several reasons. First, Hai An was a resilient and optimistic girl. She had brain cancer when she was 6 years old. She went through many treatments, but she never cried. She wasn’t absent from her school although she was in pain. She always smiled. Second, Hai An was kind. She wanted to donate her organs. This was the little girl’s dream before she died. She wasn’t allowed to donate her organs because she wasn’t 18 years old. However, she could donate her corneas, and the result was that 2 people could see again with her corneas. Finally, Hai An comforted her mom. She was a little girl, but she knew what was happening with her. She tried to talk to help her mom be calm while she was feeling pain. She told her, “Mom, smile, I’ll be ok.” She wrote a letter to her mom before she died. She said, “Mom, I love you. You wait for me 500 years. I’ll be your daughter again.” I hurt and admired her when I read newspapers talking about her story. I can’t do the same as her. She was the youngest person to donate organs in my country. Hai An Nguyen was a shining jewel in life. Donating organs wasn’t popular in my country. However, many people were more open-minded, and they decided to donate organs after her story.

Written by: Dao Nguyen

ESOL Level 6

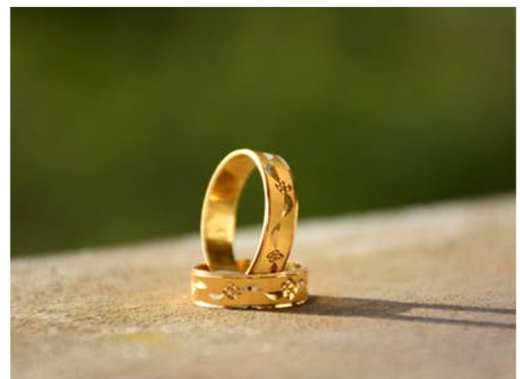
Somalia and US Marriage

Have you ever attended wedding ceremonies of different cultures? Marriage is important for human life, and it keeps the existence of human beings in this world. Without marriage no one could live in this world. The two basic elements of marriage are religion and culture. As the people have different cultures and religion, they also have different customs of their marriage. The wedding customs that Somalia and the US have are very different.

Religion takes the most important part of marriage for every society. In Somalia, as a Muslim country, people perform their wedding ceremonies under the sharia law. The sheikh (Islamic scholar) asks the bride, the groom, and the father of the bride for their consent to perform a nikah (a connection between couples). A dowry (money or valuable things like gold) should be mentioned for the bride. The sheikh finally performs a nikah and announces the marriage of the couple. In the USA, usually a pastor or priest who has the authority by the government performs marriages and the ceremony is held at church. The bride and the groom say their vows to each other and exchange the wedding rings. Finally, the person in authority announces that they are husband and wife.

The kind of food that one society likes to eat makes them to be different from other societies. When attending a Somali wedding ceremony, meat with rice that is specially cooked is the most important food that everyone who attends the ceremony likes to eat. Halwa, which is a traditional sweet is also something people like to eat at the wedding ceremonies. Samosa, which is another traditional snack, has its own specialty for the Somali wedding ceremonies. The USA has many traditional food and drinks for their wedding ceremonies. Fruit, beef kabobs, fresh salads, salmon, chicken, seafood, coffee/tea, water and juice are among the food and drinks that Americans like to eat at their wedding ceremonies. At the end of the ceremony, the bride and the groom cut the cake and feed it to each other. This shows that they are one flesh. They also throw rice which is a symbol of blessing and fruitfulness of the marriage.

People have different styles of how to wear clothes especially at wedding ceremonies. The shiny hijab of any color which covers the body of the bride is usually common to see at the Somali wedding ceremonies. Necklaces, bracelets, and rings of gold are also what the Somali brides like to wear at their wedding ceremony. A groom mostly wears a beautiful white kameez and headcraft. In The USA bride wears a white wedding gown which is a symbol associated with innocence, purity, and virginity. The groom wears a suit or tuxedo, especially a black colored one.



Culture and religion are the most important factors that affect the difference between the societies of their wedding ceremonies. Somalia and The USA have different foods and dresses of their wedding ceremonies. As many people or societies of the world have differences of their wedding ceremonies, Somalia and The USA have their own differences of wedding ceremonies.

Written by: Mohamed Nalaye

Two Different Worlds, One Love

When I first met my wife, I thought marriage in other cities was the same as in Sanliurfa, Turkey. The more I knew her, the more I realized that it was completely different than in Sanliurfa. I know cultures can affect traditions but I never thought that it was going to be so different. I was born in Sanliurfa, which is a city on the east of Turkey, almost near the border with Iraq and Syria. Sanliurfa is a very conservative city. On the other hand, my wife grew up in Portland which is very open-minded culture. In Sanliurfa and Portland marriage culture is extremely different.

First, in Sanliurfa, as a man, dating wasn't permitted. However, nowadays people date in secret or if the parents are modern. In my days, I was not allowed to date. My wife has been living in Portland for 12 years so she has a different culture and she was able to date. When I started talking to her, she didn't know about my customs, traditions or culture. She didn't know I could not date. It was a long distance relationship but for me it was a very serious relationship. In Sanliurfa, most of the families are strict about dating. If you meet a girl it has to be to marry. Usually, the parents find a girl to marry their son. Then the traditional customs start. The family goes to meet the girl and the man for the first time will see the girl. She will make a salty coffee and the family will see the man's attitude by seeing his face while drinking the salty coffee. After that the father of the girl will accept or deny the relationship. On the other hand, the traditions in Portland are completely different from tradition in Sanliurfa. People usually date for months or years, or different people can date until they find the one.

The second step is the engagement. In Sanliurfa the engagement is a big party. It is the step that formalizes the relationship. In my case, I proposed to my now wife after 6 months of knowing her. We made a party in which there was a ceremony. Someone that you admire will start the ceremony by giving advice, and after that we share the rings. The rings are tied together with a red ribbon. Once the rings are in each one's finger the person who gave the advice will cut the red ribbon and we will start the party. In Portland, people usually don't get engaged very fast. It can take month or years to get engaged. Usually, in Portland people move in together and after months or years they start thinking about getting engaged. In Portland, It takes some time to formalize a relationship between boyfriend and girlfriend. There is no time frame or a tradition to follow for people to get engaged.

The final step is marriage. In Sanliurfa, marriage is very important and also a very serious step. It's a commitment that can't be broken. You can be engaged for a maximum of one year. In that year, most of the time parents and the bride plan the wedding. It's the biggest event for girls. It has to be big and extravagant. Usually the father of the bride talks to the groom and requests for a furnished house and some money for his daughter. Sometimes gold is also requested as a gift for the bride to be. For example, my family gave to my wife two gold bracelets as a gift for the wedding. On the other hand, in Portland marriage can come anytime. It all depends on the couple, and if they are committed and want to be married. Sometimes couples can be together for years and not get married. It is unpredictable when couples get married after dating or being engaged for a while.

In conclusion, marriage customs can vary depending on the city, culture and traditions. As for me, it took me less than a year to be married. However, I think that if I had lived longer in Portland I might have done the process of getting married slower just because you get adapted to the culture.

Written by: Irfan Kizilelma



ESOL Level 7

This Spring, Luciana Diniz's Communication 7 class attended an Illumination Project performance that focused on LGBTQ+ issues. Here are some of the students' reflections on the performance.

Illumination is a great project and makes us open our minds and think about themes that usually oppress people. It's a good opportunity to share our opinion, hear other people, be in their shoes, and feel how uncomfortable their broken hearts feel. So many times I have had the desire to help people who have no voice, and sometimes I just don't know how to express myself. During the play, I thought a lot of times about some friends who experience the same situations every day. I wanted to say STOP, but I was shy, and I didn't. But I really don't want to be shy anymore so that I can help my friends or people who are not able to speak for themselves.

Written by: by Fernanda Mussap

Last Wednesday, I had the opportunity to see the Illumination Project at Portland Community College, Sylvania Campus. This Spring, the project presented a play about the LGBTQ community and the issues that this population faces in their daily lives. There was a scene that caught my attention and made me think about how cruel we humans can be. It was when Andy, the main character's sister, was in the classroom listening a lecture about suicide. When her professor mentioned that LGBTQ population had a highest rate of suicide in the United States, Andy's classmate expressed that "this means fewer 'faggots' in the world". I have heard this same idea frequently in different scenarios: "fewer African Americans, fewer poor people, fewer Hispanics, fewer Jewish, fewer Africans, fewer people from Syria, fewer people with mental illnesses.... the list is LONG!! For me, this idea reveals not only the lack of compassion and solidarity of the human being, but especially the frivolity and the simplicity that human beings can reach before issues that do not agree with. We just decide to isolate people with situations, characteristics or thoughts we don't share. It is easy to see the situation from far away. We need to discuss these issues face to face. We need to listen to others more. We need to love more, and we need a light in our minds. The Illumination Project is that light that is willing to enlighten our being. There is a long path to follow, but projects like the Illumination Project is a good start.

Written by: Yadira Santiago

The Illumination Project was a great experience, and I am still moved by the different scenarios that the actors presented about the oppression suffered by people who have a sexual orientation different from what society is used to. For this reason, I think people from the LGBTQ community have to have a lot of courage to educate more people on the subject because although it seems hard to believe, every day there are more people who feel oppressed by the simple fact of having a certain sexual orientation. For me, it is important not only that people educate others with this type of activities but also that they help many other people to feel confident about themselves, what they want, what they feel, and most importantly, to face situations like those presented by the actors. For me, the most difficult scene to watch was when Max's classmates went to talk to the coach. It was difficult to see how the coach was not trained for such situations, and therefore, she did not have a correct answer or any advice. She did not know how to handle the situation. Although it was a difficult situation because she did not know at the moment with certainty if it was true what they said, or if it was simply a homophobic person discriminating against another, it makes me think that many times, we need to know more about the subject to respect, support and even to know how to handle situations like the ones we saw.

Written by: Monica Cabrera

The Illumination Project focused on LGBTQ. During the performance, I experienced a lot of uncomfortable situations, but I couldn't say stop. One of the saddest situations was when a girl who has depression, and she wanted to talk to her mother, but her mother only said "Did you take your medicine today? I don't have time, I have to go now." At the moment, I wanted to say "Why did you leave her? She is your daughter. She needs you now." I also thought this was the girl's worst moment. I knew this "LGBTQ" word before because one of my coworkers was gay. He was a really nice person, but in Japan, many people are not really open-minded regarding this topic, so people who are LGBTQ always have a difficult time. I hope everyone can find and speak to friends or family, then they can share their thoughts and difficult situations. I also hope everyone can live comfortably.

Written by: by Mia Tanaka

ESOL Level 7

Reasons Why People Take Online Classes

These days the internet has become an important tool for many people. It is something useful that serves to perform many activities such as finding places easily, communicating with people from different places or having fun. Other people also use this tool to work from home and even to study online without leaving home. Online classes can be the beginning of new opportunities for many people. There are many reasons why students decide to take classes online.

One reason for taking online classes is that they are flexible. Students can take the course at any time either in the morning or at night. Students who work are able to take the class based on their schedules. For example, some students work during the day but at night they study. Other students only take a few hours of their free time a week to complete their course. Gabriela Torres, who took classes online, states that online classes are a good option for those who want to finish school faster and do more things during the day. This type of classes has benefited many people such as young people, single mothers, elderly people, among others. In many occasions these people have other responsibilities like work and going to school is not an option for them, but in this case it is easy owner our time. The flexibility of the course makes it possible for a person to complete the course, while attending college courses in person might be impossible due to their work schedules.

Comfort is another reason why students take online classes. Students can study from anywhere either from home or even in a cafe. Some people save time by not having to choose formal clothes to leave home because they can study even in pajamas. These classes are a good option for people who are shy because they feel more comfortable studying or even participating in discussions. Many individuals

fear that their partners will make fun of them if they make mistakes while they participate in the class. That is why many people are left with doubts that impair learning. Mauricio Gonzalez, who took online classes for 2 years, describes that online classes offer a variety of benefits and allow the person to feel comfortable asking questions and receiving answers quickly. The more comfort a person feels, the easier they acquire knowledge.

Finally, online classes help students to save money. These classes do not require leaving home, so students do not spend money on extra expenses. For example, food is an extra expense because most of the time many students leave from home without eating anything and the most practical thing for them is to buy something to eat outside. These foods that are sold outside besides being unhealthy are very expensive. Regular classes require daily commuting to school, which results in gas, parking expenses or bus tickets. Taking classes online saves money on expenses like these and provides the same education.

Online classes can be a great opportunity for many people. Today there are many people who want to finish their studies and thus be able to have a better life. These types of classes can be a good option for them, and it is available at any time. It also comes down to personal preference and knowing how people would learn best. These learning formats can be very effective, and most of the students can take advantage of this great opportunity.

Written by: Dulce Gonzalez



ESOL Level 8

How do Couples Breakup?

A person is born again when he falls in love, that is a fact. Lovers often claim that love is the sweetest thing that has ever happened to them. Love doesn't only make a lover incapable of seeing the faults of the person he adores. It literally makes him incapable of seeing anyone else. Alas, not all supposed lovers truly fall in love. People vary in different aspects such as, the way they think, the way they love and the way they hate things, so it takes time to find the perfect match to fall in love with. On the other hand, some relationships lack chemistry and love. This relationship can be so exhausting emotionally and mentally to the partners that it becomes visible that this relationship is doomed to fail. Ironically, in such toxic relationships both partners suffer equally. In this case, breaking up becomes the best possible solution but even when breaking up, people significantly vary, depending on how far they have gone to with the partner they are breaking up with, how long they have been together and the experiences they have gone through in this relationship. All these factors play a huge role on the way partners act and react to these situations. Partners were found to fall in different criteria when breaking up, some break up with their partner by informing them directly, others ghost away, while the remaining last make their partner take the action.

The first group are the "direct," as they tell their partner directly that they are breaking up with them, this way of breaking up is straight forward. In this case, most partners say, "that they prepared an environment for this act." They also suggest that the partner who is breaking up should remain calm and silent as much as possible. This way of breaking up is known to be effective as it cannot be interpreted in a different way. This way of breaking up is also the most ethical and moral, as a partner is being honest with the person who might be still in love with them, so this could be the last good thing they will do. The second group is the "ghost," as they run away and disappear without notifying their partner. This way of breaking up is mainly preferred by partners who are not ready to confront. In this case, they will make sure their partner won't find them, so they leave no trace behind them. People who ghost usually change their phone numbers, block all their partners' accounts on social media and avoid going to places where their partners might stalk them. Partners who ghost will be expected to live in hiding for a period of time to make sure they don't get caught by their ex-partner. This way of breaking up is less effective as one of the couple's social life will somehow be ruined. Moreover, the situation might get trickier if the dumped partner reported to the police the disappearance of their partner. Finally, this way of breaking up is unethical, as the dumped partner might live in frustration and sadness for missing the partner who dumped them without knowing why.

The third group is the “jerks,” as they make their partners break up with them by deliberately ignoring them. Presumably, they were stuck with a partner that they cannot confess their disaffection to. Therefore, they trick their partner into making this decision and thinking it was theirs. This way of breaking up is very cruel and painful, as it requires ignoring a partner for a period of time; they may severely suffer through this process until they give up this relationship and make a decision of breaking up. It also involves lots of meaningless arguments and fights that the partner who wants to end the relationship will come up with. This way of breaking up takes the longest time compared to the other methods, and it is the one that would harm the dumped partner the most.

At the end, partners regardless from which group they are categorized under agree that breaking up from a relationship isn't an easy decision to make. However, taking this hard decision with all its consequences is usually less painful than having a relationship with a person they dislike, or they dislike them. Whether they decided to breakup with their partner directly, break up by ghosting, or by tricking them into breaking up, it will always be better than living a lie they cannot deny.

Written by: Ahmed Albaqshi

