

The Official Newsletter of LINC Home Study

NEWSLINC

2010 Annual Edition



The LINC Home Study program is funded by:



Citizenship and
Immigration Canada

Citoyenneté et
Immigration Canada

LINC Home Study

LINC Home Study is an English language program for newcomers to Canada who wish to improve their listening, speaking, reading and writing skills. This program provides students with the opportunity to learn English in the comfort of their homes and is open to immigrants who have permanent resident status and convention refugees 18 years or older.

Classes are taught by certified TESL instructors, who contact students every week to review homework, practice speaking and answer questions. Students have a choice of using their computer to study English or having a traditional textbook. All the study materials are based on the Canadian Language Benchmarks standards.

How much does the program cost? Nothing. The program is funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada, and as such, all study materials are provided free of charge to participants. LINC Home Study students are encouraged to study independently for between 5 to 10 hours a week, and to finish homework on a regular basis. To be successful students have to study hard, and commit their time to improving their English skills. The teacher is there to guide students along on their path to significant language improvement.

The LINC Home Study program offers many other study options, including **drop-in conversation classes**, **additional phone conversation classes**, **curriculum for seniors and women** and instruction for **deaf and blind** clients.

We encourage all LINC Home Study students to take advantage of the options available to them, to participate in the online LINC Home Study **forum**, to contribute to our monthly newsletters, and to their journey in learning English.

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Welcome to the Annual issue of the LINC Home Study newsletter.

This a collection of the year's most interesting articles submitted by students in the LNC Home Study program.

We would like to say thank you to all those who submitted articles throughout the year. Please continue to send us your articles, feedback and comments every month.

Enjoy!

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January 2010

HOW TO BECOME A PHARMACIST IN CANADA by Lara S.



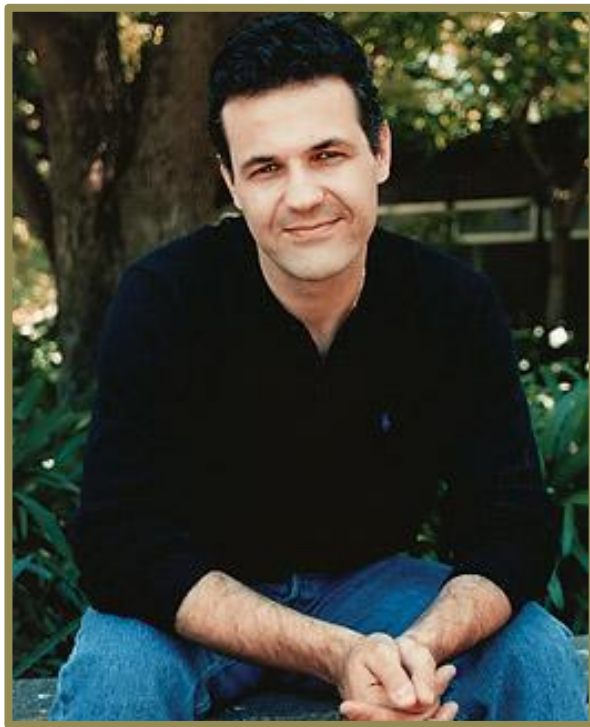
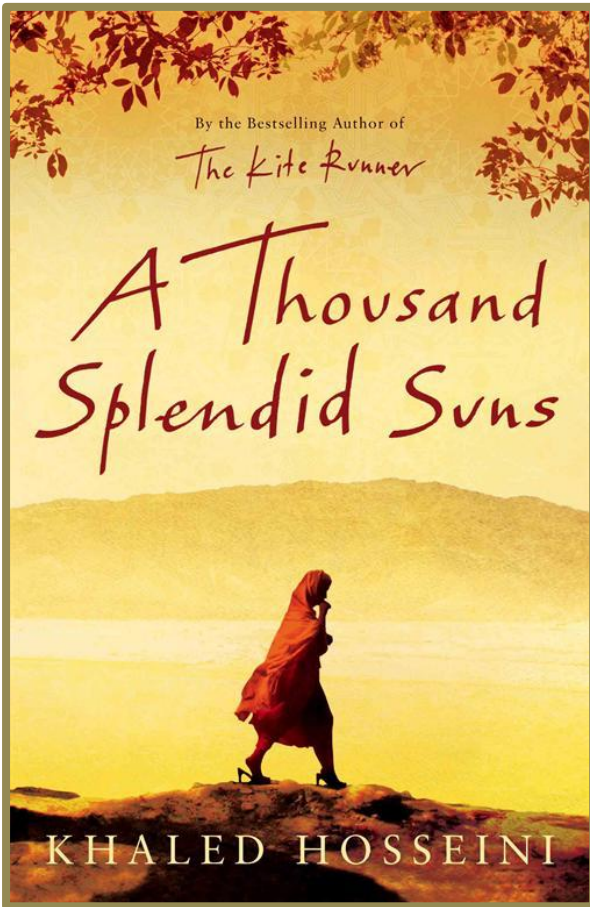
Pharmacists are medical professionals specializing in medication. They are responsible for understanding drugs and planning drug therapy programs for patients. That is why I decided to study pharmacy, which is a helping career.

I studied pharmacy in Jordan for 9 years. I started training in the fourth year. It takes 5 years to obtain a BCS Degree in pharmacy in Jordan. The first year in university, I took life science, health and mathematics. The next four years were pharmaceutical education, pharmacology, therapeutics, etc., all courses a pharmacist needs. To finish training in Jordan, I had to complete 1650 hours of practice. After graduation, I was licensed and I worked as pharmacist for 2 years.

Now that I am in Canada, I need to get my pharmacist license to be able to work as a pharmacist in Canada. In order to practice pharmacy in Canada, I need first of all to have my degree from Jordan evaluated by the Pharmacy Examining Board of Canada (PEBC). Then, I have to pass two exams called the Evaluating Exam and the Qualifying Exam. After passing these two exams, I will be given a certificate called "The Certificate of Qualification" by PEBC. Next, I have to obtain English scores in TOFEL or IELTS and then I have to finish sufficient hours of training in a pharmacy. Usually there are 2 stages of training, studentship and internship. Finally, I have to pass the Law exam (Jurisprudence Exam) and get the pharmacist license.

Completing this procedure is not enough to be good pharmacist. There are some characteristics that help to be good pharmacist such as: understanding people's needs, being energetic, having high levels of communication skills, being accurate and having high ethical standards.

Peel Region – Lara S. is a Level 6 student. Her teacher is Susan M.



A Thousand Splendid Suns is a novel by Khaled Hosseini written in 2007. It's an impressive novel about two Afghan women who shared one husband, named Rashid.

One woman is an orphan girl named Mariam who becomes Rashid's wife by the force of her father's wives. Rashid is a shoemaker and had a strong desire to have a child because he had lost his son and wife. Mariam wasn't able to have any children and bad-tempered Rashid started to abuse her.

During the war with The Soviet Union, many families moved to Pakistan and other countries. A young girl named Leila and her family decided to escape to Pakistan, but a bomb hit their house and killed her parents. Leila got injured and their neighbour Rashid found her. Rashid and Mariam took care of her, but Rashid made an evil plan. He sent someone to tell Leila that her beloved, Tariq, who had gone to Pakistan one year before, was killed there. Then he asked lonely and disappointed Leila to marry him although she was almost two generations younger than him.

This novel was written after **The Kite Runner**, one of the best sellers in 2006. Both of Hosseini's novels are about the war and the Taliban. The setting is mostly in Kabul. The title of the book refers to a 17th century poem by the Persian poet Saib-e-Tabrizi called "Kabul", which was translated into English by Josephine Davis.

Every street of Kabul is enthralling to the eye

Through the bazaar, caravans of Egypt pass

One could not count the moons that shimmer on her roofs

And thousand splendid suns that hide behind their walls

A Thousand Splendid Suns is a heartbreaking story about women in Afghanistan. It is fiction but based on reality. It's a novel of politics, religion, romance, tragedy, revenge, patience, love, hate, anger and abuse. Hosseini's prose is very fluent and he did great with his two novels. I hope we have a nicer world with more peace like the end of his stories.

Niagara Region – Maryam G. is a Level 6 student. Her teacher is Lesley H.

February 2010

CANADIAN HERITAGE by Sandra S.

Canada is a place full of natural beauty, peace, and history. Every province in Canada takes us to the past. It is for this reason that the Heritage Canada Foundation has designated the third Monday of every February as Heritage Day in Canada.

The history of the country shows the great development from the First Nations, European immigration, settlers and newcomers. They are the voice of Canada and they demonstrated their talent through their art and writing. The history of Canada inspires others who are curious about a nation that offers an amazing journey across the country that applies to different areas from diversity of cultures, rights and responsibilities as citizens whose human rights are outstanding.

There are amazing places that are part of Canadian Heritage and I would like to mention some of them: Fort Henry from the 19th century located in Kingston, Ontario. If the walls of that fort could talk they would describe the long nights, the dark days and the hope of freedom. Museums are a window to our eyes where we can see the evidence from the past. As well, Canada has churches located in different provinces with their unique essence of a friendly atmosphere. Unfortunately some of them are in risk like Bellevue House whose architecture is from the 18th century and there are few houses left with this classic design. On the other hand, we can visit libraries that are rich in data and archives, where we can have a better understanding about why the First Nations have an important role in Canada.

There are a lot of questions about Canadian history, but I know that most of the people who live here came for the same reason: for a better life. Thanks to organizations, volunteers, schools and other institutions, Canada allows people and new generations to be part of a unique legacy from the past that feels alive in the present and it can be preserved for the future.

Kitchener Region – Sandra S. is a Level 4 student. Her teacher is Sukhi S.





Speed skating has been a part of the Winter Olympics for many years. Speed skating is a very popular sport in Canada. Most cities in Canada have speed skating clubs. My son, now 14 years old, is a speed skater at a speed skating club, in Ottawa. He started inline skating when he was six years old, in China. Four years ago, when we immigrated to Canada, he attended, for the first time, a figure skating program and a speed skating program offered by the City of Ottawa. He instantly, not only loved the feeling of skating on the ice very much, but the speed even more so. A speed skating coach suggested joining a speed skating club. The following year, he did, and now speed skating has become a very important part of his life.

By practicing and developing skills, setting goals and preparing for and competing in contests, speed skaters learn the benefits of dedication, perseverance, stress management and discipline, all applicable in other aspect of their lives.

The speed skating season is from September to March. My son attends regular practices, twice a week. Usually, monthly, there are ability tests, testing skater's speed and ability. There are Ontario Cups for those qualified skaters to compete in, four times each season. When good enough, skaters attend the provincial championships, at the end of the season. Through these series of competitions, skaters improve very quickly. My son has become eligible this year.

Like other sports, speed skaters must wear protective gear when on the ice, including helmets, neck protectors, cut and water resistant gloves or mitts, knee pads, shin guards and long sleeve clothing (or a skin-suit).

Of course, skaters also need speed skating boots and blades. Compared to other sports, speed skating is a much cheaper sport, gear costing about \$170 (excluding boots and blades, which can be rented and skin suits).

The club fee is \$300-\$600 per season. When skaters attend competitions, there are also \$30-\$60 organization and ground fees.

Speed skating is timed on a long track (400m) oval ice rink or a short track (111m) ice rink. For our non-professional skaters, both tracks are used. Skaters can reach speeds of over 50km per. hour. My son likes short track speed skating very much.

I often wonder why he loves this sport greatly. When I see him practicing, doing exercises at home to improve his strength, fall down during a competition then get up quickly and continue, not achieving his target at a competition, he still tells me he loves speed skating. I have realized that this is the spirit of the sport, not only strengthening the body, but also shaping the character.

I hope more newcomers learn to love this sport and more and more kids take part in speed skating.


***Ottawa Region – Chun Ming L. is a Level 5 student.
Her teacher is Lillian W.***



March 2010

MY PASSIONS, MY DREAMS

by Mahmoud G.



I am an immigrant – almost new – living in Canada. If I want to say a couple of sentences about myself, I will talk about my hobby - mountaineering; my passion, helping needy people, and my feelings about Canada, my new home.

I've been interested in nature since I was a child. I grew up in a family who respected and enjoyed the wilderness, and who've influenced me to learn to love nature and to protect it. My hometown in Iran is surrounded by mountains. I soon developed a passion for mountaineering when I was six or seven years old. I started to climb small hills whenever I had an opportunity. Then at 16 and 17 years respectively, I climbed the highest summit in my province (Zardkooh 13,850 ft.) and the highest summit in the country (Damavand 18,600 ft.).

Adventurism has led me to professional mountaineering which totally changed my life. Long story short, I improved my abilities to conquer Everest. In spring 2005, I was in my fourth expedition to the Himalayas to climb Mount Everest. I can't explain how amazing it is for climbers to be in mountaineers' paradise, the Sagarmata National Park. It is an extraordinary environment. The Nepali people's hospitality and historical cornerstones of the area have engraved memories in my mind, calling me forever to repeat them.

Finally, I have stood on the highest point of the earth, Everest summit where the tears of happiness froze on my cheeks. Being one of about 2,000 people who have climbed Everest is fascinating, but I also consider myself lucky enough not to have been one of those climbers who died there.

Besides my passion for nature, I would like to help people who are suffering, particularly by means of humanitarian work. I am patient, but I cannot stand other people's sufferings. I have been a member of the Red Cross for 12 years and have completed some valuable projects back home. For example, I've helped injured people in the devastating earthquake of Bam in September 2003 and have participated in several mountain rescues. In my future plans for charitable works, I would like to volunteer with MSF (Doctors without Borders). Working in these kinds of activities would not make me rich or famous, but it would satisfy my soul.

Finally, I am in a new country now because of my life-changing decision to immigrate. I have lived in Canada for more than two years, and during this period I've learned a lot about this huge, beautiful, multicultural and, of course cold country. Canada with its thousands of lakes, beautiful waterfalls and the Rocky Mountains is a place full of beauty and variety. Unfortunately, I have not traveled to Western Canada, where I desire to go, but I have plans to climb in the Rocky Mountains. Who knows, I might even move out west since I miss the mountains while living in Ontario. In Canada there are opportunities for every one who wants to progress. I am so grateful to be here, trying to make a new life while proving myself useful in a new society.

In conclusion, I believe that I have accomplished much in my dreams such as reaching the highest peak in the world, being a part of rescue teams in several calamities, and immigrating to a country I have always wished to live in. Given that dreams have no ending, I am planning to accomplish my other dreams. I believe that life will be counted not just in years, but by how I have fulfilled my dreams.

A former student of LMS instructor Anne F., Mahmoud was promoted to Level 6 in the fall of 2009. Mahmoud is an extraordinary individual: a medical doctor, a humanitarian, naturalist and mountaineer. He is one of an elite group of world citizens who has successfully climbed to the summit of Mt. Everest - the highest mountain in the world at 8,848 metres (29,029 ft.) Mahmoud is presently studying to receive his Ontario medical license and is also looking forward to joining "Doctors Without Borders" – an organization that sends doctors and medical personnel to countries around the world whose citizens need help because of earthquakes, tsunamis and other crises.

We wish him much success in his efforts to help make our world a better place.

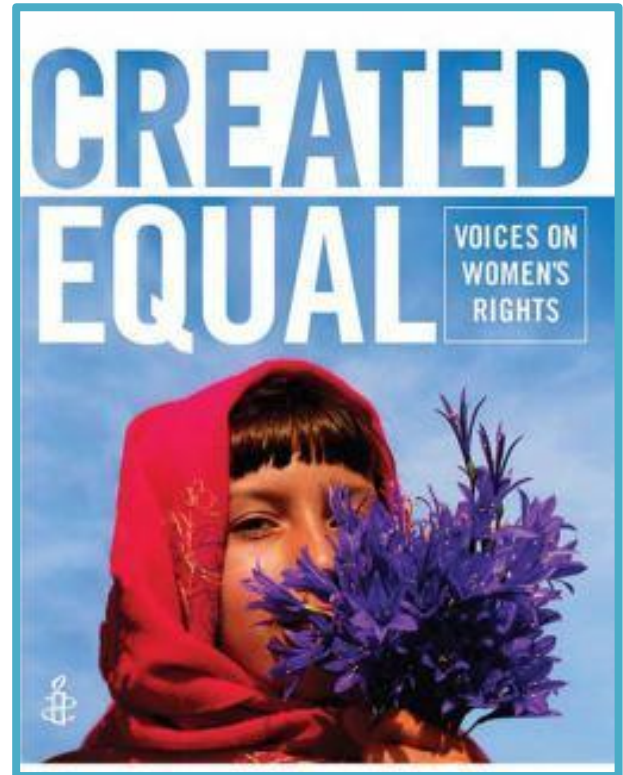


STATUS OF WOMEN by Chikako B.

There are many sad things happening daily that I had never imagined or experienced in my life, just because of being a woman. Some big incidents appear in the media, but there are so many things we just don't know about.

Once I was talking to an immigrant mother. She told me that she and her husband had been so scared when their 12 year old daughter was arrested for skating in front of their house around 10 years ago in their country. The girl was wearing tight blue pants. Her husband, being a cardiologist, had a higher social status, had begged and begged, until finally after 14 hours the girl had been released. I am very thankful that I have never had such an experience. At the same time, I noticed how naive I was, being unaware of what was happening in the world around me. When one person tries to change the world, it seems impossible, but with many supports and guidance, I believe we can make a difference.

Most Canadians believe that women have equal rights with men. It is true, but to me, many women are in need of help. I notice this especially after divorcing or breaking up with a partner, that many women tend to search for a new partner right away, even before their wounds are healed. I, watching them as a third person, think so many women are dependent on men. We are the women who fought for our rights.



Sadly, some of them are not using them as a tool in their lives. Many parents try to create a perfect world for their children. Yet, are we still dreaming for a handsome man to come up and create a perfect world for us?

Some hundreds of years ago women started to work for their rights little by little. Since then, in many countries, women have been working hard creating positive waves. Living in a country like Canada, we should be able to create another wave for the next generations. On the International Women's Day, I would like to suggest that we take the time to care for our inner self and educate ourselves and our children.

Nova Scotia – Chikako B. is a Level 7 student. Her teacher is Marisa L.

Being a full-time parent, particularly a mother, is very demanding and there is a lot of opportunity to burn out at times. As we know, housework is not rewarding at all, and many women spend most of their time at home doing the routine work and feeling unappreciated. The working woman on the other hand, is always the subject of admiration and delight.

In my opinion, it is very important for busy parents who stay at home to take some time out. It may be in the form of doing different activities such as going shopping, going out for dinner with a best friend, or studying something new that will be beneficial to finding a good job in the future.

It is also very important to be a well-organized person. Frankly speaking, if the woman has good time management, she is able to find time for herself. It is also very important not to be afraid of giving the responsibility to the husband to stay with the children. For example, every Saturday you can go work out, or study, or just get out of the house; it depends on your interests and hobbies. Your husband can stay with the children just as you do the rest of the week. You will feel happy and relaxed. Also, during the week, you can ask your husband to stay with the children for an evening or two, and you can go out and do some things for yourself. You don't have to blame yourself if you did not read a book to your children one day or did not go for a walk with them. You also have your life and your interests and it is also very important for your family.

I am convinced that a happy mother has happy children. If the parents are happy and the atmosphere in the house is calm, then the children are also happy. I am absolutely sure about it.

Let's enjoy our lives, our families and our children and try to be happy!

Barrie Region – Alla K. is a Level 5 student. Her teacher is Andrea R.



May 2010

KEYS FOR HAVING A HAPPY FAMILY by Jazmin L.

How can I have a happy family? Many couples think getting a happy family is good luck or requires a big effort, but it is not true. There are many factors that help couples to have a family happy, For example:

Establish priorities: Each spouse must set his/her partner's necessities first over their own necessities, work, friends and relatives. This is easier said than done. Couple needs to think about the following questions to know if they are setting the family first. If my partner or children need to talk with me, I hear them as soon as possible? Am I prepared to reject additional responsibilities that will take time from my family? When I speak about my activities, do I include the activities that I do with my family? If any couple answers yes to above questions, they have set up their priorities very well.

Spouses must have a **high sense of commitment:** Happy couples consider that marriage is a permanent joining. There are always problems between spouses, but if they have a sense of commitment, they feel more secure. Couples need to think about these questions before they marry: If there are doubts that either spouse has, or regret getting married. Before the marriage is the time to find out.

Working in a team: Spouses must work in a team if they want to find solutions to any kind of problem; otherwise, each one will waste time and energy and will not find a solution. Couples need to think about those questions like, "Do I consider my salaries only mine because I gained it?" Or, "do I need to be without my partner to relax me?"

To respect each other: couples must never use bad words when they disagree with something because bad words hurt feelings. All issues may be discussed without getting angry or furious. If children hear good words to discuss they learn too to avoid bad words when they disagree with sibling, friends and parents.

To be reasonable: Spouses must set reasonable rules, they must neither be excessively permissive not strict with their



children. Parents in a happy family give freedom to their teenagers in accordance with grade of responsibility that their children have.

To forgive: to have a happy family it is important each member of the family learn to forgive so resentment never grows, otherwise it becomes very difficult to forgive it and people will stay in an unhappy relationship.

In conclusion to get a happy family is easy, we need basic elements: time, patience and love. Everyone should think about factors mentioned above in order to know in which factors we are failing at and correct them.

Halton Region – Jazmin L. is a Level 7 student. Her teacher is Fiona E.

Every year from spring till late autumn, I feel like a bee madly trying to visit a flower from a picture. While I walk along the streets, I often find myself staring at people's lawns, beautiful flowers and shiny vegetables. I used to have a garden, with trees and many plants and now I miss it very much because I live in a high-rise and have a small balcony.

As I was surfing the Internet recently, I found information on how to grow vegetables on my balcony in containers and self-watering containers. Last summer, I was successfully growing herbs from seeds, so this year I decided to be brave and grow tomatoes, beans and cucumbers. I also came across a wealth of material about gardening at the public library, so I borrowed a few books.

The most interesting thing I read was that I should not spend money on containers. Anything that holds soil and has holes in the bottom for drainage is good: old plastic storage containers, 5 gallon plastic buckets, baskets lined with garbage bags to hold the water in, wooden crates, and so on. I simply have to place a saucer under the pot for the extra-water.

I could buy the containers, but I own two plastic buckets of 5 gallon with their lids. I think of transforming them into self-watering containers. I have to fit the lid inside the bucket, so I'll cut it with a saber saw and then I'll drill a few holes in it. On the bottom of the container, I'll lay 3 pieces of perforated drain tile, about 2 ½ inches long. The perforated lid comes on the top of them, forming a water reservoir. The plant's roots growing through the medium can pass into the reservoir. Above the bottom of the bucket, another hole has to be drilled. Here I'll insert a piece of plastic tubing wrapped to the end with electrical tape to create a snug fit. The other end of the tub goes into the shoulder of a 1-gallon jug. The container will be placed on a concrete block, while the bottle remains on the balcony's floor because I have to create two levels as the surplus of water flow into the jug. Before adding new water, I'll simply pour back the collected water; thus, I won't lose the nutrients from it.

The growing medium has to be light and fluffy for a good aeration and root growing. The soil has to be permanently moist, but not soggy. Fertilizers can be added, and for watering it is advisable to use a special can for a soft stream of water.

I think gardening will be both fun and rewarding. Plus, I might have the most astonishing and enviable vegetables garden right there on my balcony.

Note: For more information go to <http://www.hgic.umd.edu> or just search your browser: for 'gardening in containers' and also 'water gardening in containers'

Hamilton Region – Elena T. is a Level 7 student. Her teacher is Basia K.



June 2010

MIGRATING TO CANADA by Cleofe C.

On a bright and sunny day in the month of December, 2006, when we received a notice from the Canadian Embassy regarding our immigration application, it was a day to celebrate. After waiting for a long time, this welcome news was like a Christmas gift, since it reached us on December 23, 2006. A simple letter from the Minister of HRDC inviting us to attend a Canadian Immigration Integration Project (CIIP), seminar in Manila would change our lives. A brochure was enclosed. We had been accepted as immigrants to Canada. We got ready to travel by flight to Manila for the seminar.

In January 2007, we received another e-mail from CIIP inviting us to attend a seminar scheduled during the last week of February 2007. We confirmed our attendance to the two day seminar. During the seminar, we were impressed by the visual presentations and lectures of the various resources and the persons giving the seminar. We were given advice on so many things and we were encouraged to ask questions at the end. They really focused on how we can survive in Canada. So, the pressing matter was how to land a job. They gave us many options. They provided us insights. They painted many scenarios. After the seminar, we went into counselling. We were assigned a handler. We were made to make an Individual Integration Plan (IIP). The IIP was like a handbook. It was the heart and soul. Going into battle, we were armed. It became our compass. Just follow all the bearings and you won't be lost. Upon reaching our home (a one hour plane ride), I immediately surfed the many websites in my IIP through the internet...it became my habit that whenever I checked my emails, I also surfed for jobs.

We left on July 15, 2007 and arrived in Canada and proceeded to Mississauga via Vancouver. We were so overjoyed and thankful that finally our dreams became a reality. On July 16th, we applied for our SIN card, opened a bank account and tried to apply to OHIP, but were denied as we were not able to show proof of residency.

The following day, I bought a family medical insurance at Blue Cross. Like any newcomer, we experienced difficulty in finding places and streets. On the third day, we went to the Central Library to apply for a library card so that we could avail of its facilities like internet, etc. We visited prospective schools for our children such as University of Toronto, Mississauga and John Cabot Catholic Secondary School. The hindrance to proof of residency was overcome by getting a driver's license and opening bank accounts for the children. So, when the bank statement came, all of us proceeded to get our OHIP cards. It was very exciting.

On July 31st my mobile phone rang. It was the Controller of PRG Canada asking me about my available time as he would like to interview me. So in the afternoon, I went to the PRG Canada office for the interview. The interview went on for nearly two hours. I was asked questions regarding my qualifications and work experiences in the accounting field. I was even asked to present a work flow chart. Finally, I was told to report to work on August 1, 2007 as Accounts Payable Coordinator. I reckoned from our arrival date of July 15, 2007 till I found work in my own field was about 15 days. I wondered at first how PRG Canada got my name and how they decided to call me for an interview. So, I asked the interviewer out of curiosity. The Controller informed me that he got my resume through monster.com in the first week of July 2007. Thanks to CIIP, our transition and migration was as smooth as it could be and we did not experience much difficulty.

Peel Region –Cleofe C. is a Level 5 student. Her teacher is Jonathan B.

Spring is here. The grass is green. The trees are green. All hibernating animals are waking up. This is a season full of life. I like spring. The spring breeze is gentle. It strokes my face, and moves my clothes back and forth. The spring drizzle falls slowly on my hair, my face, and all over my body. It looks fuzzy and makes me comfortable.

As winter is getting farther and farther away, spring is walking with slow steps. I usually stand inside my home window, just to watch what is going on in the park's trees and grassy fields. Sometimes, I wonder if spring ran to Toronto because the green world came too quickly. Toronto's spring is very beautiful. There are dandelions over hill and dale, and on both sides of the road. All my family members enjoy the season.

"Mom, do you see the blue sky, white clouds, green grass and yellow dandelions like on the T.V. program?" my daughter Kaka said on our way to school, "Let's jump in! One, two, three." Then she jumped into the grassy fields. Every day we play like that. After school, I pick up three children including Kaka from school. We always play in the park.

They are like rabbits, jumping here and there. They always pick up fresh yellow dandelions to put on their heads and white fluffy dandelions to blow. When dandelion seeds fly into the sky, they laugh and run after them. Sometimes, I bring snacks with me for when I pick up the children. Then they shout, "Yay! We'll picnic on the grassy field." I am very happy to see the children eat, play, and laugh. One day, Kaka asked me why the dandelion flower she picks dies. I answered, "Because it left its' mom and there is no water, sunlight, and nutrients." The next day, Kaka picked a dandelion with a longer stem.

She pointed at the long stem and asked me, "Mom, is this the flower's mom?" "No, the flower's mom is the root which is under the earth." Kaka left me. She found a stick and started to dig a dandelion. I asked, "Kaka, what are you doing?" "I can't let the flower leave its' mom," Kaka said, "I want to take the flower home and let it continue to grow." With my help, Kaka dug out the flower and took it home. She put it in a pot with soil, watered it, and then sang it a song. She continued to water the flower for three days but the flower still died. Kaka was sad, "Why can't the flower live? Can it only survive outside?"

Spring will be gone soon and summer will come, but the pictures I took in the spring will remind me of the wonderful season.

Toronto Region – Hai Qiong A. is a Level 3 student. Her teacher is Rose D.



BANKING IN AFRICA by Ida D.

I come from West Africa, the Ivory Coast. My country is beautiful and plays an important role in the economy of the neighboring countries because of its' agriculture (producer of coffee, cocoa, pineapple, wood, cotton, etc.), logistics (bearing, an international airport, roads, etc.), mining, industry, commerce and potential.

The banking sector is very important in the economic system of my country. The bank began in the Ivory Coast in 1939, initiated by France, the colonizing country. After independence, the banking system was organized into four big groups: the commercial banks, the deposit banks, the merchant banks and the development banks. Today, we speak about credit institutions including banks and financial institutions.

This system is just like banks in most non-developed countries. It is weak and still doesn't meet the needs of the population. There are several commercial banks who work in reality as deposit banks. It is partially the fault of the population which is not used to repaying their loans.

There is, in reality, no database containing all the information about the customers - so the risks of fraud and the loans not being reimbursement can be reduced.

Besides, the electronic system is still not very reliable. The debit card is used but the credit card is almost non-existent.

When I was in Africa, I had a bank account. I notified my bank of my departure from my country. I couldn't close my account before leaving because some money would be paid to me at the end of the month. I left the country with my debit card. When I arrived in Canada, I couldn't get the balance from my account using my card so I continued to withdraw money until it was not possible any more. It meant I didn't have money anymore in the account. Sometime later, I received notification that I had withdrawn from my account more money than I had. I owed money so I had to pay it back. How was it possible? How could I withdraw more money than I had? I understood that it was one of the weaknesses of the banking system in Africa.

In Canada, according to my reading, three reasons explain the population's trust in the Canadian banking system: the caution of banks in loans and investments, a better management of the Canadian banks and the regulation of the banking sector by the government.

The proof was that the USA financial crisis in 2009, which caused several bankruptcies, did not affect the Canadian banking system. The banking sector in Canada is healthy and helps to support its' economy.

The using of debit cards, credit cards and online banking in Canada are current and secure.

In conclusion, the banking system in Africa is still weak but many efforts are being made to make it more competitive and secure.

Toronto Region –Ida D. is a Level 5 student. Her teacher is Rose D.



Have you ever wondered what is distance learning or e-learning? Distance learning is a term used to describe the process of teaching and learning where the instructor (teacher) and the learner (students) are separated by time and/or physical place. In the same way, e-learning involves the use of the computer and internet technologies to deliver the knowledge and to communicate. Over the last years, distance learning has been rapidly growing by leaps and pounds for its many significant and considerable benefits. The following are some of these advantages.

Distance learning is economical not only for the learners, but also for the learning institutions. Students do not have to commute which saves money usually spent on fuel, parking, car maintenance, or transportation. Furthermore, they do not need to be in the same city or country of the learning institution. As a result, there is no money to be paid out on board and lodging. On the other hand, distance education is economical for the learning institutions as no classrooms or other materials have to be provided for the teachers and students. For all of the above we can conclude that distance education can be considerably cheaper than attending a traditional college.

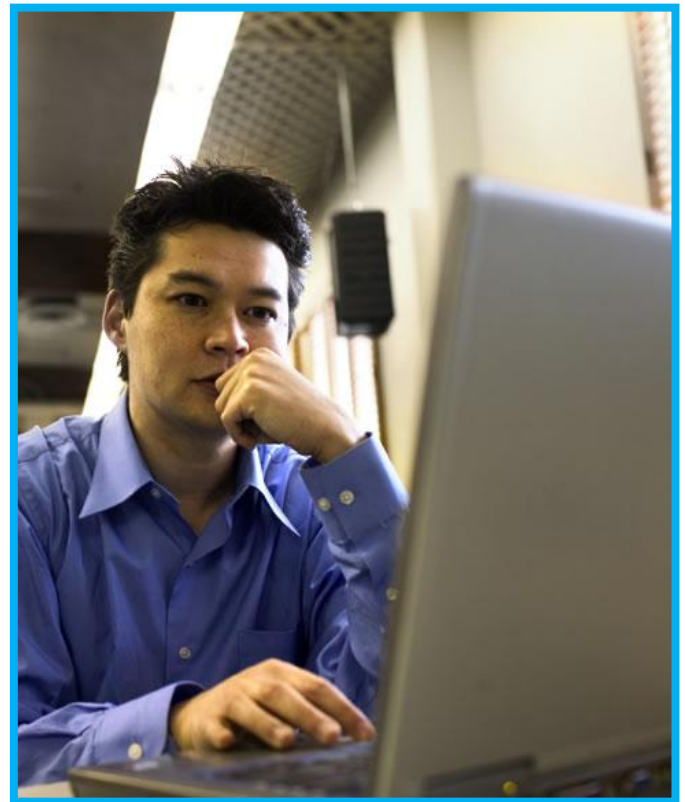
One of the most important advantages is its flexibility. Distance learning gives the students the opportunity to enjoy the freedom to balance their study, work, family, and social life. For instance, people who work full-time or with changing work schedule, parents who take care of young children, those with health problems, and seniors can continue their education as they do not have to attend classes at a specific time or location. Distance learning certainly allows students to flexibly schedule their classes around work and family.

The third feature of distance education is that it's convenient. Students can study anywhere and anytime they have access to a computer with an internet connection. They can study at the comfort and luxury of their home. In addition, they can review assignments, get announcements, access notes, take practice quizzes, discuss questions with their instructor, and chat with fellow students at any time they want. Thus, with distance learning students can complete most of the classes at their convenience.

Another feature of e-learning, which the traditional one lacks, is that it can be self-paced. In other words, students can study on their own speed. Students actually can skim over material that is already mastered by them, and concentrate their effort to learn a subject containing new information. This reduces stress or increases satisfaction not only for a slow learner, but also for a quick one. Self-paced learning is a special feature of e-learning.

We can see from all of the above that distance learning has many benefits in comparison to its traditional counterpart. In short, it provides a great opportunity for people to gain higher education for their career promotion or to upgrade their knowledge at their convenience and the comfort of their homes. And with the increased use of the internet and the availability of many degrees with the e-learning, from high school to post-graduate degree, the future is for the distance learning.

London Region – Rana A. is a Level 6 student. Her teacher is Art R.



August 2010

HANOI by Minh V.N.

Hanoi is the capital of Vietnam, my country. I was born and raised in Hanoi. But I've never written anything about it. It's very difficult because there are so many things to write that I don't know where to begin.

Hanoi is a little, serene, antique city. There is Hoan Kiem Lake, which means Return Sword, in the center of Hanoi. The Huc Bridge connects Ngoc Son Temple on the lake to the city. This temple was built in the 19th century. In the centre of the lake there is the Turtle Tower.

The Turtle Tower was built by a French architect with 2 Gothic arches.

Hanoi has 4 seasons: spring, summer, fall and winter. I like the fall in Hanoi. Fall comes to Hanoi so gently that nobody notices. One day, people suddenly feel that the autumn exists in every breath, in the wind playing off your hair, in the sunshine as thin as silk, in the streets, and in the passionate fragrance of milk flowers. That's why many songwriters wrote songs about Hanoi and many painters painted a lot of paintings of Hanoi. Bui Xuan Phai spent his whole life just to draw pictures of ancient streets and create a school of paintings called "City of Phai." He is one of the most famous artists in Vietnam in the 20th century.

There is a road considered the most beautiful road in Hanoi called the path of love. It is surrounded by two large lakes, West Lake and Truc Bach Lake. There are thrilling legends and stories full of historical significance about these two lakes.

Hanoi is small, but there are so many alleys. The alleys split from big streets, inserted into the middle of houses. I love the small alleys in Hanoi. Hanoi has lots of things to miss, and to love. If you have a chance to visit Hanoi, you will see for yourself what I mean.

Peel Region –Minh V.N. is a Level 3 student. Her teacher is Babak M.



Which parks, gardens or picnic areas you can recommend for the readers to visit and why?

It is summer again, and everybody is thinking of doing some outdoor activities. As the cold season in Canada is so long, people try to use summer in a maximum capacity. Therefore, to save time, it is really important to know more about the potential places to visit beforehand. Bruce Peninsula National Park of Canada is the place that I recommend to all the Londoners to visit this summer. We went camping there in the summer 2008, and it was one of our most memorable camping ever. There are three main reasons for my recommendation: short distance, diverse nature, and nice weather.

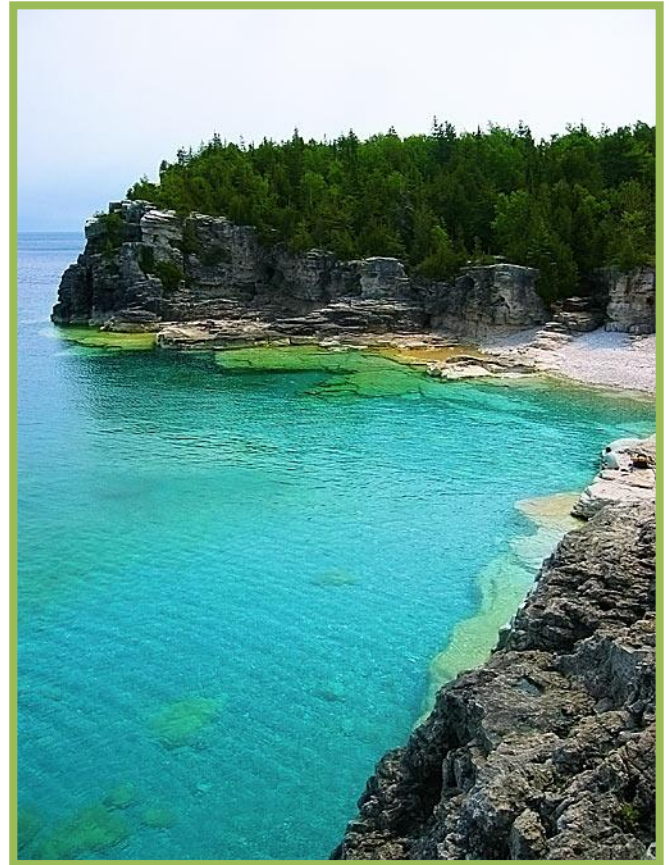
First of all, this national park is located on the Bruce Peninsula surrounded by Georgian Bay and Lake Huron. It is around 300 km from London which takes less than 5 hours by car to get there. So, it is a great opportunity to have this fantastic place with so different nature than London this close to our city.

Secondly, Bruce Peninsula Park has varied landscape and rich nature. It features limestone cliffs, beach and forest scenery. So, you can go for a hike in different trails which pass through forests and along the lake. Or, you can go swimming or canoeing under caves. You can also go for rock climbing if you like more adventure. As you see, this place covers different interests of different people.

Finally, although this natural park is not far from London, it is much colder than London. When the hot and humid weather in London is unbearable, you can enjoy the mild weather in Bruce Park with nice breeze that cuddle your face skin.

Therefore, for the above reasons, Bruce Peninsula National Park of Canada is a great place to be visited in the summer. It is close to London, yet it has a rich natural scenery and mild climate which makes it a must see place. I am sure that everybody enjoys being there as there is something to fulfill different interests.

London Region – Mehrnaz Z. is a Level 7 student. Her teacher is Art R.



September 2010

CHEAP AND FUN HOLIDAY IN CANADA

by Maria R.

My name is Maria. I am from Poland. I have been in Canada since 2006. I like travel; that means Canada is like a paradise for me. My husband, Pawel, and I already travel a lot from coast to coast in Canada. Based on our experience, I think I have a couple of useful tips which I would like to share with others. First, you have to choose the kind of transport you like. We travel by car, canoe, bicycle or RV.

Tips:

1. Hiking:

Wherever you are, you can go outside your home and walk for a couple days and enjoy the beautiful country in which we are living. Hiking, which is completely free of charge, is good for the environment and for your body.

2. Cycling:

Bicycling doesn't cost you anything: Fuel is free when we travel from city to city in the Niagara Region. Our expenses were on food, which we prepare at home anyway. Travelling off-season allows you to enjoy fewer crowds and more quiet.

3. Canoeing:

If you want, you can buy a used canoe from Kijiji for 1/10 the cost of a new one. Canoeing saves on gas because you use your muscles. You don't have to stay in provincial parks or national parks because Northern Ontario offers you 1,000 lakes free of charge. Camping there is also free because nobody is there to collect a fee. If you are lucky, you can catch some tasty fish for dinner.

4. Driving:

You have to choose a cheap car, either a diesel or a small car. You can sleep in your car to save on hotels, or you can sleep in a tent at a campground. You can share the gas money with friends if you car pool. In provincial parks you can share a campsite with friends with 2 or 3 cars, and you can prepare your own food instead of eating out.

5. RVing:

Recreational vehicles (RV's) are like homes on wheels: First, you save on gas because you can share an RV with up to 8 persons. Another thing is you sleep comfortably inside, so you save on hotel. You save on restaurants because you have a full kitchen. You can park at truck stops, where you don't have to pay anything for the parking.

You can be a member of Passport America, where you pay only 50% at many campgrounds in Canada, U.S.A and Mexico. RVs are very kid-friendly, where they feel like home and you can bring along a lot of their favourite toys, games, etc.

The best tip: You only need a willingness to do this and have fun!

Barrie Region –Maria R. is a Level 5 student. Her teacher is Joseph

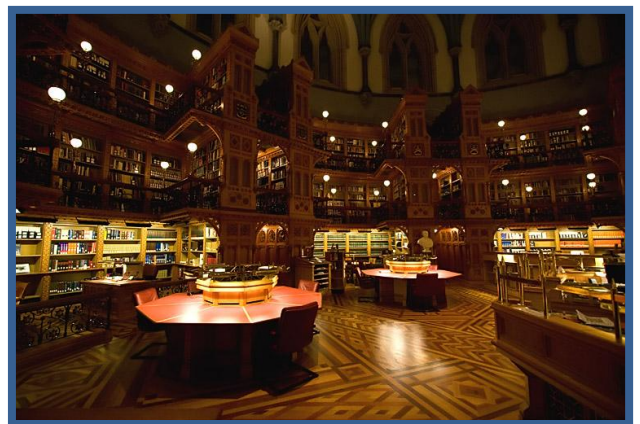
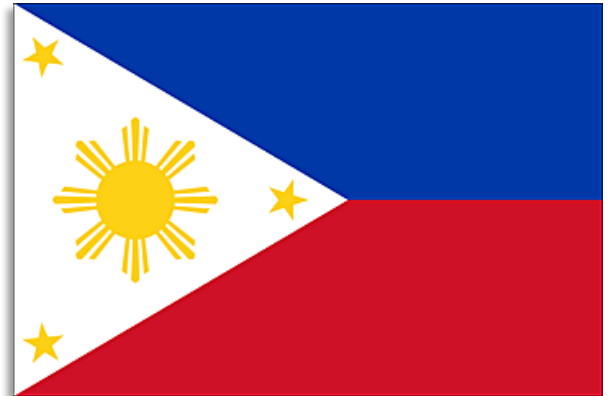


There is a big difference of the library system in the Philippines compared to Canada. In the Philippines you can rarely find a public library. There may be some in the municipalities but they are not properly maintained, even the provincial and national libraries are not properly maintained. The Philippine government has a little program and budget concerning libraries. Big libraries in the country are owned by rich private persons, colleges and universities. It is very costly to put up a library there because this is not a priority of the government. If there is a library in a locality, most of the books and other reading materials are donations. They can't even afford to buy daily newspapers and tabloids so the people can be updated with the everyday events. The only use of library in the country is solely for research and book reading.

My personal experience in the Philippines regarding libraries is not that broad. It was during my high school days when I first entered a library. Maybe three or four times only and the main lesson I got is how to use the library card or how to borrow a book. It was during my college days when we were forced to use the library because of research work. It is sad to say that I was not able to enter a public library there because of its rarity and far from where I dwell.

My short stay here in Canada gave me the realization of how important is the library. In Canada, every town has its own library and is supported by the government. All information you need to know is in the place. Libraries here have a wide variety of books and free computer usage is available. When it was my first time to go to the local library, I just wanted to get information and be familiar with this town, surely all the questions I have in my mind were answered. The map of the town with road guide, location of its parks, where are the vital establishments, banks and groceries/stores, history of the town, the leaders previous and past, historical places, I found them all. Libraries in Canada as I observed is a place of total information. It is a big help for newcomers like me, immediately to get familiarized not only with the place but also with the programs of the government. How I wish that the country where I came from will have a government program like the library system of this country.

Kitchener Region –Jay L.T. is a Level 6 student. His teacher is Jonathan B.



October 2010

FISHING IN CANADA by Xuan Z.

I like fishing. I have fished in China, as well as in America. I never fished in Canada until recently. My friend Bill asked me if I would like to go fishing with him. I told him I would like to go fishing, but I didn't have a fishing license. He said I could go fishing without a fishing license in two days when no one had to have a license. I was excited. I said I'd like to go.

We set out for Witcheekan Lake early in the morning. We spent almost three hours on the road and finally arrived at Witcheekan Lake. Wow, that was a beautiful place. There were many big, tall and old trees around the Lake. The water was clear and green.

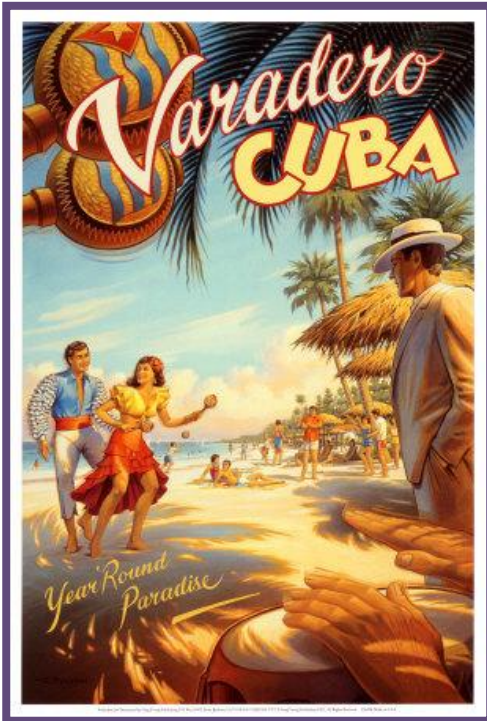
We registered first and then drove Bill's boat into the center of the lake. We stopped and threw the anchor overboard. We took out our fishing rods, put the bait on the hook, and began fishing. Bill set up two fishing rods. I had one. The bait looked good for the fish. I sat down and waited for the fish to eat the bait. I waited for ten minutes but there was no reaction. I knew that fishing required a lot of patience. So I enjoyed the beautiful place and fresh air while fishing. I did not know how long it would take.

I held the fishing rod tightly and moved slowly while the fish was moving. I pulled the fishing line slowly. I saw the fish rising while making his fifth circle. It was a salmon that was almost 5 pounds. The salmon was moving quickly, and then slowly. I knew the salmon was tired. I pulled the salmon to the side of the boat. Bill helped me and caught it with a fishnet. I felt it was heavy. We were very happy. Bill almost dropped his fishing rod into the lake. We went on fishing. I was watching the float, so that I forgot to enjoy the scenery.

We were on the lake until 5 o'clock in the afternoon. I had six salmon, and two catfish. Bill had eight salmon. But the game warden only allowed us to take six fish. So we kept the big salmon and the two catfish because I liked them. I put the smaller salmon back into the lake. Now I have had a fishing experience in Canada.

Saskatchewan –Xuan Z. is a Level 4 student. His teacher is Samuel M.





This was my first visit to Cuba, and it reminded me of things in China years ago. It was also the first vacation for me and my wife without our children since they were born. No doubt the trip will leave us many unforgettable memories. We travelled with friends, and we enjoyed ourselves very much.

We booked an all-inclusive resort stay at Varadero, which is about a two-hour drive west of Havana, the capital city. The package included two-way air tickets, accommodation, meals and beverages (24-hour supply) and transportation to/from airport/hotel; it was only CAD850 per person for a seven-night stay at a 3-star hotel. The price varied in accordance to the hotel selection. My wife was a bit upset with the hotel we picked for most of the public areas were not air-conditioned and the room was not properly equipped. There was not even an alarm clock or a mini bar in our room.

We started our journey from home at two o'clock in the morning, and we tried the Park & Fly for the first time in Mississauga. It cost only CAD52 for 8 days per vehicle parked in a spot about 5km from Pearson Airport. Our plane took off around 6:30am and arrived at Varadero before 10am. After we checked in, we had a buffet lunch in one of their five restaurants serving various cuisines, ranging from international fare to local Cuban lobster dinners.

Cuba is the only remaining communist country in Central and Latin America, and it has a rather messy history. Before Cuba became independent from the U.S. in May 1902, it was under Spanish colonial rule for over 400 years. After its independence, it went through different civil and revolutionary wars. I am not clear about the founding of Cuba and how it transformed to a communist country practicing a socialist planned economy. Almost all companies in all business sectors there are state-owned, and foreign investments are severely restricted.

Today, Cuba has a population of about 12 million, and Español, or Spanish, is the national language. There are two different types of currency: Peso, for the locals, and CUC (Cuban Convertible Currency), for tourists, at an unreasonable exchange rate of CAD1 = CUC0.83. Local shopping is not as cheap as one might think; a 250ml bottle of drinking water costs CAD1.20. We spent one night in Havana in a better hotel in exchange for our own hotel, which was obviously over-booked. The offer included a hotel room for one night, land transfers, meals and a local tour, through which we visited the old and new Havanas, taking in the many museums, monuments and other buildings.

We spent most of our time either in the pools or beaches during this tour, and we were fed with plenty of food and drinks. We also tried a sailing tour and snorkeling trip across the beach with many fishes swimming beside us. This was an awesome vacation that we will never forget. We hope to visit Cuba again if she adopts a greater open-door policy like China.

York Region –Michael C. is a Level 7 student. His teacher is Joseph N.

November 2010

PICKING APPLES

by Isela M.

I have some good memories about a nice trip me and my daughter had. One year ago we went with a friend to pick apples on a beautiful farm in the countryside.

I remember when we arrived at the farm. We could see many apple trees. All trees were full of apples and some were green and other not.

I was very curious about the meaning of something. Some trees were marked with red ribbons and others with orange, yellow, and pink. All ribbons were different colors.

I asked the farmer why he did this, and he told me the colour of the ribbons was the degree of maturity of the apple. My daughter and me were very happy to be there and began to pick apples in a basket they gave us. After a long time we had to return to our home with two bags full of beautiful apples and very happy with this new experience. We really enjoyed this trip, because it was our first time picking apples. This is an experience I will never forget.

New Brunswick – Isela M. is a Level 3 student. Her teacher is Samuel M.



Remembrance Day is an important day here in Canada; it's a nation day to commemorate the sacrifices of members of the armed forces and of civilians in times of war. Every November 11th recalls the end of World War 1, which ended at 11:00 AM on the 11th day of the 11th month in 1918.

Last year on November 11th, I had the wonderful opportunity to attend the ceremony at my children's school for Remembrance Day. Part of the ceremony is to remember John McCrae, who was born in Guelph, Ontario, and was a soldier who fought in the First World War. I live in Guelph, Ontario.

When I arrived, I didn't know my son, Peter, was going to be dressed as a soldier. I arrived early and sat where the show was going to take place. There was a boy who looked like a good-looking man in a navy uniform; he stood firmly and quietly with his legs open while looking very serious.

There were also some students practicing the ceremony in the middle of the gym, so I took a look to see if Peter was there, but I couldn't find him. Suddenly, the door opened and I thought it was Peter, but he wasn't there. Instead I saw other students in a line up quietly and respectfully entering the room. Unexpectedly, a loud voice interrupted the deep silence! My younger son, Eduardo, who had entered the gym with his class, screamed Peter's name when he saw his brother wearing a navy uniform. Suddenly, I realized that the man in navy uniform was my own son, Peter. I felt silly because I didn't recognize my own son from the beginning.

Furthermore, I couldn't believe that the guy who was acting as a soldier and saying lots of things was my son because he acted so naturally. This is a facet I didn't know my son had. At the end of the ceremony, one of the moms told me he could be a good actor, so I felt very proud of my son.

The ceremony made me think how important Remembrance Day is; I wish we had this in my country. It's really important to remember those who sacrificed their lives for us so we can have a better life nowadays.

Guelph Region –Nadine Q. is a Level 7 student. Her teacher is Joanne A.



LINC mailbag



What are your thoughts or comments on the articles printed in this month's newsletter? Do you have suggestions for articles or sections you would like to see?

Let's hear from you.

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Have fun!

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submissions

Please e-mail your submissions for the newsletter by Monday December 20th

NOTE: Articles should not exceed 500 words. Articles that exceed 500 words may be subject to editing for inclusion in the newsletter.

If you would like to submit your biography for the "Student Corner", please **DO NOT** include information on your birthday or age.

For any questions regarding submissions and guidelines please e-mail us:

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Brought to you by the LINC Home Study team.

A special thank you to all the students and staff who submitted their stories, recipes and activities for this issue.

