

VOICES

UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON



LANGUAGE AND CULTURE CENTER



FALL 2012



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From the Director's Desk

Congratulations as you complete the fall 2012 term of study in the Language and Culture Center. You have spent your time in an accredited and respected Intensive English Program with an excellent history and tradition of service to students. You have studied with classmates and friends in a dynamic university, which celebrates and welcomes international students.

On November 12, during the inaugural ceremony of the celebration of International Education Week on our campus, Ms. Anita Gaines, Director of the Office of International Student and Scholar Services, announced that the University of Houston has been recognized by the Institute of International Education as among the top twenty-five universities in the United States in terms of the number of international students studying on our campus. We are very happy to receive this recognition and to be a part of the vibrant and growing international student presence at the university. Thank you for joining your fellow international students in bringing intelligence, energy, and joy to the Language and Culture Center and to the University of Houston.

It is very likely that, during your experience in our program, you have had the opportunity to meet and talk with Mr. Dave Burns, LCC Program Director of Counseling and Student Services. Dave began working as a counselor in the LCC in May of 1985. Before that, he worked as a program assistant and teacher in several LCC programs. Dave has been a friend and counselor to LCC students for more than thirty years, and it is with very mixed feelings, that I tell you that Dave has announced his plan to retire from the LCC and the university on January 31, 2013. We are very happy for Dave as he completes a successful career in the service of international students, but we are very sad to say good-bye to a very dear friend and colleague. Through many good years, Dave has touched the lives of students from all over the world, and in this issue of Voices, we are pleased to acknowledge his dedication and service to the students and teachers of the Language and Culture Center.

The LCC will begin a search for a new Program Director of Counseling and Student Services and will likely have this position in place by the time Dave bids us all farewell. Meanwhile, Brad Powell, International Student Counselor, and Sam Long, SEVIS Compliance

Coordinator, will work with students in the counseling office. While Dave Burns can never be replaced, he has carefully trained Brad and Sam, both of whom are uniquely qualified to do their jobs, to work with the important personal, academic, and immigration issues facing international students and to maintain the very high standards of the LCC counseling office. Dave will be greatly missed, but he and I, together, assure our students that counseling and student services will remain an important and highly valued component of the LCC program.

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

This fall, we have been delighted to have 427 students from 44 countries in our program and on our campus. As the fall term of 2012 closes, we wish you a safe and productive academic break. Fall classes will end at the close of graduation ceremonies on December 13, 2012. The LCC office will be open through December 21, 2012, and then will close for the Winter Break and open again on January 2, 2013. Online registration for the spring term will begin on January 8. We look forward to seeing many of you again in the New Year for the Spring, 2013 term in the Language and Culture Center.


Joy Tesh
Director



Thippanart Saesiw, Tongna Alain Rodrique Zoure, Hilal Katibe Ekici, and Ludiolma Oliveira Receive LCC Scholarships



The Language and Culture Center awards four scholarships each term to returning students who best combine academic excellence and leadership with international awareness and cross-cultural understanding. Traditionally, one full scholarship honors Joyce Merrill Valdes, the founder and first director of the LCC. A second full scholarship honors Joseph O. Davidson, who served as director of the LCC for 22 years before retiring in 2006. These two full scholarships cover the cost of tuition, fees, and medical insurance for one term of study in the Intensive English Program. In addition, the LCC awards merit scholarships of \$1500 each for one term of study in the Intensive English Program. At the summer graduation ceremony on Thursday, August 9, 2012, the LCC awarded the Valdes scholarship to **Thippanart Saesiw**, the Davidson scholarship to **Tongna Alain Rodrique Zoure**, and the two merit scholarships to **Hilal Katibe Ekici** and **Ludiolma Oliveira**.



Thippanart Saesiw was awarded the Valdes scholarship. **Ms. Saesiw** is from Thailand and is studying in level four. This is her fourth term at the LCC. Upon completing her study of English, she will return to her country and work as a flight attendant to earn money to support her family and to help her brothers complete their schooling. **Ms. Saesiw** said that she was proud of receiving the scholarship and added, "I work hard everyday to make good scores and to learn new cultures from around the world. Thank you for giving me such a great opportunity."



Tongna Alain Rodrique Zoure was awarded the Davidson scholarship. **Mr. Zoure** is from Burkina Faso. He is studying in level five having skipped from level 3 the term before. After completing the intensive English program, he will pursue a degree in Public Health with a concentration in Maternal and Child Health. In regard to receiving the scholarship **Mr. Zoure** remarked that it encouraged him to keep doing his best. He said, "Everyone can achieve one of these scholarships, and hard work is what counts."



Hilal Katibe Ekici was a recipient of a merit scholarship. **Ms. Ekici** is from Turkey and is currently studying in level six. She has been a student at the LCC for six terms. She plans to study for a master's degree in Education at UH after graduation. **Ms. Ekici** remarked that before she had received the scholarship, she had begun to say "goodbye" to friends and teachers at the LCC, but added, "Upon receiving the scholarship, I was surprised and honored. I am so grateful for my teachers. Also, I want to thank my husband for supporting me."



Ludiolma Oliveira was also a recipient of a merit scholarship. **Ms. Oliveira** is from Angola. She is currently studying in level four. This is her second term of study at the LCC. She plans to pursue a degree in Petroleum Engineering at the University of Houston. **Ms. Oliveira** remarked, "At graduation, I had prepared myself to win or not to win, but fortunately, I won and it was wonderful and amazing. I give thanks for this opportunity that God and the LCC gave me."



We congratulate **Thippanart Saesiw, Tongna Alain Rodrigue Zoure, Hilal Katibe Ekici, and Ludiolma Oliveira** on their outstanding records in the Intensive English Program at the Language and Culture Center, and we wish them great success as they continue to study in the United States. We all look forward to learning who will be the next LCC scholarship recipients at the fall graduation ceremony.

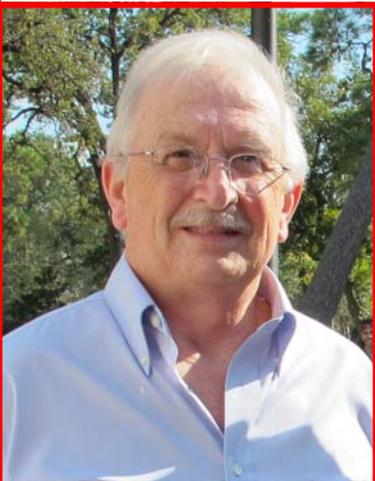
Sandy Woodson
Associate Director

Tribute to "our" Dave

As I wrote in another article for this edition of Voices, our Program Director for Counseling and Student Services, Dave Burns, is planning to retire after many years of service at the LCC. Dave is a respected colleague and has been a very good friend to teachers and students. Some of us have worked with Dave throughout his career, and we cannot imagine the LCC without him. As a tribute to Dave, I want to share this information about his background and his reasons for working at the LCC.

Many years ago on a farm on the banks of Indian Creek in Kentucky, Dave Burns was born. He says that growing up on a farm and living in a rural community was a wonderful experience; however, there wasn't much contact with people from other countries or cultures. He used to pick up arrowheads in the fields and wonder about the Indians who had lived there long ago. He also read a lot about different places and peoples. In the summers, he would travel with his family to visit his grandparents in Louisiana where there were different kinds of people and where he could sometimes hear French spoken in the stores and streets. Dave liked the experience and wanted to learn and know more. In his third year of high school, Dave was chosen to attend a ten-day conference on international affairs at the University of Louisville. This was his first introduction to knowing and working with people from different countries, and he found the experience very interesting and satisfying.

After attending a small college in Kentucky for two years, Dave moved to California and lived in San Jose and then Santa Cruz. In California, he came in contact with many different kinds of people. He went to work for an import company in Santa Cruz where he had to learn to read a bit of Spanish in order to understand some of the documents he dealt with. He also learned about other countries through his work with artifacts from around the world -- such as Turkish "evil-eye" beads, Afghan jewelry, Indian textiles, Mexican crafts and clothing.



After working several years, Dave decided he needed to finish his education and returned to Kentucky to the University of Louisville where he graduated with a Bachelor's degree in psychology. He also worked part-time in a mental hospital there. For his Master's degree in clinical psychology, he went to the University of Texas at El Paso. He says that one reason he went there was because he missed the Hispanic influence he had grown used to in California. He wanted to live in the desert, and besides, he says it was hard to get a good burrito in Kentucky. He had many good experiences and made good friends in El Paso and also worked as an intern counselor in a mental health clinic. When his two years in El Paso were finished, he didn't want to leave and has often thought about going back.

Dave then came to Houston where he took additional graduate courses and worked at the University of Houston. He worked in academic advising and taught psychology classes, and we are happy to report that one of his jobs was that of student assistant at the Language and Culture Center. In that capacity, he worked in the AV Lab, in what is now called the CALL Lab (but this was before the lab had computers), and as a conversation class leader. He discovered that he really liked working with international students.

Many experiences led Dave into international student counseling: his major in psychology and his work in different mental health settings, his work in teaching and advising, and his growing interest in cross-cultural studies and topics. He began working as the international student counselor at the LCC in May of 1985. He says this was the right choice for him and that he has enjoyed the job the whole time he has been here. He has appreciated being a part of the LCC students' adjustment to and success in reaching their personal and academic goals.

Dave has worked in the LCC all these years because of the students, but he tells me that he has also greatly enjoyed working with the teachers and administrators. He says his LCC colleagues are like family, and he appreciates their dedication to the mission of the program and their caring for LCC students. We hereby acknowledge Dave Burns' unique and immeasurable contribution to our people and our program. We wish him only the best as he plans his departure on January 31, 2013. He is truly an LCC legend. We will say farewell, but we will never let him go.

Joy Tesh

Class Picture Day



Influences of English Language and Culture on Saudis Ahmad Alshammari - 4B

Influences...

As we know, English is an international language which is used by many people around the world. Because of that, English might affect other languages in different minor or major ways. Its minor influences, in my opinion, are songs, movies, and TV. Big influences, which I'm going to discuss here, could be jobs, education, and travel.

Nowadays, one of the requirements to get a good job with high salary in Saudi Arabia is to know English. That is why many people in my country tend to learn English. There are international companies, such as Aramco and Sabic in my country where many Saudis are interested to work in. These companies have a variety of employees from different countries because the common language to communicate with each other is English. Also, hospitals in Saudi Arabia hire people with good knowledge in English for the same reason.

Secondly, education system in Saudi Arabia has changed in the last ten years. The government has started teaching English to students from the third year in elementary school. Also, a lot of Universities ask students to study

just English for one year before they start their major. This is called orientation year, and it is a requirement now.

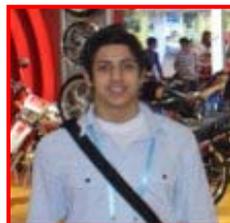
Finally, travel is one of the big influences of English on Saudis' lives. A lot of Saudis need translators to help them to communicate with people in other countries. A lot of Saudis who like to travel begin to learn some English words and sentences. For Example, my uncle likes London, and he always visits London twice a year, so he has learned English because he likes London; it is really a simple reason.

In conclusion, jobs, education, and travel have been influenced by English in Saudi Arabia. In some jobs, English is always required. Education system in Saudi Arabia has started to pay more attention to English in the last ten years, and for traveling to other countries we need to learn English. These are the influences that are most known in Saudi Arabia.



The Influences of American Language and Culture on my Language and Culture Abdulrahman Alzahrani - 4A

American language and culture has had important influences on Arabic language and culture in Saudi Arabia. First of all, we all have realized that English is the most commonly used language in the world, so English has been used in our daily life more than before. It has been used in many government departments, schools, and universities. It is just because it has become an important foreign language in my country and the only language that we can communicate with a large number of people around the world. Also, because of



American movies, we have been using some common words in English like *Hello*, *Ok*, *Bye*, and even short sentences like *How are you?* in our everyday language without translating them! Another influence of American culture has been on our food and the way we dress. We used to care more about our culture and traditions, but now everything has changed. For example, we used to eat Arabic food every day, but now we usually depend on American fast food because it's **FASTER** and doesn't take us much time to prepare it. In addition to that, we used to wear our traditional clothes everywhere and every time, but in these days, we sometimes like to wear casual and cool clothes like Americans. In conclusion, I should say that these influences have a lot of advantages that make us think about how we will be tomorrow.

The Global Language Chao-Chien Chen (Joey) - 4A



I come from Taiwan, and our official language is Mandarin. Maybe most of you know more about Chinese. Yes, Mandarin is part of Chinese.

We usually speak Mandarin with our family, friends, or coworkers in our everyday life. Even though we use Mandarin a lot, we still have English classes in our education system, but it is just to study it. We are not really speaking English in our life. Most people acknowledge that English is very important all over the world, especially in some domains such as the business world or science. They improve their English and use English a lot. Most of them can speak English very well, but usually they just use English at work. They don't use English to communicate in their everyday life; maybe their family doesn't speak English. I think English is very important because it is a global language. I can use English not just at work, but also while I travel, or I can use it to make friends all over the world. So, that is why I am here now!

Influence of American Language and Culture Hussain Alramadan - 4A

How do you think our life is influenced by American language and culture? I believe it is influenced by immigration, American movies, and computer games. Many people come to Saudi Arabia to work. For example, many people from the United States came to work in my country in 1932 when we discovered oil, and since then they have been living and working here. Also, American movies have given us a good idea about American culture and language. For example, we have special channels which play American movies. So, this is the way we have gotten good and bad ideas about American lifestyle, but my perspective has changed about American culture since I came to the U.S.A. I believe these movies show us not just the English language but also a little about American culture. Additionally, video games have taught us a lot of important words. For example, I play a lot of video games, and I have to watch the videos to understand the game and to solve the problems. This is how I have improved my English vocabulary. In short, I believe through the ways I mentioned above, you can improve your English very fast, and you can learn about American culture, as well.



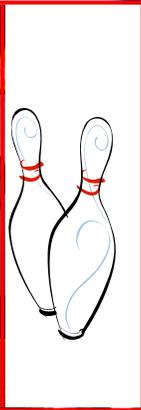
English in Vietnam Nhung Nu Nguyen (Sophia) - 4A

Globalization has led to the importance of studying English in recent years in Vietnam. Like other countries in the world, many Vietnamese, especially younger generations, have been studying this international language. They are taught English when they are in primary school. Nowadays, Vietnamese teenagers usually show off their English skills by using some English words in their conversations such as: *Cool, It is ok, Hello, Bye, Thank you*, and so on. Many children have been given English names like Tommy, Tony, Tim, Emily, Christopher, etc., so a lot of young Vietnamese parents want to give their children English names. However, it is difficult for older generations, for example grandparents to call their grandchildren by English names. They change and call people by those names based on Vietnamese pronunciation, so sometimes those names have funny meanings in Vietnamese. Take the name Christopher as an example. Christopher is pronounced by separating *Ch- ris- to- pher* in Vietnamese, and *pher* is pronounced like a kind of noodle soup! In sum, I can say that the influence of English on Vietnamese language has been considerable.





Sports Tournament



Sports Tournament



Venezuelan-American Style

Ana Alvarez - 4B



My country, Venezuela, has been influenced by the culture and language of many countries, such as the United States of America. This change was started by Petroleum Exploration. From the early 20th century, many US oil companies started to work in Venezuela. Throughout the years, this influenced our language, food, clothing, bars and discotheque decorations, and malls. But these influences have never made us forget about our own traditions, beliefs, or values.

Although our official language is Spanish, English is mandatory to learn in elementary schools, high schools, and universities in Venezuela. English is the most common language in business, restaurants, and hotels, and if you are proficient in English, you can obtain better jobs. Knowing English also facilitates taking graduate courses and MBA. Also, many people in Venezuela consider English as a way to improve their position in society and to succeed in their life. Additionally, many Venezuelans give American names to their children, such as Michael, James, Roger, Richard, Elizabeth, and Nathalie. There are also many words in English that are used in Spanish. Usually their pronunciation and spelling change when we use them in our language. There are many examples such as champú (shampoo), biquini (bikini), dólar (dollar), hamburguesa (hamburger), ketchup (name for all tomato sauces), bluyin (blue jeans), and birra (beer).

We have a great variety of Venezuelan delicious cuisines, but from 1980, all those fast food res-

Influences...

taurants, American restaurants, food delivery, and all kinds of ready foods started to become popular in Venezuela. Our people do not usually eat those kinds of food, but we enjoy them only on special occasions, or when we are too lazy to cook! These foods are not 100% American, but they are made in American style but based on our customs and popular taste. When I first came to the US, I would go to MacDonalD's, Quarter Pounder, or the Hot-Fudge Sundae. To me, the food did not have the same taste like the same stores in my country.

In the same way, in Venezuela American brands like Levi's, Nike, Puma, Victoria Secret, Adidas, Reebok, etc., share the market with Venezuelan products. US celebrities also influence people to buy such products. You can also see people wearing Venezuelan Baseball League T-shirts (Leones del Caracas) as well as NY Yankees T-shirts.

Finally, in Venezuela it is very common to see many local bars and discotheques with American names and decorations in American style where you can just hear American music and see a big US flag, and when the DJ plays El Alma Llanera (Venezuelan folk music) at the end, it means that the party is over, and it is time to leave!

In conclusion, I should say that US has influenced Venezuela in many different ways maybe because "en la variedad está el gusto" (variety is the spice of life), but we try to keep our own traditions, foods, and also language at the same time.

The Influence of English Language on México

Kevin Cosbert - 4A



In my opinion, English language has had a big influence on my country because the U.S. is our neighboring country, and also because Mexico is a country with a lot of tourist attractions. That's why learning English is a necessity for Mexican people. For example, if some German people visit México, probably they do not speak Spanish, and we do not speak German either, but what we both speak is English. This is a good example of why we need a common language to communicate with foreigners, and that language is English.

Nowadays, 90 percent of Mexican schools teach English as a requirement. Also, in most important jobs knowing English is a necessity. In conclusion, if you want to become successful in Mexico, you need to learn English.



BEST TEAM EVER !!!



The Impacts of English Language Karina Herrera - 4B

In my country, Bolivia, like many other countries, the ability to learn English determines if you can increase your living standards, or if you will remain in poverty. Generally speaking, in Bolivia you are considered highly educated if you can speak English properly besides your native language because nowadays, English has a significant impact on political issues and business; it is also required for commercial development. In Bolivia, when you learn how to speak English, there are unlimited opportunities for you because speaking English is a requirement for many companies. The use of the Internet, Hollywood movies, and English songs are the main factors that influence people and encourage them to learn English.

One of the biggest influences to learn English in

Bolivia is the Internet. Many people use the Internet for different purposes like research or playing games that are in English, and that makes them learn the language.

The second influence is Hollywood movies. All the movies that come to my country from Hollywood are in English. Of course, they have subtitles in English, and some of them are translated into Spanish, but sometimes when you see the movie in English, and then you see it in Spanish, there are things that don't match very well. Therefore, many Bolivians prefer to see the movie in English which makes them learn English better.

The third influence is English songs. Many artists, nowadays, sing in English, and when people hear them, they are interested to learn the lyrics which are, of course, in English.

In conclusion, there are many factors that influence people to learn English in Bolivia, but the factors that have the greatest influence are the Internet, Hollywood movies, and English songs.



**Proud to be
Polish
Paulina Popek -
5A**



Last summer, when I came to the United States, I met so many nice people.

The first question they would ask me was where I was from. When I would say I was from Poland, their facial expressions would show that they had no idea where it was; however, they used to respond, "Ahhhh, so you drink vodka every day?" That's the only information most Americans have about Polish people. Poland is not a big European country in terms of geographical size or population, and due to globalization, our culture has been changing diametrically over the last several years. Nevertheless, there are some distinct characteristics which remain unchanged in Polish culture: a fighting spirit, a penchant for resourcefulness, a love for soccer, and a love for our music and way of celebrating different events.

The most important feature of Polish identity is our fighting spirit. In the whole history of Poland, we have always had to fight for everything we got. After the Third Partition in 1795, we lost our country to Russia, Austria, and Prussia. However, we never gave up trying to regain our independence. Moreover, despite attempts to destroy Polish national consciousness by the invaders, we have never broken under the pressure. Indeed, we showed our fighting spirit in bloody uprisings, which led our country to independence. Poland also fought against the Soviet Union for freedom of speech and democracy during the Communist

Who am I?

period. Everything that we have now was gained by sacrifice and fight. That's why Polish people are proud of their history, and they are always ready to stand up for their country and rights.

Second, Polish people are known for their resourcefulness. We have a famous saying in our country that "Polish can do it." The word "it" means actually everything. The most creative group in Poland is the one made up of college students. Usually due to a limited budget, college students need to be ingenious to survive with very little money. For instance, not having an iron is not a problem for them. If they need to press their clothes, they can use a pan! For us nothing is impossible; they are just challenges. Another group that is able to make something from nothing is construction workers. They do not need any special equipment. They can use items of everyday use as accessories to build a house! Their imaginative power has no limits.

The next aspect that defines Polish culture is our love for soccer. Soccer is the most popular sport in Poland, but no one knows why! Even though we have one of the worst national teams in the world, we never lose hope to be the best. Despite losing every match, we have amazing fans. In our culture, love for soccer is a tradition passed down from generation to generation. Fathers make their children watch soccer games as soon as they are able to sit in front of television. Every performance of our national team is a really big deal for the whole country. Our fans decorate their houses and cars in white and red, which are the colors of our flag. Poles always cheer for our players and never lose hope to win the next match.

Another important part of our culture is the music. The most widely musical form of our country is disco polo. Disco polo was popular in Poland in the 90's. The rhythm and words are really simple, so everyone remembers the songs. Every Pole has to know hits like "Hejsokoły" or "Jesteśzalona." Most people are embarrassed to admit that they listen to disco polo, so it seems that no one listens to these songs; however, when it comes to a party, everyone sings them!

Finally, our nation is known for long parties and the consumption of a lot of alcohol. For Polish people, there is no bad time for a party. We always find a reason to celebrate. When an occasion is really special, for example a wedding, we are able to party seven days in a row and on the eighth day go to work. We believe that a good celebration makes the marriage successful. In Poland there is a lot of peer pressure to drink. If you are a Pole, you should be able to drink a lot of vodka. It is not really a wise tradition, and we do not drink every day.

Although Polish culture has become similar to America's, there are some aspects that are unlikely to change. Our fighting spirit, resourcefulness, enthusiasm for soccer, disco polo music, and our special way of celebrating different events are major characteristics of the Polish nation. Personally, I have tried to find my own unique way of living, I respect other cultures and learn from them; nevertheless, I still identify with my country, and I'm proud to be Polish.

"I don't have any identity. I don't know who I am. The only thing I know about myself is my name." This is one of the most frequent answers one of my friends used to give when we asked him about his identity. These answers seem to make no sense, but in fact, they tell us a lot about him. Ask me the same question, and I will answer you that I am African, black, a Burkinabe, a Protestant raised in a lovely, modest, and kind family. These are the most valuable things I can have.

I am an African. I come from Africa, the land of freedom, the cradle of humanity from where our mother "Lucie" comes from: the mother of the whole humanity. I am the first civilized and the richest man in the world because Africa is the land of the first civilization and the richest land among the five continents. I am an African and proud to be it, and this is my identity.

I am Black; this is my color, and I feel good in this skin, no matter what other people believe about me. I am grateful to the One who created me black, and neither segregation nor criticism could change my mindset about my color. It is just a question of color; otherwise, we are all the same inside. For example, I have watched a movie about a white boy who was suffering from kidney failure and needed a healthy kidney to survive. Eventually, his father's coworker, a black police officer who was immunologically compatible gave him one of his kidneys and saved his life. His youngest boy asked his mother, "How can a black kidney work in a white body?", and she answered that black and white people are the same inside. Therefore, although we are the same in

the inside, my color gives me a sense of identity.

I am a Burkinabe from Burkina-Faso, which in one of the languages spoken in my country (Fulfulde), means the land of the upright people and the land of traditions and hospitality. Burkina is located in "the heart" of West Africa and gives all its sense to the role she plays for peace in this region of Africa. It is the land of valiant warriors with great history. It is well-known throughout Africa and around the world for its periodical cultural activities, such as FESPACO (Pan African Festival for Cinema of Ouagadougou held every four years) and SIAO (International Saloon for Craft of Ouagadougou held every 2 years). I am a Burkinabe raised in the great values of integrity, honesty, honor, respect, and love for my country and everyone else around the world. There is a melting pot with more than sixty tribes and a variety of languages in my country, and what keeps people in peace here is a wonderful heritage passed down from generation to generation. Furthermore, my father and my mother are Burkina natives, so I am a pure Burkina in whose veins "Burkina blood" is running. I am a Burkinabe and this is my identity.

Before being a Protestant and deacon at the International Church of Pentecost, I was a Catholic. I attended elementary and high schools with missionaries in order to become a priest and, therefore, received valuable moral lessons from the Bible. I am a Protestant which means I believe in one

God, the Father and the Creator of all the heavens and earth. The Bible is my law, my reference, and my religion. We believe that Justice, love, and faith should be the main goals for every human being on earth. This is who I am, a Christian, a Protestant.

The influence of my family has molded my personality. I have grown up in a kind, modest and lovely family with two sisters and one brother. Our parents taught us essential things about life. Among other things, they taught us love for one another disregarding origin, age, or social class because all humans are equal. Another thing is courage and perseverance in everything we do in order to succeed. All these have led me to become a medical doctor and to be here in the US to keep on pursuing my main goal.

"If you do not know where you are from, you will never know where you are going." Knowing who I am helps me to learn about my identity, and that gives me the sense of being on the right path: I am African, Black, a Burkinabe, a Christian-Protestant raised in a kind, lovely, and modest family.

This is my identity which I am proud of.



Who am I?

To Be a Latin American, Venezuelan, and a Vidal- Pinto Member

Daniella Cristina

Vidal Pinto - 5D

At age 23, I am so proud to say that I am a Latin American, Venezuelan, and a member of a great family. Growing up in Latin America has obviously had a huge impact on the person I am now. Being born in Venezuela defines me even better. The last but not least important aspect of my ethnic identity, being a Vidal-Pinto member, has taught me all the values and principles that make me a well-mannered person.

People from other countries or cultures think that Latin Americans are the friendliest people ever. I do agree with that. I am not saying that people from other cultures are not kind; of course, there are beautiful people around the world, but what defines us is that we are more affectionate. We show our kindness not just by words but also by physical affection. This is something that varies in many countries and cultures. We hug someone just to say "Hi". Every day of my life I've given and received thousands of hugs. I cannot leave my house without giving my mom a hug and a kiss. I feel weird if I miss it. It is hard for me to live in the United States

because I think giving a hug or kissing someone on the cheek is not common for most Americans. Sometimes I forget that hugging and cheek kissing is not common here, and I just do it. Then I notice that some people look at me in a strange way. That's fine with me because when they find out I am a Latin American, they realize why I do this. I also love to be a Latin American because of our culture and music. I love to dance Salsa, Merengue, Cumbia, and Brazilian Samba because it un-winds me. Another thing I love about Latin America is its cuisine. The Tacos from Mexico, Bife de Chorizo from Argentina, Brazilian beef cuts, and others are delicious.

Venezuela has beautiful beaches, too. Margarita Island, Los Roques, and Mochima are the most beautiful Caribbean beaches. I feel very proud to have such wonderful places in my country. The delicious Venezuelan cuisine is very wide and varied. We have seafood and several types of beef. The dishes I love the most are Te-quesnos, Arepa, Tostones, Empanadas, and Cachapa. Another amazing thing about my country is that it has all kinds of ecosystems. There are deserts, snow, mountains, forests, jungles, etc. I am very proud to be

a Venezuelan, and I would love to raise my children there because of its people and culture.

I am a Vidal-Pinto member. The first thing I appreciate and love in my life is my family. They taught me all values and principles that make me a good person. We are very humble. They taught me to appreciate and value everything, to be sincere, to help people in need, and not to betray our family members and friends. Being part of this family has a great influence on my personality. My family taught me to be a person of strength and integrity. They constantly tell me and remind me of what we are. My family is very strong. My parents also taught me that nothing is impossible, and that you have to follow your dreams. When I am in trouble, they are always there to help me and get me out of awful moments. I am so proud to be part of this amazing and beautiful family. I really appreciate everything they have taught me. They trained and prepared me for this challenging world we live in. I don't know what I would do without them. They are one of my important reasons to live.

Being a Latin American, Venezuelan, and a member of a fabulous family has made me the person I am proud of now.

I Am a Muslim

Mohammed Alabbasi - 5A



Islam has five central tenets, which Muslims are obligated to believe in and work on. The first and most important tenet is to testify that

there is only one God, and Mohammed, peace be upon him, is His messenger. It means that Muslims are obligated to believe that God is the only one who deserves to be worshiped, and Mohammed is the last person God talked to in order to spread the truth. The second tenet to be a Muslim is to pray five times a day: in the morning, at noon, in the afternoon, at sunset, and the last one at night. The purpose of these five daily prayers for Muslims is to ask mercy from God. The third tenet is to fast during the holy month of Ramadan, which is the ninth month according to the Islamic calendar. Ramadan is also known as the month to complete reading the holy "Quran," which is Muslims' holy book. The fourth tenet is to make "Zakat," which is an amount of money given to the poor in order to purify the Muslim income. Only Muslims who are financially stable are obligated to make "Zakat." The fifth and final tenet of Islam is to do "Hajj," which is a pilgrimage that has to be done at least once in a Muslim's lifetime. These five tenets of my religion have defined and formed my life. In fact, these five tenets have touched every stage of my life from childhood, to adolescence, and to adulthood.

Islam played a major role in my childhood. I have mentioned earlier the five tenets, but let me tell you a little more about prayer,

and how it has influenced me. Before Muslims pray, they have to go through a few steps first. For example, Muslims must wash some parts of their body in a special way called "Wodo," which is to wash your hands, face, hair, and finally feet in a special order. Then, the mosque "Emam," who Muslims follow while praying, says the "Athar", i.e., calls Muslims for prayer in order for Muslims to know that prayer time has come. Soon after the "Athar," the "Emam" says the "Ekamah" to tell Muslims that prayer is about to start. What is more, my father used to take me with him each time to the mosque to pray, and on our way, he would tell me stories about what he had done when I was first born. I was surprised when I learned that "Athar" has different uses, and that made me spend more time thinking deeply about my religion.

Another time Islam played a major role in my life was during my adolescence. As we say in Arabic, "Everything that is forbidden is desired." At that time, I would cope with peer pressure to smoke, not pray, and sometimes not make donations to the poor. However, when we turn seventeen in my culture, we become responsible for our actions. Thus, I brought up the idea of making "Hajj" to my friends in order for me to escape the pressure and fall in the hole of sins. My friends liked the idea, and so did our family. From there on, our families gave us the opportunity to fulfill the fifth tenet of Islam. Soon after we returned from the trip, virtually all of the sins that my friends and I used

to commit started to disappear little by little. This had a big impact not only on my life, but also on my friends' lives. In Islam we say "patience is the key to happiness." Muslims believe that we will be rewarded if we avoid our worldly desires. What I mean is that there are some activities that teenagers are forbidden to do in the place I come from.

The last and most significant stage where Islam played a substantial role is my adulthood. The reason why this stage is significant is that Islam encourages marriage, but it does not require us to wed. Nevertheless, I am expected to consider marriage when I am in my early twenties. I question this point of view because Islam has taught us to do the best we can as long as we do not break one of its rules. In addition, if I get married in my early twenties, I will not be able to support my family financially because I will be still studying. Personally, when I take a close look at my situation, I already have my parents to help with raising my five-year-old brother, whom I consider my son. The point is that Islam has made it so much easier for me to find the right track.

In conclusion, Islam has influenced my life significantly and has taught me very important lessons. In my childhood, I learned how precious Islam is; in my adolescence I learned how to control myself, and in my adulthood Islam has made it easier for me to choose what is best for me. As a consequence, I thank God for giving me Islam because without it, I would not have been able to manage my life properly.

Special Moments



A Day I Will Always Remember Rosa Martins - 3A

The best day of my life was when I graduated from high school. First of all, the day before the party I went to the boutique to pick up my dress, and I bought high heel shoes. The day of the party, I went to the hair salon to do my hair and nails. After that, I went home to get ready, and then I went to the final gathering. We danced, ate, and cut the big cake of my school, Julio Verne. After that, we had the graduation ceremony. The director gave a wonderful speech and then called all the students. Each student said his or her name, which subject he or she would major in, and who was coming to put on the "sash." My oldest brother put mine on me. Finally, we had a big dance like a waltz dance, which was a very pretty dance. We celebrated with our family and each other, too. We were all beautiful and handsome. At the end, we went to the club "Chillout" and had a really good time. We all enjoyed that amazing day so much.



Waiting for the Bus Vu Nguyen - 6A

One day, while I was waiting for the bus, somebody tapped me on the shoulder. I turned around and was amazed. It was my old friend, Steve. Incidentally, we were both waiting for the bus to go to the Empire State Building. I hadn't seen Steve since high school, but we had still kept track of each other. He had been the maven, the guru of technology in our class. It was he who showed us how to use Facebook and other social networks, which made it easier to keep track of others as well as connect to the world.

We had a really nice conversation on the bus. We talked about our lives and businesses and found out about each other's many interesting achievements. Despite keeping track of him on Facebook, I didn't know that he had become a multi-millionaire by buying tech companies' stocks. He was one of the first people in the town to predict the invention of intelligent search engines and social networks. Undoubtedly, he was right and made big money from buying tech stocks. He told me that he was going to invest in clean energy and electronic vehicles the following year. Then, I told him how I had become an advisor and a design guru in NG, Inc.

In the next few days, he offered me the opportunity to invest in a huge number of stocks in his new company. I agreed. And that's how I became one of the biggest shareholders in World Clean Tech Corporation.

A Day I Will Never Forget Mohammed Aljasim - 3B

It was just before I came to study here that all my lovely family was sitting and talking together, and then they decided to give a party for me. A day before I left them, we made a great gathering. It was a big and an awesome event. All the children were playing and enjoying the party outdoors in our farm. Others were cooking, and grilling BBQ. My father, brothers, and uncles were beside me. We took a lot of pictures and made good memories that I will never ever forget. And guess what happened next? We had a pool party, so it was a party within a party. We had a lot of fun, and the weather wasn't bad. We all got wet. Then we got out of the pool sitting together again, but unfortunately, the party was over, and they all had to say good-bye. I shook hands with them, hugged them, and kissed them with a smile and good wishes. I love my family, and I'll never let them down. I am going to do all my best to do what they asked me to. In the end, I would say that to you that I am in good hands of the people who are taking care of me. I love my teachers as much as I love my family, and I really feel they are my family here in the U.S.

The Place I Used to Live Abdullah Albahkali (Bhkool) - 3A



I used to live in a small house in a very hot city with wonderful friends.

The place where you live may be warm or cold, but what if I tell you mine is the hottest in the whole world. I grew up in a very hot place, and that affected everyone's feelings. Imagine that the weather can make you often stressed! Yes, that's right. In Saudi Arabia, where I grew up, you could not imagine how hot it was. In the past, it was difficult for everybody to have their own air-conditioning. Instead, there were small groups of people, and everyone contributed some money to pay for an AC in the neighborhood so that people in that area could share the cool air. My father was often very frustrated with the heat.

Another thing I can't forget is my home, my very small home. It was like a camel in the middle of the desert, with nothing beside it, only sand and a few bare trees that were not enough to even cover a car.

Now, I want you to imagine a body without hands and feet that can do normal things. It cannot do anything without other people's help. My friends were and still are like my hands, my feet, and also my lungs. They helped me do all the things I didn't know; they helped me see the right and wrong things; they helped me decide what I should or should not do. We were like an athletic body together, and nobody could defeat us.

Finally, it is hard to tell every single thing about my wonderful past, but I always try to remember as much as I can from where I grew up: my very hot city, my small house, and my best friends.



The Lake Near My Home Ge Gao - 3A

The lake near my home is very beautiful. When I saw it for the first time, I knew it was the place I was looking for. After dinner, I always walk around the lake. I can see the blue sky which changes to color purple and some white clouds in the sky like a picture. What a lovely view it is! There are some ducks swimming in the lake or flying above it. When the sun sets, the red light of the sun shines over the lake colorfully. I have never loved a place like here. I can relax myself, my body, and my soul. The good view is like good music because it can warm you and give you courage. My dog, Carla, runs around it because she likes the lake, too. Sometimes she likes to swim there to show how happy she is! If one day I can walk with someone I love around the lake, I will tell him how much I love him. The unforgettable view should be shared with an important person. When I sit on a bench on the brink of the lake feeling lonesome, I think if the lake could speak, it would be sad, too. The water is its tears. I wish we could be together and never leave each other. I hope you can see this beautiful lake, too.



My Wedding Mustafa Al Tuhaifa - 3B

Everyone has a special day, and my special day was my wedding day. I can't forget the moment that brought me and my wife together. I remember when I saw my bride. She was so beautiful, and she is still the most beautiful girl in my whole life. That moment, I promised her I would never forget her, so she was happy for that. It was a wonderful day. Everybody was happy, and both of our families were there. I hope to go back to that day again. It was an unforgettable day. I hope everyone has a wedding day just like mine. I think it was an amazing day!

Special Tips

How to Study for a Test Jenny (Nhung) Truong - 2C

Studying for a test is very important. You must review all the lessons you learned in class. First of all, you need to read all of them again. Second you should write down the main ideas of all units on a piece of paper. Then, you should redo the practice exercises. After that, you must organize everything you learn. Finally, it's important to go to bed early before the test. If you prepare for a test this way, it will help you get an A easily.

A Good Actor Hiba Bhar - 2F

A good actor must have several qualities if he wants to be famous. First of all, a good actor needs to be creative and charismatic at the same time. He should have the talent and ability to play any role in the movies or theater. A good actor attracts people who love to watch his talent. Second, a good actor needs to be self-confident. A person who wants to be a professional actor should be quite independent in order to become famous in the future. He also follows the instructions of his director well. A good actor must be very diligent to achieve success in a short time. For example, he comes to the theater on time and does extra practice to play good roles. He enjoys meeting famous actors to learn more about these professionals, and he needs to be friendly with the actors on his team. Third, a good actor needs to know a lot about any roles he plays. He must have experience to work in the theater or in the movies. He should have excellent communication with other actors. To sum up, a person must be creative, charismatic, self-confident, and knowledgeable in order to be a good actor.

How to Be a Boring Person! Wichatorn Pomwiin (Tucky) - 4C

There are things you can do that will make you boring. If you want to be dull, try the following. First of all, talk about yourself and tell people about your life. Don't ask questions, and don't show any interest in other people. Above all, do not listen to what they say. Another thing is to watch a lot of TV, and do not waste your time reading or going out or doing hobbies. Just give up sports and keep watching popular entertainment programs. Next, do the same thing and get into a regular routine. Don't try anything new or adventurous. Also, don't waste time on books or art. Avoid the cinema, literature, magazines, new kinds of music, or live performances. Besides that, stay at home, don't travel to new places, and don't do different activities. Also, stick with the same group of friends you have known for a long time. Do not go out of your way to meet people or make new friends. Along with that, do not have any goals or plans. Drift along the way you are doing now. Do not set difficult objectives that you might not achieve. Moreover, never change your mind. Stick with the same ideas, and do not consider new facts or opinions. Finally, take very poor care of yourself. Drink a lot of alcohol, eat a lot of fatty foods, and get very little exercise. All in all, there can be more things that make you a boring person. I believe that all of the things that I mentioned are great ways to make you the most tiresome person in the world.



How to Get an F in English! Ghazal Sheikhoon - 2D

You can get an F in English when you follow the following steps. First of all, don't care about your class. For example, be absent from class or be late.

Second, don't do your homework. When your teacher gives you assignments, don't do them. Third, don't improve your skills in English, like writing, speaking, and reading, but write and speak in your native language as much as possible. Also, don't study for tests and give your teacher blank test papers. Finally, don't listen to the teacher when she or he teaches the class. Instead, listen to music or sleep in class. As you can see, it's easy to get an F in English and be the biggest loser!



Remembering My Father Christian Kouda - 4C

This is what my father liked to say, "Make sure to have a good impact on people's lives by the way you live so when you leave a place, someone will miss you." Of course, I always miss my father, and there are some special things, such as the smell of the garlic, the sound of a traditional song, and the sight of a lovely father spending time with his beloved children that remind me of my father.

Every morning my father liked to eat fresh garlic or garlic sauce. He said it is a natural medicine that helps your kidneys to eliminate all the heavy minerals without overworking them. Also, he said that while he was growing up, his parents told him that it is good luck to eat fresh garlic in the morning before you have your meal. For those reasons, my father would like it if we ate some pieces of garlic every morning before breakfast, so every time I smell garlic, I remember him.

Early in the morning, my father always started his new day by listening and singing a special traditional song, which is typically known as a song from his hometown. He listened to the same type of music every day while he was driving us off to school or even while we were traveling together. He explained to us what the song was saying and what kinds of instruments were used to make that sound. We could feel how glad and proud he was of his culture. Because of that, every time and everywhere I hear this song, I automatically see my father's image, singing and explaining the meaning of the song.

Overall, my dad had a really busy schedule, but he always found some time to spend with his loved ones. Especially on the weekend, we would go together to the movies, the park, or play Faso games. There we would spend time watching movies, walking together, or playing outdoors. I have great memories of us doing things together. We always spent wonderful time together during the weekend.

In brief, the smell of garlic, the sound of a traditional song, and the sight of a lovely father spending time with his kids take me back to my childhood and remind me of my dear father.

Memories of High School Renzhe Hong - 4C

It has been said that high school is one of the best parts of your life. There are many things that remind me of my high school life, such as songs and basketball.

I remember lots of songs that I heard when I was a high school student. I liked listening to music while I was doing my homework because I had bought an MP3 player at that time. Last weekend, I listened to *Quiet*, a song sung by Jay Chou. That's one of my favorite songs that makes me recall my memories of high school life. Last year in high school, I was studying very hard, and I had a lot of homework to do. I listened to *Quiet* many times when I was studying. Today, these memories inspire me and remind me that I should study as hard as I can.

My Favorite Aromas Ludiolma Oliveir - 4D

I love strong aromas. The smell of coffee, the sea, and seafood remind me of many good times that I have had in my life.

My family has a farm where we have planted and sold coffee in big quantities since I was a little child. I grew up with this aroma, and I'm very accustomed to it even though I don't consume coffee. Whenever I smell coffee, I clearly start to remember my family and especially my father, who drinks a lot of coffee. It makes me very happy because it's amazing how a simple coffee smell can bring up thousands of great memories.

I love the sea and, even more, the smell of it. At first, it seems to be very strong, but after a few minutes, I can smell the water and the salt. I imagine the period when I used to spend most of the time with my friends or family at the beach, relaxing and enjoying

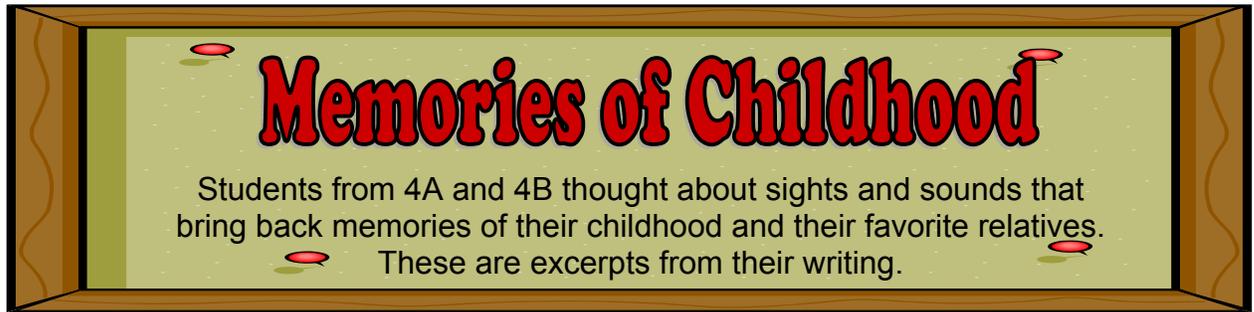
Playing basketball was an important part of my high school. I would play basketball with my friends after school. It was the most wonderful time in the day. We had lots of fun and laughter. I could make new friends when I played with other students, and we improved our skills of playing basketball together. When I see a basketball, I miss my high school friends and the time we spent together.

Some songs and basketball remind me of my memories in high school. Many people have the same experience because a song can help them recall their precious memories. Now, I rarely play basketball because I don't want to play basketball alone without fun and laughter. The sound of *Quiet* and the sight of a basketball bring back high school memories with a little sorrow and a deep longing.

the atmosphere. I feel like I'm in the water or lying on the beach.

Another aroma that makes me happy is the smell of seafood. It reminds me of the time I was in Cape Town with my friends. We walked long distances only to eat in a seafood restaurant. Only my friends and I know how comfortable it makes me feel, and how much I miss that trip!

Sometimes my sense of smell makes me feel bad because of allergies, but in the case of coffee and the sea, I remember things that I miss. Drinking coffee is not good for my health, but I always have some at home to smell from time to time. The sea and seafood are my passions. I can't smell the sea because it is very far from here, but whenever I can, I go to a seafood restaurant. The sense of smell is very important. I don't think I would be able to live without it.



Sweet-Fried Shrimp
Tristan (ZhongZheng) Li - 4B

My father is not only a good businessman but also a good chef. He used to cook a huge dinner for our families during festivals. I miss his best dish, which is sweet-fried shrimp. The reason why I miss it so much is that since he learned that he had diabetes mellitus four years ago, he has not been able to eat sweet foods. As a result, my family decided that to support him, we would stop eating sweet food. Therefore, the fantastic sweet-fried shrimp has become a legend.

Black Tea
Abdullah Alenazi - 4B

The taste of black tea reminds me of my father. He drinks it every day when he comes home from work, so I remember him immediately when I drink black tea. I have vivid memories of the two of us sitting together, drinking black tea, and talking about important things. The taste also brings back memories of the trips we used to take to nearby countries, where he always bought black tea.

The Smell of Incense
Ahmad Ghandorah - 4B

The strong smell of incense makes me remember my grandmother. She always burned it in her home before we went to visit her on the weekends. She used incense when she met friends, visitors, and important people because the smell of incense is so wonderful, and it gives the clothes a pleasant smell.

The Taste of Barbeque
Maryam Alhajri - 4A

The taste of barbeque makes me think of my father. We used to have a party where we served barbeque every Friday evening, and he usually liked to be in charge. He used to prepare his own recipe with his own spices. Sometimes he asked me to marinate the meat in vinegar to make it more tender. His grilling method was unique, and I haven't found the same taste anywhere else.

Barbeque Smoke
Ana Alvarez - 4B

The smell of barbeque meat and smoke brings me great memories of my father. When he was a child, my grandfather had financial problems. My grandmother told my father, "Although life is difficult and sad, a wonderful warm meal with the family will solve all problems." My father, who loves to eat, and I both believe in my grandmother's idea. Even though I am far from my father right now, whenever I smell the food and feel the heat in the pot as I prepare food for my own family, I feel like my father is with me.

The Sound of the Ocean
Sang Lee - 4A

The sound of the ocean brings back memories of my father because my father and I visited it often. I remember one time when we went scuba diving and talked when we couldn't breathe underwater. I could not understand him because I only heard the sound of bubbles!

Chicken Soup
Christine (Ching-Hsuan) Meng - 4B

I remember my mother when I taste chicken soup. Although chicken soup is not unusual in Taiwan, the kind with bitter melon and pineapple is difficult to find in a restaurant. Because my mother cooks it well, it has become my favorite soup. When I was in college, I didn't go home often because the journey was long and expensive. On rare occasions when I could visit my family, I asked my mother to make the chicken soup with bitter melon and pineapple for me. Fortunately, she eventually taught me how to cook it, and now I can cook the special soup by myself. I think of her each time I make it.

Smelly Socks
Dan (Suddan) Narathipat -
4A

The smell of dirty socks makes me remember my brother. When I was a teenager, I did not want to go inside his room because of the smell of tons of dirty socks! He always used the same socks without changing them or washing them because he is the laziest man in the world. For instance, after he went deep-sea fishing without taking a shower, he threw his shirts, pants, and socks on his bed and slept. As a result, the next day he had to use the socks that he had just worn the night before. The smell of his dirty socks is the worst I have ever smelled. Therefore, whenever I smell someone's dirty socks or shirts, I always think of my brother!

The Sight of a Cockroach
Esteban O'Byrne - 4A

The sight of a cockroach reminds me of my mother. This reminds me of her because she is extremely afraid of cockroaches, and every time she sees one, she screams and calls my father and me to kill it for her. When I was a child, she trained me to kill them for her. She did this because she didn't want me to have the same fear of them that she has. Something that surprises me is that her phobia is so strong that she can even hear them in the dark!

The Sound of Japanese
Andrea (Chih-Yun) Yang - 4A

Every time I hear Japanese, I think of my grandfather. He is a Chinese speaker, but he was born during the time when Japan controlled Taiwan. Since he was educated in Japan, he learned the language. He also likes Japanese culture, so he often traveled to Japan with my grandmother.

My Mother and the Sea
Sophia (Nhung Nu)
Nguyen - 4A

Whenever I hear the waves of the ocean, I think of my mother. When I was a child, she took my younger brother and me to the beach near our house every afternoon in the summer. She taught us how to swim and how to fly a kite. I still remember one time when she gave us a tight hug and said that her love for us was as enormous as the sea.

My Father, the Soldier
Xiao Wang - 4A

When I see a soldier, I remember my father. About thirty years ago, my father lost his chance to go to college because his family could not pay the tuition for him. Nevertheless, my father didn't give up the dream of creating a wonderful life. He wanted to be independent, so he became a transportation soldier. He learned many skills and gained experience that eventually helped him find an ideal job.

My Grandmother's Music
Ji Lee - 4A

My grandmother's favorite song, Cha-pyo-hanjang, makes me think of her. When this song was on the radio, she never changed the station. She sang this song while she cooked, when she did other chores around the house, and before she went to sleep. Now that she is older, her memory isn't as good as it used to be, but she has never forgotten Cha-pyo-hanjang.

White Clothes
David Temnet - 4B

I remember my mother when I see a woman in a white dress. My mother's closet is actually full of white clothes, and she always wears something white. One day when I asked her why she liked white clothes, she told me she had worn white for her wedding, so every time that she wears a white dress, she remembers her wedding day. Every time I come across a woman in a white dress, I think of my dear mother.

Chanel #5
Karina Herrera - 4B

Smelling the perfume Chanel #5 makes me think of my mother. It quickly brings back memories of when she was dressed up for special occasions like birthdays and Christmas. I also remember that she usually wore that perfume when she went out to dinner with my father. The perfume makes me remember how beautiful she looked, and all the times that we were together, smiling, joking, and laughing.

Arabic Coffee
Ahmad Alshammari - 4B

The aroma of Arabic coffee makes me think of my father. When I was a child, the smell of Arabic coffee coming from the kitchen every morning let me know that my father was awake. I always joined him, and we drank the coffee together. He was extremely happy the day I asked him to teach me how to make it. These days, I am an expert at making it myself, and I usually remember my father when I am doing so. I still hear his voice in my mind when I think about the instructions for making it.

More Memories...

My Childhood Home Hamzah Salwati - 4C

Long after I moved to a new home, I can't still forget the place where I grew up and all the memories from it. I have wonderful memories from every place I walked in the town I grew up. The smell of the trees and sound of crowded streets remind me again and again of my childhood home.

Since I was a child, I liked to climb trees. There were a lot of them surrounding the place I lived in, so I had a glorious time with trees. There were two big, tall, green trees, which I liked to climb especially after I came back from school and finished my homework. Moreover, when I reached the top of the tree, I felt that I was in the highest point of the earth, and that made me cheerful. Also, the taste of the fruits from it had a fantastic flavor that I still remember until now.

In addition, that place was crowded with people, cars, and markets. My childhood home was surrounded by a lot of malls and bazaars because it was located in one of the most important districts in my city. Therefore, there were a lot of shoppers and noisy cars day and night. Even though I have moved to a new, quiet, and vast city, I still miss that place where I spent my childhood.

All in all, the memories I have from my childhood home are unforgettable because of the wonderful time I spent with trees and the sound of busy streets. Every time I see the same kind of tree anywhere, I start to imagine myself on top of it. I know the noisy sound of car alarms or the loud sound of people's conversation is uncomfortable sometimes, but I was familiar with them in the place where I grew up.



My Childhood Memories Hassan Al Abushaheen - 4C

Last weekend when I was watching TV, I saw a cartoon channel that reminded me of the sound of TV and children crying in my childhood home.

When I was a child, there weren't any Arabic cartoon channels, so we used to buy video cassettes, and they were very expensive. After that, Spacetoons was created as the first Arabic cartoon channel. We spent all our weekend hours watching it, but it had a time limit. It was on from 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. When it was not on, there was a special kind of music playing, which I couldn't forget.

During my childhood, we used to live in a big house with my family. All of my cousins were living with us in our house. All the time we spent together, we were fighting and crying. I couldn't forget the time when someone was punched, and he ran to his father who told him to punch the child who punched him. I will never forget these memories of crying and fighting.

These are just two examples of the sounds that I can't forget. I don't know if there are some families still living together as we did. Now I don't watch the cartoon channel anymore, but I still remember Spacetoons, which I will tell my children about someday.



Someone who helped me...

My Father Nicole (Yuxin) Ma - 2C

I know a man, and the man taught me how to think. When I was a child, I really liked to play with my friends, so my grades were not good. Maybe it was because I was just a child, but I did not think about the future. One day when I was talking to this man, he asked me about my future. I said, "I don't know." He told me that people can live without money and a degree, but they can't live without a dream. People must know what they want. I started to think about what I wanted. Then I had my dream. That year I was seven years old. The man was my father! He helped me find my dream.

My Father Mohammed Awad AlQahtani - 2D

My father is a great man. He always helps people. He helps all kinds of people: rich people, average income people, and poor people although he gives more help to the poor people. Of course, my father has helped me from the time I was a child until now. He has helped me with many things, such as studying, buying a car, and sending me money for study. He has watched me in my studies and chosen the best teachers and schools for me. He enrolled me in different courses, such as physics and chemistry or in horseback riding and swimming to help me learn more. In addition, he helped me to buy a new car. Moreover, he has given me money. This is the best help my father has given me because it was my dream from high school to come to the United States to study chemical engineering. In fact, the most important thing my father has done was to send me here to learn and study the most important language in the world. These are the important things my father has helped me with because they are important for my future. In short, my father is the man who has built my good future.

My Grandfather Melsy Perez - 2C

My grandfather's name is Ciro. He is eighty years old. He is my second father. He always helps me. One day, when I was in elementary school, my teacher said that we had to give her a *Semillero*. *Semillero* is a pot with seeds of different fruits or vegetables, such as beans, melon, tomatoes, etc. The following week, I remember that I was very worried because I didn't know how to do it. When I arrived home, my grandfather asked me, "What happened?", and I told him the story. He hugged me and said he would help me. We made the *Semillero* together, and I took it to school the week after. I will always remember that day. My grandfather has always helped me whenever I need him. He is very helpful and friendly. He is very important to me. I love him!

My Grandfather Majid ALDossary - 2D

My grandfather has always been an important person in my life. He has helped me in many things. Every day, he taught me many things about life. Every week when I was young, he came to my school to talk with my teachers. He helped me to learn our holy book, the Quran. I love my grandfather very much.

An Older Person Who Helped Me Alina Zhumakhmetova - 2D

The person who helped me at high school was my teacher. She helped me in many things. When we first transferred to high school, our teacher met us and said, "I am going to teach you everything I can even though you do not want it." No matter who taught me in school, I will always remember that teacher's name and what she said. She taught biology, but she was also our homeroom teacher. As a result, during all my high school years, biology was my favorite subject. Her name was Sakypzhama. She always knew my condition. When I was despondent, she helped me feel better. I think very much in school depends on the teacher. She was not only my teacher, but she was also my adviser. She taught me for six years. During those years, I really learned a lot about the wide world around us.



The Influence of English in Korea Ji Won Lee - 4A

More Influences...

My country, Korea, is an industrial country which exports a lot of products to the world, so English is an important part of our everyday life. Many Koreans study English very hard to speak it fluently. There are three generations in Korea who are influenced by English: my father's generation, my generation, and the new generation.



My father's generation, born in the 1960s, is the first generation who was influenced by English in Korea. They had to study English to get a good job or a good position. When my father's generation started to look for a job as their first step, Korea started to be an industrial country. There were not enough good methods in learning English for my father's generation, so most of Konglishes (broken English used by Koreans) are made at this time.

My generation, born during the 1980s to 1990s, is the first generation to use English in

daily life. My generation has many opportunities to speak English with foreigners, so they use English to communicate with foreign people. Also SNS, which is facebook or twitter, is a part of my generation's life, so they post information in Korean and English together. Many people in this generation have participated in English competitions, too.

The new generation, born after 2000, is the first generation whose parents plan for them to learn English even before they were born. Most Korean mothers are tiger moms, so they plan ahead for their children's life. According to this plan, the new generation goes to English kindergartens or English schools. Mothers register for kindergarten even before their children are born because they have to be in the waiting list if they intend to go to popular English kindergartens. The kids in this generation spend most of their time speaking English rather than Korean.

To conclude, Korea has been strongly influenced by English since the 1960s: from my father's generation to my generation, and it also goes on to the new generation.

Influence of English on Cameroon

David Temnet Fongang - 4B

According to many people, English has influenced many countries over the world, and I totally agree with them. In my country, Cameroon, however, English Language has influenced almost all domains of our lives, but the most important ones are: academic institutions, job market, and shopping centers.

In Cameroon, academic institutions are influenced by English language. Today, more than 80% of schools and institutions in Cameroon are bilingual. In the past years, if you were going to study English, you had to go to those regions of Cameroon where English was mostly spoken, but today you don't have to do that anymore. The new generation in Cameroon is perfectly bilingual, and they speak English more than French.

English Language has also influenced the job market in Cameroon. People who speak English fluently have more opportunities to get good jobs than those who only speak French. Because of that, many young people start learning English at language centers after finishing their studies. Many good companies in Cameroon require English proficiency.

In addition to the academic institutions and job market, English has also influenced shopping centers in my country. When you go to a mall in my country, you may think that you are in England or in the USA because the language that is mostly spoken there is English. I was wondering why people would do that here, and a friend of mine told me that today English is the language that people use to communicate easily.

In conclusion, because English has influenced academic institutions, job markets, and shopping centers in my country, I believe that in future, people will speak only English in Cameroon.



We all need to use English to communicate with each other in this global village regardless of business, education, or tourism. For me, as a Taiwanese girl, English has been very important. It has influenced my education a lot including my entrance exams, school life, internship, and studying abroad.

As a student in Taiwan, I needed to take several entrance exams to enter high school or university, and the important thing is that English was part of both exams. I majored in Vocational English besides general English. I also had an extra English exam called Professional English, which was very difficult. Fortunately, my grade wasn't pretty bad, so I applied to the only language college in Taiwan, Wenzao Ursuline College of Languages. And then, I was chosen for an interview which was, of course, conducted in English.

My four-year college life was fully spent with people who mostly spoke English. I chose International Affairs as my major, and all the courses were taught in English. We not only had to do our graduation project but also our presentation in English. After I finished the graduation project, I had such a great honor to become one of the school representatives for 2011 World Model United Nations in Singapore, which was hosted by Harvard University. Representatives from each country had to speak English in all meetings of the United Nations. Before

I went to Singapore, I kept practicing English and gaining knowledge. After my precious experience in Singapore, I realized how English had influenced the world. Then I was considering what to do next, so I talked with my adviser and told her that I wanted to do more and gain more different experiences before I graduated.

Because of my internship experience in KMT (the biggest political party in Taiwan), my adviser gave me the opportunity to work as a research assistant for Dr. Stockton, head of the Department of International Affairs at the University of St. Thomas, Houston. I really had a great time during that period because this was the first time I would come to the United States, and it became the best opportunity for me to experience American culture. Also, I learned how to improve my vocabulary to describe things or words that I didn't know. Although I learned a lot of things from my boss, my American roommate, and friends, I knew that I really had to improve my English. After I went back to Taiwan, I quickly made a decision to learn English steadily, so I applied to the best English language school in Houston, LCC, to help me improve my English.

To summarize, English has influenced my education for almost twelve years in junior high school, high school, college, and now in Houston. I still know English is very important for me, because we are living in the global village now, so we can't live without English.

Influence of English on Iraqis' Lives Mohammed Al_Moula - 4B

There is a clear influence of English language in my country, Iraq. English has influenced our life in different ways, such as education, technology, tourism, jobs, industry, medicine, and even people's general life.

In recent years, English has been taught to students from third grade in elementary school instead of fifth grade; something which was done for a long period of time in the past. Nowadays, it is very important for Iraqi students to learn English in order to complete their studies in other countries even if English is not considered the first language in those countries.

Second, in Iraq, the languages used in the websites for all the fields and all government organizations, such as ministries, are Arabic (on one page) and English (on the other). Also, if someone wants to be hired in a place, they ask him about his ability to speak another language especially English. For instance, all of the employees who work in embassies in Iraq must speak English, and this is all because all the people in the world can communicate with each other by using English.

English has also influenced commercials and advertisements in Iraq, which are mostly both in Arabic and English, such as those of some large hotels, many restaurants, road signs, and some stores that sell different goods.

To summarize, English has influenced education system, job market, and commercials in Iraq.





Our New Culture Maryam Alhajri- 4A

I am from Saudi Arabia, and I believe that in recent years our culture has been influenced by many different cultures from around the world, such as India, Persia, and western countries. Today, globalization has impacted our lives in many different aspects, both socially and culturally. The people of the world, nowadays, are interacting with each other more intensively than before as a result of technology revolution. The world has become a small village, and the cultures all over the world have started to merge day by day. Therefore, we in Saudi Arabia, also find it very hard to keep our individual culture and identity intact. For example, the wedding ceremonies have changed a lot in the last three decades in terms of wedding gowns, dowry, henna night, and occasion halls.

Let's start with the wedding gown and dowry. A traditional Saudi bride used to wear green or any other color she liked for her wedding, and she didn't have to put too much makeup on, but she had to wear her jewelry (made of gold) that the groom had offered her as dowry. Oftentimes the dowry would vary from money, camels, gold, clothing, or perfumes, and if the groom were rich, he might have all these together. But nowadays, wedding gowns have altered from Arabian style to European style because Saudi brides want to look like Kate Middleton or any other celebrities from Hollywood. Moreover, the color of the wedding dress is changing to white. Brides also wear diamonds nowadays rather than gold. Grooms, though, have not changed much. They still wear the white long gown called "Dishdasha, Chamagh and Besht" as their traditional clothes.

Henna night has also changed recently. Henna night is the night before the wedding day, and it is special for the bride and her relatives to design beautiful paintings on her hands and feet to make them look prettier. That night used to be simple, and just a few people like the close relatives of the bride would be there. The designs were also simple to symbolize seeking happiness. Nowadays, though, Henna night has turned into a big party which requires an occasion hall designed for that purpose. There is also a specialist henna designer

to offer HENNA TATOO to the guests.

Finally, the wedding ceremony has altered dramatically in recent years. Thirty years ago, Saudis celebrated the wedding often either in the groom's or the bride's house. The celebration often included dinner, which was usually rice and meat. But nowadays, it has totally changed. We have to rent occasion halls to provide a comfortable and standard place such as five star hotels. In addition, dinner has to be offered lavishly.

To sum up, due to globalization, there is a huge leap between yesterday life style and that of today in Saudi Arabia. The world has become a small village, and we are trying our best to maintain our national identity, but the question is "For how long can we resist the change?" Maybe not for a long time.



A Strange Custom in the U.S. Fahad Alajmi - 3B

A strange custom in the U.S gave me a new name. When I was in Level one at the LCC, another student and I had the same name, Fahad. The teacher was confused, so she told me I could choose a nickname. I didn't know what name to choose, so my friend told me, "Let's call you Mr. Cheetah." In Arabic, Fahad means "Cheetah." It's an old, traditional name that is very popular, especially in Saudi Arabia. My teacher really liked it, and she wasn't confused anymore. In Saudi Arabia when there are two "Fahads" in one class, the teacher uses the last name or the name of the student's father. However, I think the strange custom in the U.S is interesting, and I really love my new name.



**“Locos de la Vela de Coro”
 (“Crazy from la Vela de Coro”)
 Marianna Nucette Alvarez -
 5A**

In Venezuela, we have a lot of colorful and fun holidays, one of which is called “Locos de la Vela.” Being so much influenced by Spanish culture, we have holidays inspired by their celebrations, and this festivity is very similar to their “April Fools’ Day.” It takes place every December 28th in the city of Coro, which is the oldest city in Venezuela. On this day, we commemorate a sad episode in Christian history when King Herod ordered every baby boy under the age of 2 years to be killed so that he would get rid of Jesus. As a result, many innocent babies died. That’s the origin of this holiday. There are three aspects of this holiday that make it an important day: the special activities, the costumes worn by the locals, and the music played on the streets.

The first aspect of this celebration is the special activities, which locals start with a show of fireworks. This announces the coming of “Los Locos” (the crazy people) and specially the coming of “El Mojinganga,” who is the main character of this day. When I was a kid, my grandma used to tell me that the oldest woman in every home would prepare special food for the “Locos” just in case they enter your house! That is one of the jokes the craziest people do because they are supposed to eat

the food they find in the houses opened to them. They have some rituals, such as “the marching of faith,” which consists of marching from one church to another.

The second component of this festivity is the costumes, and I would say this is the element that draws the most attention. Since everyone wants to win the award for the “most creative outfit,” the participants put a lot of thought into it; as a result, they come out with awesome costumes. The winner of the award is usually the one with the most colorful outfit. Colors used in the design are what matters the most for the judges of the competition. Bright colors like green, red, and yellow are the favorite colors picked by the contestants. So if you ever have the chance to attend this amazing “fiesta”, you would feel like you were at Carnival or Mardi Gras.

Finally, we have the music, which is also a very important aspect of this holiday. When the Spanish first arrived in Venezuela, they brought along with them the African slaves, who introduced their instruments. The African drums are played all over my country, so it is not rare for us to dance to this type of music. Even though this music is not properly ours, we have adopted it as such. Everyone on the streets dances to this rhythm due to its contagious sound!

I enjoy this festivity a lot because of its great spirit, but what amazes me the most is how they have created such a fun and entertaining day out of sad moments in my faith.

Dr. Bott:

One Great Presentation



Intercultural Awareness

The Life with a Sibling in Mali and in the U.S. Ismael Dembele - 6B

American culture has reached almost every country because its media is followed worldwide. Surprisingly, modern young people from Mali imitate American dress code, listen to American music, and behave like American movie stars. Fortunately, Malian social behaviors and expectations have not been influenced by American culture. For instance, when sharing an apartment with a sibling, Malians' expectations differ from Americans' in terms of how they share household chores, how they show respect to each other, and how they behave if one of them has a problem.

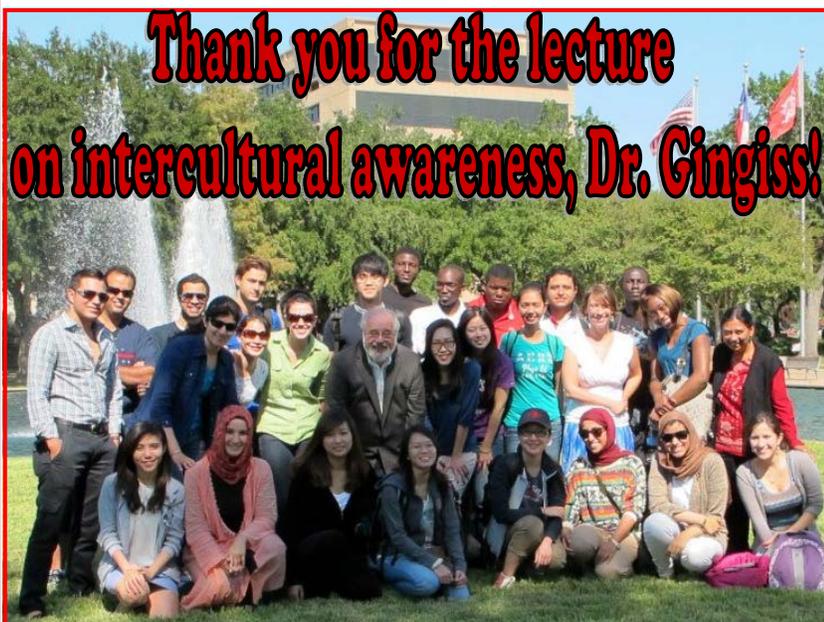
First, when living with a sibling, Malian and American manners of doing household chores differ in terms of how they share their tasks. When two Malian siblings are sharing an apartment, the younger one does all the household chores, such as shopping, cleaning, and washing up, plus additional tasks if the older one asks him or her to do so. In addition, he or she has to do all those tasks without complaining; otherwise, as Dr. Gingiss said, it will hurt his brother's positive face, which will jeopardize their relationship. Although the older sibling can help with the chores, he or she is not obliged to. On the other hand, when two American siblings are sharing an apartment, they will probably make a schedule in order to share their household chores equitably; in addition, none of them are supposed to do all the chores by themselves, and each one of them can speak their mind if they believe that the schedule favors the other.

Second, Malians' and Americans' behavior when sharing an apartment with a sibling differs in terms of how they should behave in their everyday life. In addition to doing all the

household chores, when two Malian siblings are sharing an apartment, the younger one is supposed to show respect and deference to the older one. Furthermore, he/she must follow the older sibling's advice without questioning; otherwise, he/she will show his/her negative face. Moreover, the younger one has to watch his/her tone and language when speaking to the older sibling. On the other hand, Americans have a flexible way of showing respect towards each other. In most cases, neither one is supposed to behave in any particular way; rather, they both behave as if they were equal. Also, the younger one does not have to follow the older sibling's rules if he/she thinks that the rules are wrong, let alone his/her advice. Although they can behave as two civilized adults, they both will feel free to speak their minds if they believe that the other sibling has done something wrong. In brief, when two Malian siblings are living together in an apartment, the younger sibling is supposed to show deference to the older while in the United States, there are no special rules, and the two siblings treat each other equally.

Third, when Malians and Americans are sharing an apartment, they have a different process of helping each other solving their problems. When two Malian siblings are sharing an apartment, the younger one is supposed to do the entire household chores and must show respect to the older one; the older one must take care of all his/her younger siblings' issues, such as money, transportation, and school. Otherwise, his or her family will consider him as a weak person and he/she will lose face. However, Americans have a strong notion of individualism and self-reliance; therefore, people who always ask others to solve their problems are considered as weak, and by doing so, they too will lose face. So, even though two American siblings might help each other solve their problems, there is no obligation for one of them to help the other. In addition, they are likely to avoid asking the other for help whenever they can solve their own problems.

When it comes to sharing an apartment with a sibling, Malian customs are different from Americans' in sharing household chores, showing respect to each other in their daily lives, and helping each other with challenging issues. American culture has been influencing Malian culture to some extent, but Malians still have some of their best values and social behavior, which are so deeply rooted and appreciated by all Malians.



Dr. Gingiss' lecture (Professor of Sociolinguistics, Recently retired from the Department of English, University of Houston)

Attitudes Are Not Always Similar Pierre-Arnaud Kabran - 6C

One thing in my life that I really like to participate is a family meal. This is the time when I feel the happiest because I remember my father telling our family the funniest stories related to the current events. I learned from these convivial moments and many things about good table manners. My father taught me the rules, so I am never impolite or disrespectful whenever I eat with somebody else. I am very grateful to my father! However, I have to take into consideration some things I learned from Dr. Carol Archer, such as culture bumps, which occur when people from different cultures have misunderstandings from their expectations and behaviors in certain situations. For these reasons, it is important to know what is considered polite manners during a family meal in the culture where we live. I am an Ivorian (from Ivory Coast in Africa) studying in the United States. I think that the best way to remember correct attitudes and expectations during a family meal is to make a comparison between Ivorian's etiquette and Americans' assumptions. We could analyze table settings and the family members at the table, table manners, and some expected behaviors/manners at the end of the meal.

First of all, the perception of how the family is seated at the table and how the table is set could be unconsciously perceived as good or bad. In fact, in Dr Gingiss' lecture, we learned that scholars Brown and Levinson believed in a universal polite behavior. However, Dr. Gingiss thought that polite behaviors are arbitrary, and his example concerning the use of flatware in U.K. and the United States illustrates this idea. He noticed the fact that the British use a fork in the left hand when eating and cut food with a knife in their right hand, and then they place the food onto the fork, which is still in the left hand, to eat. However, Americans cut the food with the knife in the right hand, and then *they switch* the fork from their left hand to their right hand before eating the food. In the Ivorian culture, though, the fork must be used in the right hand during the whole meal. Anything different would be considered as impolite in Ivorian culture.

Along the same line of thought, in Ivorian culture the parents should sit down first at the table. Similarly, according to Gail Daniels (UH student on Campus who was interviewed) American parents should sit first at the table. With regards to table manners, we will focus on the perception of table seating and behavior expectations around the table in both cultures. As reported by Greg Davis, it is not only impolite for anyone to put his elbows on the table, but also to put his hand on his cheeks during the meal. The same is true for the Ivorian culture. Also, in both cultures, children are not expected to sit crossed legged on the chairs. On examining the expected behaviors, we find some attitudes to be offensive to elderly family members. For example, in the Ivory Coast, children can only serve themselves after their parents. Similarly, parents in America must help themselves first (Chris Hamad, UH student on Campus who was

interviewed). However, the person who eats first differs in the two countries. In fact, in the Ivory Coast everyone can start to eat as soon as they have been served, but in the United States everyone should wait until the last person has been served before they can start eating (Greg Davis, UH student on Campus who was interviewed).

In both cultures everybody should ask to pass the food when he or she cannot reach the food. One thing that amazed me when I spoke to Gail Daniels is that during the meal, her family can talk about any topic. She said, "We can speak about any topic even my relationship with my boyfriend." It is completely different in Ivorian culture. Parents cannot talk about their children's relationships during a meal. Also, I noticed that burping and slurping are banned during the meal in both cultures.

Finally, what are the expected behaviors at the end of the meal? When the meal comes to a close, everyone has to go back to completing his or her tasks. In the Ivory Coast parents should leave the table first, and children must ask their parents if they are allowed to leave first. This is done because of an assumption that people who leave the table last eat the most! American parents also leave the table first (Chris Hamad). Moreover, according to Chris Hamad, children must help to clear the table. The Ivorian children do it, too.

I think it is not only necessary but also very important to know the rules applicable in terms of expected behaviors in different cultures in order to avoid awkward situations.

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Dr. Carol Archer (Professor of Cross Cultural Communication in the Language and Culture Center, University of Houston)

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Gail Daniels, a student interviewed on University of Houston main campus

Chris Hamad, a student interviewed on University of Houston main campus

Greg Davis, a student interviewed on University of Houston main campus



Page 32 **Two Languages of Friendships**
Mahamadou Zada, Zada - 6B

There are several aspects of social behavior that differ from culture to culture. People have different views and assumptions depending on their customs and traditions. What can be perceived as rude in one society may be tolerated in another. This essay will draw out three principles from a cultural point of view in terms of friendship between American culture and mine in Niger.

Most of the time, foreigners in the US, and in particular, students encounter some difficulties while making American friends. This is partly due to the differences in their language and culture. In my own experience, I noticed some specific differences between American and Nigerian culture regarding friendship. To start with, our two cultures contrast sharply when it comes to relationships with a friend's family members. In the United States, parents of a friend are usually called by their last or first name. Americans also tend to treat their friend's parents informally mainly because it is a strong American value to feel comfortable around your friends. In comparison, in my society, parents of a friend are always called "tonton" or "tantie", which basically mean "Uncle" or "Auntie." They are never called by their last or first name. In addition, they are treated with considerable respect. You have to treat them exactly the way you would treat your own parents. Also, based on my experience, people in the United States have a tendency to treat their friends like perfect strangers. For instance, there are some restrictions when you visit someone for the first time. It is usually considered rude to visit a friend after 11:00 p.m. Similarly, when friends visit during lunch or dinnertime, they are given a book or newspaper to read while waiting for their host to finish eating his/her meal. Americans generally do not invite guests to share their lunch or dinner. In contrast, it is totally the opposite in Niger. In fact, friendship there is considered sacred, and friends are a part of the whole family. As a consequence, when friends come at lunch or dinnertime, they are automatically invited to take part in the meal. Besides, there are no specific visit times, and friends are always expected and welcomed any time.

Second, as Individualism is a strong value in American society, people from the United States incorporate it with friendship. As an illustration, when they invite their friends to a restaurant or cinema, the bill is divided amongst the number of people attending. Even in the case of a birthday, the host shares the bill with the guests, which is perceived as impolite in certain cultures like mine. In Niger, the person/people who invite guests to a restaurant or for bowling are the ones who take care of the bill. During my interviews with students at the University of Houston main campus, I asked a couple of Americans about the payment of bills between friends. "I always pay for myself and my friends pay for themselves", said Julie Paterson, a student of Arts at the University of Houston. Another

student affirmed, "Most of the time, everybody pays for themselves." Those statements proved that most Americans think that this is something normal since they are taught to do so from a young age. Conversely, my culture teaches us to always treat your guests respectfully and in a nice way. It is therefore natural for us to always pay for our guests because that is what is considered as polite and respectful in Niger.

Finally, in a more general view, friendship in the United States is taken less seriously than in my culture where it has a very strong value. Friends are just people with whom you can party or talk occasionally; however, they are not deeply rooted in your personal life. That is how many Americans perceive friendship from my experience. People from the United States often establish more restrictions with their friends. For example, it is seen as impolite to visit an American friend without calling first. A student that was interviewed said, "I will not break my friendship if a friend comes to my house without calling me in advance; however, I will tell him/her not to do it again". That type of answer will never be heard in my society. People there perceive friendship as sacred and very important.

In brief, as Dr. Gingiss described culture as "a vision of the world, a social behavior", every culture has its own conception of life and a specific related behavior. Concerning friendship, I noticed several differences between the American and Nigerian cultures. That difference in culture is one of the main causes of culture shocks; however, people should try to learn more about each other's culture in order to avoid or at least reduce those culture bumps.

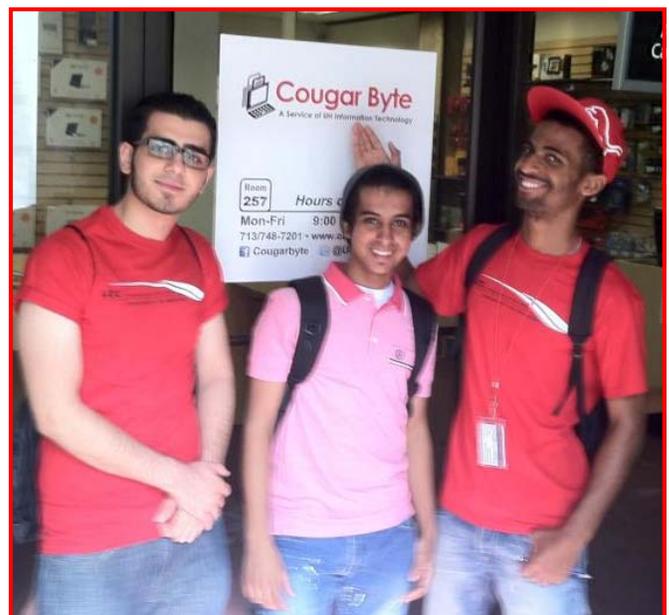
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Dr Gingiss, retired Professor of English at the University of Houston.



Business Etiquette in Thai and American Cultures

Sarilak Chutiprachakij - 6C

The line separating between courtesy and rudeness in different cultures is enormously meager and hard to determine. It is because people do not understand each other's cultures well enough when they are at the very first stage of encountering new environments. As a result of behaving in the wrong way, not only do people feel ashamed of what they have done, but also they are promptly judged to be impolite or rude. To avoid this situation, people should educate themselves about the cultures in which they are going to live. According to Dr. Gingiss' lecture, universal politeness is how people share effective ways to act politely in different situations; therefore, people around the world seem to have the same standard. Especially at the business level, businessmen should realize the level of politeness more when they are discussing business issues. On a surface level at least, the awareness of business dining etiquette between Thai and American people seems to be similar even though their cultures are considerably different.

Both Thai and American societies have similar business dress codes called business attire. Business attire for men basically includes a plain colored shirt, tailored slacks, and loafers. Businesswomen can wear both trousers and skirts with long or short sleeved blouses or shirts, all of which are not showing too much of their bare skin. However, wearing trousers for women is not appropriate in some situations, such as very formal business events. The way people dress is one element for being successful in business because it creates the first impression.

Another area of similarity between American and Thai culture is punctuality. Since business is very competitive, companies must fulfill efficiently what is in their schedules as well as those of their competitors. Companies could lose their customers easily if their employees are late for appointments because the first impression is ruined. Customers do not want to wait; consequently, professional working people should arrive at the designated place around 10-15 minutes early before the appointment time. Under no circumstances can working people make an excuse for being late.

Although Thai and American dining etiquette resemble regarding some international manners of politeness, there are obviously numerous differences with regards to manners and behaviors.

First difference is based on greetings between Thai and American people when going out for a business lunch. Unlike shaking hands in the United States, Thais greet people by 'Wai', i.e., putting both hands together between the chest every time they meet each other. Shaking hands in Thailand is considered as touching another person's body; therefore, keeping personal space is very important for foreigners who visit a Thai. Some Thai people, especially women, are not

accustomed to shaking hands even though they realize that shaking hands is a universal style. Thai women can feel threatened when a person of the opposite sex touches them. It is normal for newcomers to hold out their hand to shake, but they will receive a "Wai" in response. Greetings in Thailand can make a huge difference in a business agreement especially if people are impressed by that.

Another difference, between the two cultures, is eye contact during a business lunch. Businessmen in the United States usually make direct eye contact to ensure success in the business deal because eye contact shows attention. In contrast, Thai people feel uncomfortable if their business partners look at them for a long time in conversations; as a result, they look down or the other way. This might put them in an awkward and embarrassing situation for a little while because they feel that they are in an unpleasant situation. Since different cultures use eye contact in different ways, professional working people should strictly be aware of how to use eye contact when they are doing business with Thais.

A final difference in etiquette is using flatware. Americans use knives and forks naturally in their daily life; in contrast, Thais only use a spoon and a fork for their meals. If foreigners refuse to use a spoon, not only should they handle their fork carefully to hold rice but they should also be careful not to spill even one piece of rice out of the dish in front of their guests. It is considered impolite because it seems like the garbage falling around the dish. Thus, dining out for business purposes includes the knowledge about using flatware and how to behave appropriately in both cultures.

Dr. Gingiss stated in his lecture that people sometimes want to do the same things; however, they are misunderstood because they behave differently and end up misinterpreting each other as rude. Furthermore, as time passes, cultures change like languages. Thus, people should learn about other cultures and try to get familiar with them because politeness is valued in every culture.



Creative Writings



A Place in Houston I Would Like to Visit Fahad Alajmi - 3B

A place in Houston that I would like to go to is the Medical Center. I would go there when I have free time to talk with people who are there. The reason is because I want to know how lucky I am. Speaking with people who are in pain makes them happy, and you'll let them know what kind of person you are. I love to help people, especially those who have no chance to live. It makes me feel great because when I help them with something, they'll appreciate what I do, and that's what I need. My father told me once, "When you want to see how good you are or give up with this life, just go to the hospital, and you'll know how easy life is for you." I took this advice, and it really helped me to make everything easy. In my opinion, making people feel comfortable and improving their lives is your job, and that's what I do. That's the place I would like to go. So, when you feel sad, just go there, and I'm sure that you'll change your mind. I hope all the patients get well soon and have a safe life.

Getting a Job in a New City Norah Al-Zihrani - 4F

In our life, everyone may face many difficult experiences. It was the first time I had lived far away from my home and family. I had a new job in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. It was really hard when I had to face all aspects of life by myself. I had many reasons that made me so sad. I had just gotten married, and my husband had come to the USA to study, so I was alone. Unfortunately, I had to live with my aunt's family. It was a different lifestyle for me, so I couldn't adjust easily. In addition, my job as a teacher with autistic students was so hard. It was the main factor to change my life. Sometimes, I felt lost and sad because my responsibility got bigger and harder when I tried to understand and teach those students. However, sometimes I could feel their success. On the other hand, I had some hard times that I couldn't get over, so I just gave up. In short, despite the difficulties that I had, I kept believing that life would change for the better, and the difficult experiences would end and become a good memory to learn from.

My Job Haijin Kwag - 4B

When I help others, I feel very satisfied and blessed. I always knew that a social worker helps other people in need, so I decided to be a social worker, and I got a job in that field.

The people I helped 10 years ago were homeless. They didn't have home, money, or friends. Also, they were lonely, too. We gave them food, clothes, and other necessities. We also trained them so that they could find a job by themselves.

Five years ago, I moved to a section which helped the elderly. They were so sick and needed close care on a daily basis. We provided various services such as medical care, physical and mental therapies, outdoor activities, and social adjustment, etc. We helped them to have a more pleasant and relaxing time there.

Last year I moved to Houston from Korea. I quit the job but still wanted to help others, so I became a volunteer in a church. I help with cooking and preparing lunch for church people and especially children on Sundays.

Sports Give You a Great Life Ghaffar Alali - 2E



My father always told me, "A healthy body gives you a healthy mind." I believe that everyone should play sports. You can build your body with any type of sport to withstand the difficulties and hardships in your life. Choose what is good for you, and just do it every morning or afternoon. Healthy habits and sports are always together. This means waking up early, going to bed early, and not smoking. All these good habits give you a great life. Running, working out, soccer, and swimming can give you a better lifestyle and improve your immune system against many diseases. Finally, practicing sports means simply "you own your life."

Giving Up on My Dream Younghee Shim - 4C

Giving up on my own dream has been the hardest thing for me. Until about two years ago, my dream was to become a doctor because I love helping someone be released from pain and saving someone's life so they don't leave the people they love. However, I had to realize my limitations and eventually give up on becoming a doctor.

When I was a senior in the university, I decided to go to medical school to be a surgeon. To go there, I needed a high GPA, and I needed to pass a test like the MCAT. For these reasons, I spent my time studying. Throughout my last year of college, I managed both to take classes and study for the test. I studied almost every day at the library after the classes finished. At first, I thought everything was going well with what I wanted because I got a scholarship.

However, I might have overestimated my abilities that I could handle everything including classes, tests, and even English. I failed my exam, and I couldn't even apply to the medical school. Nevertheless, I continued to try once again. I thought I could go there after graduating from school because I would have enough time before the following year.

Still, I couldn't make it. Even though I applied for medical school after I finished taking the test, God was not on my side. I wanted to try one more year, but my family wouldn't allow me to keep doing that. They thought that the two years I had spent already had made me isolated from the world unlike other people my age who had jobs or had moved on to get a master's degree.

Finally, I had to give up, and I couldn't do anything because of my hopeless situation. As time went by, my family and friends cheered me up, and I overcame this situation. I found an alternative plan, which was to be an engineer. In any event, it was painful for me to abandon my dream.



More Creative Writings

What I Don't Like about Houston Francisco Rivera - 4D

There are three things I don't like about Houston. The first one is that it is difficult to go somewhere if you don't have a car, so it means that everything is very far. You might take a 30-minute trip by car or an hour and a half trip by bus. The second thing is the weather. In summer and fall, it is always hot, so if you are going somewhere walking, you are going to feel hot. The third and the last thing is the food. The restaurants with healthy food are always expensive, so people prefer to eat fast food, which is cheaper than healthy food. If you eat fast food in a restaurant, you might spend \$10, but if you eat in a restaurant which offers healthy food, you might have to spend \$50. In short, Houston has a lot of things that I don't like, but, in my opinion, it is still a wonderful place to live in.

Why I Like Houston Eduardo Jimenez - 4C

There are several reasons why I like Houston. Houston is one of the most exciting cities that I have visited up to now.

The first reason is because Houston is a major city for oil business. Houston is located very close to the Gulf of Mexico and is one of the most important regions for energy resources and petroleum infrastructure. Over 40 percent of the total U.S. petroleum capacity is located along the Gulf Coast.

The second reason why I like Houston is that I would like to know more about its geology. There are good universities, such as the University of Houston that are working on new technologies to advance petroleum research.

The third reason is that I like to live in cosmopolitan cities, and Houston is one of them. Houston provides a lot of cultural and entertainment events, such as music concerts, festivals, and theaters. Also, you can find almost every kind of food from any place in the world in Houston.

In conclusion, I like Houston because it has many special things that I like, such as its oil business, its geologic environment, and its cosmopolitan atmosphere.



Our Trip to San Antonio Kun Hee (Harry Kim) - 4D

The following story is about when I went to San Antonio with my Korean friends a few months ago.

We went to the River Walk and had a nice dinner there. After dinner, two of my friends (both girls) went to buy something to drink. But we did not know what happened to them. Probably, letting them go was the biggest mistake of our trip because they didn't have any charged cell phones. Unfortunately, the only one who knew how to go back to the parking place was me. I brought the rest of my friends to the parking lot, and I started to look for the lost girls alone because they would have to come back to the parking lot. We needed people who could be there waiting for them. Anyway, I ran around every-

where and asked people about two Asian girls for an hour. Then, I got a call from Ken, who had been waiting at the parking lot. He said the girls had called him, so he was going to meet them. Finally, we were able to meet each other soon.

Because the lost girls were crying when I arrived there, I needed to comfort them. They started crying again when they told about what they had gone through for an hour with some drunken guys who had hurt them, and someone who had tried to kidnap them. Although our plan about what we were going to do was canceled, we learned that our friends are priceless, and we could easily lose our friends on a trip. I can say this now because it ended happily. If I had found and saved them from the bad guys, I would have become a hero. I often joke with them now about how the lost girls were crying at the River Walk. It is still fun even if they yell at me!

He Looks Like My Dead Friend Ahmed Alsuwaidi - 4D

I just went to the hospital yesterday to have my stomach examined. While I was waiting to see the doctor, the nurse suddenly called out my name. Then I got into the consulting room, and I was startled when I saw the doctor because he looked exactly like my dead friend. The sound of his voice, the smell of his cologne, and the sight of his appearance reminded me of my best friend whom I consider as my brother.

When I got into the doctor's office, he said, "Hello, Ahmed. How are you doing?" I was shocked and silent for a minute. His voice was absolutely memorable in my mind. It was a husky voice which reminded me of my friend when he used to say my name. I was almost going to cry. I could have recognized my friend's voice from the first word the doctor said.

In addition, the doctor wore the cologne that reminded me a lot of memories from the past. In the old days, my friend and I used to hang out together. Once he came to me to pick me up in his car. When I got in his car, I smelled his cologne. I just said to him, "I like that smell." Two days after that, I woke up, and my mother told me, "You have received something from your friend." It was a small box. I opened it, and it was the same cologne that I told him I liked. The doctor's cologne reminded me of this story about my friend.

Everything about the doctor was the same as my friend. In fact, from the first sight, I was going to say to him, "Are you still alive?" I couldn't believe my eyes. I supposed the pain of my stomach influenced my mind and made me a little crazy. To make sure, I showed the nurse some pictures of my friend, and she said he definitely looked like the doctor. I was right about what I had been thinking.

In summary, yesterday, the doctor brought back a lot of memories of a dead friend of mine. All that day I felt anxious because I imagined that I had met my friend again. I realized at that time that I was dreaming, and I forgot why I had gone there. Fortunately, I woke up from that dream, and I was aware of the doctor. I hope to see my friend again someday because I miss him very much.

My Greatest Challenge Abdrmane Diabate - 3D

I had the greatest challenge when I faced the US educational system. Although there are some universal courses like mathematics and physics, the teaching methods are very different. The first time I was in my English class, I was lost because I was waiting for the teacher's notes, but after several minutes, I realized that he didn't write anything on the board. I decided to ask my classmates what the teacher said. They helped me and told me to take notes of what I understood. After that I was embarrassed by my lack of confidence. I was also frustrated by the relationship between teachers and students. For me, the students were just a little rude. For instance, they asked the teacher many questions, and they also disturbed the class with their cell phones, or they said something funny. Since that time I have taken some steps to get ahead in my education. I started by finding new methods to study. First, I approached my teacher to get some advice about learning. He was understanding and gave me some advice, such as staying focused on the lecture. He also told me to choose good friends. I formed a team to study with other people from different cultures; it was helpful because I learned a lot, such as new cultures or how to organize a paragraph in my writing. Next, I adapted the knowledge that I got in my country by studying more and finding the relation between the two systems. Finally, I kept my traditional ways of studying, and I decided to be respectful to my teachers and do what they told me to do. To this day, I have kept studying, and I notice that it's not very difficult when I do what the teacher tells me to do because at the end of the effort there are always positive results.





The Hardest Thing I Have Ever Done **Anick Daniele Tiemtore - 4D**

Every student wants to get an advanced degree at school and a good job. After high school, I decided to go to the United States to do my bachelors, and then my masters. This decision was very hard for me because I had to live far from my family and friends. It was the hardest thing I've ever done.

I thought about my plan to go to the USA before discussing it with my parents. They approved of my decision immediately. For them, it was a good plan for my future studies and job. Next, I was hesitant to tell my friends because I knew they would be very sad. I invited all my friends to my home to tell them about my decision of going to the United States. They were very sad and got mad at me. But then, they told me that they were happy for me and would miss me a lot. My travel day was painful for us. We were sad and worried. When we arrived at the airport, I stayed outside spending the rest of my time with my family and friends. They tried to tell some jokes, and it was good for all of us. The time to say goodbye arrived. Two of my friends started to cry. I hugged all of them and kissed them. It seemed like my mom did not want to let me go when I hugged her. After that, I got my seat in the airplane. It was at that moment when I started to cry. I tried not to cry, but I couldn't help it. The passengers next to me were talking to me, but I didn't listen to them. I wanted to be left alone. I cried almost the first two hours of my flight. Later, I slept a long time. When I woke up, I was still upset but less than before. At that moment, I made the resolution to study well in the USA and make my family and friends proud of me.

I don't regret my decision to come here. It was hard to move away from my family and my friends, but it is for a good cause. Now I am learning a lot at school and in my social life. I call my family frequently, and it makes me feel good and not lonely.

Dongyoon Kim (Justin) - 4E

PSY is one of the most famous South Korean pop stars in the world. His famous song is called "Gangnam Style". It makes fun of materialism in Seoul, and it is breaking Youtube records. PSY enjoys music and is the first Korean solo artist to have a top selling U.S. record. Many people in the world have seen his music video, and they know his dancing. I think his music is more popular than him and his name. He still wants to enjoy his music with other famous pop stars in the world.



Which is More Important-- **Love or Money?** **Eiman Alawa - 6A**



Nowadays, many people try to separate feelings from practical life, which orbits basically around money. They arrange their priorities by putting their favorite things ahead of their feelings. They find that living at a good financial level is more important than love. But it's not the same for me. If I had to choose, I would pick love because I believe that love does miracles.

When you get your own family---a lovely wife or husband and cute, enjoyable kids, you will live the love, and you won't be able to live without it. Love is an addiction. It has the power to change your whole life. The existence of people who love you in your life pushes you hard to realize your goals and dreams. Money might have great power to change your life, but it won't put people around you who could love you. Moreover, the effects of money do not remain forever. A real person's love has its effect for the rest of your life even if that person is gone. Choosing the treasure that lasts forever is the smartest choice, and that treasure is absolutely *not* money.

In conclusion, although life would be difficult without enough money, I will always put love as my priority. I will always try to keep love as my treasure. I will always build all my dreams and goals on a strong base of love. And I believe that this love will bring me everything else even if I have to wait a long time. There is always a nice gift from the sky for those who believe in their beautiful honest feelings towards others.

Our LCC Singers !!!



"Congratulations to the LCC Singers for their amazing performances! Such events do not just "happen." Major planning and work...and practice...has to be done to bring this to us. The singers are inspiring, and the teachers and students in attendance always have a wonderful time."

Joy Tesh

Influences of American Language and Culture on Thai Language and Culture

Dan Narathipat - 4A



The most popular cultures influencing Thai people are: Korean, Chinese, and American. Astonishingly, many Thai people especially teenagers like to follow these cultures. Among these cultures American culture is the most influential one in different ways, such as language, hip-hop music, and fast-food.

Thai language has been influenced by American language and slangs. Some English words are not even translated into Thai. For instance, Thai people always use the word "Computer" even though we have the word *Kha-nit-khon* for computer. In addition, when some Thai teenagers, who have studied abroad for many years, come back to Thailand, they use slangs to communicate with their friends. For example, they usually say "What's up, man?" to greet their friends instead of using "Sa-wad-dee" in Thai! In order to be able to show off their English, some Thai people mix Thai with English in one or many sentences. Furthermore, in the past, advertisements or brochures were printed only in Thai language, but nowadays, they are usually printed in English. Some examples are: "Buy one get one free." or "70 Percent Discount".

In addition to English language, American

More Culture...

music has also influenced Thailand, especially Thai hip-hop music. In the last 15 years, Thai people have learned about pop, rock, or jazz music, but they were not familiar with hip-hop music. Nowadays, most Thai teenagers are able to rap or sing hip-hop music! Furthermore, any pub or clubs in Thailand is supposed to play hip-hop music to entertain their customers. Every year, famous hip-hop singers around the world give concerts in Thailand because Thai people love them.

Last but not least is the influence of American fast-food on Thailand. There are several fast-food restaurants in Thailand, especially in Bangkok city. If you visit Bangkok, you will see KFC, McDonald's, and Pizza Hut in many convenient stores. As a result, our eating habits have been changing. Traditionally, Thai people usually had steamed rice with curry, soup, or stir-fried vegetables in any meals. Nowadays, we sometimes eat them for lunch and dinner, but we do not eat them for breakfast anymore because we have no time to cook in the morning, and of course, fast-food is the best solution!

To sum up, American culture including language and slangs, hip-hop music, and fast-food, has influenced Thai people and their culture, but the most important thing is how we can live and balance our life and culture with other cultures, which are influencing our culture rapidly.

The Influence of American Language and Culture on My Language and Culture

Esteban Obyrne Jaramillo - 4A

American language and culture have had a lot of influences on Colombian language and culture because the United States is a super power. Some of those areas that have been impacted are food, fashion, and language.

American food has become very popular in the past several years in Colombia. For example, McDonald's has more than one restaurant in all the large cities and almost one in the small cities or towns in Colombia. More than ninety percent of the food that Colombians eat in fast food restaurants is from American restaurants.

Fashion in Colombia has also been influenced by the US culture. Since clothes made in Colombia are too expensive, and the ones exported



from the US are not, many Colombians prefer to buy American brands. Many people buy them here in the US because they are even cheaper.

However, the negative effect of this is that because of the high demand some people in Colombia make a lot of fake clothes, so the people who cannot afford to buy the famous American brands buy the fake ones.

English has also influenced our language. For example, sometimes when we do not know the meaning of a word, we just use the English word for it. Another big impact of English on my language is that anyone who wants to work in Colombia should learn English, no matter what kind of job it might be.

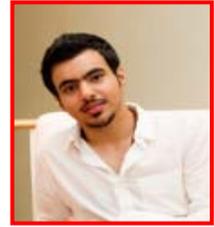
In conclusion, my country is now under the biggest influence of another culture more than any other time in its history.

Influence of English Language and American Culture in Saudi Arabia **Abdullah Alkhayal - 4B**

In our current days, English has become a global language used all over the world and considered as *lingua franca*. The number of people studying English is growing rapidly. There are also many international situations in which people prefer to use English, such as airports, hotels, restaurants, and business meetings. Many languages and countries are influenced by English, and in my country, Saudi Arabia, English has influenced several domains, such as education, economy, and mass media.

In the educational field, the latest statistics show that, more than 143,000 Saudi students are studying abroad, and 70,000 of them are in the United States of America. Saudi Arabian students ranked sixth in the world among the new students studying in the United States, so this huge number of students will influence our country when they return.

Economy in Saudi Arabia is growing fast and developing continuously. New jobs increase every day, and to help our economy, which is closely related to the global economy, learning and knowing English is a requirement in most jobs and in various fields.



Mass media is a powerful tool these days, and a large number of people are influenced by that. In Saudi Arabia a lot of famous television programs are made just like American TV shows, such as Oprah Winfrey show, Dr. Phil, entertainment programs, and dramas.

In conclusion, the influence of English in my country is going to keep increasing, but it will not replace our original language, which is Arabic, and our culture.



The Influence of American Culture in China **Linya He - 4A**

Every country, in this era, has to face globalization in many ways because the world has increasingly become a global village. China also has been influenced by popular cultures like American culture from different aspects, such as sports, building styles, and trades.

Americans enjoy sports like basketball, American football, and baseball. In China, lots of teenagers like basketball, too. When they have free time or after school, they usually play basketball with their friends, or they watch basketball games on television with excitement. After watching these games, they seriously talk with their teammates about the skills and movements of the basketball stars. They want to learn more from their favorite stars, and they practice more to have better games next time. They also want to be a top or excellent basketball player like Yao Ming. Their parents also encourage them and support them to reach their dreams. They think basketball is a healthy sport for their children because it makes them physically stronger. Although football is a new sport for us in China, it's a popular sport, too. More and more people join football teams and enjoy the game. As a developing country, China's professional athletes actively participate in the Olympic Games, and they would like to compete with American athletes.

Influenced by American modern architecture, Chinese traditional building styles have also changed. The first change is in building materials. Long time ago, we always used wood, bamboo, clay, tile, and red lacquer, but now we use armored concrete like most of the western countries. The biggest change is in the shape of the buildings. In China, old houses usually had only one floor, and the majority of those buildings with more than one floor were the temples. Now, we can build apartments, villas, and skyscrapers. Nowadays, the purpose of making buildings is to make people feel comfortable in better living conditions.

Trade is a very important economic factor between China and the United States. Last year, we held the World Trade Fair in Shanghai, China. We got the opportunity to exchange economic and technical advancements with different countries of the world such as the US. This has had a good influence on our country.

To sum up, American culture has helped us have a better mutual understanding with other countries. It has also influenced our sports, architecture, and economy.

Good Parents



Good Parents Abdulkarim Alhamami - 2A

I would like to talk about the characteristics of good parents. The first characteristic is that they should teach their children many things in their lives. For example, my parents taught me how to study. The second characteristic is to be reliable. For example, my parents taught me how to rely on myself because maybe one day I will have to live alone. The third characteristic is to teach their children how to cook. For instance, my parents taught me how to cook delicious food. To summarize, if parents do these things they will be the best parents in the world.

Good Parents Duy Quang Bui - 2B



Good parents have a very important role in our life. First, good parents have to have knowledge. They should teach their children many things about their life such as history and society. It would be great if children inherit intelligence from their parents. Second, good parents should be very kind. For example, they can help their neighbors when they need it. Sometimes good parents can give food to their neighbors. Third, good parents have to love their children. They should take care of their children all the time. They can cook good food for their children. In conclusion, good parents should be knowledgeable, kind, and loving.



A Good Father Alhajri Abdullah - 2B



A good father has three characteristics. First of all, he should be generous. When his child needs something, he should give it to his child. For example, I called my father 40 days ago because I needed money to study in the LCC program. Without my father, I wouldn't have been able to come to the United States. Second, a good father should be an advisor. He should advise his child about life. For example, my father advises me how to choose a good friend or how to deal with people with respect. Third, he should take care of his child all the time. For instance, my father helps me all the time. If I am sick, he doesn't sleep, but he checks on me all the time. In conclusion, a good father should be generous. He should also be an advisor and take care of his children.

A Good Father Eid N Alhajri - 2A



A good father has three important characteristics. The first characteristic is to be faithful. A good father should teach his kids to believe in God. A good father always says "Son, don't forget your religion". The second characteristic of a good father is to be protective. A good father doesn't allow anyone to hurt his kids. The third characteristic is that a good father should teach his kid to be respectful. For example, he wouldn't allow his child to eat before the old people eat. In conclusion, a good father should be faithful, protective, and respectful.

You Will Be Good Parents Jiseon Kim - 2B



Good parents have three important characteristics. The first characteristic is that they should be understanding. Good parents should listen to their children before they punish them. The second characteristic is to be loving. Parents should hug and kiss their children. The third characteristic is to be playful. Parents should play with their children a lot. In conclusion, good parents should be understanding, loving, and playful.

A Good Father Rakan Almurayshid - 2B



A good father should have three characteristics. First of all, a good father should always give advice to his children. For example, my father always takes care of me. When I go out with my friends, he tells me to choose good friends. Second, a good father should give his children money. For instance, my father always gives me money, and he tells me if I want money, I need to just ask him and not another person. Third, a good father wants his children to be good people. For example, my father wants me to be a good person. He always helps me with my school because he wants me to be an accountant. In conclusion, a good father should always take care of his children, give them money, and want them to be good people all the time.

Good Parents

My Father Heus Seo - 4F

All fathers teach their children how to live in this world. My father would always advise me since I was young. I learned a lot of things from him, and I am trying to follow his advice. The first thing I learned was the importance of time. He would tell me, "Don't do many things at the same time. If you work too much at the same time, you cannot concentrate on your work. That decreases the quality of your work." When my father works, he arranges his time because he believes if you do that, you can spend your time efficiently. Secondly, he would say, "If you want to succeed as a person, you have to listen carefully while others speak. Your opinion is important, and so are others'. If you do not listen to others, they will not listen to you. For instance, if you go the wrong way, people may advise you, so you should listen to them and go the right way." Finally, my father would tell me, "Make your woman feel like a queen." My mother is the best queen in the world because my father makes her feel like a queen. "Making a lot of money is not the best thing you can do for your wife", my father said. He always cares about my mother and listens to her all the time. He has been teaching and advising me until now. Sometimes I don't want to listen to him because I am an adult. However, I respect him. I believe if you want to be a successful person, you should listen carefully to your father's advice. They are the best teachers in your life. All my father wants is success for his children.

Good Parents Lamai Alsulaiman - 2B



Good parents have three characteristics. The first characteristic is flexibility. They shouldn't say "no" to every thing. They should explain the reasons when they say "no" because the child sometimes doesn't understand why. The second characteristic is responsibility. They should be able to do everything for their children's life. They must have a home, a job, and some money for their children's education because the child wants a comfortable life. The third characteristic is a warm personality. They must ask about their children and worry about them. If the child has a problem, they should share every moment with them because the children are part of their family. To summarize, good parents should be flexible, and responsible. They should also have a warm personality.

A Good Father Yazmin Rodriguez - 2B



There are three characteristics for a good father. The first characteristic is that he should be loving all the time. A good loving father makes all the difference in the child's life. The second characteristic is that he should show the rules of life to his kids. A good father teaches these values. Finally, he should be hard-working and protect his family. As the main provider of security and needs, a good father will do whatever he can for his family. In conclusion, a good father should be loving, hard-working, and show the rules of life.



Halloween



Halloween Party Fang Nai (Vivien) - 3B

I enjoyed this weekend because I had a lot of fun and met some new friends. I went to a Halloween party on U.H. campus on Friday evening. This was my first time to attend a Halloween party. When I arrived, there were many people already there. Some were dressed up in costume. I saw some people



knocking at a door, and then a girl opened the door and gave them some candies. So I also went to knock at the door, but I got nothing because I didn't know what to say to the girl. Then someone told me the special words, so I knocked at the door again. Eventually, I also got some candies. It was really very interesting. Then they had a play about the history and traditions of Halloween, a costume contest, and dancing. Finally, they had a competition of pumpkin carving. During the party, I met some new friends. They were from Saudi Arabia, India, Malaysia, China, and some other countries. I had a lot of fun and learned more about American culture in that party.

My First Halloween Tu Huang (Jolie) - 3A

The surroundings of my house were so busy and glittery because people were preparing for Halloween. The pumpkins were decorated everywhere in front of the house, on the roof, and in the living room. My friends and I planned to do something crazy for the last Halloween party.

On Saturday, we got together in the early morning and divided the work. Some people went to the supermarket to buy food while others headed to the Halloween store. At home, cleaning and decorating the house were two priorities that the rest of us focused on. During the clean up time, we had a good conversation with each other. After six hours, we had done everything to prepare for that night. The house was sparkling, but some places were dark with various colors of lights. Some bats were hanging from the ceiling, and the blood dolls were in the corner.

After that, we were excited to put on our costume for the party. One of my friends wore superman costume, and another one had red eyes and fangs. We could not skip the victim – she put make-up and blood on her body that made her look like a real patient. I did something totally new by cutting my own hair and changing it to three colors. It was not only a way to get a new hair style for free, but also to get more experience. There was a variety of friends from all over the world. We totally enjoyed the great time together, dancing and also eating the pumpkin cakes. It was a good time for us to learn about each other's cultures and improve our communication abilities.

This was the most memorable Halloween party for me. I had a great time with my friends and added something new to my life. I hope to have more parties like this to keep our relationship close and get rid of homesickness.



Scary Moments...

The Scariest Day of My Life Jiawen Tu - 4C

During the summer vacation in high school, I was working at a convenience store that is near my home. One day, I was working the same time as usual in the morning when two men came to the store. They wanted to buy cigarettes. They showed me how rich they were, but they did not give any money to me. I got some cigarettes for them. After that, they told me that they needed a receipt. While I was writing out a receipt for them, they left the store. I did not pay attention to this because those cigarettes were still on the counter. I finished writing the receipt, and I was confused about why they stayed outside a long time. I decided to tell them that I had finished it.

Unfortunately, they were gone. I was thinking something would happen. Then I went back to the store and checked the cigarettes. All of them were fake! At that moment, I found out that they changed the cigarettes while I was writing out the receipt. I had no idea what I should do next. I called my friend and boss. After a while, the boss came in and called the police. Policemen came to the convenience store to take some notes about the thieves. And then, I went to the police station with the policemen to describe the appearance of the thieves. After that, I went back to the store, and the employer told me that I had lost my job and could not get any salary from her.

To sum up, this was my first job, and I lost it. To me, it was the scariest thing that ever happened. I had never experienced such a thing before I worked at the convenience store. In my first job, I did not earn any money. Instead, I lost the job and went to the police station to describe the appearance of the thieves. But I learned something from this, and that is not to trust anybody when they show you how rich they are. And also, when I am doing something, I need to pay attention carefully to what goes around me.



The Scariest Day of My Life Jinda Liu - 4C

I believe everyone has had scary experiences in their life, and so have I. I had the scariest day when I was in high school. One day, I was sleeping in my bed, and I got a 'Ghost Stress'. 'Ghost Stress' is a kind of mysterious spirit in Asia, and it means there is a ghost on a person who is sleeping. I was really scared that day.

First of all, I felt I was waking, but I was half-awake. I could open my eyes slowly and with difficulty. I could see the window, curtains, and everything in my room, but I didn't feel well, and I was not clear-headed. My brain was running slowly; I couldn't even think at that time. I wanted to get up, but I couldn't.

The most important thing is that my body felt heavy and lacked strength. Believe me. That was really terrifying because at that time, I couldn't breathe and couldn't even raise my hands. I couldn't call my family. My voice was very weak. The part that deeply scared me was that I felt lonely, helpless, and controlled by something. In the very beginning, I didn't feel controlled. I just wanted to go back to sleep, but when I was trying to change my position, I was aware something was wrong. I didn't feel well, and something was pressing me. Then it grew stronger, and I felt more and more terror. I was trying to fight. I moved my hands and pushed back. But that was useless, and those little actions depleted all of my strength.

In the end, I couldn't do anything, and I was exhausted. Then I fell asleep again. In the morning, I felt as well as usual. That experience sounded like a dream, but I think it was real, and it was the scariest day in my life.

GOOD TEACHERS



**A Good Teacher
Abdullah Alhajri - 2A**

A good teacher must have these characteristics: first, he or she must be nice with the students. He or she needs to listen carefully to the students and teach them what they need. Second, he or she must have skills. Teachers need to know about what they are teaching because the students come here to learn. Third, he or she must be funny. If the teacher doesn't make jokes, maybe the students will get bored. To summarize, a good teacher should be nice with the students, have skills, and be funny.



**A Good Teacher
Jiang Hao - 2A**

A good teacher should have three characteristics. The first characteristic is dedication. Teaching is a sublime work. A good teacher should be serious to teach us in class. The second characteristic is to be easygoing. A good teacher should be friends with his or her students after class. He or she can play games or chat with students. I think everybody likes this teacher. The third characteristic is to be warm-hearted. If the student is ill, a good teacher can take care of the student. If the student is in need, a good teacher can help the student and give him/her support. In conclusion, a good teacher should be dedicated, easygoing, and warm-hearted.

**Characteristics of a Good School
Rossana Mendes - 2A**



A good school has three characteristics. First, it should be clean. The restrooms and classrooms should be clean. There should not be any paper on the floor or paint on the windows. Second, a good school should have good teachers. With good teachers, I will learn more, and I will study hard. Good teachers should give me advice about how I should study to pass other levels. Third, a good school should be organized, especially regarding the time and the place where events are meeting. In conclusion, a good school should be clean and organized, and it should have good teachers.



**A Good School
Saleh Alghamdi - 2B**

A good school has three characteristics. First of all, it should be a famous school. For example, LCC is a famous school in Houston, and many people know it. The second characteristic is that it should have good teachers. If you find good teachers, you are going to find a good school. The third characteristic is that you should have fun in it. If you find a school with many interesting things to do, you will be happy. In conclusion, if you find these characteristics in a school, I am sure you will find a good one.



**A Good Teacher
Hinako Kishaba - 2A**

I think a good teacher has these characteristics: First, a good teacher is always cheerful because if I am sad or nervous in classroom, the teacher says in a cheerful voice, "Hey, Hinako! How are you doing?" Then, I will become cheerful. Second, teachers should give a lot of homework because I need to study to level up, so they have to think about us and give us a lot of homework. Third, a teacher has to have a loud voice because it is a very important thing, and I need that. I want to hear everything that the teacher says. In conclusion, I want to study with a teacher that has these characteristics.

**A Good School
Martin Borja - 2B**

A good school has three important characteristics. The first characteristic is that it should have friendly teachers. With friendly teachers it's easier to learn because the students feel closer to their teacher. The second characteristic of a good school is that it should have nice facilities because the students can pay more attention. The third characteristic is that a good school can teach us two or more languages. With more languages, the students can have more opportunities in the future. In conclusion, I believe that with these three characteristics, you can have a good school.



The Beautiful Beach City Vy Do - 3A

My hometown is a beautiful and famous city in Vietnam, which is known to a lot of people in the world. It is really such a beautiful place which has a long beach with white sands and many coconut trees. Moreover, the islands near the beach attract many people to Nha Trang every year. First of all, Nha Trang is a beach city with white sand, blue water, and one of the most beautiful bays in the world. The sea in my city is so beautiful because the water is very gentle and clean so that people can swim there. Around the city, there are many islands of all shapes and sizes, and they attract tourists from both Vietnam and many countries in the world due to the fresh and healthy seafood which is caught directly from the sea. Going to Nha Trang is so exciting for the people who want to relax from the busy life.

My Home

The next beautiful sight of my city is the row of coconut trees along the beach which extends for about four kilometers. People can walk down the street, see the beach, listen to the sound of the waves, and drink the fresh sweet coconut milk. If you go there, you will feel relaxed and stress free.

Finally, the most important thing for me is the memories of growing up in Nha Trang. I'll never forget when I walked with my dad to the beach or rode my bicycle there. He taught me how to swim. Sometimes I went to the beach with my friends in the morning to see the sunrise, and after that we swam in the sea together and then went to have breakfast although everyone was wet. I have so many beautiful memories from Nha Trang, which are on my mind forever.

In conclusion, I'm very happy when I tell you about my city. It is a wonderful place, and I'm very proud of it. I always remember my city although I live far from it now.

Our House in Abidjan Yaka Cisse - 3B

Abidjan is a city in the Ivory Coast, a country situated in West Africa. I grew up in a big house there with all my sisters, brothers, and parents. My house is really big because we are fifteen children. My father has three wives, so he built a house to accommodate us all.

First, my house is composed of twelve rooms, two pools, three living rooms, two gardens, two garages, and four kitchens. Each wife has her private space with her children. I spent a lot of time in my beautiful bedroom which was decorated in a girl style. My friends liked to

come to my house because there were many things that entertained us. Sometimes we played in the pool or in the garden. The pool was very long and the water was blue, and at the bottom of the pool my father had someone write ALLAHOU AKBAR which means "God is the Greatest" in Arabic because we are Muslim. In the garden, we could find things to play with. My friends and I preferred to stay in the house because it was fun, and everything was at our disposal to have a great childhood.

In conclusion, I can say that where I grew up was really exciting because I had everything I needed, so there was no reason to be envious or jealous. I was always satisfied with what I had, so I thank my parents for the lifestyle and education that they have given me.



My Lovely Country Khaled Awad - 3B

Hello everybody. I am going to write about the beautiful place where I grew up. Kuwait is a very small country, but it is in the middle of the world. Kuwait has done me a lot of favors, so I want to return something back. First, I finished my studies in Kuwait, learned how to be successful in my life, and learned

to know what is right and what is wrong. Second, Kuwait is the place where there are wonderful hospitals, and I can go there if I feel sick to get better. Third, Kuwait is the place where I feel safe and secure. There are a lot of police officers who are looking for criminals day and night. Kuwait did a lot for me, so maybe I can build a beautiful building there, grow a lot of trees, or help protect the country. In conclusion, I will never forget the place where I grew up, and I want to give something back. I advise everyone to take care of the place where they grew up.



Apartado, The Place Where I Grew Up Juan Bernardo Ortiz Marin - 3B

Apartado is the best place to raise your children in. The town doesn't have a lot of interesting things to see such as amusement parks and museums, but it is such a peaceful place. The people are so friendly and polite, and you don't have to be worried about dangers as in big cities. All the families who have raised their children here feel that it has been one of the best decisions they have made in their life.

I was born in a wonderful big family, and I'm the youngest of my four siblings. I lived all my childhood in Apartado. I lived in a big white house with a huge pretty yard. In the neighborhood, you can find a lot of fruit trees, such as mango, guava, and carambola (star fruit). The neighborhood has parks and places where children can play. We used to play soccer, baseball, and other great games there.

There were many different ways to enjoy my childhood in my hometown because the neighbors were very close. They frequently organized activities for people to share with their families like bicycle races, family parties, bazaars, and so on. This kept the children out of trouble. Clearly this place is a good place to raise your children because it is an amazing place with positive environment.

The Neighborhood Where I Grew Up Hatim Alhamdan - 3B



In a great green calm neighborhood something magic happened. A boy was born there, and that boy was me! I grew up in the East Coast of Saudi Arabia with wonderful birds singing and cool weather in the mornings. I was born in 1992, grew up in the same neighborhood, and stayed there until I moved to U.S.A. to study.

My neighborhood is big and old. In fact, it is one of the oldest neighborhoods in that area. Actually, I grew up in my grandparents' home along with my family, my uncle's family, and two more single uncles in that big antique house. I lived there for about ten years, and after that, my family moved to our own house, but we were near my grandparents' neighborhood. Our house was in front of my grandparents' big family house, and the government put a small garden between us.

After nine years, I decided to come to Houston to study, and the University of Houston campus is my new neighborhood now. I will have memories of this place because I have become used to it now. It's true that I moved to Houston, but after I finish my engineering studies, I'll go back to my old neighborhood and raise my kids there.



A Place that I Miss Very Much Zhao Tang - 3B



I have been in the United States for three months. When I came to America, I felt so excited. I saw a lot of things and made a lot of friends from all over the world. But I always miss a place in my dream, in my mind---my hometown.

There is a city in the middle of China. Its name is Changsha. I lived there and studied there for 16 years. I have a lot of memories. This city is not a famous city in the world, but it has a long history. It was established about 1,500 years ago. Now, you can see old stone bridges over the rivers. You can also see the YuLu Academy which was built in the Ming Dynasty 500 years ago. It is the oldest academy in China and I grew up beside it.

I can imagine my mother cooking a dish called fried meat. It is my favorite food. It is made of pork, pepper, green onion, and a number of seasonings. This food tastes very spicy and is famous locally.

In my opinion, I think everyone has a favorite place. You can never forget your past life. Your friends, your parents, and your roots are over there.

♥ Ideal ♥ Spouses

Characteristics of a Good Husband

Basmah Habibullah - 2A

A good husband, for many girls, has three important characteristics. The first characteristic is that he should be friendly. When he is friendly, his wife can laugh with him. She will spend a happy time because he knows how to make her laugh, so she never feels sad or bored. The second characteristic is that he should be understanding. He should always know what she needs, what she wants, what she loves, and what she hates. He should know all these without her telling him. The third characteristic is that he should be trustworthy. I think this characteristic is very important for many girls because he knows everything about his wife like her secrets. In conclusion, I think if any girl has a husband that has these characteristics, she will have a happy life.



A Good Spouse Alali Amani - 2B

A good spouse has three characteristics. The first characteristic is that he should be honest with his wife. For example, if he wants to speak with his wife, he should be honest. He shouldn't build his life on lies. The second characteristic is that he should be a hero. It means he should always take care of his family. The third characteristic is that he should be respectful. He should respect his wife and his children and listen to his wife's opinion to make their married life happy and interesting. In conclusion, a good spouse should be honest and a hero. He should also be respectful to his wife to have a happy married life.



Characteristics of a Good Wife Mohammad Al Shalwi - 2A

My wife should have three characteristics. The first characteristic is that she should respect me. She should respect all my ideas. She should also respect my parents and my family. When I am talking with her, she needs to respect me. The second characteristic is that a good wife should be modest. She can speak with my family and her family but not with anyone else. She must stay at home, or if she goes out, she should dress in the right way. The third characteristic for a good spouse is to be trustworthy. She should keep all my secrets between us. When I make a mistake, she can advise me, but she should not tell other people. In conclusion, these are three characteristics for a good wife: to be respectful, modest, and trustworthy.



A Good Husband Virginia Torres - 2A

A good husband should have three very important characteristics. First, he should be very loving because this is the first reason for marriage. This is the reason for happiness and unity among the couples. Second, he should be very hard-working because this will give the family a good life. This does not depend on only one person.

My Ideal Husband Maya Yermekova - 2B

My ideal husband should have three important characteristics. First of all, he has to love me very much. Even though I am not a perfect girl, he has to love my personality.



I want to be comfortable with him and comfortable with my feelings. If I do something wrong, I want to be sure that my husband will not stop loving me. Second, my ideal husband has to be an interesting person. He should be unusual, unpredictable, and with good sense of humor. I want to discover him again and again. I want to talk and to travel with him around the world. I want to live an interesting life with an interesting man. Third, my ideal husband has to be bold because I like to feel that I am with a brave man. I want him to protect me. It would be an amazing feeling. In conclusion, my future spouse should be loving, interesting, and bold.

Both husband and wife should work hard to build the best future for their kids. Third, a good husband should be very tolerant because living together is the most difficult part of a marriage. If there isn't tolerance, the marriage will end up badly. Not having tolerance is the first reason of divorce because both husband and wife have their customs and might think differently about things. In conclusion, a good husband should be loving, hard-working, and very tolerant.

The Qualities of a Good Spouse Fatimah Altuhaifa - 6A

Each husband has different qualities from others. The variety of qualities does not mean that some of these qualities are better than others. However, in my opinion, a good husband should be educated, responsible, and respectful to women.

Education can improve family life. It stands to reason that when the husband is educated, his children will be, too. In addition to that, an educated husband can help his children in their school, which makes a strong bond between him and his family. Moreover, good education is the passport to a good job which enables a man to provide everything his children need.

A lot of homes are ruined because of the lack of responsibility of the husband. A good husband should be a responsible per-

son. He has to be aware of his family's health care, education, and happiness.

A responsible husband can guarantee happiness for his family. Also, his responsibility keeps him away from alcohol and drugs because he always thinks of his children.

Another quality that a good husband should have is respecting women. This will make him see his wife's sacrifice clearly. Also, a husband who respects his wife will not hit her. As a result, his children will grow up in a healthy environment.

In conclusion, a good relationship between a husband and wife is based on how they care for their relationship. When a man has education, responsibility, and respect for women, he will be a good husband.

A Good Husband Fabiola Vidal - 2E

There are three characteristics of a good husband. First of all, he has to be a good housekeeper. For example, after he prepares a great dinner for his wife, he should wash the dishes. Also, he can help his kids before they go to school. In addition, he should do the hard work in the house, such as fixing broken things. Second, a good husband has fun times with his wife, like seeing a good movie, going to a restaurant, and sending flowers to her. Third, a good husband communicates with his wife and always stays with her in both good and bad moments. Perhaps this is the most important quality of a great husband. In brief, a good husband is a good housekeeper and a fun-loving man who maintains solid communication with his wife.



The Best Husband Adriana Maria Uribe Moreno - 2E



When a man gets married, he must have many skills or abilities in order to become a good husband. First, he must help clean the house. For example, on Saturday mornings, he should turn on the washing machine and dishwasher and wash the dirty clothes and dishes. It will always help his wife if she is going to buy groceries for the next week. Second, he must be patient and calm when his wife goes to the beauty salon or goes shopping at the mall. Men are often impatient when women cannot decide about what to buy or what to do with their hair. Third, a good husband might dine out with his wife on Fridays and sometimes give her special gifts. In addition, he can cook for his wife, and he doesn't always sit on the sofa to watch TV. Finally, a man can be the best husband in the world if he loves his wife deeply and is always patient with her.

A Fun Day at the ZOO



The Texas Renaissance Festival



Greatest Challenge

Andreina Alvarado Chavez - 3D

I consider my greatest challenge has been dealing with my independence from my dad. Since I was born, my dad has solved all my problems in difficult situations; however, when I came to the U.S, and I had to do everything by myself, I realized what a hard change it would be.

My first challenge was to drive a long distance because my dad used to drive me when I had to go anywhere in my city. Secondly, in the U.S., I had to buy everything by myself, such as furniture and food. In the same way, my dad used to pay my bills and organize them. Therefore, when I arrived in Houston and had to do all of that alone without his help, I decided to be brave and drive carefully. Similarly, I decided to deal with my shopping problem and learn how to do it. I organized myself to pay my bills on the Internet, and now it is very easy for me. I felt so happy when I did it the first time, and my dad feels proud of me and how I learned to manage my life.

Haidar Alkhalifah - 3C

The greatest challenge for me while I have been in America is time management. Last year was the hardest time for my family and me because my mother had health problems, and she was on the hospital's waiting list. During that time, we were waiting for the hospital to call us. It was really a difficult time, and we did not know for how long we would stay here.

After waiting for a year, they finally called us. I was happy and worried at the same time. I was worried about timing because, in addition to taking classes, I needed to take my siblings to their schools, pick them up, and visit my mother at the hospital. It was such a hard time that I was going to quit my school.

Recently, my great father and I have been taking turns taking or bringing the kids, and sometimes we switch our visiting time. We also help each other to clean up the house and take care of everything else.

Although being in this situation is not easy, I love it because I believe that I must do the best for my parents all the time, especially during their hardest time.

Min-Ae Kim - 3C

My greatest challenge was making American friends in the US. When I first came here, I wanted to make American friends. One day after the placement test, some American girls asked me, "Where are you from? Where are you living?" I thought I could make American friends, but I couldn't speak English very well with them, and I didn't give up. While I was talking with them, I continued smiling, so I could make them feel comfortable. I also explained about Korean drama and other things, but it was so hard for me because when I met them, I hadn't studied English yet. However, they liked Korean drama, and they wondered about my country's food and culture. I felt so good because my spoken English was not so bad. I wanted to keep in touch, so I got their number. I thought when I asked them, they might feel uncomfortable, but they gave me their number and called me first the next day. I felt so thankful, and now we meet every Wednesday. When I



first met them, we were not so friendly, but now we feel like close friends. I am proud of myself because if I hadn't tried to speak English, I wouldn't have them as my friends now.

Greatest Challenge

The Most Difficult Experience I Have Ever Had

Bei Li - 4E

The first time I went to Korea was the most difficult experience of my life. First, I had never lived by myself in another country, and it was the first time for me to take a plane! Furthermore, I could not cook. Because I was late to apply for a dormitory, I had to live outside the university campus. I had to eat by myself, so I just ate noodles for one week! Secondly, as a Chinese woman, I knew a little bit of Korean. I had learned it for two months in China, but I couldn't speak it very well. I just knew Korean language and the Korean people through soap operas and songs. I did not know real Korean life. Thirdly, I had no friends in this new land. I was the only student from my university to go to Korea. When I got into trouble, no one could help me because my neighbors couldn't understand me. The worst thing was that there was no one I could talk to at home, so my parents talked to me a lot at this time through the Internet. In short, though the experience in Korea was difficult for me, I am proud of myself now. I know how important family and friends are. The experience was worthwhile, and I will not forget it for the rest of my life.



Pengqin Wang - 3C

Can you cook? If you can't, I think that you can learn something about cooking through my personal challenge that I've experienced.

Last year, I came alone to America to study. I moved to a house with my friend after I had lived with an American family for six months. When I moved and immersed myself in the comfortable environment of the new house, I suddenly realized that my roommate and I both couldn't cook. In China, I had always lived with my grandparents who took care of everything for me. Nonetheless, I was determined to learn cooking because I couldn't always eat out!

Therefore, I decided to solve this problem about cooking. First, I called my grandmother and asked her how to cook some Chinese dishes. She was so astonished that I called her about cooking. Then, she told me some detailed steps for cooking such as adding a little oil in the pan before you cook. I also found some videos about cooking from the Internet, so I cooked while I was watching the video on my iPad. As a result, I can cook some different Chinese dishes pretty well after trying plenty of times.

Now, I'm in Houston, and I live with an American family again. I can still cook, and I don't think I will lose this skill in the future.



Ahmed Alraddadi - 3D

I had a great challenge when I arrived in Houston with my sister and brother-in-law. My sister was sick, so she came to Houston for liver treatment and recovery. Because they only spoke Arabic, I had to come with them to help them. I had to do everything by myself. I went to the hospital with my sister to translate for her. Even though my English wasn't good, it helped. At that time, I felt stressed. On one hand, my sister was sick; on the other hand, I had issues with communication. Nevertheless, I decided to help my sister, and I did it.

Therefore, I started to communicate with people to learn more vocabulary and explain to doctors and nurses with my limited language. They helped me by explaining more or using gestures. Day by day, I was improving my language. One day, when my sister got very sick, we took her to the ER in the middle of the night, but they didn't have a translator from the International Office. I had to do it by myself, and I did it. In addition, because my sister felt hopeless, I stayed with her to listen to her, to remind her God is merciful, and to tell her she had to fight for her son and her husband. Eventually, she calmed down and smiled again. I still remember that when I took her out to shop or to visit interesting places, it helped her a lot and made her happy.

Finally, even though I lost her, I have a peaceful feeling now because I'm proud of myself that I could help her and make her smile before she left this world.

Greatest Challenge

Saad Alghamdi - 3D

My greatest challenge while living in the U.S has been homesickness. My first days here were so difficult because this is my first time to be far away from my family. Here, in my living room, I felt alone because when I was in my hometown, my children were always making noise in my apartment, and I used to fight with them. When I came back from my job, my sons used to welcome me at the door and kiss me, so the first time that I was driving home in Houston, I was thinking about them and asked myself, "Who will kiss me when I open the door?" I felt pain in my heart. One day, I dreamed my son asked, "When will my dad come back?" At that moment, I woke up and stayed up long time thinking about them. Nonetheless, I was determined to stay in the U.S and reach my dream.

As a result, I have developed new methods to overcome these feelings. First of all, I have decided not to stay alone in my apartment, so when I finish my classes, I study with my friend outdoors. This way, I don't feel alone. Moreover, I promised myself to call my family every morning to keep in touch and feel that I'm with them. Also, when I think about them, I quickly remind myself that I'm doing all this for them; therefore, I can overcome this challenge and see a bright future for myself and my family.



Romario Pereira - 3D

Since I came the U.S., I have faced a lot of challenges, but the greatest one was the language. I remember I stayed in my dormitory until my English classes started. Also, when I went to the market to buy something, such as food or furniture, there were a lot of people who tried to talk to me, but I didn't answer their questions because they were talking too fast for me, and it confused me. Mostly, black men or women seemed like they were singing. One day, when I went to the cashier, he asked me something, but I looked at his face, and I said that I didn't understand. He said, "That's okay." I felt uncomfortable and embarrassed. When I was walking home, I thought "What did he say?" I'm sure he laughed behind my back when I left. Later, I realized what he asked me, "Where are you from?" and "Why did you come here?" Nonetheless, I was determined to learn English. Right now, I'm studying and improving my English skills so in the future I can speak in English about anything I want.



Jieun Paik - 3C

My greatest challenge was to take care of my nephew and niece for one day. One day in October, my sister asked me to take care of her children the next day because she and her husband had an important appointment. The next day they left the house very early, and then my challenge started! First, I woke up my nephew and niece and made breakfast for them. While I was making breakfast, they watched the Disney channel. After they ate breakfast, they looked bored, so I took them out to go to the park. We took a walk and rode a bicycle in the park. There were many ducks, and we fed them some bread. When we came back home, I quickly made lunch and fed them. Then while they were taking a nap, I quickly ate lunch and washed the dishes. After one hour, my nephew woke up and got cranky. At that time, my niece woke up and cried, too. I tried to comfort them, but they didn't stop crying. Therefore, I gave them some jelly, and they surprisingly stopped crying. However, I felt very tired. Then I realized that a mother's job is very difficult! I was very thankful for my mom in Korea. Finally, when my sister came back, I felt deeply relieved. The experience of being a mother is very hard, but it gave me many things to think about. I felt my mother's love, and my love for her is deeper now.

Culture Festival



Culture Festival



Holidays

Favorite Holidays Jasvinder Kour - 4D

Last Sunday, a friend invited me for dinner at her home. I was amazed because she prepared the whole dinner at home, and it was great. For dessert, she served me some sweets like Gujiya, Kheer, and Burfi. The sweets were so delicious that they made me nostalgic and reminded me of my favorite holidays: Holi, Rakhi, and Navratri.

Holi, the festival of colors, is a popular festival in India. On this day, people visit each other's houses and put colors on each other's faces. Usually, my friends come to my place, and we celebrate this festival together. A particular type of sweet, Gujiya, is

prepared for this occasion. Gujiya is stuffed with dry fruits and coated with a sugar layer. I tried to make this on the last Holi but didn't get the exact flavor. My mom always makes Gujiya on Holi, and she has magic in her hands.

The taste of Kheer reminds me of Navratri Festival, the festival of dance. A type of dance called Dandiya is performed by the people. They use wooden sticks and dance with their partner. I used to go with my friends to play Dandiya. One sweet associated with this festival is Kheer, which is made of rice and milk. It looks more like pudding.

The last item, Burfi, reminded me of the holiday Rakhi. This festival represents the bond between brothers and sisters. On this day, the sister ties a rakhi, which seems like a

thread, on her brother's wrist, and in return, the brother promises to protect her and bring her happiness. They offer Burfi to each other as a symbol of sweetness and harmony in their relationship. Since I am here, I miss my brothers very much, so every year I send Rakhi to them.

I have been away from home for the last two years, so I miss these holidays very much. Even if I get a chance to celebrate these festivals--Holi, Rakhi, and Navratri--here, somehow I miss the ambience at home. Whenever I taste or see these sweets, they really bring back all those sweet memories.

The Memory of Mid-Autumn Day Wei Lu - 4C

Fall is coming. I can clearly feel that the weather has been getting colder, and the leaves on the trees are starting to fall. Last week, my friend gave me some mooncakes. They are delicious and make me remember the Mid-Autumn Day in China.

Mooncakes are round, which means family members should come together to celebrate the festival, just like Thanksgiving Day in America. Family means a lot to Chinese people, so they always want to stay with family when there is an important holiday. I can still remember the big dinner party last year that almost everyone in our family attended.

Mooncakes are really soft. My grandmother doesn't

like crispy things, so we always bought some soft cakes for her. She always said that mooncake was one of her favorite cakes. She must be very happy now that Mid-Autumn Day is coming because almost every family member will come to visit her. I can't go back to see her this year. I hope she can be as happy as before.

Mooncakes have many kinds of tastes. Some are sweet, some are salty, and some are a little spicy. People from different parts of China like different kinds of mooncakes. People from different families prefer different tastes, too. Our family likes the cakes that taste sweet, which means families should be sweet to each other.

Old Chinese people say that you will have strong feelings about going back to see families during the festivals. I can feel that very deeply now. Even some pieces of mooncake will make me remember my family. I hope that everything goes well for them this year.

My Best Holiday Alina Zhumakhmetova - 2D

My best holiday was last year. It was our New Year which is just as important as Christmas in the USA. We had a great time. Every year we have fun on that day. We usually celebrate it with family. First, in the evening, we had a festal dinner. Everybody wore their festive attire and sat at the table. After dinner, my dad said, "Alina, start to write wishes." Writing our wishes is our family tradition. First, we write the wishes; then we burn them. At twelve o'clock, we congratulated each other and waited for the congratulations of our President on television. After that, we went outside and started the fireworks. When we finished, our neighbors came to us, and then we started to celebrate again. I like this holiday because many people drop in, everything is new, and it is in winter.



Last week a friend invited me to her birthday party in a Malaysian restaurant. It was a great party where we ate Malaysian food, played Truth or Dare, and sang songs. But the most important thing, which awakened some great memories in my mind, was the Ketupat (a Malaysian rice roll). The looks and taste of it reminded me of my favorite holidays.

The taste of Ketupat reminded me of my birthday celebration because this was the same food I had eaten. For this reason, I always order it. It is colorful and sweet. It is made of rice and five different sauces. Sometimes, I have a painted face after the dinner! But the most unforgettable thing is that I could play with my friends the whole day. We swam and ran. I enjoyed it not only because of the freedom I had, but also because I got a lot of money from my parents. Then I bought some of my favorite video games and enjoyed them with my friends.

In China, we eat special food for our traditional festivals. For example, in the Mid-Autumn Festival we eat rice dumplings (Chinese rice balls) which look like Ketupat. When I was in China, I really enjoyed watching white rice and green leaves in my grandmother's hands as she made the fragrant rice dumplings. Also, we have dragon-boat racing during Mid-Autumn Festival. Our fathers form their own teams for the championship. It doesn't matter if our father is the winner or not. In the audience, as their children, we cheer for them on the shore and give them a great hug after the game. In the past, we had Mid-Autumn Festival to recall a great man whose name was Qu Yuan. But now, we just enjoy having fun.

These two celebrations really remind me of a lot of happiness I had with my parents and my friends during my childhood. The feelings from what we see and what we eat often bring back great memories from the past.



My Next Vacation **Hassan Al Ghanim - 3B**

Many people like to travel during their vacation and visit new countries, and so do I. If I have a chance on the next vacation, Germany will be my first choice to visit because I heard about it from my friends, and I have seen some beautiful pictures of it. I also saw it on TV, and it was really nice. My family visited Germany before, and they really liked it. They said that there are many places to visit such as parks, zoos, forests, and malls. The biggest zoo in the world is in Germany. They let the animals move out of their cages. It is a nice thing to do. Also, the malls there are huge with a lot of shops, and the weather in the winter is very cold and snowy. In addition, there are many things to do in the winter like skiing on the snow and fishing in the river. In conclusion, I'm planning to visit Germany on my next vacation.

My Favorite Holiday **Weilu Zhang - 4D**

Christmas Day in the United States is a combination of a lot of traditions. In China, many young people choose to get together or stay with their parents on Christmas Day. The reasons my favorite holiday is Christmas Day have to do with Catholicism, overnight visits, and shopping.

First of all, I'm Catholic. On Christmas Day, we celebrate Jesus Christ's birth. It is often combined with customs from Catholicism and other winter celebrations. In China, many Catholics go to church with their families to celebrate this glorious time on Christmas Eve.

Second of all, as in western culture, Christmas Day is a time to spend with friends or a time to sit down with relatives for a large meal. You can stay overnight with your friends and enjoy different Christmas lights and other decorations at midnight.

Finally, one of the most important reasons to enjoy this time is that since there are very good sales, you can go shopping to buy special Christmas gifts, and then you can have a candle light dinner with your boyfriend.

From what has been discussed above, I draw the conclusion that Christmas Day is really my favorite holiday.



My Hero

Merry Moyongo - 4E

Everyone has a hero depending on the concept that each one has. My hero is someone I deeply respect: Zidane, the French soccer player. He has never given up. He always finds a solution for his team. He continues to struggle against the other team when he plays soccer. He is a legend.

Jin Wang- 4E

Ma who is an outstanding choral conductor in China is my hero. He is the first person who studied abroad in the choral conductor field. He studied at Westminster Choir College in the US in the 1920s. He is a person who devoted his whole life to Chinese choral education. Most Chinese conductors lead under his teachings. He is serious, academic, humble, and warmhearted. He was in the worst place during the Chinese Revolution, but he never gave up studying music and helping people to enjoy music. He is 98 years old with a sense of humor. The young generation of conductors is influenced by him. Dr. Ma is my hero.

Jennifer Moscarella - 4E

A hero is a person with strong skills and good feelings. For me, my hero is my mother because she is very special for me. All the time she gives us the best she can. She cooks, cleans the house, and gives us advice when we have problems. In short, my mom is the best person I know. She is my hero.

Gerardo Medina - 4E

Lennon lived at a time when there was a lot of war in the world. He tried to make people understand why war was bad, and why people should live in peace. Some politicians thought that he was crazy and just another hippie. He changed the mentality of many people because of all the music he wrote while he was alive. John Lennon is my hero.

Justin – Dong Yoon Kim - 4E

My hero is my father. He is an international businessman, and he is very busy with his work. However, he always takes care of me and works a lot to support my family's needs. When I was a teenager, I didn't know what I should do with my future. At that time, my father taught me and gave me advice about what I could do and what I should do. In short, he is my teacher and my hero in life.

Tung Yu (Tony) - 4E

The person I admire the most is my mom. She is a history teacher. She is very popular among her students because she spends a lot of time on her lessons and has a good sense of humor. All students enjoy her class. My mom is not only a good teacher, but also a great mother. She is patient with me and is always smiling while talking. My mom is my hero.

Cuong Phan - 4E

The person who is my hero is my father. He is courageous, hardworking, and a social person. First, he was in the Vietnam army and struggled to obtain independence for our country. Besides his courage, he is an ambitious man. After the war ended, he went back to school to study at a technology university. Post graduating, he became a manager of a government company. Thirdly, he is a social man. He can speak to many people about a lot of stories. In conclusion, my father is my idol. When I fail in life, I remember my father to have encouragement to succeed in life.

Ali AlBohamood - 4E

Everyone has a hero in life. My brother is someone I admire a lot. We grew up in the same house, so we grew up together. He is older than me, so I used to play with him. He studied in the United States and got his master's degree here. This challenges me to do anything. He believes in me, and I know that one day I will succeed. He supported me to study in the US. My brother is my idol.

Yiming Gu,(Gavin) - 4E

My grandfather is the hero of our family. He was born in 1934. During the Anti-Japanese War, he was an eighth grader, but he dropped out of school to find a job to make money for his family. My grandfather had a mother and nine brothers and sisters to take care of, so he had to work very hard to earn enough money for his family. After the war in 1954, because of his outstanding work, he was allowed to meet the president of China. He is the hero of our family.

I am thankful for...

IA

Abdulrhman Alshehri:

I am thankful for flowers because they make a beautiful view.

Kamel Alghiryafi:

I am thankful for my teacher Dale because he explains grammar very well. I am also thankful for my friends because they make me laugh.

Mohammad Aljutayl:

I am thankful for my brothers because they help me. I am thankful for my teachers because they also help me.

Khitam Almugabgab:

I am thankful for my husband and son because they make my life sweeter. Also, I am thankful for coffee because it wakes me up!

Abdullah Alhuwayji :

I am thankful for my phone because I can talk with my family.

Abdulaziz Alsulaymi:

First, I am thankful for Kamel. He is my best friend. Second, I am thankful for my father because he helped me come to the U.S.A. to study English.

Edvaldo Nelumba:

I am grateful to my wife because she is the mother of my children.

Mohammed Alrasi:

I thank God for my father because he has changed my life.

Bassam Alenzi:

I am thankful for my teacher, Geneva, because she helps me study English. Also, I am thankful for my friends because they make my life happy.

IB

Isabel Bernardo:

I thank God for my mother because she is my inspiration.

Abdullah Bin Jumayd:

I thank God for my mother because she is a very beautiful person, and she helped me decide what to do with my life.

Faisal Aldiriby:

I thank God because my teachers, Mrs. Jana and Mr. Dale, are good teachers.

Moussad Alsulaiman :

I thank God for my father because he brought me here to study to be a better person.

Muklef Alshammari:

I thank God for giving me a beautiful family because they always help me.

Sattam Alfaleh: I thank God because I have a good family, and that I have good teachers.

IC

Aidana Ozhayeva:

I am grateful to God for my Dad because he is a good listener, and he always helps me. He is kind and responsible, and I love him!

Israa Alghzali:

I thank God that I can live with my family, and that we can spend time together. I thank God for giving me a kind and honest family.

Afaf Alyabis :

I thank Allah for good health and success in life.

Mohammad Aldmour :

I am thankful for my brother because he helps me with everything I need.

Ali Alabbad :

I am thankful for my mom and dad. I love my family. I love that we all love one another. Also, I am thankful for the blessings that God has given us, spiritual and natural.

Sultan Alqahtani :

I am grateful to my whole family who helps me in everything.

Mamadou Almeida :

I am thankful that my father is my friend.

Jaimov Germano :

I thank God that He is my friend.



Immigration Update

IMMIGRATION UPDATE

If you are traveling outside of the U.S. over the Christmas break, you should talk to Dave Burns or Brad Powell, the LCC student counselors, or Sam Long, the SEVIS Compliance Coordinator, before you leave in order to make sure your I-20 and visa are in order. Remember that to re-enter the U.S., you must have an I-20 for the school you will attend and an unexpired visa. Your I-20 can be either your current I-20 signed on the last page (page 3) by Sam or Dave or a new I-20.

When students re-enter the U.S. for the spring semester after having gone home for the Christmas break, they should be prepared for questions and an inspection by DHS (the Department of Homeland Security). In addition to their passports, visas, and I-20's, students should have with them copies of their school records such as their grade reports and proof of their financial resources and sponsorship. Usually the DHS inspector will not ask for these additional documents, but students should have them available in case they are asked for these documents.

Many U.S. embassies and consulates are very busy during the Christmas and New Year holiday season as well as being closed on the holidays. Students whose visas have expired may face time delays when trying to renew their visas over the Christmas break. You can check the web site of the U.S. Embassy in your country to get the latest visa processing information. You may want to change your travel plans if your visa has expired and the U.S. Embassy in your country will need too much time to process your visa renewal.

If you have any questions, check with Sam, Brad, or Dave now to avoid problems later.

F-1 STUDENT STATUS

Students need to be very careful and obey the immigration laws. Under the current laws and rules, students who go out -of-status (don't obey the rules for students) may find that they will be unable to get their status back while in the U.S. This means they may have to return to their country and in some cases get a new

visa to return to the U.S. to study. There is a possibility that a new visa will not be granted if the student is out of status.

Remember the basic immigration rules you must follow. For F-1 students, among the most important rules are:

- 1) You must be a full-time student during regular terms, taking vacations only when you are permitted.
- 2) You cannot work, except on the UH campus, unless you have special permission from DHS.
- 3) You must make sure your I-20 is up to date and issued by the school you are attending.
- 4) If you transfer to another school, you must get a new I-20 from the new school and have it processed in a timely manner in order to notify the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) that you changed schools. See the advisor at the new school if you are going to transfer in order to make sure you get your new I-20 within the time allowed.

Other visa categories such as J-1, B1 or B-2, A-1, L-2, etc., have their own rules which students in these categories must obey.

Remember, if you obey the immigration laws, you will not have a problem. If you have any doubts or questions about the rules or about what you must do, see the LCC Student Counselors, or the SEVIS Compliance Coordinator. We are here to help you and we want to make sure you are successfully in your studies at the LCC.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING NEXT SEMESTER?

Under DHS' SEVIS tracking program for F-1 students, at the beginning of each term we have to enter the data of what you are doing into the SEVIS system. It is VERY IMPORTANT that you let us know what you will be doing next term so that we can enter the correct information in the SEVIS system. If you plan to take a vacation

for the spring term, you must fill out a "Vacation Request" form. These forms are on-line.

If you are not sure yet of what you will be doing after the break, then please let us know by the start of spring term so that we can enter the correct information about you in the SEVIS system.



STUDENT ACTIVITIES

The time has passed quickly this term! Our first trip was to downtown Houston, seeing the Visitor's Center, and exploring and eating in the Houston underground tunnel system. New students and returning students from summer got to know each other, too.

In only a few weeks after that we had the LCC Class Photo followed by the LCC Sports Tournament. Students had a good time and a break from their studies. Winners in the games were as follows: **Bowling:** 1st – Mamadou Almeida, 2nd – Tu Thi Ngoc Hoang, 3rd – Yazmin Rodriguez. **Billiards:** 1st – Abdulla Humaid Alhmoudi, 2nd – Ruihond (Tim) Sang. **Table Tennis:** 1st – Jaifu (Jeff) Shen, 2nd – Marvin Flores Hernandez.

On Saturday, November 3rd, we went on a trip to the Renaissance Festival. This festival is held each fall in a recreated English village of the Renaissance time period. The village is located in the Woodlands north of Houston. Many people dress in costumes of that time. There are many shops and places to eat. Different musical groups and other performers such as jugglers, magicians, and dancers entertained us. There was also a jousting contest where knights riding horses fought each other. We had an interesting and fun day.

Next came the LCC Culture Festival. It was a beautiful day, and we enjoyed being outside for the Festival. Thanks to everyone who helped make the Culture Festival a big success by bringing all the delicious food. This was a special time as it is the same week as the American celebration of Thanksgiving. We had a good time tasting the dishes of different cultures and learning about each other by sharing this Thanksgiving lunch together. Thanks to the stu-

dents who brought their music, danced for us, and dressed in traditional clothes.

On December 12th, we have our final field trip. By the time you read this, we may have already gone to San Antonio! It's a great way to end the semester, joining your friends, classmates, and teachers and having a Mexican lunch at Casa Rio on the famous Riverwalk. After lunch is the time for exploring the rest of the Riverwalk, visiting the shops, going through the Alamo, and enjoying San Antonio. I hope everyone sees the Riverwalk after dark when all the Christmas lights are on. It's very beautiful.

THE LCC STUDENT COUNSELOR'S OFFICE:

The student counselor's office is here to

help you with your problems, to help you find information you need, and to advise you about your concerns, ranging from immigration to academic to personal.

In addition to Dave Burns, there is Sam Long and Brad Powell, to help you. Come see us if you have a question, have a problem, need information or advice, or just want to talk!

DAVE'S LAST VOICES ARTICLE

This is my last time to write for Voices. As some of you

know, I am retiring on January 31st. I have worked in the LCC for many enjoyable years, but the time has come for me to move on. I will always appreciate and remember the LCC. I could not ask for better colleagues to work with, and I will miss them. But most of all, I will miss you, the students. You have truly enriched my life. Even after all these years, I still learn from you everyday. You have opened the world to me. *I can never thank you enough.*





Editors: Farideh Darvishi & Alida Nakic
Thank you to all the LCC teachers and students
for your contributions!



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