About NewsLINC

NewsLINC is a quarterly publication of writing submitted by LINC Home Study students. We are proud of our students and thrilled to publish their writing. The publication encourages our students to practice writing, helps to boost their self-confidence, promotes language skills development and creates a sense of community within the LINC Home Study program. We also hope our readers learn from and feel inspired by the collection of works that are showcased each issue.

About 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 but have barriers to attending classroom courses.

What is the program like?

As a student in the LINC Home Study program, you can learn English from the comfort of your home. You have the choice of completing the program either online (using a computer with internet access) or offline (using a traditional textbook and CD). All study materials are based on the Canadian Language Benchmarks standards. To be successful, you have to study hard and commit your time to improving your English skills. This includes studying independently for 5 to 10 hours a week and finishing homework assignments.

Do I get any help?

To ensure you have the best possible learning experience, you receive support from our experienced and qualified staff. You work with a TESL-certified instructor who contacts you every week by phone or VOIP to review your homework, help you practice speaking and answer your questions. Your instructor develops a learning plan that is tailored to your individual needs and guides you along the path to achieving your goals. You can also contact our technical and program support staff for assistance with any questions you have about the program policies, features or functionality.

How do I register for the program?

To qualify for the program you must have your language skills assessed at a language assessment centre and be:

- of legal school leaving age within your province or territory
- a convention refugee OR a permanent resident of Canada who has not become a Canadian citizen
- unable to attend classroom-based English language training

How much does the program cost?

There is no fee to enrol in this program. LINC Home Study is funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada.

Contact Us

If you have questions or feedback about the LINC Home Study program or NewsLINC, please email us at: help@linchomestudy.ca
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Activity
This summer my family and I are planning to learn how to bike. I never got round to learning how to bike when I was a kid, but I have always wanted to because of the many benefits we can get from it. Now that I have more time for myself, I guess it is not yet too late to learn how to do it especially now that I have my own family to learn it with.

One obvious benefit we can get from biking is physical exercise. It is good for our health. When biking, we move our muscles not only when we pedal the bike but also when we balance our body on it.

Balancing is a way to discipline body muscles. When we do it outdoors, we have a chance to inhale fresh air and bask in the sun. By inhaling oxygen we take in anti-oxidants, and if we breathe deeply, we allow the oxygen to reach even the littlest cells of our body to nourish and strengthen them. At the same time, when we are exposed to the sun, we get vitamin D, which is good for calcium absorption and thus for our bones.

Another good thing about biking is how it relaxes the mind. Many veteran bikers have said that when one is outdoors and cruising along in the wind while biking, he or she feels free and relaxed. Biking is one good way to release stress. Yes, it gives some stress to the beginners—those who are still starting to learn how to bike—but, in the long run, once one gets the hang of it, to bike is not at all difficult and is a good way to relax.

Moreover, biking is also an opportunity to bond with our loved ones. Learning something together is definitely a meaningful experience. The new skill we acquire, the laughter we share and the bruises we earn from falling from the bicycle are simply worth having. These experiences help build our character and our relationships with each other as well. They are momentous events that will forever be etched in our personal and communal memories.

Thus, I would like have to spend this summer learning how to bike with my family.
Some people enjoy sports in their leisure time during summer and fall seasons. I love playing golf in my leisure time. Golf is a sport which needs equipment such as balls, clubs, ball marker, tees, golf bag, towels, etc. It is one of the few ball games that does not require a standardized playing area. Instead, the game is played in a course in an arranged progression of either 9 or 18 holes.

I started to play golf one year after I arrived in Canada. I was influenced by my friends. I was just giving it a shot at that time, and since then I have played golf every summer and fall. From my own experience, golfing offers a lot of fun and adventure. I normally play golf to get away from the busyness of everyday life. Golfing helps decrease the level of my stress and makes me more relaxed. Sometimes, I enjoy golfing because I can socialize with others and meet new friends.

I usually play golf in my town. I have never been golfing out of my town, so I can only talk about my beautiful golf course here in Maple Creek, SK. We have an adequate facility that can host enough people. Our golf course has a training area where the beginners can practice on a driving range until they get the hang of it. We have many carts which you can rent and drive in the field. We have ponds with trees around the course. There are many birds flying around and you can enjoy watching them as you play.

I always play golf with my friends. The more people play golf with me, the more fun we all have. In a golf course, we can talk about a lot of things during the game, tease each other and laugh with a funny story. We drive a cart inside the course and race in it.

I believe golfing makes my week complete. Whoever has not tried golfing yet, should experience the beauty of it. Playing golf offers lots of memorable moments in the field which you can share with others.
The First Time That I Rode a Motorcycle

Seyed M. | Level 6 | Jacqueline A.’s Student

My first attempt at riding a motorcycle was a scary, stressful and dangerous experience. I was a teenager. I have a cousin about the same age as me. At that time he had a motorcycle. I frequently asked him to teach me how to ride. He was telling me that it is like riding a bicycle; if you can have your balance on a bike you can ride a motorcycle as well.

One day we decided to go on a street to practice riding the motorcycle. He showed me where the gas throttle, clutch lever, gearshift lever and brake lever are, and how I should use them. Then we sat on the motorcycle. I sat on the front and my cousin behind me. He instructed me to put the bike in first gear and begin to move. I did, but instead the bike jumped out from under us. The bike jumped and went on its back wheel moving ahead pulling us, forcing me to run behind it along the street. My cousin was holding my shirt, running behind me and trying to slow me down and shouting “stop it, stop it.” I couldn’t because the bike was pulling my hands; I couldn’t turn the throttle back, which was in my right hand. In those few moments many things passed through my mind: Should I open my hands and let the bike throw itself somewhere? But, for sure it would be damaged and my cousin is behind me!!! On the other hand with this speed that we are running, we also would be thrown and injured. It was going very fast; I couldn’t do anything until we hit something or somebody. “Help” I shouted inside of myself but I didn’t want to show my panic. I thought, I should try to turn my fist back. Yes, I succeeded, the bike came back on two wheels and then I finally managed to stop it.

We took a deep breath. We were scared. How stressful were those moments. I couldn’t believe that I succeeded to stop the bike. My cousin didn’t let me ride the motorcycle again. After a few moments of arguing about what had happened and what could have happened, he sat on the bike and I sat behind him and went to eat ice cream to cool ourselves down after those terrifying moments.

I continued to learn to ride a motorcycle later that week and learnt it very fast, because after that first and scary experience I learned how to control a motorbike before it jumps.
Arts
Jacksoul was a Canadian music group, from Toronto. The band was founded around the end of the ‘90s. Their style of music is between funk, jazz, and soul. In thirteen years, the group released five albums. Success came at the beginning with Absolute in 1996. Then, four years later with Sleepless. From the year, 2000, until now, Jacksoul became well known through the song “Can’t stop” and “Somedays”, from this album. Also with Sleepless, the band won a Juno Award in 2001, and another one in 2007, with the album My Soul (2006). But before this, Jacksoul released Resurrected (2004). Their last album was SOULmate in 2009.

Behind these achievements was a united band. Haydain Neale, born in Hamilton Ontario, was the lead singer. He was also Jacksoul’s founder. Behind him, were five musicians: guitarist Justin Abedin, bassist Dave Murray, keyboardist Brent Setterington, saxophonist Adam Leo, and drummer Roger Travassos. These six guys were united through their good taste in soul music. They made fun for a lot of people around Canada.

Unfortunately, the adventure stopped suddenly. In 2009, Haydain Neale left us, sadly. He died of lung cancer. He was 39 years old. He had a wife, Michaela, and a daughter, Yasmin. Two years before his death, Neale was involved in a car accident. He stayed in coma for many months. But he recovered from that, and got time to release his last album.

For an English learner like me, Jacksoul’s style of music is very helpful for improving my English listening skills. Neale’s voice is usually serious. His voice keeps to the rhythm, and that helps with understanding the words. My favourite song of theirs is “Somedays” from Sleepless. By the way, the group has released a posthumous single, “Got to have it”. It’s also great. If you want to discover Canadian soul music, don’t hesitate: Jacksoul is for you.
My Short Guitar Story

Taras L. | Level 5 | Jacqueline A’s Student

When I was a child my parents always wanted me to go to a music school. Regardless on their persistence I refused to attend it. It is difficult to imagine how wrong and foolish I was. A music school could have completely turned my life upside down or, at least, change it a bit. After so much time had passed I learned how to play guitar without attending musical lessons; however, I know – I could have gotten much more information if I finished music school.

I bought my first guitar from one of my acquaintances. He was looking for quick money and was stupid enough to sell his guitar to me extremely cheaply. That was an excellent deal for me, because the money that I spent on the guitar was just ridiculous. It happened more than 15 years ago, but the price is still funny: 2 dollars and a good handshake. That guy played and sang so well that I decided to learn how to play a guitar. That was my first time I took a guitar into my hands.

There were 4 of my good friends at my school and all of them could play guitar. We all were learning together how to play and how to do first chords. It was very exciting when we gathered together and sang songs. My parents had a little retreat where we usually liked to spend our time. We celebrated many holidays there and a guitar was always a part of it. Many years have passed and none of them play guitar any more. Everybody has a family and their guitars just collect dust in corners of their houses now.

Playing guitar was very useful for me when I studied at University. It helped me to meet a lot of different people and to spend a wonderful and enjoyable time there. Two times I was asked to participate at our University’s concert called “Student’s Spring”. Performing was very fascinating, exciting and a little bit scary as well. The scariest thing for me was that I might forget the lyrics while I was performing in front of so many people, but everything went very well. It was very funny when I performed with one girl in a duet; we were singing and imitating a love story and when I looked at her while I was performing her cheek was shaking so badly that I barely could restrain myself from laughing. After the performance she admitted that she was so tense and scared, that she could barely sing. Performing at the University helped me to get excellent marks on some subjects and made me the most favorite student in my class for all teachers. So I didn’t complain at all.
Bios
My name is Angie. I was born in June 2. I’m from Colombia. In my family I have a father, a mother and three sisters. During my childhood I enjoyed a lot of activities with my family. For example, we went on trips to the river. When I was 17 years old my father died.

When I was 21 years old I had my first baby. It was the happiest moment of my life. At that time I lived with my husband and baby. We lived together happily.

In the year 2012 my mother died. That event marked my life forever. In the same year we flew to Canada. I saw my sisters. We are very happy in Canada. We are very thankful for the opportunity Canada gave us.

Although it has been difficult to adapt to the climate and language we are sure that with all the opportunities here, we will succeed and achieve all our goals. Now we are very excited because we are expecting our second baby which fills us with great joy and pride. I am very excited to continue studying to learn English as my second language.
My Life

Iqbal K. | Level 3 | Deborah K’s Student

I was born in June and grew up in Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh, in India. My mother and father passed away in 2011 and 2013 respectively.

I have six siblings. I have five brothers and one sister. I am the youngest of my brothers and sister. All of my siblings live in my home country. Only I live out of my country in Canada but I am in touch with my relatives by net chatting.

I was brought up and raised in my hometown until grade 12. After grade 12 I got married to my husband in Bareilly at Model Town Sikh temple in 1979.

My husband’s profession was a lawyer. He studied bachelor’s degree in law at Allahabad University in Uttar Pradesh.

I lived in Bareilly for few years after my marriage. By God’s grace, I was blessed with two daughters in 1980 and 1981 in Bareilly and then I moved to Mohali in Punjab.

My husband then started a business of paper manufacturing and I also started my own tutoring business.

After few years with God’s blessing I surprisingly got a third child who is a boy.

My oldest daughter lives in England and is working in a very good position. My second daughter lives in Canada, in Ontario. She is a Home Staging professional.

To sum up, since my husband passed away in 2008, and I was living alone in my house, I decided to move to Canada after my husband passed away and arrived in March 2014. I have been happily living with my son and daughter-in-law.
I was born in a small town in Ukraine called Uman. My childhood is filled with good memories. I successfully graduated from school and got married, and I started to study accounting as well as cooking. It was a little bit hard, but I was young and had a lot of time. Later I got a baby. Studying and taking care of the baby became more difficult, but I did not leave school. I managed to complete both programs successfully and get my diplomas.

All these years, my husband and I thought about our future, especially our children’s future, and we made a decision to repatriate to Israel; we had this opportunity because my husband has Jewish roots. We collected all the needed documents and repatriated after I finished my school. At that time, I was pregnant with my second child. She was born a month after we moved. Israel was an unknown country for us, with a strange language and a different culture. But we were young and we were together, so we tried to take it easy. My husband worked and I stayed with the kids at home. First we lived in the south and after half a year we moved to the central part of Israel. Compared to the south, the life there was more dynamic. Also, when we moved we got some help from my husband’s parents. I could go to study the language, and my husband found a good job. After studying the language, I started to understand people and I could speak. I started to look for a job because it became hard to live off one salary. I found a job as a cook, and worked in a nursing home for 5 years. Since my Ukrainian diplomas were not recognized in Israel, I took accounting classes for about 2 years while I worked in the kitchen. When I got my accounting certificate, I started to look for a job related to accounting. It was quite hard because many places required previous work experience. But after one year of searching, I found a job in a big warehouse as an accountant and I continued to work there for 6 years.

My kids were growing and all the time I was thinking about their future. It is always dangerous in Israel because there are ethnic conflicts. I was afraid for the future of my children, so we started looking for a more peaceful country. We decided on Canada. Our immigration process took 3 years. When we finally immigrated to Canada, we only had 4 suitcases with us. We all started from the beginning again, new language, new people and a new country. But we were not afraid to do it a second time; we already knew what was ahead for us. My husband found a construction job and I am working in a day care and studying accounting again. I am also looking for a job in the accounting field. My kids adapted very well very quickly and they picked up the language better than me and my husband. But we both study in LINC Home Study to improve our English and we enjoy our life in Canada.
Two years ago, my family made the decision to go to Ottawa, the capital of Canada. This was our first travel inside Canada. We spent five hours driving from Burlington, Ontario. The weather was in perfect condition. The weather was spectacular.

When we arrived in Ottawa, and we could see the beautiful architecture: the museums, several monuments; and the principal and historic buildings of Parliament. This building was spectacular, and we eventually had the opportunity to know it inside: the library and the different meeting rooms. Major Hill Park is near the national Gallery of Canada and the parliament buildings. The capital of Canada was really awesome.

In Ottawa, the principal language is English. Everyone is friendly. We crossed the Ottawa River bridge, and this was spectacular because we arrived in Quebec. We could appreciate many different things: the colour for traffic signals, the STOP signs in Quebec are ARRET, the positions for the traffic lights are different and the language is different, too. This was amazing: being in the same country and having different languages, but the people were the same and very friendly. Also, the places were very safe. We were very happy in the capital. We want to return, but when? I have no idea, but we will come back.
Several years ago, I heard about Banff for the first time. It is known as one of the most beautiful places in the world, where you can meet with many wild animals occasionally, including bears.

I told myself over and over: I want to go there. Fortunately, we realized the dream this summer. It was a 6-day vacation, which is a bit long for the 5-year-old boy. Finally, we joined a tour group so that we needn’t spend too much time on booking hotels, planning travel routes, and driving on unfamiliar mountain roads.

The first day in Banff was kind of rainy and cloudy, but the following days were quite good with delightful sunshine. As the weather changed, the mountain area showed an entirely different feature. It was lucky for us to see the difference.

I remember we took a ride on a cable-car towards the mountain, surrounded by mountains hidden in cloud and mist, just like a fairy maiden with shy smiles. After we arrived the top of the mountain, we got a bird’s eye view, and the world is under our feet.

As to lakes, I should say that lakes are the treasures of Canada. You know, the group tour only stayed for a limited time at each scenic spot, but we didn’t want to miss the chance to be close to Lake Louise, so we rented a canoe as quickly as possible, and enjoyed the 30 minutes so much. Yes, the slight sway of the canoe and the gentle breeze wiped our all our annoyance. We hoped the time could slow down its steps for the pure snow mountain and the emerald green peaceful lake.

Columbia Icefield Glacier Adventure was obviously another attraction in the Canadian Rockies. The glacier was formed over 10,000 years ago and was the biggest one except the North and South Pole. It was a marvellous spectacle of nature. The glacier bus took us to the spectacle and gave us a chance to taste a bit of glacier water, cool and sweet. Affected by the global warming, Columbia Glacier is getting smaller mile by mile constantly.

The tour guide also told us there would be several wildfires every year. The fires were caused by dry weather and triggered by lightening. What surprised us was that usually the government would take no action to wildfires unless it threatens human lives or goes out of control, because wildfires was thought of as a self-refresh of the forest, to destroy the dying trees and harmful insects on them, and then new
trees can grow better. It sounded very fresh and interesting to us. I can feel the efforts that the Canadian Government is making to maintain the ecological balance.

There are still a lot of things haven’t been mentioned in my writing, such as yummy foods, wild animals, new friends during the tour, etc., but I should say that Banff is really magnificent. I would like to go there again, find a peaceful lake, stay for a few days, and enjoy a different kind of vacation there.

**My First Canada Day**

_Thi P. | Level 3 | Diane N’s Student_

It is the first time for me to know that Canada Day is a national holiday in Canada and is celebrated with a family picnic, barbecue, and fireworks.

I went to the Timmins Museum-National Exhibition Centre to celebrate Canada Day with amazing activities. There were various activities in a full day, including a barbecue, snow cones and music for the whole family with kids’ games. I spent my time visiting some of the craft exhibits, just for fun. People dressed in red and white with small flags and temporary tattoo flag on them and so did I.

Outdoors, there were face painting, cotton candy, Ba-Looney, and Clancy’s Meat had a barbecue with hotdogs and hamburgers.

Some things to do inside the museum for families with kids to enjoy were the Egypt Exhibit, kids crafts, a movie, an artefacts guessing game, and shopping for souvenirs. I got some old stamps there.

The Canada Day events on TV helped me become more proud of the country. There was a parade and a lot of people celebrated with the Prime Minister’s speech in Ottawa, and finally with a firework show at 11pm.
After learning about Crawford Lake from my teacher, I made up my mind to have a visit. Of course, first you have to know the location of this place of interest. It is located at 3115 Conservation Road, Milton, ON L9T 2X3. It’s a wonderful place to visit, and luckily it’s not too far from my home.

I learnt a lot from homework articles, as well as from information on the Internet about the Iroquoians, but I could finally could see their customs and culture in person. There is a 15th Century palisaded Iroquoian village with two reconstructed longhouses. There are hands-on displays, exhibits and seasonal demonstrations.

If you are good at hiking, believe me, it is heaven for you because there are three routes you can choose, and they vary according to the length. The longest route has over 18km of beautiful and interesting hiking trails.

During my time there, I passed a rare meromictic lake surrounded by a boardwalk. The site offers special programs and events which interpret how the Iroquoian people lived at the site. Kids can also learn a lot here. Such learning tools as the guider teach them how to play with animals and treat them with respect. They are also taught basic survival skills in the wild.

One thing I have to remind you of is not to forget that there are markings with different colors to indicate various routes. So, if you are lost on your trip, you can come back by following the same color.

By the way, admission is $7.25 for adults, $6.25 for seniors, $5.00 for children 5-14, and free admission for kids under 4.

I think this information might be helpful to other students who may be interested in going there and having a very interesting time.
We had planned our camping vacation only 2 weeks before our camping date, because our friends had decided to cancel their visit, so not to lose the reservation they proposed to us to keep the reservation. That’s the reason why we had only 2 weeks to plan our camping trip.

We were very lucky, because the date we booked the site was perfect camping weather, 3 days in a row of sunny weather. Only the first night was cold, the second wasn’t. We stayed Friday, Saturday and Sunday. The first day we didn’t have a lot of time to do much on the site, because we departed at 10 am. Unfortunately we got stuck in the ugly Toronto traffic, anyway we arrived before 2 pm, by the time we had lunch and put gas in the car, we spent almost 5 hours to arrive of course, don’t forget the time lost for the traffic.

Friday we visited a beach, I can say a gorgeous beach, because this place had two different beaches. One side is the ordinary beach with sand, and rocks for diving, as well as diving could be a little be dangerous, because there are rocks under the water. The other side instead had sand, and a huge rock, but you can go inside the water through this rock. Friday night we had a camp fire and roasted some marshmallows, the kids loved that. Unfortunately we got some noisy teenage neighbors and our baby was awakened. Saturday we did a lot of activities, in the morning we went to the beach, a different beach from Friday. We swam and played with a small air raft.

In the afternoon we went hiking on a trail just close to the beach. It’s a short and beautiful trail. We had an awesome view for the Georgian Bay. In the evening we went hiking on another trial, this trail was longer, three and half kilometers. It’s a terrific trail, there are a small guide books that explain very well the places in the trail. There are a different ecosystems and the end of the trail there is a beautiful view again of Georgian Bay. In fact this trail is a loop, unfortunately the return was closed because it was very wet the way, but it doesn’t matter, the trail was worth it to do again by the same way.

Sunday was the worst day for me, because I got sick. I didn’t worry because anyway, it was the end of our visit. On our last day we just had to pick up our tent and all the stuff to return to the civilization.

We love do camping and staying close to the forest. Of course, only for a few days. That was our adventure for this summer, going camping in Killbear Provincial Park.
My Experience of Living in Canada

Leonid Y. | Level 5 | Jacqueline A’s Student

In this essay I would like to share my experience of living in Canada. I am going to talk about the quiet and relaxed life style in Canada and will recommend interesting places to visit. I have lived in Canada for a couple of years and I believe that I have started to understand this country better and have learned to like the people that live here.

Canada is a very big country. It spreads across the entire continent and embraces a territory that is second only in size to the biggest country in the world - Russia. Despite the big territory it has a very moderate population. It means that it has a vast territory with almost none or very scarce settlements. Though Canada has several large metropolitan areas, a big portion of the population lives in mid size or small cities and towns. Most of the people are very friendly and benevolent. On my first visit to Canada, I was surprised to see people smiling to me and starting conversation to a complete stranger. Within time, I have learned to understand the openness of Canadian culture and started to enjoy it.

I would also like to tell a few words about Canadian nature. Since Canada is not so crowded as compared to many other industrialized countries, it has a lot of nature reserves and areas with untouched wild life. Even in the big cities you can meet raccoons in the back yard of your house, observe deer on the fringes of a city area and enjoy the view of frolicking squirrels on your lawn. I believe that Canada is one of the few countries that cares about its nature and makes a lot of efforts to preserve it.

Canada also is very famous for its wondrous landmarks. There are so many worldwide known places. Just to name few: the grandiose Niagara falls, the magnificent forest of British Columbia, the harsh crags and cliffs of Newfoundland and the unique architecture of Montreal and Quebec. I live in the province of New Brunswick and recommend visiting the unique Fundy bay. It is well known for the highest tides in the world. There are a lot of tourist attractions along the coast of Fundy bay, but the most famous is Hopewell Rocks. It is well known for its magnificent rocks that get almost three quarters covered by tidal waves at the height of 30-40 feet and then get exposed to the bottom of the ocean during ebb time. As you can see, Canada has a lot of interesting places that are worth visiting.

In conclusion, I would like to say that I like to live here in Canada among friendly people and magnificent nature. I also enjoy relaxing and a worry-free living style in Canada. It is a great place to live in and to raise your children. It is safe and secure and provides a lot of potential and opportunities. It also has a lot of natural resources and people who care about preserving it for future generations. If you decide to come to visit Canada, you will enjoy every moment you spend here.
Why I like Canada

Yuk Y. | Level 5 | Supriya H’s Student

People like Canada for different reasons – some like to earn in dollars; some like to do winter sports; some like it because it is near the USA. I have my own three reasons for liking Canada.

Firstly, I can experience all four seasons. In spring, I can see a lot of small, yellow flowers in the grass, and I can hear birds singing in the trees. In summer, I can feel the warm weather, and we can go swimming and fishing in the lake. In fall, I can see yellow maple leaves on the trees and grass. In winter, I can see snow covering everything.

Secondly, in Canada, people have more freedom than in other countries. They have freedom of speech. They can express their opinion on anything they want. They have the freedom to practice their religion. People have different religions, but they can live in the same country in peace. People have the freedom to choose their partner. People have the freedom to elect their leader.

Thirdly, Canada is a safe country. Canada has low crime rate and most people are very polite. Some residents don’t need to lock their door before they go to bed.

I like Canada because I can experience all four seasons; it is a free country, and it is safe for me.
When we speak about Saskatchewan’s weather, we must talk about its seasons. Saskatchewan has four seasons like most other parts of the world: winter, spring, summer and fall. Each season is unique in its own way and there is a lot to tell about each one of them.

First comes the summer. I would like to introduce summer first because winter in Saskatchewan is a special season and I would like to talk about it at the end of this article. So, summer in Saskatchewan is a beautiful time when the temperature mostly stays between twenty and forty degrees Celsius. Due to the fact that Saskatchewan is predominantly prairie, it is always windy and partly cloudy; therefore, you can’t feel so hot. However, in some areas tornados, hurricanes, torrential rains as well as thunderstorms with lighting or hailing may occur, which causes a lot of damage.

Next comes the fall. This is the shortest season of all. It lasts about thirty to forty days. It is still warm, but at night the temperature drops to zero. As a result, this may cause fog and slippery conditions on the road. An unforgettable sight is when leaves on trees change their color and fall off within ten days. It is very common in Saskatchewan for the fall day to be awfully hot and muggy and the night to be covered with a thin layer of snow. Due to those sharp temperature changes many people get sick with the flu, cold and other diseases. However, I like fall very much.

To demonstrate winter I would like to stress this is the time of the year that lasts about six long months. The temperatures range between minus fifteen and minus fifty degrees Celsius. Forty and fifty degrees below zero is called chilly. But comparing Toronto’s minus fifteen and Regina’s minus fifteen, you’ll feel you’re better off in Regina because there is less humidity. Here I have seen the biggest snowfall in my life. The greatest view of the winter in Saskatchewan is the northern lights that can be seen if you travel outside the city, away from the city lights.

Finally after winter spring comes. It is the time when the nature wakes up and the migratory birds return. You can see thousands of birds above you. The spring in Saskatchewan means rains and fog. Mainly the sun shines and the wind blows. All the year’s harvest depends on the weather in spring. Saskatchewan is the bread basket of Canada and if the crop fails during the spring, there will be lots of trouble during the rest of the year.

In summary, the weather varies a lot in Saskatchewan. It also seems that I always wish for different weather to come, but I am never happy with what it brings. Maybe I am just a very cranky person when it comes to weather. I always look forward to something that will satisfy me at that moment. All throughout our long winters, I impatiently wait for summer, but as soon as it gets too hot, I want it to be winter. That is why spring and fall are my two favorite seasons.
Chand Raat Eid Festival
Afsheen A. | Level 4 | Jacqueline A's Student

Chand Raat Eid festival is a traditional festival in all Islamic countries, including our country Pakistan. Chand Raat means “Night of the Moon” because it is the first light of a new moon of the next Islamic month of Shawal. It is a unique evening and a big event, no doubt. The celebration of Eid beings with Chand Raat. Before going further, let us take a look and learn the basics of Chand Raat.

The Islamic calendar is based on the Quran (holy book) and it contains twelve months. All Islamic months move according to the moon, so moon is especially important for all Islamic celebrations. We have two main religious festivals in a year. The first one is Eid-ul-fitar and the second is Eid-ul-Adha.

Eid-ul-fitar comes right after the end of the holy month of Ramazen (Islamic month). During the whole month of Ramzan, Muslims all over the world keep fasting and the next month after Ramzan is Shawal (Islamic month), so the first three days of Shawal is the celebration of Eid-ul-fitar.

The celebration of Eid-ul-fitar starts with the first sight of Shawal’s moon. Muslims become very happy because Allah says “there are two gifts for the Muslims fasting in Ramzan, that is one at the time when they open fast and the second is Eid-ul-fitar”. In fact, Chand Raat is the eve of Eid. Therefore, when the time is come to receive the second gift from Allah, mosques (a place where Muslims pray) and TV channels announce the beginning of Eid celebrations.

Many people are using many ways to get involved in the moments of Chand Raat. City centers and shopping malls are open till late at night. Roads are decorated by lighting and flowers to give them a beautiful look. Mosques are also decorated. Women and girls decorate their hands with matching bangles and mehndi (temporary tattoos) and prepare special sweets and food for the next day. The main purpose of this night is to forget every stress and enjoy the happiness. This festival is an opportunity for everyone to get together. There are many people who want to enjoy, but they don’t have enough money to spend on all the preparations and food. Therefore, another main reason of this night is for rich people to take out a percentage of their income to give money to the less fortunate in the shape of Fitrana, so every one can enjoy this Chand Raat and Eid.
Today I am pleased to introduce one of Chinese festivals, Dragon Boat Festival, which is a traditional festival in China. It is celebrated on May 5th every year according to the special Chinese calendar. According to the regular calendar, it happens in June every year.

The first Dragon Boat festival was celebrated in 278 B.C. in ancient China. The festival was created to celebrate a man named Qu, Yuan. Long time ago, China did not exist. There were many small countries in this region, and they were at war all the time. Chu was one of the countries that lost in a war. According to the legend, Qu, Yuan, an official of Chu kingdom, was framed by the nobles, and had to leave his country. He jumped off the cliff into the river to kill himself because he was so sad that his country lost the war. The people of his country threw rice dumplings and Reaglar wine into the river so that fish will not eat his body.

In memory of this brave man, Chinese people have created the Dragon Boat Festival to honour Qu, Yuan. Now Chinese people celebrate the festival by eating rice dumplings, drinking Reaglar wine and sailing a dragon boat.

This festival is important to us, the Chinese, because it always reminds us that we may be brave, rightful and loyal people who love our home country no matter where we are in the world. In Canada, my family, my brother’s family and our friends get together to have dinner and watch Chinese TV and remember the days we were celebrating Dragon Boat Festival in China.
Eid Festival
Asma P. | Level 5 | Jacqueline A’s Student

Eid is a religious festival for Muslims all over the world. Eid is a day of happiness for them. The day of Eid is a gift for them from God after the month of Ramadan. Ramadan is a holy month. The whole month Muslims are fasting. They do not eat or drink anything after sunrise until sunset. The Fajar prayer, which takes place before sunrise, is the start of the fast. They can eat food prior to this prayer and they cannot eat after that. They offer prayers five times a day; Fajar is the first prayer of the day. After Fajar, they have four more prayers called “Zohar” “Asar” “Maghrib” “Eshaa” and they break their fast at the time of Maghrib.

For Eid, Muslims do extraordinary preparation. They stitch and buy new clothes and they buy new shoes. On this occasion, they wear traditional dresses according to their customs and culture. Especially, women and little girls are very excited about this day. They wear bangles and decorate their hands with Henna. Henna gives beautiful red colour on their hands. Children and young girls wait for this day impatiently.

The announcement of Eid depends on the moon; when they see the new moon then they celebrate Eid. They gathered in mosques and offer their Eid prayer. After prayer they hug each other and say “Eid Mubarak”, that means congratulations of Eid for all.

Ladies prepare deserts at home and bakeries prepare special sweets and cakes for Eid. They take the cakes and sweets for friends and relatives when they go to meet them. They give some money and gifts to children which one called “Eidi”. It is a most attractive and exciting thing for kids and even every younger person got this gift from elders.

The last celebration of Eid is get-togethers and Eid Millan parties. They arrange these parties at homes and in halls. These are pot luck parties, so everyone cooks one food at home and brings it with them. For Muslims across the world, it is the most fantastic day of the year.
Celebrating Father’s Day

Botros W. | Level 7 | Morley M’s Student

Celebrating Father’s Day with my family last Sunday was a great pleasure. Joseph, my son, gave me a bird feeder he built at school. He decorated, coloured and wrote my name on it by himself. He gave it to me with a very nice card he made himself as well. Presenting his gift by reading the kind words from his special card made me feel proud. Later, my wife took me to the Mandarin Restaurant for dinner. She gave me a beautiful initialed necktie. I felt happy being in Canada to celebrate Father’s Day. I was especially pleased to learn that children at school are taught how to be grateful to their parents.
Succeed in Achieving Your Dreams

Claudia B. | Level 7 | Jonathan B’s Student

“When people succeed, it is because of hard work. Luck has nothing to do with success.”

The dream of most of the people is to be successful. That is the reason why they make a great effort trying to do well. Some people decide to study hard; others choose building day by day their experience, working on their dreams and some lucky people don’t need to do anything to be successful just because they have good connections or lucky days. Sometimes, lucky people get an opportunity to be successful without any effort because of their connections, but they still have to work hard if they want to be successful.

To be successful, most of the people have to make a big effort. It is easy to see how this responsibility rests on the heads of the big companies who are in charge of many employees. They put in a lot of effort and decided to study and spend long hours in classrooms or libraries acquiring valuable knowledge to be able to command the company. If some one is lazy or does not have sufficient knowledge or experience and tries to be the head of a company, it will be closed in a short period of time.

Another way to do well is working hard from the bottom to rise to the top. That is the case of one of my friends, when he was a student in high school he decided to be successful but his parents did not have enough money to support him in his studies, so he decided to start volunteering for a big oil company. He started by cleaning screws, and as time went by, he was learning how to fix machines and he started to study by himself. Soon, the company realized his potential and sent him for training and paid for his studies. Right now he is one of the heads of the company because he knows everything about the company from how to fix properly the expensive machines and he can always come up with a good solution.

“What is the difference between an obstacle and an opportunity? Our attitude toward it. Every opportunity has a difficulty, and every difficulty has an opportunity.” ~J. Sidlow Baxter

Finally, if some one wants to be successful he/she needs to make an effort to achieve and keep their dreams.
A Good Neighbour

Violeta S. | Level 5 | Lesley H’s Student

Neighbours are people who live near our house. To be a good neighbour is not such a difficult thing. If we want to live in a community which is friendly, the neighbourhood is safe, and the area is nicer and a comfortable place to live, we have to do that by ourselves.

There are some unwritten rules that everyone has to respect to make this community a beautiful place for living. First, if we have already moved to this area, we have to introduce ourselves. We can do that in a few different ways, by saying hello or with a welcome gift. It doesn’t mean that you have to buy something, you can just make classic homemade cake or pie and bring it to the nearest neighbour. Second, you can ask them some questions about what is near here, a mall, shop, bus station, or when garbage day is. Also, it is good to know their schedule. I mean, what time they come from work or if they work shifts, just to know to be quiet some period of the day or maybe if they have baby. The most important thing to be a good neighbour is to keep your garden tidy. Some of the neighbourhoods have very close yards or walls or some neighbours are divided by their yards and all of us have to take care of the flowers, grass, trees and branches.

Being a good neighbour means to respect your neighbours and not do anything that might cause them upset. It’s good to be in a good relationship with the neighbour because you never know when you will need help from them.

I live in a neighbourhood where our yards are close and we must cut the grass together. I’m satisfied with my neighbour and we are in a good relationship. Every time we see each other, we say hello, we help each other, we are here when they need help, and sometimes we have a barbeque or drink coffee together.
My Surgery

Irina M. | Level 5 | Nahed S’s Student

Our life is wonderful but sometimes in our life there are unforeseen circumstances such as a disease. That’s happened with me. I had to have surgery in the hospital. Of course I was very worried and was nervous before the surgery. I passed a lot of pre-op procedures and tests in the hospital. They carefully checked me for allergies, took blood tests and asked many questions on the presence of health problems. Finally came the day of surgery, it was 8 o’clock in the morning. I came with my husband, because I would not be able to drive by myself after the surgery. After registration, we waited for our queue, and then the nurse came for me and held in pre-op department. Nurses made the relevant procedures and then took me on a gurney in the operating room. My doctor-surgeon met me with her team, they were very friendly and helpful with me. I saw them by me for 10 min. After anaesthesia I remembered nothing. I woke up in the recovery room. When I woke up next to me sat a nurse and monitored my condition. When I moved, I felt a strong pain and the nurse immediately made an anaesthetic injection to stop the pain. After 2 hours I felt better and my doctor let me go home. The fist two weeks after the surgery, I felt very bad and it was painful, I should take painkillers supplement every 6 hours. After 3 weeks I started feeling better and better. Now I feel good.

I would like to say a big thank you to the people who work in the hospital for their patience and love to people who are sick. I would like to say a big thank you for such a beautiful country as Canada. I’m very happy to live in Canada.

Raising Children

Nunnaphat E. | Level 5 | Nahed S’s Student

Raising children right is a challenging and rewarding job for me. First thing, I teach my children to respect other adults. I have to always remind them to say thanks and please. When everyone sees and hears this, they say my children are very nice. This makes me feel proud of them. Secondly, I want my children to be active and not lazy. I don’t let them watch too much TV and take them outside to play. Finally, my children must put education first. They must learn my home language (Thai) as well as English. My friends in Thailand were surprised when they talked to them. In conclusion, I would be happy to see them grow up to be good people.
Mari Johanna Kiviniemi

Mari Johanna Kiviniemi (born 27 September 1968) is a Finnish politician. She grew up in rural Southern Ostrobothnia and is the daughter of a wealthy farmer. She was a student in the University of Helsinki in 1988, and in 1996, she married a businessman. Her hobbies are running, reading and hunting. She spends her summer and fall weekends with her family.

She acquired her Master’s in Social Sciences while serving as the Secretary General of the Centre Party Students Union. In June 2010, she was elected Chairman of the Centre Party of Finland, and later in the same month she formed the government as Prime Minister. She became the second female Prime Minister of Finland. In addition to her work in national politics Kiviniemi has been a member of the Helsinki city council since 2005. She enjoyed a lot of prestige and influence in the European Union.

Kiviniemi said she believes that her party is strong, but can only succeed when the leadership enjoys absolute support. After new polls showed that her party had made no gains against the governing parties, she decided to step down as chairperson and did not contest the election for chairperson in the summer of 2012.

In my opinion Mari Johanna Kiviniemi is a good political leader. Her dedication and confidence in political matters helped Finland progress and become a financial controller in the world. Her dedication and love for family is appreciable.

I like her approach to her work because she once said, “The importance of work lies not only in growing the national economy but in the difference it makes to people’s lives, giving them an opportunity to express and develop themselves”.

Mari Johanna Kiviniemi

Shailesh G. | Level 5 | Supriya H’s Student
I have been in Toronto for almost one year. What I miss the most from my homeland in China is Suzhou Cuisine. In the autumn, every family likes to eat Gorgon fruit, sticky-rice mixed candied lotus-root and Hairy Crab but I can’t find them in Toronto.

The Gorgon fruit, which is known as “Hen’s Head Rice” and is boiled with rock sugar, is one of the famous fresh water products in Suzhou. It is a very delicious dessert and is also good for digestion, keeping your stomach and spleen healthy.

Sticky-rice mixed candied lotus-root is one of my favorite foods. It is very easy to cook. You cut both sides of the lotus-root, fill it with glutinous rice on the inside of the root, boil with rock sugar and water about three hours, then refrigerate it and, finally, slice it to eat. It is soft and sweet and everybody can eat it, even babies without teeth.

Hairy Crabs, which are just one kind of small crab from Yangcheng Lake in the Suzhou area, are the great autumn delicacy of eastern China. The female crabs ripen in the ninth lunar month, the males in the tenth, and from then until the end of the year they are very plentiful. You can spend more than $100 for two crabs in a local restaurant. We always went to a farmer’s house near Yangchen Lake to choose live crabs and cook them back home and it only cost $20 for two crabs. A good hairy crab, with an azury back, white belly, yellow villus and golden legs, can creep quickly on the grass. The crabs have fresh and sweet meat, and the crab butter is nutritious. After steaming the crabs, people always eat them with sauce which includes grated ginger, aromatic vinegar from Zhengjiang, sugar and soy sauce.

People living in Suzhou eat a different diet for each of the seasons. We like fresh food in the spring, light tasting food in the summer, special flavors in the autumn and tonic foods to keep us healthy in the winter. We love cuisine.
My First Canadian Wedding

Thi P. | Level 3 | Diane N’s Student

For me, it was the first time to attend a Canadian wedding so I just can say some features about it according to my limited understanding. In generally, weddings vary in style depending on the ethnic traditions of the bride and the groom. They have many decisions to make whether they want a large or small, traditional or non-traditional, civil or church wedding.

In Canada, it is considered bad luck for the groom to see the bride before the ceremony on the day of the wedding. The bride usually wears a white gown with a veil and the groom often wears a tuxedo.

In Vietnam, the bride usually wears a dress or Ao Dai and the groom wears a tuxedo or Ao Dai. On the best luck, the groom with a bunch of flowers in his hand picks up the bride with a car and with a team of cars for holding the groom’s and the bride’s relatives and neighbours as official witnesses and then have the ceremony in Temple Holy See. Then all the guests are treated to a ceremony and party at the groom’s home or in a restaurant.

The reception after the ceremony is usually lunch or dinner followed by music and friends’ songs. The groom and the bride have pictures taken with guests at the tables and they go to all the guests to thank them. Then they leave at around ten o’clock in the evening.

In Canada, a traditional wedding takes place in a church. The reception after the ceremony is usually a dinner followed by an evening of dancing until one or two o’clock in the morning. Before the wedding couple leaves the reception they go to all the guests, thanking them and giving them each a piece of wedding cake to take home. The bride throws her bouquet to the unmarried woman. The groom throws the bride’s garter to the unmarried man.

A wedding reception in Canada seems more relaxed than the one in Vietnam. They dance together happily and the guests continue dancing until very late but they really feel more relaxed and happier here.

Even though Canadian weddings seem more relaxed, I would say I prefer a traditional Vietnamese wedding because the wedding party is more colourfully dressed in traditional Ao Dai. Furthermore, I am bias to my religious ceremony and I think all guests who attend a wedding in Vietnam feel more honourable than Canadian’s as they have their pictures taken with the bride and groom.
Ethnic Origins and Homeland

Kleber O. | Level 5 | Jacqueline A’s Student

Ethnic origins are very important for everybody because that is how you are going to be sure about your roots, heritage or background. So to me it is part of our identity and it is something that you have to keep or remember for your whole life.

Ethnic origins are not just something related with the place of the world where you are coming from. It is more related with culture, and culture is not only how much you know about your origins as a human, but it is how well you preserve your own identity: food, music, clothing, beliefs, traditions, art, language, dialects and in certain cases even religion. However the most important thing about the ethnic origins aspect is show respect for other cultures as well for your own culture. That is relevant to me, because it is going to give us a peaceful environment making our country highly tolerant.

Talking about my home country the first people to come to Ecuador were the Spanish conquerors, which was in 1534, “under the Command of Sebastian de Benalcazar. At that time Ecuador was under the Inca Empire domain. The Incas domain started around early 1200 in South America but their domain in Ecuador started later in the 1400’s. The Incas came from Peru, and they were based in Cusco which was the Incas main city; later Quito became the main city when the Inca Empire was strong enough, and Cusco took the second place” (Wikipedia).

As an Ecuadorian, what I know about our background is what history says. In the early seventeen hundreds, a massive emigration took place all over Central and South America. Those emigrants came from Spain, but they came to America looking for better days. History says they were poor people without land, and had expensive taxes to pay to the King. They couldn´t pay those taxes, so they didn´t have any future over there for them, and also for their families.

The last Inca Emperor was Atahualpa. “His empire stretched from South of Chile, and ended North of Ecuador. When the Spanish conquerors arrived in South America they destroyed all Inca millenary culture, and many other cultures all over South America, but that happened because many other cultures that were based in Ecuador, and even Peru, didn’t like the Inca’s abusive behavior. They started working together with the Spanish, providing valuable information that very quickly weakened the Inca Empire.”

“The Inca Empire ended their domain in Ecuador on November of 1532 when Atahualpa, known as the last Inca Emperor, was taken prisoner and executed by the conquerors. The Incas were in Ecuador around 80 years before they disappeared forever” (Ecuador.us).

Sources:
I left Guangzhou, and now I live in a beautiful country called Canada. Four years after coming here, I still miss the city of Guangzhou, the place I was born, the place I grew up, the place I used to love, and I still do.

First of all, I miss Cantonese language spoken there widely. I miss Cantonese because it just feels so familiar. And I like the way we express ourselves so clearly, and the way it sounds.

Secondly, I miss the crowd and rush on the streets. I can’t claim that Guangzhou is the most crowded city in China, but it surely belongs to the top three. The funny stuff is that all the rush and mess on the streets and construction areas is not only real but it also works.

Thirdly, I miss Chinese New Year celebrations. Gong hey fat choy! I will definitely miss that greeting in the streets of Guangzhou, as the end of the month marks the beginning of the Chinese New Year. Food is definitely a big part of Chinese New Year celebrations. I miss a candy tray with eight kinds of dried sweet fruits, plants and vases of fresh flowers. And I miss the time and moments I used to spend with family and friends during the New Year. We played, we laughed and we made fun with each other with no harm. I appreciate and I am thankful for all the love I got from my friends and family.

As you can see, I love my home town, I love Guangzhou. Even though I have settled in Canada, I will visit my home town and I recommend everyone who is curious about China to go there and experience what I miss about this city. Maybe you fall in love with this city as I did.
Wedding Traditions In India

Kishoriben G. | Level 6 | Ian Z’s Student

In Indian culture typically the family chooses the bride and groom. Arranged marriages are strictly intra-religions and intra-caste.

Month before the wedding an engagement ceremony known as Mangni is held. The two families meet to perform rituals to make an engagement official. A Muhurat (date & time) for the wedding is decided based on horoscopes.

Traditional Indian wedding lasts a week, and starts with pre-wedding ceremonies. Haldi is a holy bath ritual during which turmeric oil and water is applied to both the bride and groom by married women. This is followed by Mehendi ceremony, during which the bride’s hands and feet are decorated with intricate patterns by the application of Heena.

The wedding is usually held at the bride’s home. The arrival of the groom is an important and fun filled event. At the wedding venue, the bride waits for the groom, with a jaimala, which is a decorated garland, soon after the groom arrives, the bride and groom exchange garlands.

Another interesting tradition is the Sapthapadhi which means taking seven steps together. Thus in a wedding this symbolizes that the bride and the groom will keep up their friendship for life and also partake equally in both good and bad times in life. The Kumkum, the Mangalsuthram and the toe-rings symbolize a married woman. Food served during the wedding ceremony is traditional and vegetarian.

With so much of colour, vibrancy, food, people, rituals, music, fun and frolic, the Indian wedding is truly a festival in itself.
My Own Educational Experience

Thamillarase K. | Level 5 | Jonathan B’s Student

I am from Sri Lanka. In Sri Lanka, health and education are free. In Sri Lanka grade 1 to grade 11 is called ordinary level and grade 12 and grade 13 is called advanced level.

The ordinary levels have eight subjects and advanced level has four subjects in different fields. The students who pass the ordinary level can study the advanced level. I finished both levels. After that, I studied in the University for one year. The students who get a high score in the advanced level can enter the university.

I studied in the accounts field and the subjects were accounting, business studies, economics, and business statistics. My favourite subjects are accounting and statistics. I like accounting because when I do accounting my mind clears up and is sharp. English subject is a very important subject for all levels. Most educational institutes are considered English medium according to the Sri Lankan education scheme.

Finally, I hope that school days are always remembered and are memorable days in everyone’s life.
Multan

Muhammad A. | Level 3 | Jacqueline A’s Student

I lived in a beautiful city in Pakistan. Its name is Multan. It has many tombs. Its famous tomb is Shahrekhnealaam. People come from different cities to visit those tombs. They usually pray in the tomb. On the other side of the tomb, Multan has the highest stadium in all of Asia. Its name is Qadafi Stadium.

Multan has the highest temperature in the summer time. That raises to 50 degrees Celsius. In the summer time most of the shop keepers shut their shops in the afternoon and go home for a nap. We also faced lots of storms in the summer time. Sometimes it is so terrible, so lots of poor people lose their houses because those houses are made of mud. Living in Multan in the summer time can be very difficult.

Multan has very talented people. They do embroidery on the clothes, scarfs, beddings, bags, sandals and napkins. They use different kinds of material to make those things, such as beads, threads, leather and different frames. When people come from different cities they love to buy those things to give presents to their friends and families.
The First Day of September in Russia is a Very Special Day

Ekaterina Z. | Level 5 | Sarah H’s Student

The first day of September in Russia has been considered a special day for many years. It is called the Day of Knowledge. This day starts the new school year for students in schools, colleges and universities. For students who go to Grade 1 to Grade 11, which is the last Grade in the Russian school system, the Day of Knowledge, September 1st, is very significant and memorable.

On this day small children ages 6-7, go to the first grade for the first time and feel very grown up. They already know a lot about school, because their parents and grandparents spend lots of time together with them describing everything about school and telling them their own funny stories about their school years. Students in Grade 11 sadly think that this is their last September 1st in the school system, and it is the most important year before college or university.

Like all holidays, this day has its own traditions. On September 1st, schools organize a special celebration to mark the start of the new school year. Teachers and students listen to songs and poetry, describe their summer days and tell funny stories about what happened in the summer. Congratulatory speeches are given by the schools' head teachers and principals, and sometimes by members of the local administration. It has become a tradition for top politicians, including Russia’s President and Prime Minister, to take part in the ceremonies at the country’s most prestigious schools. Also, the Russian President always makes a congratulatory speech on the most important Russian TV channels.

Flowers and white ribbons in the hair of all the little girls are an integral part of the celebrations. As well, flowers are traditionally given to teachers by students from all grades. At the end of the ceremony, adults and children listen to the anthem of the Russian Federation. Little girls from the first grade sit atop the shoulders of a boy from a senior grade (aged 16-17). A little girl rings the school bell, which means the new school year has successfully started at the school. After, most schools hold open lessons for guests and parents. As a rule, September 1st is not a full school day and children can return home once the celebrations have finished. However, on the following day the school routine starts and parents return to school only for parent-teacher meetings.

I can say that on September 1st students begin a completely new life at school. This day is always very exciting and memorable. And the importance of this day is not only to celebrate but it is also intended to emphasize the importance of education in Russia.
Recipes
Cambodian Salad
Kim S. | Level 4 | Diane R's Student

This recipe is called “Plea Sach Ko “ in Khmer. Cambodians eat it for special occasions.

Ingredients for 4 people

1 lb beef (steak)
2 bunches of fresh mint
½ bunch of fresh basil
3 stalks of fresh cilantro
Juice from 4-5 limes
1 red chilli for mild, 4-5 red chili for spicy
1 stalk of lemon grass
½ red onion
2 tbsp fish sauce
1 tbsp sugar
½ salt

First, you have wash the herbs well and dry them.
Second, you have to slice the beef very thin and mix with lime juice, salt, sugar, fish sauce, lemon grass and chopped onion.
Then, let the beef marinate in this mixture for about 5 minutes until it changes colour.
After that, you can taste the beef to see if it sweet and sour. If it is too sweet, add more fish sauce or lime juice or both. If it is too sour, add more sugar. You can put mint on the dish.
Next, when the beef is ready, put it on top of the herbs and garnish with mint and red chili.
Finally, you can enjoy the Cambodia salad.
Pork & Cassava Stew
Leidy B. | Level 7 | Jonathan B’s Student

Ingredients:

2 lbs. Boneless pork loin
1 lb. Cassava
1 Carrot
1 Red pepper
4 Tomatoes
4 Spring onions
4 cloves garlic
1 cup of beer
1 Onion and Cilantro
Achiote, cumin and chilli powder
Olive oil, salt and pepper

Directions:

1. Blend the spring onions, garlic and beer. Add salt and pepper to taste. Marinate the pork with this mix overnight.
2. Chop the onions, tomatoes and red pepper using a food processor.
3. Add olive oil in a large pot and place the pork pieces with the vegetables mix. Stir and let them cook for 10 minutes on medium flame.
4. Add the achiote and chili powder.
5. Reduce the flame, add water and let it boil for 1 and half hours, until the pork is tender and the sauce is nice and thick.
6. Add the carrots and cassava during the last half hour.
7. Sprinkle cilantro and serve.
Tikka Boti

Shazia S. | Level 5 | Jonathan B’s Student

Ingredients:

- Beef/chicken - diced ½ kg
- Ginger paste 1 tbsp
- Garlic paste 1 tbsp
- Raw papaya as you need
- Crush chili 1 tsp
- Salt 1 tsp
- Lemon juice 2 tsp
- Oil ½ cup
- Coriander leaf chopped 2 tsp
- ‘National’ Brand-TIKKA BOTI spice 1 Packet

Method:

1. Add national TIKKA BOTI Spice in beef/ Chicken
2. Add raw papaya, oil, ginger, garlic paste, salt, chili and lemon in beef
3. Mix well and marinate for 3-4 hours
4. Thread the meat pieces on to the skewers
5. Grill on low gas fire/ or oven which one you have, don’t let the meat get too red
6. Delicious TIKKA BOTI is ready
7. Serve with Naan, salad and chutney.
Crispy Meat Cakes (Meat Dumplings)

Qiong W. | Level 5 | John W’s Student

These crispy meat cakes, or “moon cakes”, are similar to an Asian version of a meat dumpling. They should not be deep fried. They should be lightly fried to a golden brown with just a small amount of oil. These cakes can be served as an appetizer, as a snack, or as a side dish to a main course.

Ingredients: (You will need to experiment with quantities, depending on the amount wanted)

1. some flour to make a dough
2. little bit of olive oil
3. some pork or other meat depending on your taste and amount to make
4. some onion, green onion and carrots (beans and potato can be used also)
5. some Chinese rice wine (TNT Supermarket or Chinese grocer, or substitute with cooking wine), salt, sugar, soy sauce
6. some water

Method:

1. Put some water into the flour, mix together into a paste. Very lightly coat dough with olive oil, and then cut into pieces that are 2 fingers wide, and the length of your index finger. After this, let pieces sit for about 20 minutes.
2. Chop all meat, onion, and green onion into very small pieces the size of corn.
3. Put some oil in the pot, when the pot is hot, cook all ingredients together. Add the seasoning: just a little sugar and salt, and use enough soy to change the meat colour to light brown. Use a some rice wine or cooking wine for flavour, according to the amount you want. Cook well. Leave the cooked mixture to cool.
4. Now using the cut dough, pat the pieces together using palms to make a very thin pancake. Put cooked meat mixture on one side, then take one edge and fold over to the other edge. Pinch the edges together, ensuring both edges are sealed together.
5. Heat a pan on medium high heat with a small amount of canola or corn oil in the pan. Do not deep fry. Wait until oil is hot and then put the prepared cakes in the pan. When the cakes turn light brown, cook the other side until brown. Serve warm as an appetizer, or part of main dish entre with vegetables and other sides dishes.
Homemade Peanut Punch

*Chavita H. | Level 7 | Meghann W’s Student*

Peanut punch is a Caribbean drink most popular in Guyana and Trinidad. With just a few ingredients the result of this drink is very rich, creamy and delicious. It also makes a perfect summer drink. If you love peanut butter and condensed milk - really who doesn’t? - then this recipe is a keeper! Serves 2

**Ingredients**

- 10 ice cubes
- 1 cup of milk
- 2 1/2 tablespoons of peanut butter
- 1 tablespoon of condensed milk
- 1 ripe banana (optional)
- 1/2 teaspoon of vanilla (optional)
- 1/4 teaspoon of nutmeg (optional)

**Process:**

1. Start by putting the ice cubes in a blender along with all the other ingredients.
2. Blend for 40 seconds until everything is evenly incorporated.
3. Serve immediately

**NOTE:**

1. If condensed milk is unavailable, feel free to use sugar, honey or any other sweetener of your choice.
2. Make sure to put the ice before all the other ingredients so that it won’t stick to the blender. ENJOY!!!!!

Honey Almond Cookies

*Sonal K. | Level 6 | Mark N’s Student*

**Ingredients:**

- half teaspoon of almond essence
- half teaspoon of honey
- three fourth cup plain white flour
- two and half cups of butter
- three fourth cup of almond pieces

1. mix honey and almond essence
2. beat them with hand mixer
3. add one cup flour and beat again then slowly added remaining flour, and beat until becomes the batter becomes soft then add almond pieces
4. put this batter on baking sheet of any shape you like and bake them for half an hour at 300 degrees
5. when baked remove from the oven and allow cookies to cool
Kerala Sambar Recipe

Geena G. | Level 7 | Zakia S’s Student

Sambar is a healthy South Indian curry, which is very delicious. It is served with rice, dosa or Idli. It is one of my favorite curries.

Ingredients.

Vegetables:
Potatoes, okra, tomatoes, eggplant and carrots are some examples, but you can add any veggies you like
Toor dal - 1 cup
Water 3 cups
Turmeric powder -1/4 tsp
Tamarind -Size of a lime (soaked in water)
Sambar powder -2 tbsp
Asafoetida -1/2 tsp
Small onion - sliced finely.
Red chilly - 2
Mustard -1/4 tsp
Curry leaves
Oil
Potatoes -1 cubed medium and half cooked
Carrot - 1 cubed
Drumstick -2, cut lengthwise
Okra - 4, cut lengthwise

Instructions

1. Cook Dal in a pressure cooker with water and turmeric powder. Wait for 3 whistles. Keep it closed for 30 minutes or till the steam goes. Mash the cooked dall well using a wooden spoon. Add more water. Add all veggies except the potatoes. When the veggies are half cooked add potatoes and the tamarind pulp. Cook till all the veggies are cooked.
2. Meanwhile heat oil in a another pan and add sambar powder and Asafoetida. Fry it for a minute, and make sure that it doesn’t get burnt. Add some water to the powder and make a thick paste. Add this to the pressure cooker and let it boil with the veggies.
3. Heat some more oil in the pan and crackled mustard seeds. Add sliced small onions, red chilies and curry leaves. Fry it till the onion becomes golden brown. Add this to the sambar and mix well. Remove from fire.

Enjoy this delicious sambar!
Seasonal
Everybody enjoys to go camping with family and friends, especially in the summer time. However, cautions must always be undertaken when partaking in outdoor experiences as nobody wants to change enjoyable times to tearful memories. One of the most important precautions during camping in Ontario and some other parts of Canada is paying attention to ticks, Lyme disease and how to protect ourselves and our health.

Lyme disease is an illness caused by the bite of an infected tick named the “blacklegged tick”. Ticks are small insect like spiders with 1 to 5 millimeters in length and feed on blood. Individuals come into contact with ticks when they rub their legs up against tall grasses containing these bugs. Ticks move slowly and can’t fly, so the only way they come into contact with humans is via these long grasses. Many individuals will have skin-to-skin contact with a tick without even realizing it. Furthermore, most bites from ticks are painless, non-infectious, and will usually not result in Lyme disease. However, it’s better to be prudent and to check all bite marks for any symptoms of this painful disease.

Infected ticks carry Borrelia burgdorferi, the bacteria that cause Lyme disease. The ticks obtain these bacteria when they bite infected mice or deer. When someone gets a bite, it takes about 24 to 36 hours for ticks to transfer the bacteria from their bodies to yours. Therefore if you can remove the tick from your body during this time, you will reduce the risk of getting infected. Lyme disease symptoms can appear after 3 days to a month and some of them include a fever, headaches, muscle and joint pains, fatigue and skin rashes. Untreated disease can result in recurring arthritis, neurological problems and paralysis (unable to move parts of the body).

Here is some advice on how to protect you against ticks and Lyme disease while camping:
• wear light-coloured clothing that shows the ticks easier;
• wear long sleeve shirts;
• wear long pants so you can tuck your pants into your socks;
• spray tick repellent to your skin and clothing;
• avoid hiking in the bushy areas where ticks usually exist;
• use camping chairs and tables to avoid direct contact with the ground and grass

In the event a tick bites you, grasp it with tweezers as close to your skin as possible and pull it straight out without squeezing it. Visit a doctor if you get bitten by a tick.

Going camping and hiking in the woods can be a pleasurable activity for all of us, so let’s consider and pay more attention to some precautions before going into the heart of the nature. Doing so will create even more enjoyable memories of outdoor activities and contact with nature.

Sources:
http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/id-mi/lyme-eng.php
I enjoy working in the garden. When I was a little girl, we lived in a private house. We had a vegetables garden and all the family members had to work in it. We never bought vegetables in the store, because there was not enough money. We worked from spring to autumn the whole season, and I can’t say that I liked to work in the garden. We just had to work like it or not, but we always had fresh fruits and vegetables throughout the season and harvested for winter. Many years have passed; we moved to Canada and bought a private house. Experience and love for the land, which I have got in my childhood, was very useful for me. Of course now I like to be in the garden more than in my childhood. Here I have another garden, basically flowers. When I’m planting and caring for them and then see the result, my soul rejoices. In Canada gardening is a developed business and this allows you to have a beautiful garden if you love it.
My Family’s First Halloween

Svetlana P. | Level 6 | Sarah H’s Student

Halloween is a special and funny holiday that is celebrated in North America on October 31st. Children wear many different costumes. You can see princesses, fairies, supernatural heroes, monsters, zombies, ghosts, witches, skeletons, etc. The children go out trick-or-treating or go to Halloween parties. It doesn’t matter if there are any differences between traditions or religions.

When we moved to Canada I saw Halloween for the first time. We attended a Halloween holiday party with our neighbors and friends. During that time we lived in our old location of Richmond Hill, where people start decorating their front yards at the beginning of October. There are many black cats, rats, spiders, and orange Jack-o-lanterns crafted from pumpkins. Every day you can discover new witches, fairies, skeletons and ghosts in yards near and around your house.

For our first Halloween, we made crazy costumes for my kids with help from our neighbors. They went out trick-or-treating in the evening and got a lot of candies and toys. I guess this is the best part for children.

Overall, Halloween is more than a holiday; it is a month-long celebration that brings joy to all people who celebrate it around you or with you. Halloween is a fun holiday and we celebrate it every year. We dress up in crazy costumes, we carve pumpkins, we go trick-or-treating, we share candies, and we have Halloween parties. Today Halloween has become the most important and special celebration for my family.

Happy Halloween!
One day that I will never forget is the first day of school for my daughter, Amenah. She is now 9 years old, but she started her schooling in the United Arab Emirates when she was 3 years old in kindergarten. That day I had different feelings between fear, anxiety and joy because it was the first time she went alone without me or her father. However, she was happy and excited. Amenah wore the school uniform, which was a baby blue shirt and dark blue shorts. She took her lunch box and went to school with her father by car. As I watched her from the window leaving the house, I thought she was too small to go to school but she was very cute in her uniform and ponytails.

Her father stayed a while after he dropped her off at school to make sure she was okay. After that he called me to reassure me about her. When school had finished I picked her up and took her back home. She was happy with her first day at school and she gave me a report about her class. She was very quiet and didn’t speak to her teacher or her classmates. The next day the teacher said that Amenah was shy and didn’t make friends until her classmates invited her over to play. This was my experience with the first school day of my daughter. However, I have another child who started school 2 years after Amenah. Also, I have a third small baby who will one day have an adventure with his first day of school.
I loved all seasons of weather when I lived in Ukraine: summer, fall, winter and spring. But when I moved to Canada I completely changed my idea and attitude about all seasons. Saskatchewan’s seasons are totally different from other provinces. I would like to describe summer and fall because there is nothing to say about spring as it’s totally absent in Canada and it’s not interesting to describe winter as it’s too long in Canada. By the end of winter, which lasts approximately 6-7 months, people start to hate winter. So my story will be about summer and fall. I think these seasons bring happiness to all people, even to those who love winter because of snowmobiles and winter fishing. But even these people can’t love winter for 6-7 months. However, summer and fall have their disadvantages.

What is summer? It’s a hot season without rain or cold. Usually summer has to start in June as it’s the first month of summer. But in Saskatchewan it starts, I would say, in July. During the whole month of June it’s raining and it’s cold. Everybody is waiting for hot mornings and evenings. Finally in July we have summer. All people prepare their boats and quads to have fun and have a rest. There are lots of lakes in Saskatchewan and people like camping. The negative side of summer in Saskatchewan is mosquitos. The crowds of mosquitos are everywhere and they are so big and hungry. Even sprays don’t help sometimes. But it’s so, so hot that people start to think that June was ok with its rain and cold. Anyway, nobody wants winter back because it was too long and everybody prefers hot weather and lots of mosquitos instead of snow.

Fall in Canada is very beautiful. I would say that this season is the most beautiful of all seasons in Canada. It’s not very long but it’s very bright and warm. In other countries there is lots of rain during fall. But in Canada all rain is in June. It’s the most beautiful season because it’s very bright. All leaves are yellow, red and some of them are green. The fishing is good during the fall and we have less mosquitos. People try to spend more time outside with their campers on the lakes. People who do not like camping just walk a lot in the parks. On nice evenings everybody wants to feel the fall as much as it’s possible because they understand that winter is coming.

When I lived in my country, I loved all seasons. But here in Canada I can’t love all of them. The loveliest seasons are fall and summer for me. Maybe after sometime I will be able to love winter as well, but for now it’s impossible. I can love it for 3-4 months maximum, but not for 6-7 months. But all people try to find a way to live positively and have fun even during such a long winter.
Settlement
I was born on a beautiful and peaceful island in southern China. It is the youngest volcano island in the world; it is five hundred years old. It has clean seawater, gorgeous sunrise and sunset, amazing fresh seafood, white and soft beaches, different and tasty sea shell and simple people. There everything is my dream world. It is my children’s hometown. But now, everything is different. It is all developed. There used to be only simple houses, but now there are big houses and hotels. It is a tourist place. Everything is all different, and I don’t like it anymore because it is crowded and all changed.

Time has flown by. I have been in Canada for three years now. When I first came to Canada, everything to me was strange and scary. The winter was too cold and I lived in a remote countryside. The food and people all scared me. After being in Canada for only three days, I wanted to leave Canada right away, but now I am used to it. Time has made me change so much. I noticed that everything was all in my brain. When I saw people take care of animals, it moved my heart because in China people eat animals. When I saw cars all stop to wait for children getting on or off the school bus, it reminded me of China where 24 children had to sit on a bus which was only for eight children. The bus crashed killing everyone. It also moves my heart when people give donations to disabled people, when all the cars stop and wait for an ambulance, when people help when my car is in a ditch, and when I forget my pin number in the store, someone helps me pay. Now, I think Canada is a great place to live in. I love Canada.
I was born and raised in a tropical country, the Philippines. When I was a child, it was my dream to come to Canada to experience the “white Christmas” as I have seen in the movies. Oh! How I loved the feeling of seeing children making snow angels. It stayed in my mind until I grew older.

Coming to Canada has always been my long-time dream. In my childhood, the simple aspiration of experiencing snow angels was my only motivation, but as I became more mature I have realized that it is not just about snow angels anymore. It is more on making a good life, “a greener pasture”. You might wonder why. My answer is simple, because for me living in a country of poverty limits my opportunity to have a good future because of underemployment. Therefore, I motivated myself to strive harder, finish my studies and to get a chance to possibly immigrate to Canada.

My dream was realized on December 8, 2008. I came to Canada as a Temporary Foreign Worker bound to work in one of the restaurants in Lloydminster, Saskatchewan. It was winter time when I arrived and it was so cold. On my first day, my uncle took a picture of me with people throwing snowballs in the background. I was thrilled when I laid down for my first ever snow angel poses. It was indeed so cold and there was even a time my nose bled because of the coldness. Can you imagine I was born and raised in a tropical country? And now, here I am in this cold environment.

My adaptation and integration in my new community had never been that easy, but I managed to fit in as time goes by. It took a couple of years of struggles through immigration to bring my family to Canada. How I missed them. Now, I am happy that my children are with me, enjoying the life that I never had when I was little. Growing up, we were a family of eight and my parents’ earnings were just enough to feed us and to send us to school when we were younger and I promised myself that I will give my children the best life I could possibly offer. At the present time, I’m trying my best to support my children to give them a good future.

Thank you Canada, My Home Away From Home as I know I could have not achieved my goals without the privileges and opportunities this country has offered.
The library is a place I like very much, and the Westmount Library is my favorite place. When I came to Canada, it opened a window to Canada allowing me to get acquainted with the Canadian Culture.

When I arrived in Montreal, I first went to the library, and applied for a library card, and I got a Newcomer Guide from there. Now, nearly every day after dinner, my family heads to the library together. It is a good place to learn and explore, and a safe place to spend time. There is a play room for kids, and a lot of toys and books that children can borrow and take home.

When it is a special day or celebration, the library will recommend reading, and through these books, I know about the culture of Canada. At the library, there are a variety of programs, such as the English book club, Film Fridays, Chess and Scrabble clubs, story time for kids. For example, last Friday my son and I saw a the “Lego” movie at the library. That is a fantastic movie, and my son discussed it with me all weekend. The library also is an information center, and I can get all kinds of information about our community from the library.

The library is a part of my life, and I could not imagine my life without a library.
What Are Some Challenges You Have Faced?

Iwona C. | Level 7 | Jessica W’s Student

We came to Canada two years ago. On our journey to settle down in Canada, we faced many challenges. It was a long process involving both adaption and acceptance. The first things we noticed were the different customs, laws, unfamiliar land, people and weather. Through our process towards citizenship we were able to familiarize ourselves with the cultural differences in Canada, but still with enormous cultural shock. Settlement was not easy, we were learning how to navigate the health, education and social systems. The most difficult challenge we faced was missing our family and friends abroad, not to even mention the winter in Canada. The first winter over here was really hard. Staying at home for four days, without going out was the most traumatic experience we ever faced, (people in Canada have a name for it “cabin fever”). When we went outside we could not see our car, all covered in snow. We were not sure if we should start digging out the snow or just go back home and wait for the snow to melt. However, on our journey here we realise that Canada offers a friendly reception along with quality of life and amazing, natural beauty. The arriving and adjusting process is without doubt the most worthwhile challenge we have ever faced.
My Citizenship Writing Test

Qian L. | Level 6 | Christine L’s Student

I completed my citizenship writing test last month. There were 20 multiple-choice questions to be answered within 30 minutes, and the passing mark is 75%. I got 100% correct! Here, I would like to share my citizenship writing test story.

I applied for Canadian citizenship on January 2011, and then received the citizenship file number and a study guide “Discover Canada” in April 2011. I got a shock when I opened the guide and all the citizenship test questions based on it. Over 70% words I hadn’t learned, and my English level was only Level 3 at that time. I received a letter to take the writing test in October 2011. I felt crazy and I didn’t have any confidence that I could pass the writing test. Everybody has one chance to write the test another time, so I called the CIC with my poor English to ask for a later time. CIC accepted my request and put my application at the bottom of the pile, so I would have enough time to improve my English.

I had to take a class to understand the study guide, but there were only evening and Saturday morning citizenship test preparing classes available at that time. I couldn’t take those classes, so I had to self-study. First, I translated all the words that I didn’t understand. It took me a long time to finish it, but I thought that it was the right way to do it. Second, I read the study guide while I listened to the audio guide chapter by chapter again and again. This way really helped me. Then, I found some online Canadian Citizenship test training programs to practice.

I took the test in April 2014. After the writing test, I felt those webpages had really helped me: Free Online Canadian Citizenship Practice Test ( www.v-soul.com ), The No.1 Online Training for the Canadian Citizenship Test ( www.citizenshipsupport.ca), and Canadian Citizenship Practice Test - Richmond Public Library (www.yourlibrary.ca/citizenship/).

Now, I feel so great! It is not just that I passed the Canadian citizenship writing test, I feel I know more about the rights and responsibilities of citizenship, Canada’s history, how Canadians govern themselves, Canada’s economy and geography. Canada is now my home country!
I was born in Cote d’Ivoire, a beautiful and multi-cultural country in West Africa. Because I was raised in a small village, I was educated according to the multi-secular tradition of the tribe I belong to. I have learned some basic but critical rules that maintain the cohesion of the society and foster good relationships between people.

Now that I have immigrated to Canada, I have experienced a kind of culture shock in some circumstances. In my culture, if you start talking to a person without greeting him first, that person can simply behave as if he was deaf and dumb. Saying “Hi” is the sine qua non condition to establish any communication with another person.

Any failure of that basic rule is interpreted as a lack of respect and a lack of consideration. However, at my workplace it’s usual to see some friends of my officemate coming in, greeting only him and chatting with him without even saying hi to me. I’m just ignored as if I am not a human being. That behaviour really drives me nuts.

In my culture, when a person you might not even know is passing your house and says hi to you, you should invite him to have a seat and give him water to drink. This simple and small attention will be greatly appreciated and will show your hospitality and your natural propensity for helping people in any circumstance. Even if that person is not thirsty, he may accept the water and drink only a mouthful or simply dip his upper lip in the water. That means he is really grateful to you and he will also be willing to help you in the future. Not giving a glass of water to any person that pops in is interpreted as being selfish. However, the day after I had arrived in Montreal, I stopped by my neighbour’s apartment on the main floor to say hi to him, as required by my culture. After I had knocked at his door, he came out with a strange face and asked me “How can I help you?” I first said “hi” to him and then introduced myself. He asked me the reason I moved to Montreal. In short, the thing that shocked me was that he didn’t invite me to have a seat, so that all our conversation took place just at the door.

At that time, I started to wonder whether not saying hi to people and not giving a seat to a visitor were the gold standard in Canada or just some isolated cases. However, after a while, I was positively surprised that Canadian people are really nice and lovely. Canadians are eager to help their community through diverse activities such as volunteerism and fundraising. There were times where I was trying to get directions and people spontaneously asked me if I needed any help. That was really touching and meant to me that Canadians are very nice people. Moreover, services are generally customer-oriented. Salesmen and receptionists are extremely friendly and smiling.

In summary, I do believe that as new immigrants, if we are shocked by or unfamiliar with some Canadian behaviour, maybe we should not rush to judgment. We should take time to learn the culture of our new home country and adjust our behaviour or our perception accordingly. Personally, I have come to the conclusion that talking with people and addressing our concerns about the culture of our new home could help wipe out any misunderstanding.
How We Decided to Come to Canada

Aeja J. | Level 5 | John W’s Student

I came to Canada five years ago with my husband and a 7 month old, and a 3 year old child. Canada was not really our original destination. We drove 7 days from Portland, Oregon in the USA to Alliston, Ontario in Canada. My husband and I went to college in the USA. After we finished school, we went back to Korea because our statuses were only as students with F1 student visas. Due to this, we needed to change our status to stay in the USA.

In Korea, while we were preparing all the documents for our visa change, our agency suggested going to Canada. That’s how we changed our direction to Canada. Luckily, the processing was really fast, so in a year, all the documents were finalized. We bought flight tickets to Portland, Oregon where we had left our belongings in storage. We stayed in a hotel for one night there, and then rented a moving trailer and drove for 7 days across North America. That’s how we arrived in Canada.

When we decided to come to Canada, we studied about Canada and Canadian life, so that way, we made few mistakes, or had few surprises in Canada. Even so, we had never been in Canada before, so there were many things, and surprises waiting for us! For example, the weather was a surprise: an extremely cold, long winter, with heavy snow! For this special winter weather, there are special traffic laws I wasn’t aware of. One winter, early in the morning, my husband moved our car from the driveway to the street for parking in front of our apartment. He did this for our apartment maintenance man could shovel the driveway. We got a ticket for this because we blocked the city snowplow, which was supposed to remove the snow on the street. I went to the police department to pay the ticket, and asked the record clerk if this ticket would be a criminal offence or not. She smiled at me, and said, “No, this ticket has nothing to do with criminal offences.” This was important to me because I was about to apply for permanent resident cards for my entire family.

Still, we are learning about Canada and continue to get little surprises while we to settle in Canada. However, we are enjoying all those things, and love living in Canada. Last summer, we got our Permanent Residency Cards and bought a first house. I think we are doing well, so far.
These days, many immigrants decide to return to their country after being here for a while for some reasons. The first reason is finding a suitable job; the second is the language barrier; and the last reason is the difficulty of adopting to a new culture.

One major barrier to living in Canada is finding an adequate job. New immigrants don’t have Canadian work experience, which is a necessity for getting a job in Canada. Therefore, most of the new professional immigrants start with general labor for survival. However, if the government gives grants to big companies to hire new immigrants, it will solve most of this problem.

Another challenge for many immigrants is learning a new language. Some of them think that their English is good enough but they would still have difficulty understanding and communicating with others. Fortunately, Canada offers lots of services where newcomers can enroll for free and learn English as much as they need.

Adopting to a new culture is another difficulty that newcomers face. Sometimes, they get shocked or confused because they see a lot of differences between their home country and Canada. Even though they miss their family and many other things, they can make some friends and be more involved in a new community to overcome this problem.

No doubt, when a country decides to bring immigrants, they have to be prepared to accommodate them. By offering services for newcomers to overcome their barriers and making sure there are different employment opportunities available, immigrants will have an easier time settling to the new country and be encouraged not to return to their home country. Indeed, Canada offers many services to help newcomers settle, but they can put more efforts in facilitating employment opportunities for the professional immigrants who have left everything in their homeland in order to have a better life in Canada.
Skills
Getting a Job in a New Country

Maryam E. | Level 4 | Jacqueline’s Student

When a person immigrates to a new country, the first and most important issue is how to get a job. As a newcomer, I found it really hard. Most of us had a dream of Canada, so we prepared ourselves, studied and got experience. In contrast to what we thought, getting a job is not that easy.

After a while, we will realize it does not matter what position we can get. We just should start from somewhere. For instance, in my case I dreamed about having a computer job because I had passed courses in computer and I know how to work with many types of software, but now I work as a sales person. I realized I should improve my English and earn money at the same time. Working with people as a sales person helps me accomplish both.

We need to learn how to apply for a job and how to follow up our application. First, to apply for a job, we need to prepare a resume and cover letter. We can drop off the resume in person at a local business, or apply online on a website such as www.indeed.ca. If we have a chance to be selected, we should get ready for an interview. It is highly recommended to search the Internet and get information about the job that we have applied before meeting with the interviewer. Depending on the job which we have applied, we might need to dress up for the interview, so preparing appropriate clothing is important.

After passing an interview we may think we are all set as a Canadian resident but it is a good idea to find out about our rights. Sometimes we need to face people who do not like immigrants. As human beings, we all have the right to choose a place where we like to live. Also, we have the right to be respected as long as we have not done harm to anyone. In this way, no one can abuse or take advantage of us in the workplace.

I hope everybody can find their dream job in Canada, but we all need to be patient and strong enough to reach the goals which we had dreamed about. I know it is too hard but we cannot get valuable things easily. Our decision was a big decision; we left our family, our home and everything that we had so it is worth it to keep focused on our goals and not give up.
How to be a Good Parent if you are a Student

Khrystyna K. | Level 5 | Jacqueline A’s Student

In this fast paced world, time alone with our children at home is limited and before you know it the day arrives for them to move out of the house. Our kids are the most important thing in our life. You will never have this day again with your children because tomorrow they will be older. The days you have with your children are a gift. We have to prepare our children for a great future, by giving them good education and teaching them to enjoy life. But how we can do this if we don’t have a good education and a good job, if we have to start again – start a new life in a new country?

Sometimes, being a mother is very hard time in our life. The most they care about their family. Mothers not always are having a time for their own dreams. To go to university is very big decision in our life, especially when we started new life in the new country again. It is not that easy to do this when we have kids, because they know that we always are giving them attention. We have to sacrifice something to have a better life and better opportunity in the future. We have to know what we like to do and where we can open ourselves. Sure, it would have been easier if you had gotten your degree years ago, before your child entered the world and made your life more complicated and wonderful*. Of course going to university it means not having fun with your friends, we have to study till midnight, we have to take care of our children, we have to do everything that we use to do before and etc. So this way we want to make sure that we have a plan so it will worth our effort.

Every day when we are doing something, we are setting an example for our children. They are easily influenced and very receptive. Our children understand how hard we are working to make a better life for our family. I think it’s a great idea to continue with your education. Now we are living in Canada, where are high standard of living and strong economy. I think we have to try to be educated again in this beautiful country. Your and your family future in your hands!!!

*Source:
http://blog.frontrange.edu/2012/01/30/mom-or-dad-as-college-student-why-youre-a-great-example-for-your-kids/
Trips
Since I watched the movie Titanic over 10 years ago, I had a dream: Will I ever board a cruise in my lifetime? Actually it was just a daydream when I was still in China. However, when my family immigrated to Canada, the dream indeed became possible and it was approaching my family day by day.

Last year my parents came to visit us. It was a good chance to realize my dream and show them I care. I was going to ride the cruise ship called Oasis of The Seas, the biggest of all cruise ships in the world. It is super luxurious and three times as big as Titanic. When I told my parents the good news, they were so surprised and they also treated it like a dream.

Everything is ready, let’s go. First, we took a flight to Miami then took a bus to the port. When we got on the cruise ship, it was so amazing that you couldn’t imagine. The cruise ship is 360 meters long, 65 meters wide and 18 decks high. There are several sections on the cruise ship: central park, royal promenade, entertainment place, swimming pool, sport zone, spa, fitness center, and youth zone and so on. You can rest anywhere if you feel tired; you can eat and drink anything for free as long as they have it; you can join any activity as you like. Also I’d like to mention my room attendant; he is a very friendly Jamaican guy who folds towels into different animal shapes every day. We tipped him extra.

We enjoyed the cruise for 7 nights and 8 days. It was truly unforgettable, and we took several hundred pictures. Here in Canada, my dream finally came true.
My Memories of London, U.K.

Hana G. | Level 6 | Rima B W’s Student

Many years ago, I visited London, England. I was very excited and happy to see London for the first time in my life. Before the plane landed on the airport runway, I saw London’s busy streets underneath. It was summer time; very amazing, beautiful views with all types of colorful flowers, especially tulips were shaping incredible images. The highways, spaghetti junctions, modern skyscrapers and the Thames River were all very beautiful.

I loved all what I saw. I liked the freedom which I missed back home, especially for women. I was eager and enthusiastic to see all the amazing sightseeing attractions around London city. For this reason I could not even rest after 5 hours of flying, so I put my suitcase in my residential place and went down to discover that new world and enjoy my time. I started to look in the tourism maps to find my way to Oxford Street. It took me 25 minutes walking to that very famous street.

It was the most important trip in my life in those years. I was engaged to my husband at that time. Everything was new to know and to deal with. The communication was not like today, they were limited and slow. Still, I enjoyed all the letters which my husband sent me. I send him back letters describing to him all about my days and nights there.

When I remember those days, I feel like I am in very nice and beautiful dream. Even my husband keeps talking about that romantic time which we had and loved very much. My children always ask me questions about that journey and how my parents allowed me to travel out of my country alone. That decision was taken by my father who was proud of me because I was going to get a degree. I miss him a lot; he was a well educated person. I think I need to write more about all the details I did not put down in this assignment. May be sometime in the future when I improve my writing, I’ll do that.
Here is some vocabulary from this month’s newsletter. Do you know what the words mean?

**Veteran (pg.7)**
someone who has had a lot of experience of a particular activity

**Momentous (pg.7)**
an event, change, or decision is very important because it will have a great influence on the future

**Tease (pg.8)**
to laugh at someone and make jokes in order to have fun by embarrassing them, either in a friendly way or in an unkind way

**Funk (pg.11)**
a style of music with a strong rhythm that is based on jazz and African music

**Repatriate (pg.16)**
to go back to one’s own country

**Glacier (pg.19)**
a large mass of ice which moves slowly down a mountain valley

**Longhouse (pg.21)**
type of long, narrow, single-room building built by some Aboriginal peoples in North America

**Ecosystem (pg.22)**
all the animals and plants in a particular area, and the way in which they are related to each other and to their environment

**Scarce (pg.23)**
when something is not widely available

**Crag (pg.23)**
a high and very steep rough rock or mass of rocks

**Frame (pg.28)**
to deliberately make someone seem guilty of a crime when they are not guilty, by lying to the police or in a court of law

**Gurney (pg.34)**
a long narrow table with wheels used for moving sick people in a hospital

**Delicacy (pg.37)**
something good to eat that is expensive or rare

**Prestigious (pg.44)**
admired as one of the best and most important

**Tick (pg.53)**
a very small animal like an insect that lives under the skin of other animals and sucks their blood

**Prudent (pg.53)**
sensible and careful, especially by trying to avoid unnecessary risks

**Quad (pg.57)**
a small vehicle, similar to a motorcycle but with four wide wheels, usually ridden on rough paths or fields

**Aspiration (pg.60)**
a strong desire to have or achieve something

**Strive (pg.60)**
to make a great effort to achieve something

**Cohesion (pg.64)**
all the parts or members are connected or related in a way to form a whole

**Propensity (pg.64)**
a natural tendency to behave in a particular way

**Grant (pg.66)**
an amount of money given to someone, especially by the government, for a particular purpose

**Port (pg.71)**
a place where ships can be loaded and unloaded
Glossary Crossword

Complete the crossword below

1 2 3

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Created on TheTeachersCorner.net Crossword Maker
Across
2. something good to eat that is expensive or rare
4. all the parts or members are connected or related in a way to form a whole
5. a style of music with a strong rhythm that is based on jazz and African music
6. all the animals and plants in a particular area, and the way in which they are related to each other and to their environment
9. a natural tendency to behave in a particular way
10. a strong desire to have or achieve something
12. when something is not widely available
13. to make a great effort to achieve something
16. to go back to one’s own country
17. to laugh at someone and make jokes in order to have fun by embarrassing them, either in a friendly way or in an unkind way
18. an event, change, or decision is very important because it will have a great influence on the future
19. a long narrow table with wheels used for moving sick people in a hospital
20. a high and very steep rough rock or mass of rocks

Down
1. a very small animal like an insect that lives under the skin of other animals and sucks their blood
3. type of long, narrow, single-room building built by some Aboriginal peoples in North America
5. to deliberately make someone seem guilty of a crime when they are not guilty, by lying to the police or in a court of law
7. admired as one of the best and most important
8. a large mass of ice which moves slowly down a mountain valley
11. a place where ships can be loaded and unloaded
14. someone who has had a lot of experience of a particular activity
15. a small vehicle, similar to a motorcycle but with four wide wheels, usually ridden on rough paths or fields
19. an amount of money given to someone, especially by the government, for a particular purpose
Comments

We’d like to hear from you. Send us your feedback, thoughts, comments and suggestions.

E-mail: help@linchomestudy.ca

LINC Home Study Forum

You can find more student writing on the LINC Home Study Forum.

Website: http://www.linchomestudy.ca/online/forum/

Submissions

The deadline for the Winter 2014 issue is December 12th.

Note:

- Writing should not exceed 500 words.
- If submitting your biography, do not include information about your birthday or age.
- To avoid copyright infringement, only personal photographs will be considered for publication.

A special thank you to all the students who have contributed to this publication and the forum.