

The ESOL

Ambassador

Volume 18 No.3 Spring 2017



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.

Subscriptions: The ESOL Ambassador is distributed to various individuals and departments at PCC. If you wish to receive issues regularly, please contact Sarah Bailie at CT 206 or by email at sarah.bailie@pcc.edu.

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Maryam Alobaidi

*Special thanks to all teachers
who contributed
student work.*



ESOL Level 1 students interviewed each other in class.

Here are two of their interviews:

Her name is Maria

She is happy.

She is busy.

She is not sad.

She is not retired.

She is not lazy.

She is married.

She is not single.

His name is Thanh.

He is from the Vietnam.

He is married.

He is tall.

He is very happy.

He is not angry.



Written by: Alem Medhanie

Written by: Hawraa Alogaidi

ESOL Level 2 students write about the hometowns they grew up in:

I was born in Junlian, China. It's a large town. There were 427, 5500 people. In 1997, the Dingshui River was polluted. There was a lot of garbage in the river. And the air was polluted too. But now the air and water is clean. In 1997, there weren't tall buildings and most were small buildings. There were dirt roads. There wasn't a lot of traffic, but in those years we took a bicycle. Some people were friendly, some were not. I think there were lots of jobs. In 1997, most people were poor. People could find work, but couldn't make a lot of money.

Written by: Zongyu Li

I was born in Trkutsk, Russia in 1953. When I was born, the population of Irtutsk was about 300,000 people. It was a quiet and calm city. There were many parks and trees. The air was clear. The rivers were unpolluted. There were a lot of fish in the river. The people were friendly. In the city, there were few tall buildings. In the city, there were many houses with two or three floors. There wasn't lots of traffic. But it was always very cold and there was a lot of snow in the winter. Work in the city was not difficult to find.

Written by: Klavdia Golonvynkh

ESOL Level 3 students write about life in outer space:**How to Make a Sandwich in Space**

Astronauts don't use bread in space because there is no gravity in space. Everything floats. If astronauts eat bread, they drop a lot of crumbs, and they float everywhere. So Chris can only eat tortillas.

First Chris needs to open the tortillas. Bag and takes it out. Then he opens the peanut butter and squeezes it on the tortilla. Next he opens the honey and spreads it on the tortilla. After that, he closes the tortilla and eats it. Finally he cleans up his hands with wipes.

Written by: Weifen Ding

How to Sleep in Space

Sleeping in space is different than sleeping on earth. There are four or five sleep stations in the International Space Station. The sleeping station is in node 2. There are six small bedrooms, with six sleep pods. Inside each one, a sleeping bag is tied on the wall. They sleep inside for eight hours every day. There is no gravity in space so everything is weight less. They don't need a mattress and pillow in space. They just relax every muscle in their body. When Chris gets ready for bed, first he puts on his pajamas. Then he floats up to the sleep station. After that he gets in his sleeping bag, and he zips up the zipper. Next he turns off the light, and he closes the door. Finally he relaxes.

Written by: Lucy Chen

How to Make a Sandwich in Space

Christy is astronaut. He's on the space station. He makes a sandwich. First he explains that he's going to use tortilla instead of bread because it makes crumbs. After that he opens the bag with a tortilla, and he shows a tortilla. Next he opens the bag with peanut butter, and he spreads it on the tortilla. Next step he squeezes a plastic bottle of honey, and he drops it on the tortilla. A sandwich is ready. He tries it. It's delicious. He cleans up his hands with the disinfectant wipes.

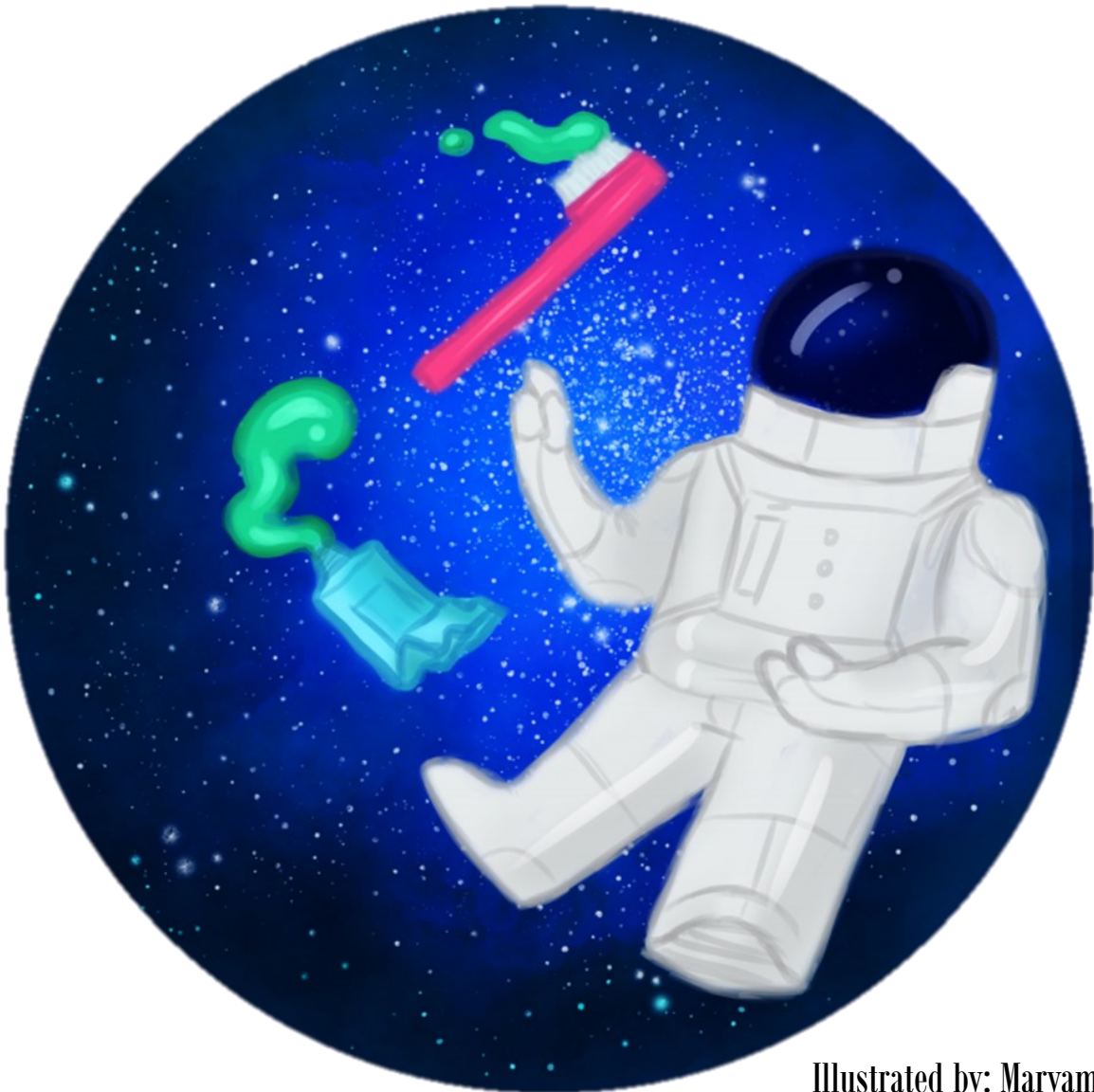
Written by: Vira Moroz

Life in Space: Brushing Teeth

Brushing teeth in space is not as easy as on the Earth. Our bodies change in space. The astronauts have to float to move. They have their own toothbrushes and toothpaste. These are kept in a personal pocket.

First, astronaut Chris Hadfield gets a toothbrush from his pocket. Then, he squeezes water from a ball onto the toothbrush. Next, he puts toothpaste on it and brushes his teeth. After that, he squeezes water, and he rinses his teeth and his toothbrush. Finally, he swallows the water. Living in space is not the same as living on the Earth.

Written by: Liubov Tiutriumova



Illustrated by: Maryam Alobaidi

ESOL Level 4

Best of Dubai

Dubai is a city in U.A.E. There are three places you should visit in Dubai. First, Dubai Mall is one of the largest malls in the world. Dubai mall has more than 1200 shops. It has a dance fountain. All restaurants at Dubai mall have a great view of the fountain. Second, Atlantis is a water park. It has 25 water games. You should spend a day at it. Finally, Burj Khalifa is the tallest tower in the world. It has 130 floors. At the top of Burj Khalifa are three international restaurants, so you will enjoy your food with a view to the city of Dubai. In my opinion, those 3 places are the best of Dubai.

Written by: Bandar Al Abdullatif



These ESOL Level 4 students write about important people:

My Wife

There are many reasons my wife is an interesting person. One reason she is an interesting person is that she is very smart. She uses her time well and is very organized. Also she can turn any bad situation into a good one. Another reason she is an interesting person is she is very patient. She knows how to handle kids when they are being bad. My wife always has a great attitude no matter what. Finally, the last reason my wife is an interesting person is she's hardworking. My wife always gets things done. She has multiple jobs as a manager, mom, wife and more. As you can see, my wife is an interesting person. I'm lucky to have her in my life.

Written by: Sergio Patin

My Uncle

The person that I am truly proud of is my uncle. He was a doctor. He graduated from a university in London, England, in 1971, and they chose him as one of the best doctors at the university. He did many incredible surgeries, and he helped people to stay alive. Also, he performed many surgeries in different countries. He was a traveling doctor so he knew many things about the cities that he visited. Finally, my uncle was an awesome person, and I am proud of his job.

Written by: Sarmed Atuhafi

My Favorite Person in the World

My wife is the most important and interesting person in my life. We met a few years ago, and that moment our lives changed. She has a lot of good characteristics. For example, she is smart, beautiful, funny, and she is the strongest person I know. Also, she came here from Guatemala five years ago and she began again. All the time she strives for her dreams. First she started to study English in the morning and she worked in the afternoon. She learned English very fast and she got a new and great job. Currently, she works at Walgreens. For me, she is perfect. I love her! She is a good example of overcoming. She has a smile on her face all the time. She lights my days and I am so happy with her. I hope to be with her all my life. For that and more reasons, she is my favorite person. She didn't change the world, but she changed my world.



Written by: Lenin Guerrero

My Cousin

There are many reasons why I think my cousin is an interesting person. She has traveled and worked in many places. For example, she was a tour guide in Egypt, a student in Madrid, Spain, and she also worked in Spain. She learned a lot about different cultures and languages. Also my cousin worked a variety of jobs before she went to university. For example, she was a waitress and a sales rep. Later she went to school and became an orthodontist. My cousin is a really interesting person and I really admire her.

Written by: Montserrat Saldana

My Grandson

My grandson is an agreeable and friendly child. When he was only five years old, he traveled and lived in many places. For example, when he was six months old, he traveled to California with his mother. A year later, he traveled to Japan to visit his father and after that, he went to Vietnam to live with me. He enjoys being everywhere. Also he can stay with everyone. When he was one year old, every weekend he went to stay with his mother's friends. He was always happy with them. This is the reason why he is not afraid of strangers. He loves all of the people he meets. He has attended many different schools, so he always has new friends. My grandson is very friendly with everyone, and so everybody loves him. He is an agreeable and lovely child. Currently we are living together in southeast Portland.

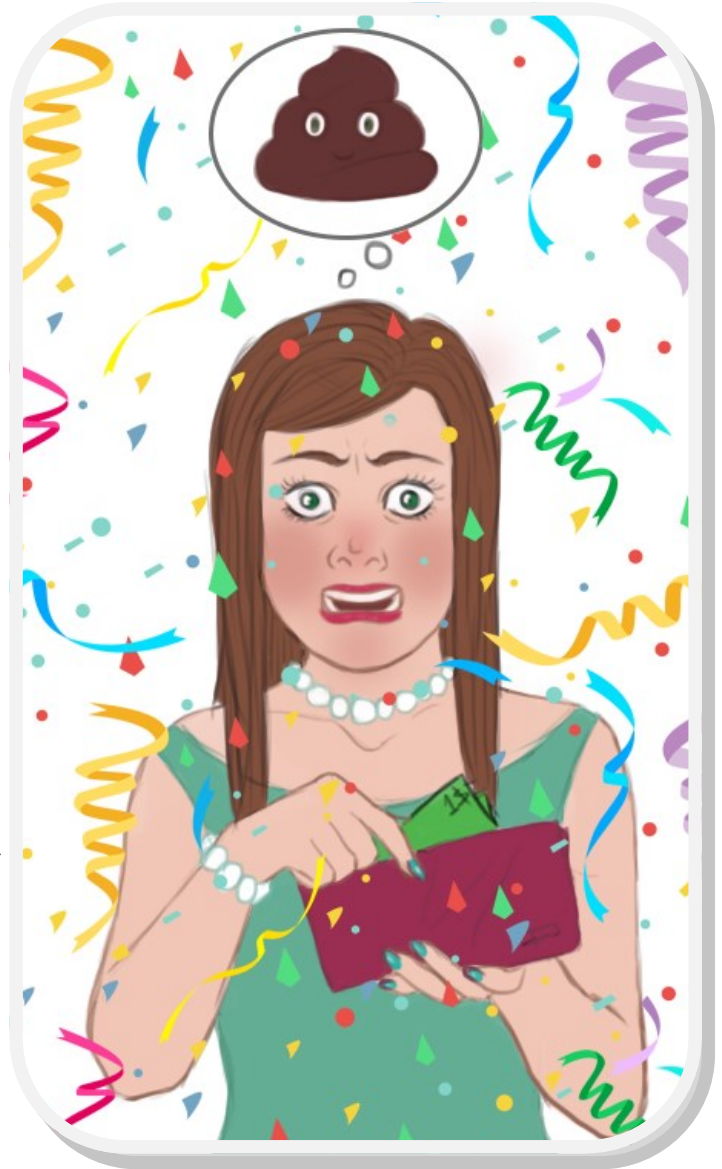
Written by: Lan Duong

This Level 4 Student writes about an embarrassing memory:

The Most Memorable Experience in My Life

One day, when my coworkers invited me to a party for my birthday the first time in America, I was very happy and looked forward to that moment. When I arrived in America, I worked at Ametek Company. At the end of work day, I was surprised when a group of my friends told me that they would be holding my birthday party at a favorite restaurant of mine. I was very happy from the day of work. At the restaurant, everyone there already waited for me, so we greeted each other. I sat down between my best friends, and we talked about food, culture, people, and the most amazing scenery from different countries around the world. Then, the food was served and we were all hungry. The waiter very busy and surprised by the amount of food consumption. Everyone enjoyed their meal, and I especially left some room for dessert with vanilla and chocolate ice cream cake. Finally, it was too late, so I said goodbye to everyone. I saw one by one paying for their own meals only, and I didn't know if anyone saw how surprised I was. What was wrong? I asked myself. Did I have to pay for my birthday dinner that they invited me to? I didn't bring money with me. My face turned flushed and hot because I was the last one and couldn't figure out what to do. I called my husband and told him the story. He was laughing at me and explained that was American culture, and he was the only who paid for my meal. In my culture in Vietnam, whenever anyone asked someone else to go out to eat, that person always pays for the meal. I will never forget this embarrassing memory, and I also hope that no misunderstanding will come to me again. Learning is never enough in my life.

Written by: Kim Cao



Illustrated by: Maryam Alobaidi

An interview with featured Ambassador artist *Maryam Alobaidi*, about her background, art, and inspiration.

Where are you from?

I was born in Mosul, Iraq but I lived in Baghdad, Iraq. My family and I would visit Mosul every summer to see our extended family.

What brought you to PCC Sylvania?

I want to go to school to get a degree (undecided yet) and PCC seems like a good place for me to explore what I want with life in general, and from what my friends who are already attending PCC have said, it will be great fun too.

How long have you been doing art? Can you describe what motivated you to learn art?

Around the time I was 5-6 there was a TV show called *The Small Atelier* that would air on weekend mornings. I remember waking up super early so I wouldn't miss it. the artist (Khalid Jeber) would take us step by step through how to paint or draw, but what stuck with me the most was at the end of every episode he would show some of the artwork the children my age and older would send him. I was just transfixed by how good they were and I wanted to be like them. Then, after the war and everything that was going on, art became an outlet for how I felt at the time.

What inspires you as an artist?

What inspires me in art is -as shallow as it may sound- beauty and how it provokes a variety of feelings when viewed. I also love making up stories and creating all kinds of universes where things that could never happen in reality come to exist.

What are your future plans?

My life has twisted and changed in the most unusual ways, and I learned to take life as it comes. All the goals that I have set are short term- in that way it lessens the fear of failure. So right now I want to go to school and find a field of study, and from there I'll see what life will throw my way.

***Maryam Alobaidi* will begin taking ESOL classes at PCC in the Fall of 2017.**

Welcome, Maryam!

ESOL Level 5 Students write about special places:**My Special Place**

My favorite place is the Aller river in my neighborhood in Germany. It is one of the biggest rivers in my town, Celle. I used to go there most of the time in the summer with my friends. We enjoyed swimming, relaxing, listening to music and other things. It was a great place for me to escape, especially when I needed time to think.

The river is popular for most of the young people who want to enjoy the water. Also, people can walk or ride a bicycle next to the river and the field. I loved to be there the whole day until night began. It is really beautiful in the afternoon when the sunset starts. When you sit next to the river, you can hear birds flying overhead, people talking, children playing, dogs playing in the water, teenagers playing music, and the rushing water. Sometimes I just closed my eyes, smelled the green meadow, and listened to people playing in the grass. Some people drive small boats or swim in the river. When you sit there and listen to music, you feel alone, and you can feel the air in your hair and face. In the summer, I used to go swimming in the river, and every year I met new people. We just sat together and listened to music and talked about the world. When the sun starts to go down, people come to take pictures of the view because the meadow on the other side of the river is beautiful. When the sun sets, you have a feeling of being free.

I loved to sit at the Aller during the day or in the evening after a hard day of work. I really miss this place because the fresh air and the colors of sunset lead you to dream.

Written by: May Von der Kammer

**A Beautiful Meadow**

My favorite place is a beautiful meadow, Kusa-senre, at afternoon in my hometown, Kumamoto in Japan. I like to go there at the end of summer.

I sit in the meadow near the pond. The blue sky is reflected on the surface of the water. Horses drink the water on the other side of the pond. There are lovely gentians blooming here and there. Some small coppers fly from flower to flower. Japanese silver grasses rustle in the breeze, and black-browed reed warblers perch on them and sing. I listen to their pretty symphony. There is a volcano a few miles

away when I face east. Mt. Naka gives out smoke as usual. The smoke goes up in the sky and fades away slowly. In the gentle sunshine, I close my eyes and take a deep breath. The air is fresh and clear. The cool breeze tells me it is the coming of fall. It's my favorite season.

I feel I can get away from my daily life, spend a relaxing time, and recharge my energy. It is my sacred place.

Written by: Kozue Hayashi

Gorge Rogers Park in Summer

My favorite place is George Rogers Park, which is in Lake Oswego. I love to go to the park, especially in summer.

First of all, the park has access to the Willamette River, and I can appreciate a river scene painted in delicate watercolors. I usually sit on the bench to enjoy the sunshine and stillness, and my children skip stones in the river. Also, there are some activities that our family members like, such as kayaking, stand-up paddle boarding, and swimming in summer. When I kayaked on the river at noon in summer, I love the way the sun reflects off the water. My children often hang out with their friends to swim and throw their Frisbee during summer vacation. Lastly, the park offers the lower shelter which has seven picnic tables and four barbeque pits. Electricity is available upon request. I really love outdoor barbecue cooking. When I eat barbecue and drink some wine at dusk, I feel that everything is still.

The delicious food, laughing children, and beautiful river view make me blissful and content. I really recommend that people should come by and enjoy the George Rogers Park in summer.

Written by: Sunmi Min

ESOL Level 5 Students write biographies of important people in their lives:

Ahead of Her Time

My grandma was one of the most famous people in Jerusalem at clothing alterations and making wedding dresses. She was born in 1931 in Nablus (North Jerusalem). When she was fifteen years old, she started to do alterations as a hobby. Two years later, when she was seventeen years old, she got married. When she was twenty-three years old, she started teaching alterations for ladies in the neighborhood. She was very

smart and hard-working. She had an accident and became paralyzed when she was twenty-seven years old, but that didn't stop what she was doing because she had an institute to teach alterations to ladies. In 1975, she moved to Jordan with her husband and their kids. There, she kept teaching and making wedding dresses. Since I was a kid, I don't remember buying any clothes. She made all the clothes for me and my siblings and my cousins. I remember her sitting at her sewing machine all day working. In 2009, she became sick, and in 2011 she died. I miss her very much.

Written by: Ahmad Aldasouqi

The Grandfather I Remember

Today, I visited the tulip garden, and I missed my grandfather so much. He was a farmer, and he used to have a big field in Vietnam like that. My grandfather's name was Hoang. He was born in a small town in the north of Vietnam in 1920, but he didn't live there for his whole life. He moved to the center of Vietnam when he was 16 years old. Four years later, he got married. He was a soldier until he got injured by a bullet in his shoulder in 1950. He quit and demobilized a year later. He started to be a farmer. He bought a big piece of land. Then he planted vegetables, such as green onions and broccoli. This job helped to support the whole family at that time and for several years. He had a total of seven sons and daughters. He loved them all so much. He also loved his grandchildren. He was a kind person. He died in 2012 because of a heart attack. It was a great loss for our family. I also missed him for a long time afterwards. Our family often visits his tomb and reminds ourselves about our beautiful experiences together in the past. I just want to say I love him so much.

Written by: Huy To



Korean and American

I love my uncle-in-law's life story, and I admire his courage because he has lived a special life. He was born in South Korea in 1952. It was during the Korean War. His mother was a Korean nurse for the U.S. Army, and his father was an American soldier in South Korea. After the war, his father had to go back to the U.S.A., and his mother died when he was eight years old. He was orphaned, and he was adopted to the U.S. in 1960. He has lived in Oregon since then. After he graduated from college, he became a carpenter, and he got married and had a baby. One day, he decided to find his family in South Korea. He remembered his Korean name and his relatives' and uncle's names, so he returned to South Korea in a successful effort to find his Korean family in 1985. Now, he has almost forgotten the Korean lan-

guage, but he remembers some words and children's songs. He still likes spicy food, and he loves kimchi also, so my husband and I sometimes go to his favorite Korean restaurant with him. He often tells about his story. He sometimes cries when he talks about this story, but he thinks he is a happy and special person. These days, he is trying to speak more Korean to us, and he plans to visit Korea this year, so he is very excited. Even if I have not known him for a long time, I admire and love him very much.

Written by: Kyungbin Woo

My Aunt

My aunt Rata is a beloved relative of mine. She is a very observant and creative person. She always likes looking for something new and likes to invent new ideas. She was born in Bangkok on March 15th, 1972. Rata has short hair, black eyes, and is medium height. She can speak Thai, English, and Chinese, and she can listen, speak, and read English very well. She studied Communication Arts at Columbia College in the U.S.A. 23 years ago. Now, Rata is a hostel owner in Bangkok. De Talak Hostel opened in 2012. My aunt is single because she loves to travel and likes looking for something new. When she goes to travel in another country, she always likes looking for and thinking carefully about new places or products, and she usually tells a story to her mother and me. Last year, I went to Japan with my aunt. She taught me to look and consider how to use and think about innovative Japanese products. When we went to attractions and looked at some buildings, she always asked me, "Why does the building have this design?" In the future, my aunt wants to build a new hostel in Cha-Am, Prachuap Khiri Khan. It has a new concept for people who are long retired, or the elderly, who seek a cure for illness in Thailand. Also, she creates and looks for a lot of new projects for herself, and she shares some projects with me. Rata is a creative and active person.

Written by: Phantira Chaipatkul



ESOL Level 6

Twenty Four Hours

Amid the sounds of gunfire and war, I was standing behind the operation room and anxiously waiting for the news. My mother-in-law and my sister were standing beside me waiting for a nurse to tell us about my wife who was giving birth. Every now and then, sounds of gunfire interrupted our prayers and excitement. Although the birth of a first child should be exciting for every man, I experienced a wide range of ambivalent emotions such as anxiety, loss, and happiness.

At the start of the day, I felt a lot of anxiety throughout the morning. I was worried about my wife because her surgery took a long time with no updates. Also, I was worried about my baby because he had passed his due date. Further, I was concerned about the future, maybe because of the civil war, or the responsibility that I would have soon. I was thinking a lot about financial obligations. For these reasons, I was really anxious and I needed support.

Around lunchtime, I kept thinking about my late mother. I wished that my mother was there for me. I really needed her support. She was a very sensitive person, so her emotional support would be very helpful for me. Also, she was going to be a great supporter for my wife in moments like this. I wished that I could see her happiness to see her son becoming a father. I pictured her holding her grandson. She would have been proud of me.

When my wife was finally out of surgery at 2 p.m., I was really happy and excited. It means a lot for any man to become a father. I was excited because my little family was going to be bigger. The first moment that I saw my little son, I felt like I was the king of the world. He is a piece of me and fruit of our love. Also, I was very happy when I saw my wife smiling, and she was fine after the surgery. All of these moments were very pleasant and joyous.

Overall, I went through a lot of mixed feelings. I experienced too many different emotions in one single day. That day was hard and exciting. New memories have been made, and old memories of my mother were present. Even though I had ambivalent emotions that day, those twenty four hours were the best in my life.

Written by: Kaled Tagiuri

ESOL Level 6 Writing



The Nowruz: Kurdish New Year

Each country has a different way to celebrate the New Year. In general most of the countries celebrate the New Year on January 1st, however, as a Kurdish nation, we organize party in some of the indoor places on January 1st. But we consider (Nowruz) as our new year which is on March 21st, with the beginning day of spring season. Nowruz is a compound word of (New-Roz) which means new day. Nowruz is our traditional family ceremony which all extended family convenes to an outdoor picnic for celebration.

In the early morning on March 21st, the Nowruz day, every one of family wakes up so early to be ready on time to go to the big family picnic. Women are in the kitchen cooking delicious Kurdish food: Dolma, Biryani, chicken and soup. Men are busy with preparing other stuff. Some of them prepare BBQ, tent, groceries, games like chess and Kurdish traditional games. Some others prepare pillows, blankets, and rugs and put them into the back of the car. Each family member, even the youngest ones, wears national Kurdish clothes. The kids bring their volleyballs and soccer balls to play with. They all should be ready on time and meet each other in one specific outdoor place, so they have already planned where they will go.

In the middle of the day, when the day almost approaches to the lunch time, everybody gets ready for lunch. Each family arrives at the place where they are supposed to meet after they have to pass a crowded street and busy traffic. Women and girls are busy with taking out their cooked food and putting the long cloth on the ground to have lunch on it for the whole family. Some men fix tents on the floor just in case it rains or when the sun becomes so strong and warm too. Each family cooks and shares different foods or desserts with all. After having lunch, all sit together for drinking tea with nuts and desserts. The oldest men play games and discuss about their daily routine life, and the others take pictures with their immediate family or with their cousins. Some of the cousins dance together to the Kurdish music and enjoy their time. The kids play soccer and volleyball with their cousins, but the youngest ones run around and dance. It is their favorite day and time. So all enjoy and have fun till the late afternoon.

In the approach of the evening time, everybody gets tired and hungry after playing, dancing and enjoying their time, so all get ready for the dinner time. Some of the men prepare and make Kebabs for the dinner, and two of them start to prepare BBQ and put coal on it to be ready to broil the Kebabs. Some of the young girls sit and chop tomatoes, vegetables and onions and put them on plates in a very nice way to eat them with the Kebabs. So when the Kebabs become ready, they all sit and have dinner together. After they have dinner and tea, the sun approaches to set and the day becomes a little dark. Each family is busy with packing their stuff and putting it back into their cars to be ready to return home. After packing all the stuff and cleaning the place of the picnic, they all hug and give best wishes for each other and head home.

This is how we celebrate our new year Nowruz in a traditional family way in my country. I feel so lucky and blessed to have a big family and an amazing traditional celebration like Nowruz every year. It is our family's favorite day because it is the day of being re-united with the whole extended family.

Written by: Berry Ahmed

ESOL Level 6 Writing

ESOL Level 7

My Family

My family is the sunlight of my day,
My family is the peaceful place where I can stay,
With them I feel happy.

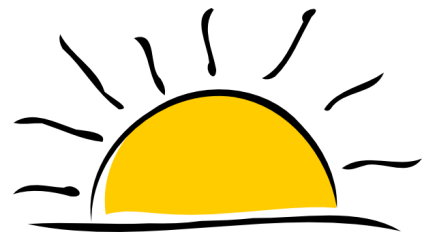
My family puts the hope and the love in my life,
My family is my memories which make me laugh,
With them I feel lucky.

My family is my power to face all my pain,
My family is my past, present, future and my plan,
With them I feel steady.

My family is my dad, mum, brother and sisters,
My family is me, my husband and my kids,
With them I wish to stay forever.

Written by: Doaa Elfeky

ESOL Level 7 Reading



How I Changed in Five Years

Time flies, but we rarely stop to think about how we change. Change happens slowly and unnoticeably on a day to day basis. What happens if we stop and take a look back? Here is how my life changed from when I was 18 years old to now, 5 years later. The three most significant changes were my character, values and my outlook on the future.

First, my character changed from being very shy to confident. When I was 18 years old, I was really shy. For instance, when somebody spoke to me, I could barely move my mouth to speak. In addition to being shy, I was also overly accommodating and had a hard time saying no. When someone asked me to do something, I would always say yes, even when I didn't want to do it. This could be something really simple, like, "Do you want to go to the movies with me?" Or, something more involved like, "Can you cut my hair for free?" (I was a trained hairdresser.) Now I am not shy at all, and I learned to stand up for myself. Sometimes it is hard, and I fall back into the old pattern of putting the needs of others before my own. However, saying no makes me feel empowered and gives me a feeling of control over my life.

Second, my values changed, too. When I was 18 years old, my family was not that important to me. I spent a lot of time with friends and took my mother, father and brother for granted. I enjoyed spending time with them, but I did not make it a priority. Now I call them every weekend, and we are very close. I think when you get older, your values change. In addition, I moved to another country, half-way around the world. It is as if the distance has brought us closer. Not living in their house and realizing how important they are to me has been a big change. Now when I come home, I make an effort to see my family as much as I can and we take trips together to create lasting memories. For instance, last Christmas I went home. My parents flew to Frankfurt to pick me up and we made the last leg of the journey from Frankfurt to Vienna together. At the airport, 10 additional relatives came to greet me. We all went out for dinner. It was nice, although they don't understand jetlag and I had a hard time keeping awake. It was worth it!

Finally, my plans for the future changed from wanting to be a hairdresser to considering a career as a preschool teacher. In 2012 I finished my vocational training as a hairdresser and started working in a hair salon. My job as a hairdresser was good but not perfect. I liked the interaction with people but could not imagine cutting hair for the rest of my life. Thus, I started to think about a career change. I realized that I really liked working with kids. While growing up, I was a babysitter for a lot of my family and friends in Austria. Could a job as a teacher be right for me? So in order to find out, I signed up for the Au Pair program and was matched with a family in Portland, Oregon when I was 20 years old. I am happy to say, I love being an Au Pair! Working with kids comes naturally to me and makes me happy. Kids are incredible, they help you

laugh when you have a bad day and every day they teach you something new. For example, one day my host kid came home claiming you can squeeze an egg with your hand without breaking it. Naturally, I did not believe her. I took an egg and a bowl, and squeezed the egg in my palm as hard as I could. I could not break the egg! Lara just stood there and laughed. I learned something new that day and she learned that you are never too old to learn.

Coming to the United States as an Au Pair changed my life. This single decision created a new path for me. My personality, values, and outlook on life changed completely. I like who I was, but I am very proud of who I have become. If I had stayed in Austria as a hairdresser, I would have probably changed as well. Time just does that to us. However, I would not have been able to make this big step without taking the risk of leaving my home, my country and all that is familiar to me.

Written by: Kerstin Burgstaller

ESOL Level 7 Writing

Changes are Welcome

“All changes are positive! Have confidence, be optimistic and you will see good results.” While I was growing up, this was a saying in my house. My grandma with her infinite wisdom used it frequently, perhaps to encourage me to face new challenges, maybe to help me to confront unexpected changes with bravery, or simply to help me to grow without the need to cling to anything. Because everything changes, evolves, grows... blooms!

To illustrate this theory, let's turn the clock back a decade in the past and view my life through a magnifying glass to see what my lifestyle was like, how I understood interpersonal communication, and what my student life was like compared to today.

The first difference I observe in my life is my lifestyle. Ten years ago I was living in Caracas, a cosmopolitan city in Venezuela. Now I am living in Portland, a very popular city in the Pacific Northwest of the United States. Before, I was single, and now I am married. In Caracas, I walked a lot and used public transportation to go to work, to the university or to go out to eat at a restaurant. I drove only to go to the beach, the mountain or somewhere outside the city. On the other hand, in Portland I use my car to go everywhere. While living in Venezuela, I traveled only within the border of my own country. Today, I can say that I have traveled to several foreign countries in Europe, North America and the Caribbean Islands. Before, my world revolved around my huge family: five siblings, five aunts, five uncles, thirty nine cousins. Now I have gained new family like my mother and father in law, but even they live far away from



Illustrated by: Maryam Alobaidi

me. In the past, I appreciated my family; however, today, I have learned to value my Venezuelan relatives who are so far away from my new home even more.

Another significant difference is the way that I understand interpersonal and intercultural communication and experiences. Early in life, my culture experiences were based on what I had read in books and what I saw in the movies or TV series like “Friends.” Now, my cultural understanding has evolved through travel and personal friendships with many people from all over the world. For example, my best friend is from Vietnam, and I have friends from Italy, Germany, Russia, Ethiopia, Thailand, Jordan, Costa Rica and the US. Thanks to these experiences and friendships, I have a better perspective of the knowledge of their countries and culture.

Finally, my student life has changed considerably. In Venezuela, I obtained a Master’s Degree, which made me feel like I had achieved an educational level very close to the top. However, in the United States, I felt like I had to start from the beginning as a first year student since I had to begin with learning English first. I spoke a single language before moving to the United States, and now I am almost bilingual. When I finished my studies in Venezuela, I thought I had finished my career as a student... sitting at a desk, enjoying class, doing homework, going to the library, meeting with classmates, eating in the cafeteria and taking exams. Now, I have become a student all over again, and I am doing all the things that I thought I had forgotten.

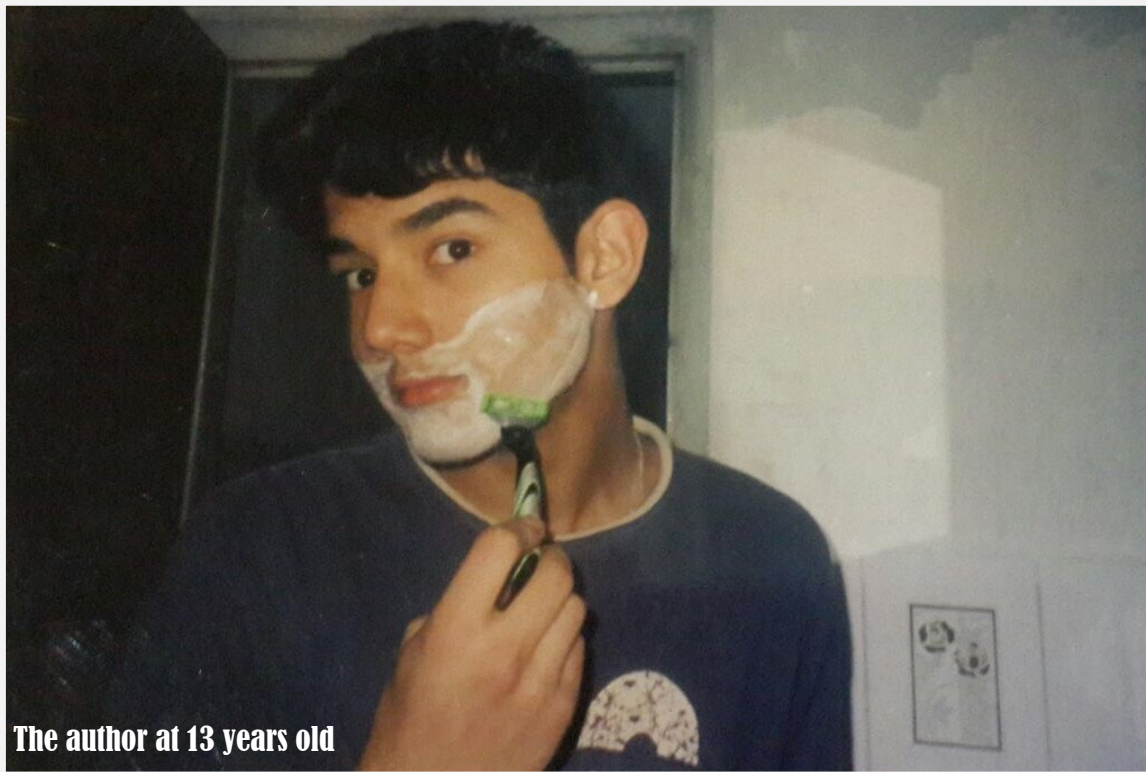
In conclusion, my grandma was correct! Even though changes seem heartbreaking, the way you deal with them is directly proportional to the results. In my case, some aspects of my life have changed remarkably such as my lifestyle, the way I understand life and my academic career. All of them have made me a better human being, more humble and more grateful. Therefore, changes are welcome in my life!

Written by: Rasec Benton

ESOL Level 7 Writing

My Changes in Ten Years

Think about yourself in the past ten years, or when you were 13-15 years old. Have you noticed any changes? Which ones are the most obvious? It is surprising that during the year we never notice some of these changes. I thought I didn't change at all, but when I thought more deeply about it and looked back on my memories, I found out that I was wrong. The most noticeable changes range from looks, personality, values and even location.



The author at 13 years old

My most obvious changes are physical. Ten years ago I was 13 years old, and I didn't have a mustache and a beard. My face was very soft and white. I didn't have long hair because my mom didn't like it; therefore, I wasn't allowed to grow out my hair. My vision was perfect, so I didn't have a need to wear glasses. I was around 5.2 tall, and my shoe size was 7.5. I was the only "chubby" boy in my family; however, that 13 year old Armin changed 180 degrees. Now, I have a mustache and beard on my face which I'm so tired of trimming every day. I have long hair, and it is a struggle to dry, brush, and keep it out of my face; I spend lots of time after every shower. Luckily I got taller than ten years ago, so now I'm 5.10. I have the weirdest feet ever; they fluctuate between 9.5-10.5, so I always have a problem with choosing shoes.

Some other obvious changes are personality, values and beliefs. My mother, sister, a few friends, and my relatives were the most important people in my life. I was religious (believed in Islam), and I prayed five times every single day. I didn't like tattoos and piercings at all. My mother was always complaining about me because I always got myself in some sort of trouble. I didn't take part in any responsibilities, so no one could count on me. After ten years my values didn't change much. My mother and sister are still important for me, but I did stop talking with some people who are not important or relevant in my life anymore. Also, someone really important came into my life who wasn't there before, and it is my girlfriend. I am not as religious as I used to be. I don't believe in any religions. Some people say I'm atheist; however, I believe in God, so I'm a deist. I became calmer and more responsible, and I like to make people laugh. I try as much as I can to stay

away from any sort of trouble and drama, also, now I have lots of tattoos and piercings which I realized is what makes me, me.

The last few obvious changes are location and education. When I was 13 years old, I lived in Gonbad-e-Qabous, Golestan, Iran with my mother and sister. Gonbad-e-Qabous is a small city with a small population. The weather in summer is so hot and humid, and in winter it is freezing. I was in middle school, and I wanted to be a pilot. I preferred to play video games to studying. Now I live in Portland, Oregon, USA by myself and far from my mother and sister. Portland is the city with lots of rain in the fall, winter and spring. Sometimes I can't see the sun for 3 months because of rain and clouds. Compared to Gonbad-e-Qabous, Portland is much bigger and more crowded. Moreover, I study at Portland Community College, and I want to be an architect. Because of I changed my major, I study harder than before.

No one can realize how much they've changed until they really sit down and think about it. So many people have let them down, left them, and so many new people surround them. New friends and new people count as their family, and new people influence them to be who they really are and push them to be the best form of themselves that they can be. Ten years ago, I would have never thought of changing *this* much. I didn't think I'd have the guts to grow out my hair, get tattoos and piercings, and live all the way across the world away from those who mean the most to me. This essay got me thinking of all the new changes that will occur in my life in the upcoming 10 years. Who's going to be new in my life? Who's going to leave? Will I have any children? How many? Guess we just have to wait and see.

Written by: Armin Bahmanyar
ESOL Level 7 Writing

The author today



Too much Spam

In the 21st century, the advancement of technology has been making our life and work easier in many ways. In particular, the Internet is the easiest and most widely used technology. However, most people deal with problems on a daily basis in their communication on the Internet such as receiving too much spam in emails. Spam is "unsolicited junk email sent indiscriminately in bulk, often for commercial purposes." (Stanford). Research of the University of Texas in May 2016 shows that from the total of 11,158, 253 email messages that were processed by the IronPort Antispam System, 81.1 percent (9,054,752) were detected as Spam by the filter. Among them 0.9 percent were suspected Spam, 8.6 percent were Marketing Spam and 90.5 percent were positive Spam. Therefore, it is important for individuals to know the security measures to solve Spam problems.

A significant amount of Spam email messages distract people's communication on the Internet. In day to day personal and business communication, people regularly use email to exchange ideas and information. However, most of these users receive junk emails from spammers. Of course, there are several well-known reasons for this major problem in their email communication. First, people subscribe to untrustworthy sites and use their primary email address in public websites, newsgroups or forums when surfing the Internet. As a result, their machines are attacked by viruses and personal information are stolen by spammers. Next, some of the email service providers get hacked and email addresses are sold to advertisers because it is a million dollar business for spammers (*NBCNews*). Consequently, users receive thousands and thousands of unwanted emails from spammers. Also, spammers are frequently looking for new ways to bypass Spam filter softwares even though companies like Google are constantly filtering spam emails for their users.

There are several ways to address the problem of too much spam emails. One solution for spam emails would be to add senders to black lists as soon as it is detected as a spam. There are many common signals that show whether it is a spam or not. For instance, when the incoming e-mail is moved automatically to Spam folder, we receive repetitive emails from unknown senders. We see unusual header and subject line information, and we see irrational requests like "free when you subscribed" or "subscribe and get your free ebooks." This method is the most effective way to alleviate the issue. In order to do that, a couple of steps will be needed. Thus, users can set up by themselves after reading or watching videos about setting up Spam filters. However, they can also get help from their school or office IT technicians if they need help.

Next, using a different email address for business communication is a possible solution to the problem of too much Spam. Whenever people subscribe to a public website, newspapers or forums, using a secondary email address is recommended. Thus, the primary address should be used only for personal and business communi-

-cation. Finally, users should not reply and open attachments for any emails which have unusual header and subject line information such as “Britney and friends”, New Book- "How To Juggle Women: Without Getting Killed or Going Broke," “\$1,000 for sending an e-mail”(MIT), and so forth. In fact, once spammers get a responding email, they will constantly send a message to the inbox. Therefore, never send any reply for such emails.

In conclusion, in this digital world technology plays a vital role in our daily activities. One of the technology products such as email is the most common medium to exchange ideas and information with friends and business colleagues. However, people experience a problem of receiving too much Spam emails because they subscribe undependable sites, using primary address to public websites, and others. Hence, users should set up spam filters, should not click on advertisements, should not open email attachments from unusual email header information and misleading subjects to protect themselves from such issues. Even though it is impossible to block completely, using these recommended ways helps to alleviate this major problem.

Written by: Leulseged Mequanint

ESOL Level 8 Writing



Illustrated by: Maryam Alobaidi

Common Types of Mental Illnesses

It is currently considered that anyone regardless of country, race, age, and gender can develop mental illnesses. In other words, they are no longer seen as uncommon as they were in the past. Mental illnesses are complicated because there are a number of types depending on their factors and symptoms, and it's difficult to find the onset of them. However, the study of psychology has evolved over the years, and it has been found that some mental illnesses are closely related to our life events and stress. Mental illnesses can be classified into several categories including anxiety disorders, mood disorders, and eating disorders.

First, anxiety disorders are one type of mental illnesses which result from an emotion such as fear, tension, and worry. People who have anxiety disorders can't control themselves when they strongly feel those emotions. Furthermore, it directly influences their body response such as intense heartbeat, panic, sweating, and shaking. According to Joseph Goldberg (2016), in the United States, approximately 40 million people who are more than 18 years old suffer from anxiety disorders annually. Anxiety disorders can be divided into generalized anxiety disorder, panic disorder, and social anxiety disorder.

One of the common anxiety disorders, generalized anxiety disorder, is caused by extreme apprehension or concern in everyday life (Goldberg). For example, people who have had a tragic experience because of natural disasters such as an earthquake often imagine that disasters will happen again and struggle with anxiety. Also, my acquaintance has an anxiety disorder, and she overly worries about danger or risk in her daily life. She has to go back home several times a day to check whether she locked the front door and every window. Otherwise, she can't focus on anything else. Panic disorder, on the other hand, causes unexpected and uncontrollable panic attacks which result from fright or nervousness, and it generally occurs outside including crowded spaces or certain situations (Psychology Today). For instance, some people have fear of heights and may panic at high places such as tall buildings and airplanes. There is another anxiety disorder called social anxiety disorder. Joseph Goldberg (2016) explains that social anxiety disorder is caused by tremendous fear and nervousness at social situations including speech-making and attending parties and activities. He also mentions that overstress that individuals feel makes it more difficult for them to engage in some activities in daily life.

Second, mood disorders are characterized by continuing extreme emotion of sorrow or exhilaration, or those feelings repeated alternately, states Joseph Goldberg (2016). People with mood disorders can't control their feelings, so these symptoms may have a negative effect on relationships between others around them. There are two main types of mood disorders, which are depression and bipolar disorders. Depression is widely known in the world. When individuals struggle with a period of sadness, they are deeply depressed and

tend to think of everything in negative ways. Most people with depression don't feel like doing anything or meeting anyone. On the other hand, bipolar disorder is associated with two opposite excessive feelings: sadness and happiness. People with a bipolar disorder experience the duration of depression with lack of energy and desperateness and the duration of mania with positive and exhilarating feelings alternately (Joseph). In this case, those completely different attitudes can make people around the person confused, so it not only has a negative impact on their relationships but also causes individuals great distress.

Finally, eating disorders are also mental illnesses related to food and weight. These disorders can be caused by tremendous concern about body image, stress or pressure. According to Joseph Goldberg (2016), people with eating disorders tend to be generally overweight or extreme underweight, and they can't control their diet themselves. This type of disorder includes binge eating, anorexia nervosa, and bulimia.

Binge eating is characterized by eating too much food. People with binge eating tend to be overweight and they can have not only obesity but also diseases such as diabetes, high blood pressure, and heart disease (Goldberg). Next, in his article, *Types of Mental Illness*, Joseph Goldberg (2016) describes that anorexia nervosa is a grave eating disorder which is common in females. He also points out that people with anorexia nervosa feel exaggerated anxiety about gaining weight, so it leads individuals to become extremely underweight and causes deadly health problems. For example, people who work in show business always care about their looks and body shape which are evaluated by others, so some of them suffer from anorexia nervosa due to an obsession with losing weight. Also, bulimia is one of the dangerous eating disorders causing repeated bingeing and purging (Goldberg). People with bulimia tend to consume too much food and continue to eat until they can't eat anymore. After that, they start vomiting by guilt from eating overly.

In conclusion, people living in modern society easily feel stress from family environment, school, work and life-changing events, and it can cause mental illnesses such as anxiety disorders, mood disorders, and eating disorders. In addition, there are some serious types of disorders that can cause suicide, so it is necessary to receive appropriate treatment as soon as symptoms are found. Therefore, being aware of the types of mental illnesses is valuable for our bright future.

Written by: Yukari Izumi

ESOL Level 8 Writing

