

Language
Education
at a Distance

NEWSLINC

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF LINC HOME STUDY | SPRING 2015



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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

My First Time Fishing

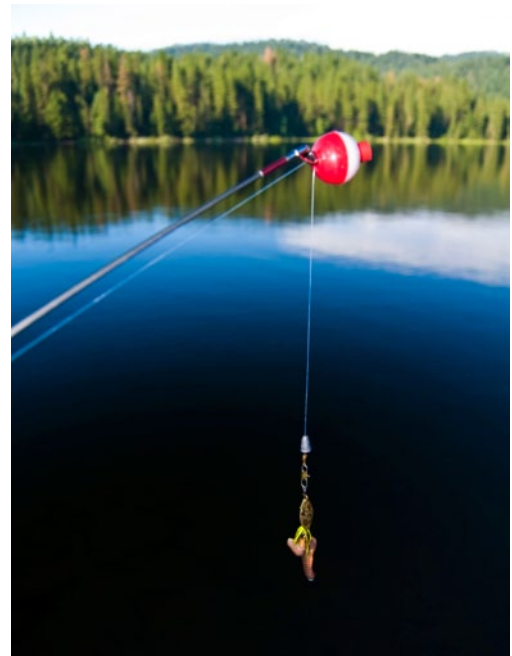
Yao L. | Level 4 | Christine L.'s Student

When I first came to North Bay, my boss and I went to the waterfront. I saw a lot of people fishing. Then my boss asked me, "Would you like to try?" "Of course!" I said. I said yes, because I had never tried it. Interesting for me is you must get a fishing licence, first. This was new for me.

After, my boss and I went to Walmart, where you can get everything you want for fishing, including a licence and worms for bait. After only half an hour we finished our shopping.

After that, we went back to the waterfront to go fishing. I discovered my boss was very professional. He told me how to use worms for bait, and some fishing rules. Then I put my bait in the water, and in just 30 seconds I saw my buoy move. I talked to my boss. He said I got a fish, which was exciting for me. I easily got the fish out of the water. When I looked at it, it was a colourful, small fish. My boss said it was a sunfish. We couldn't keep it because it was too small. If you want to get a big fish, you must keep your bait in longer than before. After that, he taught me how to put the bait on to stay longer. It is not easy to learn. "Just for a few minutes," my boss said, "Look at me get a fish." I said, "Wow, it is a big fish!" He said it was a pickerel, a very good fish.

We kept fishing. In ten minutes I got a big pull on my fishing line. I pulled in a big fish. It was a bass that weighed about $\frac{1}{2}$ pound. I caught five more fish that day! I brought them home and cleaned them. Then, I cooked them. I steamed them with some soy sauce and onion. They tasted delicious. Now I go fishing every week in the summer.



Hockey Night

Lea S. | Level 6 | Jonathan B.'s Student



For the last week the most important subject of everyday conversation (even with strangers) wasn't the weather at all. It was all about the junior hockey cup. Everybody tried to guess. Would Canada's team get to the finals or not? Who were they going to face? We put a lot of social pressure on top of those young boys' shoulders, representing Canada.

January the 5th, 2015 6 p.m.: many private businesses were closing earlier. At 7:30 p.m. I noticed a lot of pizza had been delivered to my street. People were rushing to get home.

7:45 p.m. - not too many cars on the roads and no people on the street. The whole country gathered in front of TV screens at homes or at sports clubs to watch the most important games of the year. It was Canada versus Russia in the finals. Who will win the gold medal?

For the last 5 years the Canadian team didn't have a chance to win and bring the gold home. That's why the victory was so important and those young talented boys had to make it happen. Whole Canada was watching and cheering.

The media had full coverage for the game. It was a very emotional and electrified game. Our boys did it! Canada's junior team beat Russia by one goal. As Sager said: a win is a win! It was a very exciting game.

I have two young boys and they stayed up till the game was over. They were so cheerful and nervous when the Canadian's took penalties or the puck was in our zone. My boys know hockey and they play their favorite game. Early practices and games, few times a week, driving in any weather condition, no more sleep for the parents, that what it takes to be dedicated and love what you do. My boys have a dream that one day they will play for team Canada. Who knows; maybe one day they will. Watching those boys playing made us so proud and happy. Maybe one day, my boys also will be representing their country; the country that gives so many opportunities for everyone.

Go Canada!

Running the Marathon

Sergei G. | Level 7 | Morley M.'s Student

When I was seven years old, my mom and I lived with my grandparents. My grandpa used to jog every morning. Occasionally, he took me with him and I had to work very hard to keep up with him. He's been a jogger for thirty years and even nowadays he has a daily walking routine. Since childhood, I've admired his determination to stay in shape all his life. Following his example, throughout my life I've done many sport activities including: swimming, tennis, boxing, shooting, spinning and mountain biking. Recently I've found my real passion in marathon running, just like my grandpa. I talked to some friends who run



half marathons (21.1 km) and they told me that it is easier than it looks. They told me to train, I should start from longest distance I can run and then keep increasing my distance by ten percent every week. I started training at 7 km and after less than twenty training sessions, I am now running 17.2 km. I plan to add the remaining four kilometers within the next 2 weeks. After the accomplishing the distance, my next phase will be dedicated to time improvement, I have more than enough time to improve my speed before the next half marathon in May. Marathons have become very popular last years. More than 2000 runners attended the Toronto Marathon last summer. I'm looking forward to running and performing my best in the Toronto Marathon next spring. My wife, kids and of course my grandpa will be proud of me. My hope now is for my kids to follow my example the same way I did with my grandpa.

My First Time Skiing

Ling W. | Level 5 | Mark N.'s Student



If you have never skied, you will fail to experience a Canadian winter. A few years ago, during the snow season, my friends invited me to go to skiing. At first, I didn't want to go with them because I had never tried skiing and I was not interested in it. They asked if I didn't try, how would I know? Finally I agreed. I prepared the clothes, gloves, glasses; everything was done.

We drove over 2 hours and arrived at Blue Mountain skiing site. The landscape is extremely attractive, like spectacular mountain views. We went inside the

building; there are several areas for service, food court, and shopping center etc. We quickly finished the paperwork and rented a pair of skis and a pair of poles.

For new skiers there was an instructor training them. When I wore the skis, they were very heavy, so I almost couldn't walk. I carefully learned from the instructor how to balance my body and how to control my speed. Slowly I was able to walk, after a half an hour and I could ski on the ground. I was continuing to practice for a while. I wanted to get up the hill to experience the real skiing.

There are the chairs called ski lifts which are a cable transport device that carries the skier up to the top of the hill, and then the skier skis down to the ground. I waited in line to get on the chair, and I was very nervous. When the chair arrived to the top of the hill, it didn't stop and the skier had to get ready to jump to the ground. Unfortunately, I fell to the ground, but it didn't matter. I took a rest to calm myself, and then successfully I skied down to the bottom of the mountain. It was a very exciting feeling. I did this many times because I knew how to control my speed. When my speed was too fast, I could part my feet, and let my heels both go outside to decrease the speed. At the end I enjoyed the experience, so I am happy I tried it. Skiing was the most memorable thing I have done since I came to Canada.

Stopping Fights in Hockey Games

Wei W. | Level 6 | Fernand V.'s Student

An increasing number of concussions are reported ice hockey. As a result, many medical experts have devoted their energy and time to ban fighting in the risky sport of hockey. Opponents believe that fighting is part of professional hockey. Although there is not a good solution for this issue, I believe some factors such as professional skills, attitudes of the fans and media awareness may have a chance to restrict fighting in hockey games.

First of all, according some of the reports, hockey fighters (“enforcers”) lack other skills that will offer a better job for them. Providing some real hockey skills to those “enforcers” could be a start... Those fighters sometimes pretend to get aggressive during ice hockey games because they want to keep their spot on the team. Equipped with some better skills, they could avoid fighting and have a chance to get another job. As a result, hockey players will be eager to improve their abilities if they only care about how to build their professional skills.



Second, fans play an important role in hockey games. We read in the newspapers that when fighting starts, fans rise to their feet and begin cheering wildly. They hope to see fighters knock each other out. Naturally if fans show interest in fighting that behavior will continue. But if fans were to refuse to watch fights or even leave their seats when fighting breaks out, that would have the hockey club owners worry about their investments. Better still, if fans were to go home the moment fighting starts, owners may change their minds about senseless violence.

Finally, the media should make people more aware of the result of all that fighting. Television should show us the bad outcomes of concussions more often, tell us how accidents have increased and that some players have even died from their injuries. The media could show us some visually disturbing images of hockey violence on the street, bus, tram or subway and in shopping malls. Once people notice the brutality, they may not want to go and watch hockey.

To summarize, although stopping fights in hockey games is going to very difficult, we could consider the approaches outlined above. It IS possible to see an end to fighting in ice hockey.



Arts

Titanic

Pushpa G. | Level 4 | Nahed S.'s Student

My favourite film is "Titanic". Why is "Titanic" my favourite film? There are three reasons.

First, I like this film because it is based on a true history. Second, the actresses acting were very real and amazing. Third, the music and sound were really good.

The Titanic is a romantic disaster film, directed, written, produce, and edit by James Cameron. It was released on December 19, 1997. The film won lots of awards for best pictures and best director. Cameron wanted to convey the emotional message of the tragedy, and felt a love story interspersed with the human loss.



The film is based on the sinking ship "Titanic". Main actors are Jack and Rose. Their acting is great and emotional. Leonardo DiCaprio as Jack Dawson. Jack 20-years-old homeless, poor man. Kate Winslet as Rose DeWitt Bukater. Rose 16- years- old girl as member of different social classes who falls in love aboard the ship during that time. Billy Zane as Cal Hockley is Rose's 30- years-old fiancé. He is arrogant and snobbish. He becomes jealous and cruel about Rose's relationship with Jack. Frances Fisher as Ruth DeWitt Bukater is Rose's mother, who arranges her daughter's engagement to Cal, to maintain her family's high society status. She loves her daughter and believes that social position is more important than having a loving marriage.

The actors did their characters very well. Music and sound are great. Music by James Horner. "My Heart Will Go On" is a wonderful song performed by Celine Dion.

"Titanic" had everything. It is romantic, dramatic, and has great actors. Rose is gorgeous, no doubt about it. Music and sound are best. The story seems very emotional and heart wrenching.



Bios

My Autobiography

Adora A. | Level 5 | Inara M.'s Student

I am Adora A., a Filipino citizen, I landed here in Canada as a permanent resident. I am happily married with two kids, a girl and a boy. My eldest is a girl named Sophia, and my youngest is a boy named Stephen. My husband's name is Harris. I am a working mom, and I work at Prairie North Health Region as a Continuing Care Assistant. I love taking care of those old people, because as I do my job, in the end of the day, I have the feeling of fulfillment in my heart.

It is not easy to be a full time worker and a mom at the same time. It is tough, but I just try my best. My everyday walk of life is really busy. I spend my time at home doing household chores and taking care of the kids. I don't have boring moments, my time is precious. My and I husband are both working, that's how busy we are. When we are both working at the same time, we send the kids to a babysitter. We only have our bonding time during our days off.

I am a kind person but quite sensitive. I easily get hurt when someone is not nice to me. I am also easy to get along with, because I am simple and down to earth. I'll be happy, if I can help someone who's in need.

My hobbies are singing and dancing. We usually sing with my daughter and my husband and that's our bonding time. We don't have a pet because my husband is allergic to them, he has sinusitis. My interest in life for now is to finish my CCA course and have a certificate, so that I can have a permanent full time job as a caretaker. As for now, I just work casually.

My goal is to have a better and fulfilling job, in order to give a good future to my kids. I would love to see them being successful in the near future. Being a woman, daughter to my mom, a wife and a mother is a big challenge for me. My vision and mission in life is to be a better person.



Anatoli's Biography

Anatoli R. | Level 4 | Christine L.'s Student



I am going to write about me, my family and my life. My name is Anatoli R. I'm married. My wife's name is Liudmila. We got married before we came to Canada. I have two sons. Now my wife and youngest son and I live in Sudbury, the eldest son in Edmonton. In Belarus, I have left my mother, three brothers and a sister.

I was born in a small village called Little Lyudvinovka. When I was seven years old I went to elementary school. My favorite subjects were physics, mathematics, chemistry, biology and history. After high school with good grades I applied to one of the oldest universities in Belarus. On September 1, 1985, I enrolled as a first-year student in the Agriculture Academy of Belarus. After studying for only two months, I was drafted into the armed forces of Belarus. It is the law that every man in Belarus when they reach eighteen years of age must undergo two years of military preparation. After serving in the army, I went back to school. While in university, time passed quickly. After graduating from university I began working as a manager of greenhouses.

Even though I had a good job, I was not getting paid very much, like many people in Belarus. I thought I could have a better life somewhere else. I decided to come to Canada to have an adventure. My wife had a brother here, so it seemed like a good idea to come to Canada. In 1999, I applied for a Canadian visa. I finally got permission for entry to Canada in 2007, and on the fourteenth of June I set foot in Canada. Soon my wife and children moved to Canada, too.

Canada is a beautiful country, with many opportunities, and possibilities to grow as an individual. Canada is a very diverse country, and anyone can find his/her place in it. I really enjoy this place, and I am happy that I moved to this country.

I have had several jobs working on farms, driving trucks, and working in construction. I am taking English classes now, so I can improve my English and work in agriculture in the future. Now, we are planning in the near future to apply for Canadian citizenship.

From Algeria to Canada

Nadia A. | Level 5 | Christine L.'s Student

My name is Nadia and I come from Algeria in the north of Africa between Morocco and Tunisia. I have been in Canada for three years. I got married in 1990 and I have four children, three girls and one boy.

I was a pharmacist in my home country, but unfortunately here in Canada they didn't recognize my degree. Then, I decided to become a French teacher, so I attended the University of Ottawa in 2012. Now I am to go to graduate soon, in April. I don't want to stop at this level, so I am thinking of getting my Master's degree in medical sociology. It's close to the subject of my first degree. Maybe the Ph D will be the next goal, why not?! Otherwise, I might open my own business in the same field, like a pharmacy. However, the only things I would sell are medical plants, vitamins, dietary supplements and special foods for allergic people.



I know it is hard for me to find a place among Canadian people because I have so much to learn about their habits and their customs. I know it takes time. Canadian people are hard to get to know. This is different from living in my country. There you get to know people very easily and we are not egocentric. We live together. When you meet your neighbor in another city, you help him without him asking you. You act spontaneously. People in Canada are more cautious and people keep to themselves more. I have learned that if I use small talk, I can get to know another person. This is important for me because I like to have people around me. I am now learning how to make friends in Canada.

I have to be patient and brave to begin again my life from scratch at 50 years old. It is my choice and responsibility. I am an optimist and there is a very important thing that makes me hang on. It is when I see my kids happy here in Canada.

My Biography

Mutiasari M. | Level 6 | Christine L.'s Student

I was born in a small city in Indonesia, during a very hot summer. Unfortunately, when I turned two years old my parents got separated. I have one sister and one brother. My aunt helped to raise me and brought me to a big city far away from my parents. The reason was she didn't want somebody bothering me until I finished my school. I could still remember my father's face exactly, but my mother, until I turned 16 years old, I had never met, so by that time I was wondering what she looked like. Eventually, I met my mother and I couldn't believe that I had such a beautiful mother. Even though she didn't raise me, I never hated her.



I graduated from university in 2007. I felt I was just starting my life now, looking for a job and struggling with all my problems since I was a kid, so I thought I deserved something better. I decided to move out from my aunt's house. Eventually, I got my first job in banking and I felt so happy because this was something that I had dreamed of. I had my first job in over three years in customer service and I felt so proud because I could stand on my own two feet now.

In July 2011 I got married. I had had a long distance relationship before with my boyfriend because he was in Spain. After he came back to Indonesia and we decided to get married, three months later I was pregnant. My husband got offered a job in Canada as a coach. In 2012 eventually, I got my visa and came to Canada. Time goes so fast. My daughter has now turned two and a half years, and recently I have been working at Tim Hortons.

Canada is, for me, a very developed country and people have more independence than in Indonesia. I like the weather, even the long winters. I think Canada has a good education system too.

In Indonesia we have to retire by 50 or 55. In Canada we can work longer, but it is not always easy to get a job. My goal is that within five years I would like an office job and buy a house. I have been interviewing for customer service jobs recently and I'm hoping to be successful.

My Story

Samira B. | Level 4 | Deborah K.'s Student

My name is Samira. I was born in Iran. I have one brother and one sister. My brother is younger than me. He is very sociable and cheerful. He is married and he has a daughter.

My sister is younger than me too. She is very kind and emotional. She is married but she doesn't have a baby.

When I was child I had a very good time with my family.

I completed primary school and continued my schooling all the way to university. In university I had many friends, but I had one close friend. Her name was Azadeh. I really liked her. She was full of energy and always happy.

I studied a total of 16 years. I studied computer software in university. I like computer software because I love technology. I worked as a web designer for 5 years, in my teacher's company.

After university I met my husband at a party. He was very good looking and handsome. He is very kind and has a good sense of humor. We have a very good time together.

After one year we got married. We had a big wedding with my family, friends and in-laws. On our wedding day my husband and I were a little bit nervous and excited. We had a lot of fun and a good time. We danced very much and we were very happy.

After 7 years I had my first child. When I saw my baby for the first time, I can't find the words to say how I felt. It was like a very beautiful daydream. I think motherhood is a very important job in the world.

He is full of energy but also he is very polite. He likes to play with toys and watch cartoons. Everyday we play music and dance.



My Life

YiFeng Y. | Level 7 | Inara M.'s Student

My name is Yifeng. I was at a small city called Jingdezhen in China. I am the second child of my parents. I grew up with my brother in the residential area of the factory where my parents worked at. That is a relatively closed area compared to the actual city area. It was like a small town with only one store. By living in such kind of environment, it made me dream of living outside of the closure and experiencing a different life. It became one of the reasons why I am living in Canada now, which also formed me a traditional person.



Part of my memory of my home place is constant fighting with my brother, but it is a warm feeling still. After I graduated from my high school, which is part of the big factory where my parents worked at, I went to a different province for my university as I wished. It took me four years to finish my undergraduate study of Mechanical Engineering in 2003, and I gained my bachelor's degree as well.

After I graduated, I went to Shenzhen to look for a job. Shenzhen is a big city in the south part of China, and that is where my brother had already settled and my parents went to live with him. With the convenience they offered me, I found a job without having to struggle so much. After I worked for a few years as an engineer in a busy city life, I felt that I wanted to change. Finally, I decided to immigrate to Canada to experience a different life.

The beginning of life in Canada was not easy. First of all, I needed to find a way to live on. Which means that I have to find a job to support my life. It was not easy, may be due to the nonrecognition of the foreign credential or because of the recession. With the passion of living in a new place, I struggled to work in many different places as a general laborer. Anyhow, I survived here. After surviving the first struggle, I needed to live a life here. By luck, and essentially with a friend's help, I got my first professional job related to my field in a consulting engineering company. That was a good enough job for me. It gave me a different view of life. I started to feel that I am living my life by then. But I got laid off due to the bad economy not quite long after. What an unstable life. I started to search for a job again. After about a year trying, I thought I may need to change places to try something else. Heading west, I went to Calgary, hoping to find a job that I can make a good salary as what I had been told by many different friends. Without luck, I couldn't find any professional jobs there, instead I went to work in a restaurant once again. Dramatically, a work offer brought me to a place that I hadn't even heard before, Prince George. It is an industrial city located in the northern part of BC. Now I am doing my job here, and hopefully I will live here eventually. But who knows, life is full of incidents and surprises.

Perla's Biography

Perla R. | Level 7 | Inara M.'s Student

Born to spouses Pedro and Jasmin is a lovely baby girl whom they named Perla. She was born on the 10th of November in San Pablo City, Philippines – the place known as the City of Seven Lakes. She has five siblings and they grew up to be enjoying many wonderful sports – like Patintero, Hide & Seek, and many more which the kids during this time was missing.

She attended her elementary school just about one block away from her house. During her fifth grade she discovered her love for numbers and started to enjoy Mathematics. She had a wonderful Math teacher named Mrs. Rosita Lasco. Her love for numbers and also her father's influence as an accountant led her to choose a Business Course with Accounting major.



She enjoyed joining the church choir and participating in Cantata during her high school and college life. She joined activities like teaching the children about the Bible. During her leisure time, she will be seen holding a book or any reading material that may interest her. The sceneries will catch her eyes while riding the bus going to nice provinces.

On the 19th of December 1998, she got married to the man of her dreams, Joselito. They were blessed with two wonderful sons: the older is named Matthew and the younger is named Gabriel. On July of 2013, the whole family moved to the province of Saskatchewan in Canada to settle.

My Life

Svitlana M. | Level 5 | Inara M.'s Student

Hi, my name's Svitlana. I was born in a small village in the Ukraine called Vonihove. Now I live in a small village called Kisbey in Canada. My birthday is on December 14. I'm married. My husband is a truck driver. I have three children. I used to work in a small cafe. I am a housewife now.

My life before I came to Canada was normal. I went to school for 12 years, then I went to Law school where I studied for 6 years. I got married in 2006, and in the following year I had daughter. In 2008 we came to Canada and we live here now.





Canada

The 401

Hao Y. | Level 7 | Emily S.'s Student

Me: I got a job interview! This event planning company is bringing me in for an interview!!!

Him: That's great! Where is it?

Me: Er.....some place called Mi...missi...ssauga...

Him: Where is this place?

Me: ...I don't know.

This was my first job interview, three months after I had landed here as a new immigrant. I had heard more than enough stories about newcomers with Master's degrees or Ph.Ds who couldn't find a job for years and ended up laboring in some Chinese restaurant or had to return to China.



For the people who are already established, or who are financially stable, it is good to enjoy the “simple life” here. Unfortunately, that was not the case for either of us. We came to Canada with a very limited sum of money, and an eight-month-old baby.

Just like anyone else, I started to look for jobs right after we settled here. With dozens of résumés sent out, I got zero response. Canadian experience is always the first thing employers look for. Again, not the case for me.

That's why, when I got my first response from this company, I was so excited that I didn't even hear clearly where they said the interview would be. And when I got a confirmation email from the recruiter, and looked up the address where I was going, I didn't even know the right pronunciation of the city, nor how to get there.

Google Maps told me to reach the destination by taking the highway called: “The 401.” That was the first time I had ever heard of the name of the highway, and it was so unfamiliar, even the name. In China we name highways with actual names; for example, if a highway connects cities, it will be called: A (city name) B (other city name) Highway; or if the highway circles the city, it is called “The City Circle Highway”—but here, it's only a number? And I needed to take another weirdly-named highway called 404; where was that?

Anyway. With the 3G map, a suit for the interview, and the baby in the back of the car, we started the engine. Even after four hundred days, I can still remember the very first time we traveled on that highway. Without even a single feeling for where we were going, and absolutely no idea of what exit we were supposed to take, we just hopped on it.

One thing I still am not used to is that, unlike in China, the traffic here on the highway is so heavy that we were scared to death when we were traveling on it the first time. It was my husband who was driving, but I was as nervous as he was.

There is something uniquely annoying about the 401: it runs with both “collector lanes” and “express lanes.” People like me who are not familiar with the road system could easily exit unintentionally without even noticing until it’s too late. And that was exactly what happened to us that day. We kept exiting when we didn’t mean to, or we had to stay on the shoulder and keep flashing the left-turn signal in the hope that someone would slow down and let us in, so we could get back in the express lane. (It was not until couple months later that I realized that both collector lanes and expressway are the same, I just have to stay in the left lane while approaching an exit I don’t want to take.) Plus, all the signs are in both English and French, and we didn’t really recognize the English signs very well, not to mention the French. I just felt lucky that it was my husband who was driving.

Finally, when we reached the destination, both I and my husband were sweating and our faces were so pale, I almost wanted to give up.

What happened next was the good part of the story. I got the job as an Event Coordinator, because I had showed up 2 hours early, and my attitude impressed the owner who happened to be on the site on that particular day (although heaven knows we were only early because it was our first time traveling on the highway, and we were so afraid of being late).

There is a saying in China: “Things you are most afraid of will always come to you quickest.” Only when I started to work did I realize that I had found a job which required my traveling on that highway EVERY SINGLE DAY, with my event box, sample kit, posters, and easels!

On the first day of my new job, I found myself paralyzed when I faced the prospect of getting on that highway. But I didn’t want to just give it up.

“Giving up is not a part of my vocabulary!” I said to myself. And I grabbed the event stuff, threw it in the back of the car, slammed the door, and started the car, heading out on my own.

First event: Etobicoke. It took my co-worker 20 minutes to get to the event site. For me? Two hours.

I didn’t even remember how I had gotten there, I only remembered that I got honked at a couple times, took the wrong exit many times, and when I got there, I was thirsty, sweating, shaking...and the event was about to end.

These days, when I’m on the road while I am drinking water, chewing gum, putting on or taking off my sunglasses, and switching my position in the car while driving on all kinds of different highways, that first trip on the 401 will flash back into my mind from time to time, like an old movie.

I remember when I got on the 401 at 5 in the morning because of an early event, the sun rising behind me. I remember when I left Mississauga and headed back home, a full moon and stars looking down on me. I remember the signs for every exit from Ajax to Mississauga...

As time went by I started to learn some interesting facts:

The 401 is called “The Way of Heroes” because it is the road used to transport soldiers who have been fighting overseas and have sacrificed their lives for the country. When the government collects their bodies and ships them back from the airport, the 401 is the highway they use. Local people here will just call it “four-oh-one,” because they are so used to it. They have probably been traveling on it ever since they were born.

At its widest area, there are twelve lanes, includes collector lanes and express lanes. The highway connects the east and the west of Ontario, and it connects mid-Canada and the U.S as well.

Mississauga, the city I couldn’t pronounce the first time I heard it, is the interconnecting city for drivers who travel from the U.S to central Canada: they un-load, they load, they switch shifts, they eat, they rest, and they continue driving towards their destinations on the 401 again. That’s why it is always so busy; in fact, it’s the busiest highway in the world.

On the 401, we have gone down to see Niagara Falls in summer; St. Jacobs, a small old-fashioned Mennonite market town; and Port Hope, where the salmon come through on their way back from the Atlantic Ocean... not to mention my daily commute.

I now travel on the 401 every day, and I complain like local people: “Oh...the traffic on the 401 is brutal...” But there is also an attachment to it deep in my heart. It is a highway, but it is not only a highway.

This road has become a ribbon connecting my present and my past, ever since I landed. I have no doubt it will connect them to my future as well.

The Beauty of Gros Morne

Dolly D. | Level 7 | Lily B.'s Student



Two things catch my attention about Gros Morne National Park. The first one is that it was designated by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site in 1987. Why would UNESCO declare it as such if Gros Morne were not both a national and international treasure as well as a place of immense natural beauty and rich cultural heritage? It has a rich variety of scenery, wildlife, beaches, and the like. The whole place is just simply amazing. As awesome as it is, however, Gros Morne is also people friendly. People can go there and camp. They can also do biking, hiking, boating and other

recreational activities. Tourists who get a chance to boat under towering cliffs, will definitely be enthralled by the freshwater fjords carved by glaciers. The other thing that catches my attention about Gros Morne is existence of fresh water fjords. As a matter of great interest, Gros Morne has this very impressive fjord, which is a long, narrow inlet with steep cliffs on the sides that have been created by glacial erosion. It reminds me of the movie, Lord of the Rings. I can imagine how people who cruise on such fjords feel. They most likely feel like they are treading on to a mysterious site seasoned by nature and enlivened by the spirits of creatures who have inhabited it for millions of years. No wonder Gros Morne is one of the amazing tourist spots everyone ever wants to visit.

My Dream Park

Yankun R. | Level 7 | Lesley H.'s Student



East Don River Park is an all nature park. This is a big park located north from Steeles Avenue east to Sheppard Avenue, west from Bayview Avenue to Leslie Street. There is a river named East Don River so this park was named after it.

Every springtime, some geese families come here to give birth to their babies and raise them until they can fly and swim and then they will leave. This year I saw a goose couple with eight babies. This is a big family. The parents were very cautious when people were close to their babies, but unfortunately just five

of them survived. I took a lot of pictures of this family.

This park is a migration flyway for birds; for example, American Red, Blue Jay, Cardinal, Yellow Finch, and Robin. You can see them in different seasons. In summer time, the wildflowers bloom everywhere and the fragrance is so good. In fall, salmon come back every year to this river to lay eggs there. Salmon spotting is a traditional event in this park. I found two locations for spotting them: one is a bridge, above the river. People can see salmon very clearly just looking down from the bridge. Another location is on a dam. A lot of salmon jump from this dam then pass it.

In the middle of October to November, the maple leaves turn yellow and red from green so it makes the park so colourful. In winter time there is no winter maintenance in this park, and therefore, it is covered by snow. After a big snowfall I will come down to this park and lay down a while on the snow. There, I watch the blue sky and take a breath of the very sweet fresh air.

Whenever I walk in this park, I feel happiness and appreciate the creator. I get so much comfort and strength from there, so I love this park. I have lived here over five years since I immigrated to Canada. I don't think I will leave it ever until I leave this world. This is my dream place to live in Canada.

Town of Tisdale, Saskatchewan

Vadym L. | Level 7 | Milanka V.'s Student



PHOTO CREDIT: Vadym L.

Tisdale is a town located in the north east part of Saskatchewan. The weather and nature there are exactly as many foreigners imagine Canada would be. There are cold winters when temperature can drop below -40°C , and with strong wind the weather feels much colder than what the thermometer shows. Fortunately, this usually lasts a few days only. Summers are warm and pleasant, while spring and fall are very short.

Tisdale is surrounded by farmers' fields which are divided by rare bushes. The view of blooming canola fields is beautiful in summer time. There are lots of lakes and rivers around Tisdale and people like to spend weekends fishing or swimming.

I knew absolutely nothing about Tisdale just four year ago. First, my friends immigrated to Canada and settled down in Tisdale in 2010. They had sent so many pictures and enthusiastic stories about their life in Tisdale that I was happy to accept an invitation my friends had sent to me and my first visit took place in 2012. During that visit Tisdale and Canada astounded me so much that I became obsessed with the idea to live here. I was lucky to find a job while visiting and I started my immigration process immediately after arriving back to my country. My family and I arrived to Canada in January 2013 and Tisdale was an obvious choice to start our new life.

The town of Tisdale is a really small town with population of just three thousand and five hundred people. It has all the services and facilities people need for comfortable life: the line of stores and cozy cafés on the Main Street, huge and lovely Kinsmen MacKay Park where we like to take a walk in the evenings, several small parks, a golf course, a swimming pool, a recreational center, an indoor ice rink, etc. There are lots of bicycles in summer and snowmobiles in winter. In my opinion there are more bicycles than cars in Tisdale.

All people here are hardworking and very friendly. They are always ready to help you. All the time my co-workers, neighbors, friends and strangers smile and say "Hello! How are you?" when they meet you. Even if they drive I can see affable gestures and smiles.

Tisdale is considered to be the grain handling and honey bee center of the region. That is why we have the World's Largest Honey Bee statue on the Main Street. I took this picture of the statue on the last day of February to share with you. Tisdale is known as the "Land of Canola and Honey" or as the Honey Capital of Saskatchewan. In fact, 10% of the honey produced in Canada comes from Tisdale. In 2005, Tisdale celebrated 100th birthday. We are very happy and fortunate to live here and to be a part of Tisdale's community.

Canada

Jeyaruba T. | Level 5 | Fernand V.'s student



Canada is one of the best countries in the world. Canada gives many advantages to newcomers and other people.

Firstly, Canada has many social services. All people have access to housing, income, settlement and childcare services.

Secondly, all people enjoy a variety of freedoms: freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom of gathering, freedom of sexual orientation, freedom of thought and political opinion, freedom of clothing.

Thirdly, Canada is multicultural country and as such discrimination isn't allowed and people are free to practise their religions. In the GTA there are people living representing 150 countries. People from all walks of life and diverse cultures live together harmoniously.

Finally, Canada gives employment opportunities. Canada is a highly developed country. It has many industries and services and gives newcomers the chance to find work in their chosen profession.

Overall Canada is peaceful and clean country, so it is a good place to live.



Celebration

International Women's Day in Ukraine

Vlady I. | Level 5 | Joseph N.'s Student



March 8th is International Women's Day (IWD). This holiday symbolizes women's fight for their rights, democracy and full equality with men. As time passed, the holiday lost its political sense and became the day when men may express their love to the women in their lives, mothers, wives, daughters, sisters, etc.

March 8th is an official holiday in Ukraine. Usually, people celebrate this beautiful spring holiday by having supper with family or by visiting friends. Men and women give gifts, flowers and postcards to their mothers, wives, daughters, sisters, etc. Some Ukrainian men make a special gift to their wives: they do all the household duties on this holiday, such as doing dishes, cooking, cleaning and looking after kids. So women can take the day off. Too bad that we have this holiday only once a year. I wish we could have it at least every week.

Everybody, men and women, give presents to women they are close to. Usually, the gift depends on how close they are to the woman. Flowers such as roses are the most popular gift on IWD. Chocolate, perfume and cosmetic are the next popular gift choices.

Since the IWD is an official holiday in Ukraine, employees celebrate it the working day before the holiday at their offices. Women receive flowers and small gifts from their male co-workers. During the lunch break, it is common to have a small office party with cake and a glass of champagne or wine. I remember getting flowers and small gifts from my male classmates, putting up music and dance programs for female relatives and teachers during my school days.

Chinese New Year

Alfie N. | Level 6 | Jonathan B.'s Student



This year Chinese New Year celebration is on the 19th of February. Year 2015 is the year of the sheep (goat or ram) according to the Chinese zodiac. Chinese New Year celebration in Indonesia is known as “Imlek”. According to the population chart the Chinese in Indonesia is about 4% until 5% and it is rising by 1% every year. Chinese New Year became a national holiday in 2002 to the pleasure of millions of Chinese Indonesians. A lot of Indonesian Chinese hopes in 2015 will be good according to the Chinese zodiac. The sheep (goat or ram) is among the people like most. It is calm and gentle. People have learned to use its fleece to make writing brushes and skin to keep warm. As it is white, people describe it as delicate and precious white jade to be “suet jade”. It is close to the meaning of good thing.

Chinese New Year is a time to respect those people that passed away and to reunite with family. On New Year’s Eve, family members come from across the city to get together and gather usually at the home of the eldest family member. Most traditional food dishes are also served on Chinese New Year. Milkfish and the “angpou” (a red envelope with money inside) are the most famous things on this day. The angpou is for children or teenagers not for married adults. When it’s close to New Year’s Eve we can see that a lot of people sell the milkfish. Not only Chinese people enjoy this celebration, we also can buy fresh milkfish and enjoy “barongsai”. Barongsai is a large dragon like puppet measuring four to six meters that is manned by three or four dancers. It was very loud with Chinese traditional musical instruments but we really enjoyed that performance. Although I am not Chinese, in Indonesia we are used to the Chinese New Year’s Eve. I have many friends that are from China and neighbors from China and we respect each other.

Diwali

Parmjeet B. | Level 4 | Deborah K.'s Student



Diwali is the festival of lights. It is an important festival for Hindu people. The word Diwali comes from the word “deepawali” meaning row of lamps. Diwali is held between October and November. It is mainly celebrated in India by many people. For example, Sikhs, Hindus and Jains. Diwali is a national holiday in India. Diwali began when 2 Hindu people, Ram and Sita left their home and went into the jungle. They returned after 14 years. When they came back, everyone lit candles and divas at their homes. The people were full of happiness because Ram and Sita had come back after a long time. Guru Hargobind Singh Ji who

was the 6th god of Sikhs religion went to get the 52 kings from jail. The 52 kings had also returned when Ram and Sita had returned. So that’s why Sikhs also celebrate Diwali.

People light divas and candles inside and outside their homes. This brings light over darkness. Hindus pray to their goddess Lakshmi to bring them good luck in the coming year. Before Diwali, people clean, renovate and decorate their homes. On the day of Diwali people do fireworks and eat many different type of sweets. Hindus and Sikhs dress up in new clothes. Many people go shopping, share gifts and pray to god. Diwali is great and memorable festival.

Eid-ul Fitr

Imran I. | Level 2 | Jacqueline A.'s Student



Eid-ul Fitr is a Muslim holiday which comes after the holy month of Ramadan. Muslims celebrate Eid on the first day of the Islamic month Shawwal.

Muslims get ready for this day. They wear new clothes. They give Zakaat-al-Fitr, or charity, to the needy. Muslims pray in the Mosque and they listen to the Khutabah, or speech. After the prayers, all the people hug each other, start visiting to relatives and friends, donate something to the poor people and eat sweets. The people give gifts to the children and say Eid Mubarak, or Happy Eid.

The Carnivals in Peru

Francisco A. | Level 4 | Marjan B.'s student

In my country Peru, it is common to celebrate The Carnivals every year. We celebrate this in the month of February. In the West of Peru, we celebrate this by playing with water--a water fight! We use water balloons, powder, paint and pails of water! We do this every Sunday of the month of February. It's a way to enjoy time with the family every Sunday and have fun! Children and adults, everyone! In other places in Central Peru, they celebrate The Carnivals by dancing traditional dances (folklore) and wearing traditional clothes (costumes) and finish the night with fireworks. In these regions, The Carnivals is a traditional party to give thanks to the earth for the harvest they receive every year. The Carnivals is a fun time and every Peruvian enjoys this tradition every February.



My First Baby Shower in Canada

Sumaia I. | Level 3 | Vinka B.'s Student

A baby shower is a very happy time for the mother-to-be. In Canada baby shower is held before the baby is born. In my country it is usually after the baby is born. My first baby shower in Canada was in January. Many women came and we sat and talked for a few minutes. We ate special Libyan food and then we had some dessert. After that, we listened to Arabic music and danced. In Canada people usually give presents like baby clothes, toys, baby blankets or a stroller, baby food and bottles, diapers or other baby gifts. In my country, people give clothes or money. In Canada women play games, but in my country we sit, talk and listen to music. Then we go home. This was my very first baby shower in Canada and I had a lot of fun





Family

Our Lives Changed When Son Went Away to University

Dorys G. | Level 6 | Christine L.'s student

When my son finished high school, it was for him, a nice success. His dreams were starting. He decided to move to Ottawa to study there and it has brought a lot of change to our lives. One of these changes was going outside of London and leaving his life with us. In our Colombian culture, if you live in the capital it is unusual to move to another place. You study, work and after that when you decide to get married, you then leave your home.

Another change for us was as a family. We have just one child, and we believed that he would be living with us for a long time. For my husband, it was a hard decision to accept. He talked to him and explained the pros and cons of this decision, but our son told us why he was doing this. He felt that he had more job opportunities in Ottawa. My husband thought that if he gave him a car he would stay. My son loves driving, so my husband thought he might change his decision, but he didn't. My husband just accepted it and gave him advice, and told him we would help with all that he needed.



In my case it was really bad news. I have cried since he decided to live outside of London. We have a long distance relationship now. Every day we would have breakfast and lunch together and talk about many things. After my son left I have to eat by myself after my husband goes to work. Now I listen to music to not feel alone and try to stay busy to not feel his absence. We are a lovely family. We enjoy everything together, watching movies at home or in the theater, going shopping, playing cards, and much more. Now just my husband and I do these things. Fortunately, we have a nice relationship and we are like boyfriend/girlfriend again.

My son is really happy in his new life. We miss him a lot. I was trying to call him every day and he said, "No Mom, not every day because I won't have anything to tell you. Call me once a week." Now, I just send a text message and call once or twice a week. We are thinking that this change in our lives is good for everybody, for him because he is growing up and needs to explore his own capabilities, and for us it is a good time to get together as a couple again. We hope that our son gets it right.

My Hometown Journey

Yu R. | Level 7 | Lydia A.'s student

I realized my dream of going back to China during my vacation. Although it was a three-week visit, my hometown journey was warm and unforgettable. The love of my family and friends was warm to me and the development of China left me with a deep impression.

My hometown, Kunming, is in the southwest of China and is called a “Spring City”. After almost 20 hours of flying, I arrived in Kunming. The city looked green and was full of various flowers. In winter, Kunming is totally different from Toronto. The temperature is 16 Celsius and made me very comfortable.



The warmest thing was from my family. My parents prepared many of my favorite foods for me every day. We not only had meals at home, but also tasted delicious food outside. Rice noodles are a classic gourmet food for people in Kunming and are one of my favorite foods. Also, I enjoyed picking up my 7- year- old nephew after he was off school. We watched the movie “Frozen” together and enjoyed it very much. He can speak a little bit of English with me. Most of my friends invited me to go for dinner. Sometimes after dinner, we went to a tea house to chat. I cherished all the time with my family and friends.

With many years of development, Kunming has become a metropolis in China. High buildings and large mansions have modernized the city. I could not even find the way when I wanted to go somewhere. In my memory, China was the biggest country of bicycles, but now cars and electric bicycles are popular instead of regular bicycles. However, with more people come to the city from the countryside, the city was becoming more and more crowded. Lots of sidewalks are occupied by automobiles and traffic jams is routine life now. But the efficient thing in China is to shop on the Internet. Alibaba offers people a very fast, convenient and good quality shopping experience. The most interesting thing for me was that I experienced the Maglev (magnetic levitation) train in Shanghai. The maximum speed of the Maglev train reaches 430 kilometre per hour. It costs 6 minutes from the origin station to Pudong international airport rather than 1 hour on the subway. Up to now, I can still feel that speed.

Although my hometown journey was short, I have lots of good memories to review when I am alone. Now I know, no matter how far or how long away I am from my hometown, it is in my deepest heart and gives me warmth.

Missing My Parents

Shagufta S. | Level 6 | Jessica W.'s Student

Every relationship has its own importance in one's life. For me, the best relationship is the one with my parents, who have a unique place in my heart. Nobody can ever take their place.

I have been living in Canada for 3 years. I have not seen my parents in real life, face to face. Although we have the best communication systems, such as Skype and the Internet, they never work when you want to feel your mom's love, or your father kindness. I miss you mom and dad, badly!



My heart aches so much and there are days that I can't handle the feeling. I cry sometimes, and other times I hold it inside me. I call them, and talk with them on Skype, but it's not the same. I continue to feel that a huge part of me is missing. It is really hard.

I am preparing myself for my upcoming pharmacy exams. I am looking after my three darling kids. In fact, I am very busy, and I have no time for myself. Beside these all important matters, I have such feelings about my parents. I can't help but have such feelings.

I wish I could jump on the first flight and go to see my parents, but that is not possible now. I have to fulfill a lot of responsibilities before travelling to Pakistan and it's the biggest fact of my life.

I have always wondered, and now even more so, how people cope with missing their parents and their siblings. I don't think I ever will.

I love my parents so much and can't help but miss them with every passing second of every day.

My Mother and Grandmother's Visit to Canada

Bruno B. | Level 6 | Morley M.'s student



I had the most wonderful Christmas this past year. Both my mother and grandmother visited Canada and stayed for a month and a half. This was my mother's second visit to Canada. My wife and I were working during their visit but we still had time on the weekend to tour Toronto with them. My grandmother was amazed. She felt like an ant when we exited the subway downtown. She couldn't believe how tall the buildings were. We visited the CN Tower and the Aquarium. We also visited Casa Loma. In continental Europe there are no old castles like Casa Loma. My mother and grandmother really enjoyed the Distillery District and all its small shops and galleries. We went there before Christmas. There were many vendors

selling all kind of things. We bought hot chocolate, scarves and nice warm gloves for them to have as souvenirs of Canada. We ate in many restaurants. My mother and grandmother enjoyed trying new food that they would never find in Romania such as Indian, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Japanese sushi.

The most important thing for my mother and grandmother was spending Christmas with me and my wife. We made traditional Romanian cabbage rolls, cookies and all kinds of sweets. On Christmas Day, we had a true family dinner because my dad had come too. We watched movies remembering how we used to live in Romania.

My wife and I even had some time to relax. We didn't have to do all the housework for a while because our guests helped us out doing laundry, cleaning, cooking and other chores.

Even though most days our guests were home alone, they were very happy when we come from work. We talked until late in the evening every night and took lots of pictures. It was very hard, even for our cat Olivia when my mother and grandmother left after Christmas. Saying goodbye is always hard when we don't know when we'll see the person again.

A New Addition

Hashem H. | Level 6 | Supriya H.'s Student

"A baby will make love stronger, days shorter, nights longer, bankroll smaller, home happier, clothes shabbier, the past forgotten, and the future worth living for."
—Anonymous

Children are treasures for parents, but the decision to have a second child is a difficult one. In the next month, I am expecting my second child and that is causing me and my family excitement as well as stress. We all have mixed feelings about the arrival of the little one.

We are all excited to have a new member. We don't know what he looks like, so the suspense is greater. I am hopeful that he will fulfill some of my wishes like being a successful sportsman or artist. My wife is thrilled to have a son who can be a good brother for our daughter. My daughter is

also excited to have a sibling to play with and take care of.

At the same time, we are all stressed, nervous and anxious about the new bundle of joy. I am worried about how I will look after our little daughter with her demanding school work and take care of my wife singlehandedly. Furthermore I am concerned that my daughter may feel jealous of all the attention that the new one will get and she may feel ignored. Moreover, my wife is anxious about her delivery and how she will cope with her post-delivery issues without the physical and emotional support of her mother.

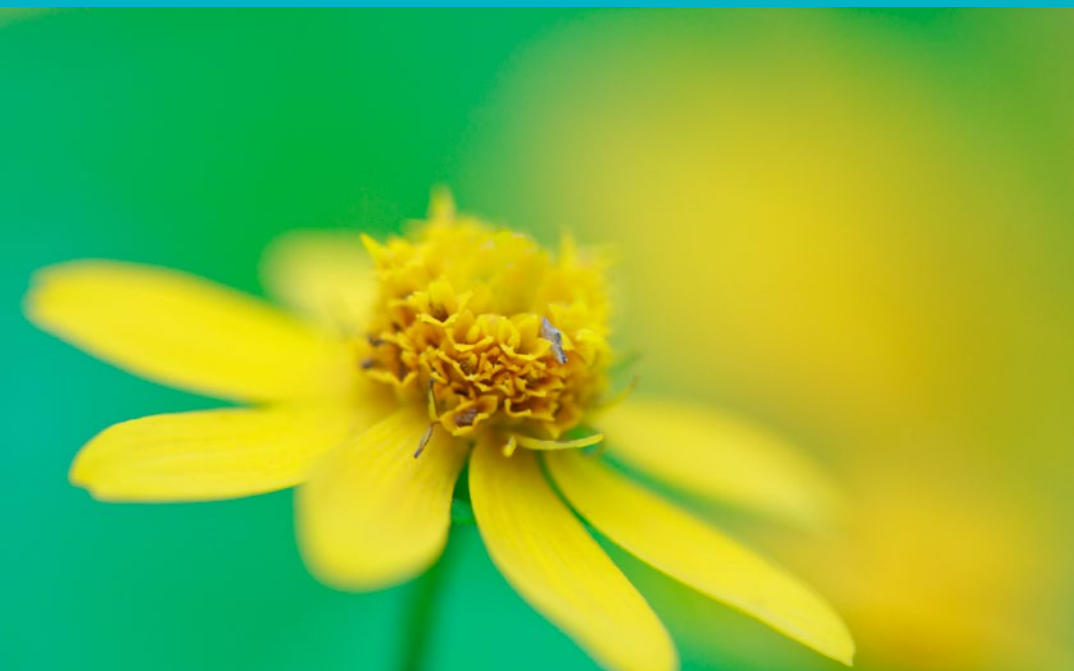
To conclude, I will say that although having a second child will have many challenges, it will bring a lot of joy as well.

My Little Story

Ayşe K. | Level 5 | Mark N's student



My grandfather was a good man. He was always shaved and well-dressed. He was so sick before he died. I didn't see him while he was ill. One day he said death would come to me, not sickness. When he coughed, he leaned forward and his two hands were always on his forehead. I grew up while I was watching him. He was always saying nice things to me and my sister and he read us poems. He always kept our photographs in his wallet. When he came home, his chickens would come and welcome him. My grandfather patted them and said nice words to them while I watched with amazement. He died many years ago, but I will not forget him. Almost every night I see him in my dreams.



General

If I could change one important thing about my hometown

Souad C. | Level 6 | Jonathan B.'s Student

Our native country is like our first mother, and everyone wishes to be proud of his native country. Even when we leave our country and go somewhere for a better life, we still wish the best for our hometown, and for our family we left there.

So, if I could change one important thing about my hometown, it will be the peoples' bad habits there. If they do their job, help and support each other, stop talking about others and about some topics they don't like, and instead wish only the goodness to others is what I like to change.



This life is so hard; we struggle to live it well. So instead of criticizing others, we should give good advice and guidance. We should create a clean atmosphere free from blaming and accusing others. If somebody makes a mistake, we should tell him that he is wrong and then we must give him another chance to fix what he broke. Like this way, we will remove the other bad side of human being and let the good side act.

Nobody is perfect, but we should at least try our best to be good and do good to others. But, first of all, I should start with myself to be the example, to take the initiative to change myself, and then pray that others do the same. This is the most important thing that I would like to change in my hometown; the attitude of people.

Comparison of Korean and Canadian Education Systems

Yojung P. | Level 6 | Erin O.'s Student



I am going to compare Korea with Canada about going to university for more education.

Most Korean students have one goal: they seem to be very eager to go to famous universities and then to get a job like a doctor and a lawyer. However, students in Canada have many different options after graduation like to go to university, to get a career or to go to a vocational school. It depends on their interests and their abilities, not just about earning money. Teachers and parents have a lot of passion for their students or their children to succeed for school in Korea. Furthermore,

Korean parents are willing to sacrifice their money and their time considerably. Additionally, Canadian parents think getting a perfect mark in school isn't the quite same as being highly successful for their children's futures. They want to back their kids up even if they have a desire to do something that is not related to schooling. Therefore, parents in Korea have a much stronger propensity to sacrifice their life than parents in Canada.

Korean high schoolers put considerably more time and effort into their studies than Canadian students. Korean students can improve intelligence and memorize any information as much as they need, but only some students barely make it to go a famous university. They don't have time to think about what they want, so even though they achieve this feat, not only do the students get lost in university life, but also their parents. Fewer high school graduates in Canada go to university than in Korea, because fewer students think they need more education after high school graduation. They naturally assume that every graduate doesn't need to go university. It may waste money and time.

I can't say what is ultimately a better choice for their future. Korean parents like me should know university is not the only measure of happiness and success in Canada.

Child-Raising Styles in Canada and India

Hetalben P. | Level 4 | Mark B.'s student

The education system in India allows kids to enter into school at an early age if their parents wish to admit them early to Junior Kindergarten, whereas in Canada there are strict guidelines for admission into school. In India, a “joint family system” is very common and hence kids are generally taken care of by one of their family members or friends while their parents are working. In Canada, daycare is a profession used to make money, whereas in India daycare is not paid for as there is a lot of generosity amongst people residing in the same housing subdivision. In India, children are allowed to stay home by themselves after age 7 whereas in Canada, children are not allowed to stay home by themselves until age 12 or 13.



In India, children are guided by parents, friends and relatives to choose their field of education while they are in Grade 12, and sometimes they are pressured by their parents to choose the best fields of study like Engineering or Medicine. On the other hand, in Canada children are guided by their parents, friends and relatives but the child is not under any pressure to choose a certain field of study.

In India children are generally guided by their grandparents, parents, friends, relatives and are limited by their social circle to ensure that the kids do the right thing. On the contrary, in Canada, children are not limited by a social circle due to privacy laws in Canada. For example, in India if a child is seen smoking then the friends and relatives report this incident to the child's parents. This is for the betterment of the child and to prevent the child from getting a bad habit.

In Canada, children are given a lot of practical approaches to studying, whereas in India, they teach a lot of theory but fewer practical skills. For example, Canadian children have very little stage fright, but there is a lot of stage fright amongst Indian kids.

Children in Canada and India have the same heart and kindness, but I do see the cultural differences that exist in how kids are raised in these two different continents.

Muhammad Ali Jinnah: Freedom Fighter

Afsheen A. | Level 4 | Jacqueline A.'s Student



Muhammad Ali Jinnah is Pakistan's national leader. I choose him as my hero because I really admire him. He is the greatest freedom fighter of the subcontinent (before the separation of India and Pakistan). He is the founder of Pakistan. He was born on December 25, 1876. Every year we celebrate this date in his honor. He was very attractive, impressive, charming, and had a disciplined personality. In fact he had a balanced personality. If somebody met him, they could not forget him easily.

Muhammad Ali Jinnah took his early education from Karachi (now the largest city of Pakistan) and then he went to England for his higher education. After having successfully finished his education, he returned to India in 1896. In those days his father Jinnah Ponja's business was not running well, so to support his family he started a new business with his father, but he was not successful. He went to Bombay, India for another work opportunity, but that was also not according to his degree, so he left that job, too. At last he started his career as the third presidency Magistrate of Bombay. This time he had much

confidence. Within a short time, he was recognized because of his sincerity, devotion and hard work.

In those days, he was in close contact with Gopal Krishna. At that time Gopal Krishna was the president of the Indian National Congress (a political party). At the same time, Muhammad Ali Jinnah also started his political career in Congress. Very soon he was known as an ambassador of all Hindu Muslim unity. But as time passed, he realized that the basic purpose of the Indian National Congress is to establish Hinduism. That is why he left Congress and joined the All India Muslim League. He served as the leader of the All India Muslim League from 1913 to until Pakistan Independence in 1947.

Muhammad Ali Jinnah became the first Governor General of Pakistan. He gave freedom to every Pakistani to spend their life according to their own religion. He worked day and night for Pakistan but ignored his health. Muhammad Ali suffered from tuberculosis and lung cancer and just his sister and some other very close family members knew about his health. His health began to falter day by day. He did not live much longer, just over a year after Pakistan's independence. He died September 11, 1948 in Karachi.

"May God shower His blessing on him"

Whether Distance Education is the Way of the Future

Zhao W. | Level 6 | Maha S.'s student

Compared to traditional education, distance education has its advantages and disadvantages.

One advantage is that distance education is very convenient. It lets both teachers and students choose as suitable times and spots as possible to teach and study; as a result, distance education will minimize interference with their personal family lives and work. For example, a distance education teacher can sit at home instead of standing in front of a blackboard in a classroom to teach English grammar, while a distance education student may stay up to study an accounting course at midnight if they are willing to.



Another advantage of distance education is that it is relatively cheap. Distance education, at least, meets fewer classroom limits than traditional education. In fact, when the distance education system is built up, it is ready for many people to use it at the same time. The marginal cost for adding a new user nears zero. Hence, the average cost for each teacher and student is very low.

However, distance education has a key disadvantage --- the quality of distance education is a real worry. Education is just like manufacturing. It has its own input, procedure, and outcome. The higher quality the input and procedures are, the higher the quality of the outcome is.

Let's talk about the key factor--procedure first. Does the student finish their homework by themselves? Is the student really trained well by the course, which may require face-to-face communication and cooperation? Obviously, it is difficult for distance education to control its procedure as well as traditional face-to-face education can.

Then, let us go on with the input. Undoubtedly, no one has endless time and energy. The more things one should do, the more distracted he/she will be, and the more possible he/she may be lost. Unfortunately, the reason that most people choose distance education is that they can't concentrate on education, especially full-time learning. So, it is not surprising that it is difficult for distance education to ensure the quality of its "product". Distance education is right for those who are not eager for certificates but rather knowledge and technologies.

With the characteristic of convenience of use and low operation cost, distance education will play an increasingly important role in education in the future. However, encumbered with the uncertain quality of education, it cannot replace traditional education thoroughly. Generally speaking, distance education will mainly be used in the field of ongoing education and be a supplement in formal full-time education. Going

further, a different kind of education will have a different future. Thanks to the development of information technology, on-line education, on the one side, will continue to enlarge its advantages, such as supply more education materials and faster reaction speeds. On the other side, it will make up its shortcoming as much as possible, such as using on-line videos to finish tests.

On-line education will surely be the main way of the future for on-going education. As to the pure correspondence distance education, owing to the lack of effective methods to face competition, it will not have a bright prospect.

How to Bring Up a Child

Amel E. | Level 7 | Tuula L.'s student



There are many different ways to raise a child. Some people believe the best method is the traditional way of punishment, whereas others argue that the modern method of guiding and talking to children is more effective.

In the first place, to bring up a child is not easy, and some parents do not like to take the risk of trying new methods. Consequently, they use the traditional ways of spanking to discipline a kid. For instance, parents in Libya still use the old fashioned physical and verbal punishment occasionally. Moreover, this type of discipline is still used in schools where corporal punishment is not illegal. Disciplining children like this can lead to many psychological problems and will affect children's future seriously. Children who are abused will suffer from low self-esteem and lack of confidence.

On the other hand, many parents around the world use the modern ways of raising their kids. Canada is the best example how to raise children without corporal punishment, and here child abuse is illegal. Physical punishment is not permitted in the Canadian law. Parents use different ways, such as time out for toddlers, and with teenagers, their parents restrict their hours of watching TV or use of electronic devices. In addition, some parents try conversation and talk more to their kids rather than impose rules on them.

In conclusion, to bring up a child is not easy, and parents need to learn more about what is good for their children.

My Window

Shohreh B. | Level 7 | Lisa G.'s Student



I like to sit on my favorite chair by the window and look out onto the street, a lovely city park and the North River, which flows behind while I am drinking a cup of cup of tea or coffee. I just like sitting there, looking out and watching life pass by; no matter which day of year or what time of day it is.

Last winter, I delighted in sitting there with a cup of tea or coffee and feeling the hotness of it in my hands when there was nothing outside except ice and snow. I couldn't distinguish the difference between the river, ground or road. All I could see was the whiteness of the snow and foxes' footprints. I enjoyed the sun and moon shining making the snow glitter and dance. I often watched this charming picture and listened to the sound of wind. It was as if the wind was whispering through the tree's branches and slapping against the bare tree trunks. Sometimes, I could hear the gentle breeze through the trees; I thought it wanted to wake them up from their winter slumber. Other times, it looked like nature was at war. I imagined the wind was trying to drag

the trees out of the ground. I sat near my window, thinking about the beauty and power of nature.

When spring came around, I sat on my chair and watched the snow melting, the grass growing and the trees awakening with their pretty new dresses. I enjoyed looking at the blossoming trees and hearing the birds singing. I was amazed to see the river appear as the snow and ice melted. I sat there, listening to the music of the water falling from the roofs and tricking through the pipes during the midnight silence. It was like watching a magical panorama and listening to the music of the universe.

During the summer, I looked upon the contrasting colors of the bright green grass and deep blue of the North River. I admired the nightly sunsets, especially when the dark orange reflected magically on the water. I often saw a man who fished alone from his small wooden sailing boat and wondered how he felt.

Then it was fall's turn. I sat there and looked at the colorful leaves falling down, whirling and twisting. In no time, the ground was covered with those beautiful dried leaves. As I observed the changing colors, it seemed as though the trees were changing their clothes daily. I listened to the sound of the wind at night quickly blowing between the trees, breaking their branches, and sweeping leaves from my yard.

I just like sitting and looking out my window from behind the vapor of a cup of hot tea, and seeing life passing by.

Robots

Hong C. | Level 5 | Nahed S.'s student

Some people think that human's future development can benefit from robots. Firstly, they argue that it is impossible to handle every aspect of social activities by human resource. Take saving fire for example: how do you make this sentence? Do you just copy it from some online translator like google translate? Also, firemen cannot survive in extreme situations which are full of poison, smoke and high temperature even if they have been protected as much as possible. But robots can do that. Secondly, the efficiency of modern industries can be improved a lot by using more robots because robots can work in 24/7 and there is no need for any rest time or vacation. Actually, today there is an increasingly rapid growth among modern industries to use robots in production. Thirdly, the cost of human resource has been continually increasing. To reduce the cost, the managers have to turn out to robots.

By contrast, it is argued by some other people that robots are dangerous and have negative effects on society. They worry that the intelligence robots will replace human's leadership in the world, even it may destroy the human beings in the future. Someone who is the famous IT leader like Bill Gates has claimed like that the technology is harmful for the human beings if it out of control. Another concern is that there will be more unemployment if we use more robots.

Having considered the arguments on both sides of the debate, I believe that robots are not only useful, but also can be harmful in some situation. Therefore, I would suggest that we should develop robots under mature consideration and restrict limitation, thus we will only get the advantages and get rid of the disadvantages from it for the future.



Winter Driving

Rawah K. | Level 4 | Sarah H.'s student

Driving in winter is completely different than the driving in normal weather. I always drive slower than the speed limit because it takes a longer time to slow down on slippery or icy roads, and I could lose control of the car which can lead to an accident. To avoid that I usually keep extra distance between my car and the car in front of me in case of stopping suddenly; moreover, drivers should give extra time to get to their destination and that is what I do when the roads are full with snow. Being more careful can save my life and the lives of others with me on the road. So here are some steps that I follow to be prepared for winter. Those steps include: checking my car, switching to winter tires, switching to winter windshield washer fluid, and keeping an extra bottle of windshield fluid in my car.



Furthermore, I always check if the gas tank is full to avoid gas line freeze up. The gas tank should be either full or at least half full to keep me moving on the road. Also, I keep a shovel, an ice scraper and snow brush, a flash light and jumper cables. In addition, I have a winter emergency kit in my car in case of any unexpected situations. The emergency kit should include the following items: food such as energy bars, nuts, a bottle of water, blankets, extra clothing, a cellphone, a first aid kit and a warning light. Those supplies can help me a lot or even save my life in case of an accident or getting stuck on the road.

Stephen Hawking, Who Inspired People All Over the World

Khadijeh Z. | Level 7 | Jessica W.'s Student

Physicist, Scientist (1942–)

Stephen William Hawking was born on January 8, 1942 in Oxford, England, of a Scottish mother. His parents, Frank and Isabel, were Oxford graduates and had four children. Stephen was born at an inopportune time for his parents, who didn't have much money. England was dealing with World War II. His father wanted Stephen, his eldest child, to go into medicine, but at an early age he showed a passion for science and the sky.

Early in his academic life, he was not an exceptional student. During his first year at school, he was third from the bottom of his class. But Hawking focused on activities outside of school. He entered Oxford University at the age of 17. At first, Hawking started to study mathematics, but since Oxford didn't offer a degree in that particular area, then he moved toward physics, specifically cosmology. In 1962, he graduated in natural science and went to Cambridge University for a PhD in cosmology.



One year later at age 21, he was diagnosed with ALS (Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis) . He was an atypical case. Unfortunately, the nerves that controlled his muscles were shutting down. So doctors gave him two and a half years to live. It was very harmful news for him and his family.

A few events, however, fortunately prevented him from becoming completely discouraged. The first, when he shared his room in hospital with a boy suffering from leukemia, he thought his situation seems more tolerable. The second was love. At a New Year's party in 1963 he met Jane Wilde and they got married in 1965. Now they have three children. They divorced in 2006. He had to use wheelchairs in 1969 and he finally lost his voice. Now he uses an invention that allows him to select words on a computer screen that are then passed through a speech synthesizer.

"Before my illness, I had been very bored with life. There had not seemed to be anything worth doing. But then I poured myself into my work and research," he said.

Stephen Hawking has many great pieces of research on black holes, gravity, and the collapse of stars. He published many books, one of them is *A Brief History of Time*, Also he received the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2009. He hopes to travel to space one day and has trained with NASA on their zero gravity aircraft. Part of his life story was depicted in the 2014 film *The Theory of Everything*.

Hawking's disease helped him become the noted scientist and theorist he is today.

Selected biographies of sources used for this summary:

<http://www.biography.com/people/stephen-hawking-9331710#research-on-black-holes>
http://www.ducksters.com/biography/scientists/stephen_hawking.php

Freedom of Speech

Iqbal B. | Level 7 | Terese C.'s student

Freedom of Speech has been considered one of the main birth rights of every individual all around the world. In a society where people can freely express their opinions and share their ideas, is it necessary for them to say whatever they want? From my point of view, each person in the society should be given the same opportunity to speak freely without any fear or any sort of hesitation. The importance of freedom of speech has an impact on society with fewer conflicts, more opportunity to participate in a society's governance and great justice.



We cannot imagine a single day without expressing our thoughts by speech. If there is no freedom to speak independently, we would rather die rather than to be unable to disclose our feelings. The media would stop publishing actual news and the public would have to shut their mouths. Everywhere there would be disgruntlement. On the contrary, in a free society where each person has the right to say anything freely, there is every chance that it may hurt the feelings of others if it is not deliberated on cautiously. So we must be careful about that.

A historical example will explain why freedom of speech is so important to have more opportunity to participate in our society's governance. Back in 1952, the West Pakistan government declared that 'Urdu', the national language of Pakistan would also be the national language of East Pakistan (at present - Bangladesh). Soon after hearing the announcement, the whole nation exploded and started to protest, because their mother tongue was Bengali. The people of East Pakistan were not ready to accept this unfair decision that the ruling government would not let them speak their own language! The students called for strikes and marched on the streets to break the curfew. Several students of Dhaka University along with other protesters were killed on that day. Then the authorities obeyed the mass public opinion and withdrew their decision. Every year the 21st of February is celebrated as the International Language Day throughout the world to show their respect to the freedom of speech.

The reason why it is so necessary to speak freely without any bindings is that, when someone in the society is prevented from getting justice or when an individual becomes the victim of an unlawful act he/she must raise the issues with the media or public by telling the truth, otherwise it will be untold forever. In addition, when an incident happens in a country and the government thinks that it might be against them, they try to pour cold water on it, so that there will be no discussion on this issue and therefore the mass public may not come to know the actual facts. In this way the government tries to control the whole situation by preventing the flow of freedom of speech.

To sum up, I would like to say that independence of speech has always been an indispensable part of human-rights. Although not every country or nation has the same situation to enjoy this historical right, it should not be denied by any means.

Technology

Carla P. | Level 7 | Joann M.'s Student



It is unbelievable how technology has changed our society in many ways. Nowadays, technology produces profound effects in many professions, and its uses have become indispensable. In fact, we see computer simulations in medicine, engineering and in the construction field, and it is relevant to say that computer simulations have changed the justice system as well. In fact, lawyers, judges, police and many other professionals are able to help the community in an accurate way, and the use of the computer's benefits assures a proper and efficient way to deal with any problem that might arise.

Nowadays, lawyers are able to access a court order or an investigation through online software, saving the need to commute to the court or to the justice system to have access of your client's file. Consequently, this decreases the price, making it affordable for many people. In addition, lawyers are able to easily take training to upgrade their knowledge and to be part of a simulation trail to extend their skills. Last, computer simulations have been used in justice school to help lawyers, police and many other professionals to efficiently use the law appropriately, minimizing the risks of errors in real life.

Last, computers have made communication among police, lawyers and judges easier, providing access to any investigation anywhere at any time. In such, lawyers are now able to participate in their clients' trials, or talk with their clients at the jail, all through safe computer software and take part in many computer simulations to provide the best service.

Work and Life Balance

Anatoliy S. | Level 6 | Uzma N.'s Student

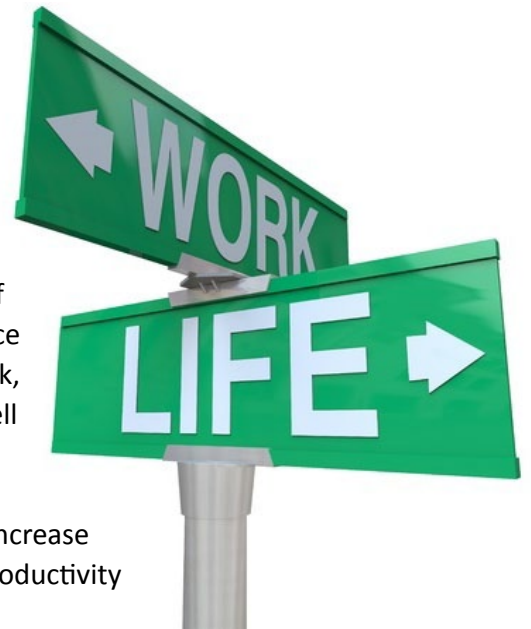
Nowadays we can see many and many temptations to spend our money. Some people want to travel everywhere in the world with their families or alone. Other people want to buy a new car or home, or spend their money for other necessary purchases etc.

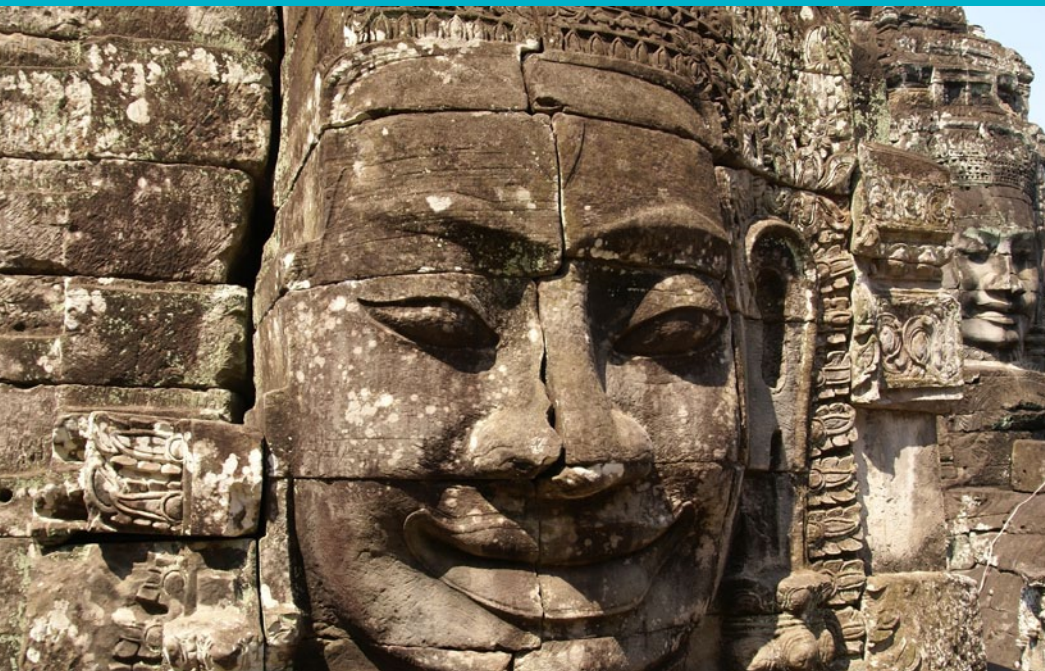
It's understandable that no one can live in the modern world without money. To be able to buy something and have an ability to pay for their needs, people are forced to spend more and more time of their work. Now there is a very urgent problem to find the right balance between work and leisure time. When people spend more time for work, they get less time for themselves. It can lead to health problems as well as the disruption of families and personal relationships.

For one thing, there is absolutely nothing to prove that long work hours increase productivity. In fact, when people work longer than they should, their productivity decreases. They fail to concentrate and need longer time to finish job.

In addition, investigations have proved that people who spend too much time in the office are also more likely to develop major health problems like heart disease etc. Another problem is how those long working hours affects people's family and social life. When people spend much time in the office, they get little time to spend with their dear ones. Parents, who work too long often fail to take proper care of their young children. It can be a big problem in families where both parents work. When children can't get attention from parents it will affect their emotional well-being. Also it can have a negative impact on children's academic progress. Sometimes, failure to get a balance between work and life can lead to the family's breakdown.

In conclusion, I want to say that long working is in nobody's interest. Long hours of work don't increase productivity. On the contrary, people become less productive and concentrate less. In other words, proper work and life balance is absolutely essential to spend a pleasant and useful life. It is very nice to hear that many companies try to arrange their working hours in a way that employees get more time for themselves.





Health

Oh Sugar Sugar - You Are My Candy Girl!

Veronica P. | Level 7 | Lily B.'s student



Sweetness is the most desirable of flavours! Even as toddlers, our tastes become refined enough to appreciate food with a high sugar content.

Try a “cake or broccoli test” on a 4 year old, and no more scientific testing is necessary. Sugar and candies are much loved at any age, and men enjoy buying lovely heart-shaped boxes full of candies or chocolates for their favourite girls on Valentine’s Day. However, the danger is that what was once considered relatively harmless, is actually an addictive substance.

There is always a lot of talk surrounding the responsibility of sugar in weight gain. Sugar seems to be enemy number one. So, why are Canadian adults and kids alike unable to make meaningful changes? One interesting Health Canada proposal places the blame on product packaging.

If the proposal goes through, changes would include making the sugar content more prominently displayed, as well as offering a daily limit for sugar consumption. Health Canada says an individual should not exceed 100 grams daily.

The object of this proposal is not just to curb obesity. Doctors and researchers are moving away from long held ideas about weight loss. Most people are mistakenly assuming that the key to weight loss lies in burning as many calories as possible. While this is an important component, the number of calories burned is less significant than the type of calories burned. Foods with high sugar content are proving to be more dangerous for our health.

Obesity should not be our only fear. Consuming too much sugar is also linked to a whole list of other ailments that include heart disease and Alzheimer’s. Frighteningly, unhealthy sugar can actually be found hidden in food that we largely consider to be safe, like pasta sauce, bread, and salad dressing!

One can only hope that Health Canada’s proposal will take effect soon and that its warnings will sink into the minds and bellies of all the “candy girls” (and boys) nationwide, and eating large doses of sugar may only be totally acceptable on Valentine’s Day.

Home Remedies

Manpreet K. | Level 5 | Rima B.'s Student



Are you paying extra money on medicines? Do you want to remain away from prescriptions? No time to see a doctor? Here are some natural remedies.

1. Soothe Sore Throat and Flu

Mixture of honey, spices, herbs and citrus fruits help to soothe sore throats. Honey has antifungal and antibacterial qualities. Honey soothes and helps getting rid of any bacteria in throat. The spices and herbs help in aiding the swelling in throat.

Mixture of honey, fruits, food and herbs help to improve the healing properties.

Mixture of honey and ginger helps with upset stomach. Honey with fruits which have citrus deals with the cold and fever. Honey with cloves deals with toothache.

2. Hypertension

Eating raw almonds every day helps to lower blood pressure. Even though raw almonds are high in fat and calories, almonds prevent weight gain.

Amount of the salt in vegetables should be less. Salt contains sodium which increases high blood pressure. Drink lots of water. Drink at least 6-8 glasses of water every day. Drink high amount of water in the morning and less quantity at night.

Garlic is the most powerful natural antibiotic. It is more effective when you eat in the morning before breakfast. It reduces the blood pressure and lowers the cholesterol level. Garlic also helps to control stress and stomach acid.

3. Back Pain

Keep yourself warm and eat only hot items in case of chronic back pain. Garlic should be included in diet on regular basis. Tulsi is the best medicine. Boil tulsi in water until the syrup is reduced to half of actual size and add salt after cooling. Massage with mustard oil for severe back aches. Exercise is the best medicine to keep fit from all types of aches.

These natural home remedies don't have any side effects. The ingredients are easily available, are good for your health and you can save money. Try them next time you have a cold, aches and pain or just want to keep fit.

Losing Weight

Yamile L. | Level 5 | Morley M.'s Student

I have gained too much weight in the years since I came to Canada. "I have to do something," I tell myself, especially when I am shopping or when my favorite clothes don't fit me. Lately, after many visits to my family doctor and reading about the bad things that obesity does to my body, I have been gaining enthusiasm to lose weight. I really see the necessity of paying attention to this problem. Excess of weight has caused me health problems. This situation has made my system weak. I feel different, tired and sick all the time. Obesity can also cause many diseases like: Type 2 diabetes, strokes, high blood pressure and arthritis. Now I'm trying to eat healthy food like vegetables and protein. My weakness is sweet things. I really love strawberry milkshakes and funnel cakes. I don't know why the most delicious things are unhealthy.



Obesity is one of the main health issues especially in North America. There are many websites to help people lose weight. People should visit websites like: <http://www.acefitness.org> which provides a lot of useful information.

I really hope that I find the strength I need to beat the obesity problem. I have already lost one of my organs in part because the excess weight. Excess weight is like a silence venom that will kill you from the inside. People better stop gaining weight. Changing our eating behaviour and doing regular exercise will help people stay healthy and enjoy a longer life.

The Truth about (GM) Genetically Modified Foods

Dolly D. | Level 7 | Lily B.'s Student



Genetically Modified Organisms (GMO's) and Genetically Modified (GM) foods are basically the same. They both pertain to living organisms like seeds or plants, whose genes are altered using biotechnology for specific intentions. The cells of these organisms are manipulated with the use of external agents like chemicals and UV lights and scientific processes that are unnatural. Ideally, the objective of this intentional manipulation is to use these living organisms in the service of mankind, to be exact, to improve the human food supply.

For many, including the government of Canada, genetic modification has many benefits. Chief among these benefits is the efficient production of food at a lower cost. They say that with genetic modification, farmers and food producers can have crops that are more resistant to pests

and resilient to weather changes. They can enhance useful traits or add more desirable traits to their produce so they can have produce that is better tasting, longer lasting and packed with more nutrients. In short, the proponents of genetically modified foods claim that genetic modification can provide more efficient but less expensive food crops that may contribute to the global food supply.

While to a certain extent I do agree that GM foods help in increasing food supply, I still have reservations in supporting them. First, I have issues about food variety. The popularity of GM foods lessens the variety of foods in the world. Because of the high yielding effects of GM foods, farmers tend to choose similar types of crops and become less attracted to growing other crops.

Second, I disagree with the GM foods supporters in their claim that genetic modification can contribute to the global food supply. Because of genetic modification, small farmers, especially in the global south, are stripped of the freedom to grow their own food. How does this work? Genetic modification is usually done by big industrial farming corporations that have the technological 'know how', facilities, and the equipment to do so. Once they have done it in a particular seed or organism, they patent it to their companies, giving them the legal authority over the seed. Now, the seed is owned by them, and anyone caught storing, cleaning or saving that same seed (but unaltered) will be sued and charged against the patent law. In this case, the small farmers have to buy those seeds from them. The worse thing is that these seeds are not sustainable, meaning they are designed to produce seedless crops. Therefore, the farmers have nothing to use when planting the next time.

Aside from this, the pesticides that the crops need can only be bought from these companies or from their partner companies. Needless to say, this leaves the farmers dependent on them. Season after season, year

after year, the farmer must buy their seeds and pesticides. On unfortunate occasions, when farmers do not have a good harvest, they don't have enough money to buy seeds for the next round of planting, much less for their own food. That is why today many small farmers are dying of hunger -- so much for the GMO's promise of increased food supply.

Slowly these big companies are killing these farmers despite the fact that 70% of the world is fed by them and not by the big companies. Cases of human rights violations related to GM foods have been reported happening in Haiti, Brazil, Colombia, the Philippines and the like.

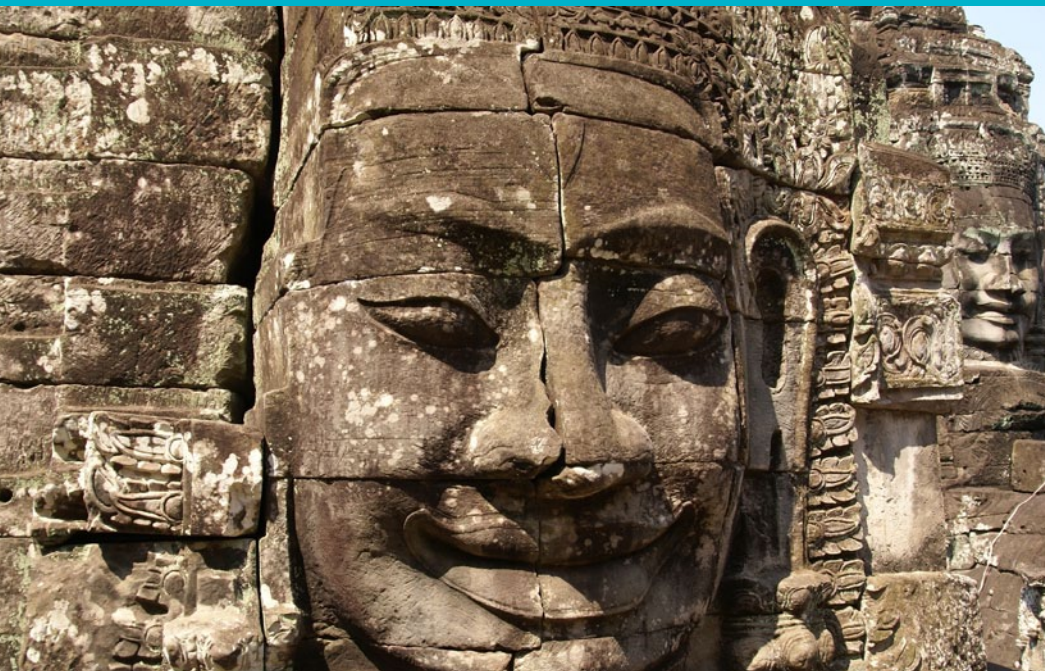
Third, is the issue of ecological justice. These "tampered" organisms need strong pesticides and fertilizers, but these chemicals leech into the soil and water and poison the land. Subsequently, the yield from such croplands has fallen substantially throughout the world.

Fourth, is the issue of health. Although authorities claim that GMO's present no health risks, I still believe that they are not good for our health. Surely, I support human creativity and ingenuity in dealing with nature. We can enhance and improve the natural world for our use. However, I equally believe that at a certain point we should stop. We should know the boundary between being creative and being destructive. I believe GMO's, to a certain extent, are destructive to ecology, human culture, and human health.

Some people say that we become what we eat. I do believe that. For me, if the food we eat is no longer natural, we too become unnatural, tampered and altered, both physically and figuratively speaking.

When it comes to our physical make up, I suspect that the unnatural changes in the growth of our cells may be attributed to the genetically modified food that we eat. Perhaps I am wrong since I cannot cite any scientific studies here to back up my stand. However, authorities cannot support their claim on the complete safety of GMO's either. They have not done any studies on their long term effects yet.

Therefore, until a study is done and completely guarantees that GMO's are free of any health risks, I maintain that GMO's are generally hazardous to our health.



Heritage

Qingdao, China

Yue Z. | Level 6 | Lesley H.'s student

Qingdao is a beautiful city on the east coast of China. It is famous for its European-style city construction. Many of its old buildings are attractive. But for me, the most attractive thing is the food, the traditional Chinese food.

As every local person knows, the seafood in Qingdao is fresh and yummy. There are many kinds of restaurants that can offer different levels of seafood. You can buy some fresh shrimps, crabs, clams, mussels and squid in the seafood market, and take them to a small restaurant. They will help you to cook them in their traditional ways. You can just spend very little money to get the most fresh and yummy seafood this way.

Also, you can choose to pay a reasonable price for a luxurious seafood dinner with some of your favourite wine in a hotel restaurant.

But don't forget to taste one of the few famous good brands of beer there. Qingdao Beer is famous for its unique taste in the world. If you have the chance to visit Qingdao during summer, you will have the opportunity to see a very special custom of the local people. They love the beer, and they use special plastic bags containing beer. Do not feel strange about it. There is a saying that Qingdao people drink beer like water. I love this city for its beauty and yummy food and beer.



India's National Bird: The Peacock

Ektaben S. | Level 6 | Fernand V.'s Student



The peacock is 90 cm to 130 cm in length (35 to 50 inches). The peacock's feathers look like eyes and peacocks have their own crest. A peacock has approximately 200 feathers. There are two main types of peacocks: the blue and the green peacocks. The rare type is the white peacock.

Peahens are shorter than peacocks. Peahens have also fewer train feathers. Also peahens are duller and less colourful than peacock, while peacocks are brighter and more colourful than peahens.

A male peacock's train feathers are 3 feet and a peahen's train feathers are 0.5 foot in length. A male peacock's weight is 11pounds and a peahen's weight is 7 pounds.

A peacock has a lot of enemies such as: tigers, lions, eagles, foxes, wolves, mongooses, large owls, bears, lizards and jungle cats. A peacock's enemy can catch the bird by his train feathers, these train feathers will fall off and the peacock can get away most of the time. But a peahen can get away faster than a peacock because it doesn't have a long train to slow it down. Also if an enemy tries to catch a peahen, the peahen's feathers help her blend in with her surroundings and the predator won't be able to catch her.

The lifespan of a peacock is 20 to 24 years. It is interesting to know that peacocks eat grains and insects every 2 to 3 seconds!

My Wonderful Vacation in Thailand

Waraporn C. | Level 4 | Jacqueline A.'s Student

In November 2014, I was very happy to take a wonderful vacation with my sisters and their family. We had lots of fun traveling to many beautiful places, but I will only talk about a few of these interesting places: The Phimai Historical Park and The Banyan Trees which are located in Phimai town, Nakornrachasima province. I wanted to take my vacation in Thailand because I wanted to visit my country and my family there. I haven't seen them for so long. Also, I wanted to attend the Annual Loy Krathong Floating Festival, one of the most renowned festivals in Thailand.



PHOTO CREDIT: Waraporn C.

Loy Krathong Floating festival. This celebration takes place on the evening of the full moon on the 12th month of the traditional Thai lunar calendar, which is in November of the western calendar. Loy literally means “to float” while Krathong refers to the lotus-shaped receptacle which can float on the water and is decorated with many flowers.

During the night of the full moon, Thai people will float their Krathongs on the rivers, canals, and the pond lakes, paying respect to the spirit and thanking the Goddess of Water to bring them good luck and fulfill their wishes. It's a beautiful festival of lights at night, because floating down the river are many Krathongs with candles, including the thousands of lighted lanterns that are released in the sky, paying homage to Buddha. During the festival, there are many nice events launched throughout Thailand, ie., pageants, fireworks and the Thai traditional beauty parades.

Phimai Historical Park. It is one of the most important Khmer Architect temples of Thailand. The temple marks one end of the ancient Khmer Highway from Angkor. Most buildings are from the late 11th - 12th century. They were built as a Buddhist temple. I am interested in the history and the heritage museum, so I love visiting there. I wonder how come the people in that century with no high technology like the present could build the building with sand and stone and maintain the ruin till now.

The Banyan Tree, or Sai Ngam, is the odd old largest tree in Thailand. It's over 350 years old. The tree has spread out laterally covering an area of 3,250 square meters. The roots of the Banyan tree have grown down into the soil to prop up the tree and these roots have turned into hard, woody stems that look like tree trunks. There is a creek behind the trees too. I walked around the area and took many photos. It's such a beautiful and interesting part of nature that I had never seen before.

On November this year, I will go to visit Thailand again and will take my husband to visit those above mentioned places and attend Loy Krathong Festival, too. I think he will like it, as do many other tourists. He will probably take many photos to show his family in Canada. I would like to encourage anyone who is planning their vacation to go there if my photos and my story are interesting.



Recipes

Doodh Dulari (Sweet Dish)

Aziz S. | Level 4 | Babak M.'s Student

Doodh Dulari is a healthy and delicious dessert in Pakistan. It can be served any time but some people like it after dinner. Children love this dessert. If you eat Doodh Dulari once, then you will love to eat it again and again. This dessert is easy to make. I love it.

Cooking time: 40 minutes

Ingredients:

2 liters milk
 1 cup condensed milk
 1 tbsp. corn flour/custard powder
 ½ cup colored vermicelli
 1 packet strawberry jelly
 1 packet green jelly
 250 gm khoya
 200 gm cream
 1 large tin mix fruit cocktail
 500 gm small cham cham



Method:

1. First, cook 2 liters of milk till it becomes thick.
2. Second, add ½ cup colored vermicelli, 1 tbsp. corn flour/custard powder, and dissolve them in ¼ cup of cold milk and add this to the cooked milk till it becomes thick.
3. Then, leave it to cool down entirely.
4. Then, dissolve each jelly packet with 1 cup of water and set till firm.
5. Cut in cubes and add to the cooled milk.
6. Next, add condensed milk, fruit cocktail, cream, small cham cham and Khoya, mix all well.
7. Finally, serve chilled Doodh Dulari and Enjoy.

Shahi Paneer

Khadijabibi D. | Level 3 | Deborah K.'s Student

Ingredients:

Paneer (cottage cheese)
400 grams
Oil/ butter 2 tbsp
Onion paste 2 tbsp
Ginger paste 1 tbsp
Garlic paste 1 tbsp
Tomato puree 2 cups
Green cardamoms 5
Bay leaves 2
Cloves 10
Peppercorns 8
Red chilly powder 1 tbsp
Salt 1 tbsp (to taste)
Garm masala 1 tbsp
Shahi paneer masala 1 tbsp
Cream one cup
Dried enugreek leaves 1/2 cup

Utensils needed:

Fry pan
Wooden spoon
spoons
Knife
Bowls
Grinder



Method:

1. Gather all materials needed.
2. Roast onion, ginger and garlic paste in oil, until the pastes turn into pink/ brown colour.
3. While the pastes get ready, cut paneer into pieces of square or triangle.
4. Put Bay leaves, green cardamoms, cloves, peppercorn, red chilly powder, salt, garam masala, and shahi paneer masala in the roasted paste.
5. Mix properly.
6. Heat up gravy for 5 mins (until the gravy leaves some oil.)
7. Place tomato puree into the gravy.
8. Heat the gravy for 5 mins including the tomato puree.
9. Add paneer.
10. Leave the paneer to cook for 2-3 mins.
11. Put whipping cream.
12. Mix the shahi paneer properly once again.
13. Put stove on medium position 5-7 minutes.
14. Turn off the stove carefully.
15. At the end, spread dried green enygreek leaves.
16. Serve hottest Shahi Paneer with rice/ roti (service 4-5 people)

Chicken with Green Olives

Souad C. | Level 6 | Jonathan B.'s Student

Ingredients:

- 1 chopped onion
- a few stems of cilantro finely chopped
- a few leaves of parsley finely chopped
- 3 gloves garlic finely chopped
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon pepper
- 1 teaspoon fresh ginger
- 1 teaspoon turmeric
- 1 pinch of saffron
- 1/2 cup green olives
- 1/2 chicken skin removed, cut into pieces
- 1/3 cup olive oil



Preparation:

1. In a medium bowl, marinate chicken with ginger, garlic, spices, cilantro, parsley and one tablespoon olive oil.
2. Set the marinated chicken aside for few minutes.
3. In a small pot on medium heat add the rest of olive oil, the marinated chicken ...then add the chopped onion.
4. Cook for 10 minutes and stir from time to time.
5. After 10 minutes add the water, cover the pot and continue cooking until the chicken become tender.
6. When the chicken is cooked, transfer it to a plate and cover.
Continue cooking the sauce over medium heat; keep stirring occasionally until the onion forms a blended mixture which separates from the oils.
7. Add the olives and simmer for 5 minutes
8. Place the chicken on a serving plate; put the onion sauce over the top and side.
9. Serve with bread.

Enjoy!

Gulag Kale - Indonesian Curry with Kale

Alfie N. | Level 6 | Jonathan B.'s Student

Ingredients:

- 1 bunch of Kale, cut into small slices
- 5 cloves shallots, peeled
- 4 cloves garlic, peeled
- 1 teaspoon ground turmeric
- 1 teaspoon ground coriander
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1 fat stalk lemongrass
- 1 sheet bay leaves
- 1 segment of gelangal (*an Asian plant of the ginger family, the aromatic rhizome of which is widely used in cooking and herbal medicine.*)
- Salt
- 3 tablespoon canola oil
- 1 cup coconut oil
- 1/2 cup water

How to make it:

1. Put shallots, garlic, turmeric, cumin, coriander into food processor. Whirl to grind up a bit until it is smooth like paste
2. Heat the oil in the pan. Add the paste ingredients, lemongrass, bay leaves, and gelangal until smells good
3. Add the kale and stir until blends with the spice.
4. Add coconut milk, water and salt and stir it again until it blends
5. Cook until slightly thickened and remove from the heat

Enjoy!



Kurnik

Iuliia S. | Level 4 | Jessica W.'s Student

A Little History of the Cake:

Kurnik – a kind of Russian, Ukrainian, and Moldovian cake, is often referred to as the King of cakes, or the king's birthday cake. It is stuffed with chicken, rooster, duck, lamb, beef, nuts, and potatoes.

Traditionally, Kurnik is considered as a dish that is made on a tray for celebrations, such as Weddings or Easter.

To prepare the Kurnik, butter and fresh dough can be used (you can also use puff and short crust pastry). Usually, one of the finished pancakes separates the stuffing and other ingredients intended for the making of this hat-shaped cake. These are photos of my pie from when So, I glazed the hat cake for the first time, before doing the middle. I was very pleased with the result.

Ingredients:

Puff pastry for the decorative leaves
Melted butter for glazing

For the crepes:

2 cups flour
2 cups milk
2 eggs.
Salt ½ tsp.
Baking soda ½ tsp.
oil for frying

For the filling:

Chicken breast (boiled)
3-4 pieces.
Boiled rice 100 g
Mushrooms 400 g
5 eggs
1-2 potatoes (boiled)
1-2 onion s
Cheese (to taste)
Mayonnaise (to taste)
Salt (to taste)
Pepper (to taste)
Herbs, such as parsley
and dill (to taste)



PHOTO CREDIT: Iuliia S

I chose my ingredients according to my taste; you can add your favorites. There should be plenty of fillings. I love to cover the layers with mayonnaise and sour cream. Pre-mix them together.

1. Prepare the batter with milk, fry thin crepes from it.
2. First filling: Cut the chicken into small pieces.
3. The second filling: Crisp the boiled rice with oil in a pan, add 1 hard-boiled egg, coarsely grated.
4. Third filling: Boil the mushrooms, and lightly fry in butter. (You can not boil, fry just until tender).
5. Fourth filling: Grate potatoes with a grater and top with fried onions.
6. Fifth filling: Boil the eggs, cut into small cubes and add the (optional) parsley and dill.
7. Sixth filling: Grated cheese.
8. Roll out the puff pastry to a thickness of 0.5 cm, cut two round cakes - one smaller round (the primary) — and one larger one (the cover). Grease a round skillet with butter. Put a small layer of puff pastry on the bottom pan - a pancake. Next, spread the fillings on top in the order described above, with each layer lightly covered with the mayonnaise and additional crepes. Cover the top with a large piece of puff pastry and pinch the pastry edges together.
9. Decorate the cake surface with carved patterns of diamonds and asterisks; brush with egg and bake in the oven at a medium temperature until golden brown. Bon Appetit!!!

Libyan BBQ Salad

Safa F. | Level 7 | Lesley H.'s Student

Ingredients:

- 7 fresh big tomatoes
- 6 fresh green hot peppers
- 2 fresh green sweet peppers
- 1 head garlic
- 1 big red onion
- 1/2 cup olive oil
- 1/4 cup lemon juice
- 1 tsp. salt

Method:

1. First, put all vegetables on the grill for 10 minutes each side or until they are done and are brown on both sides.
2. Then, put all grilled vegetables in a bowl and cover for about 15 minutes and let them cool.
3. Next, take off almost all the brown skin from the grilled vegetables.
4. Last, put all vegetables, olive oil, lemon and salt in a food processor and pulse on a low speed until you have a coarse chopped vegetable mix.
5. Finally, put the salad in the fridge for at least an hour.
6. Serve it with grilled steak, and enjoy.



Okroshka

Elena K. | Level 7 | Milanka V.'s Student

Okroshka is a popular cold soup in Ukraine and Russia. It is made with kvass and chopped vegetables. Kvass is a beverage made from fermented rye bread and can be bought in Eastern European stores. I remember from my childhood my mom preparing the soup with the first fresh seasonal vegetables, like onion and radish. It is quick to prepare and very healthy, especially in spring when our body requires more vitamins. There are many different recipes for okroshka, but I use the one I learnt from my mom.

The recipe makes four servings.

Ingredients:

- 2 hard-boiled eggs
- 2 small garden cucumbers
- 2 new potatoes (cooked whole with their skin, peeled and diced)
- ½ cup green spring onion
- ½ bunch radishes
- ½ lb. bologna, sausages or ham, diced
- 1 bunch dill, chopped
- 6 cups kvass
- ½ cup sour cream
- Salt to taste

Instructions:

1. Dice the eggs, potatoes and bologna.
2. Slice the radishes in half.
3. Chop the green onion and dill.
4. Combine all ingredients in a big bowl, mix and add the kvass. Sour cream and salt can be added according to taste. Serve cold.





Seasonal

Gardening Tips

Tian T. | Level 7 | Jonathan B.'s Student

After five years gardening, I do have some tips to share:

1. When you buy a house, don't rush to cut the bushes and trees down in the garden, always waits for one year. You never know what kind of flowers or surprises will come out from your yard.

2. Relax, relax, understanding that the garden won't be done by one day's work will help.



3. If you are planting vegetables, plant what and how much you can eat. This year I made a mistake in my garden. I planted too many cucumbers but so few leafy vegetables. I should have planted different vegetables instead of just a few.

4. Never plant sunflowers, this is a kind of joke for me. I planted ten sun flowers in my garden this year, but at the end of the season, I got nothing. Each time when my sunflowers are ready for harvest, the squirrels come. They drove me crazy. I don't mind sharing my garden with those creatures, but when I saw my sunflowers destroyed by squirrels, I made a promise to myself: never plant sunflowers again.

5. Make your own compost. Since I have many trees surrounding my garden, I have at least 50 bags of leaves down the road. I am happy about having those leaves. I used to throw them away, but now I keep them in my compost bin, then I will have my own garden compost. They will make my garden more organic.

6. Till your garden in late fall and early spring let the land breathe.

7. Share your garden, specially the front yard. It is not for you alone but for the whole neighborhood. After seeing our front yard, many passing by neighbors praised it. One neighbor even commented "You have raised the standard of our neighborhood", another said "the former owner (who passed away) would be happy to see this from heaven"!

I Love Spring

Mahalakshmi G. | Level 5 | Sarah H.'s Student



I would like to say wow... about the spring season! I love the smell of flowers. I would like to look at and touch the flowers. I would like to make a garden. Spring also has a nice and beautiful climate. We don't need the air conditioner or the heater.

Also, my birthday is during the spring. I will be busy on my birthday. I usually do most of the shopping in the spring.

I start to go for a walk every day with my daughter after the long winter. My daughter also likes it. We spend a lot of time outside in the spring. Sometimes there is sunshine; sometimes it is rainy and cloudy. It doesn't matter. It's better than winter!

I will be super active in the spring time. Tamil New Year, which is celebrated by Tamil people, is on April 14th. On that day people go to temple and pray to God to get his blessings.

One place I am very interested to visit again is High Park. It is located in Toronto, Ontario. I am very interested to visit it, because it is the largest park entirely within the city. I hope everyone can visit High Park in the spring and enjoy the cherry blossoms. Especially during late spring, where there are so many flowers that they are all you can see!

Spring in my country, Argentina

Delia L. | Level 5 | Sarah H.'s Student

September 21st is the first day of spring in Argentina. Winter ends, and warmer days begin, with beautiful flowers, colours and smells.

On the same day, Argentina celebrates Student's Day, and so spring is associated with youth. The reason for this celebration is because that is the day in which Argentina remembers a great person, Domingo Faustino Sarmiento. He was a great teacher and also became president. He strongly believed in public education and he funded the first schools in Argentina.



Every year, students wait excitedly for this warm day, and they organize different events, like games, dances, sports tournaments, and most importantly a picnic. The schools are closed on this day, and the students spend the day in parks, playing, singing and laughing.

Meanwhile, the gardens beside houses, the parks and trees, begin changing to beautiful colours of different tones of greens. Gardenias, eucalyptus and jasmines also begin to scent the streets.

Springs Invitation

Mervat R. | Level 5 | Sarah H.'s Student



“The beautiful spring came and when nature resumed her loveliness the human soul is apt to revive also”- Harriet Ann Jacobs. Spring gives power and a big charge of happiness, love and joy. Spring comes with beautiful days and carries great precious memories. It is the time of optimism and activity; it has a wonderful spirit with its colorful flowers and leaves. So, “Keep calm spring is on”.

The blooming flowers and the sunny weather are the nicest invitation sent from nature asking all of us to go out, because the long cold winter is finished. My family responds to this generous invitation, by going to the lovely green fields and celebrating with friends. We also enjoy the different colours of flowers and enjoy the fresh spring breeze. Our children enjoy running in the open green fields, spending a nice time there and enjoying the spring time.

Weekends at that time are full of outdoor activities such as picnics. Children enjoy running in the open green fields a lot. Families and friends watch their kids and enjoy lovely snacks while sitting on the grass and chatting. Bikes come out, and people get them ready for nice spring rides. My favorite part of this short season is the end of it; when it is the time for berry picking. It will be great seeing my little son for the first time, running in the fields with a small bucket picking up berries with his clothes fully stained of their colors.

Waiting for the spring is like a child waiting excitedly to open his birthday gifts. The portrait of life changes from faded grey and white colors and is replaced by colorful changes, smiles, and activities. So with a big smile warming up the soul embrace the spring.

Spring

Melika P. | Level 3 | James T.'s Student

Spring is very important for Iranian people, because Nowruz (the Iranian New Year) is the first day of spring and the beginning of the year in the Persian calendar. Nowruz is for all Farsi language speakers in the world.

It began in the second century and has lasted until now. When spring is starting everything turns to green. The trees have blossoms but I haven't seen them in Canada at the same time as in my country.

When I was in Iran, Nowruz was the most important holiday for my family and I. My parents live in another city and I went there every year and sometimes we all went together on a trip. We had lot of fun and now I miss all of them.





Settlement

Childhood Dreams

Sheyda K. | Level 6 | Jessica W.'s Student



I will never ever forget May 14th, 2012 when my husband and I left our lovely relatives, nice home, and good jobs with high salaries and moved to Canada with our eleven-month old daughter.

Although I had waited for that time to start a new life in Canada, I wasn't happy or sad. It was a strange feeling that I hadn't had before. My mom knew this feeling as well. She proved her love for me at that time by crying silently in private. She controlled her crying up to the good bye time. She understood,

and let me to follow my dreams and leave her, after living close by her until that time.

In the airplane, I remembered the day that I decided to visit Niagara Falls and the Louvre Museum before exploring the other places in the world when I was a child. I did these things, and I could visit other beautiful countries that I loved. I learned everyone can achieve his or her dream if he or she believes in it.

Living in Canada was my childhood dream too. I chose Canada as a new home because of its multicultural features that made it the best place for someone like me who likes to learn about different cultures, languages, and who believes in multicultural diversity. It would also allow me to see other cultures without being able to explore all the amazing countries in the world. It was a beautiful childhood dream but when I grew up, it was just one of my reasons to become an immigrant. My people have had many political and religious problems, especially after revolutions, just because they live in the Middle East.

Once we had gotten the visa, the Iranian currency rate went down a lot because of some new sanctions. This caused us many problems in order to prepare enough money and make a good budget for our new lives in a new place. My immigration problems started before moving.

After a long time, we arrived in Fredericton in New Brunswick and went to a small suite which we had rented for the first month. It was expensive for us but we had no choice. We needed time to get to know the city well enough to rent a yearly apartment and get home furnishings. We were exhausted and feeling lonely.

The next day we walked around our building. It was a beautiful sunny day with fresh air and lovely weather. We saw friendly people who smiled at us and waved hands at our baby. But it wasn't enough to help remove our fear and sadness.

We got ID cards, SIN numbers, and opened our bank account in the first week. It seems simple, but it isn't simple for newcomers without confidence.

SETTLEMENT

Although we had a plan for moving toward our target, I became depressed. I was such a sociable person in my country but I couldn't communicate with other people in Canada because of my English level. I went to college and took a business analysis course to improve my English and business knowledge in Canada. It was so difficult for me as a perfectionist and as a shy immigrant to do all the assignments the same as my other, native classmates. I was under pressure because I didn't want to accept that I needed time to become comfortable in my new situation. After passing two months in my school year, I had surgery for something that seemed to be cancer. It was a tragic, ridiculous happening.

When I was alone in the hospital, I found that I had to help myself and my family. I had a chance to achieve my childhood dreams that many people don't get. Life is very short and we have to enjoy it. I have to love challenges and find a way to use my abilities in my new life.

Luckily, it wasn't cancer, but it was a gift for me that has made me able to handle my bad feelings and depression better than before. Now, I am working on my last childhood dream and I believe I can do it.

My First Winter Surprise in Canada

Rita N. | Level 5 | Nataliya B.'s Student



My native country is Ghana, which is located in West Africa. My family and I landed in Canada in January of 2012. When I came to Canada, I was surprised about many things. What surprised me the most is the snow and trees without leaves. In my home country, the weather is usually hot; that is why, we do not have snow and the trees are always green.

The first morning in Canada when I saw snow, it scared me! I asked myself whether I could live in this country. The backyard was almost full of snow. I did not even want my kids to play in the snow thinking that they could sink in it, even though it

looked beautiful to me. When I saw the dry trees I thought that is what trees are like in Canada, and they are not going to change. Although my husband told me about the four seasons in Canada, I did not know what they look like.

It was in March when the snow started melting and the trees started to turn green. Only then did I understand the change of seasons in Canada. I now love snow even more than anyone, and I often play in the snow with my kids. Snow is fun in Canada, and the Canadians are famous for winter sports. I love Canada and all the four seasons it has. Long live Canada and God Bless this country!

Moving to Canada

Jose B. | Level 4 | Jacqueline A.'s Student



Moving to Canada from another country is a big step for any person, especially when your home country's language is not English. You need to be willing to learn a new language, new skills, and work hard. You can't really prepare yourself for all the changes you will face, but with a positive attitude you can move ahead and do better.

Two weeks after I arrived in Canada I went to write my first test in English. It was for my driver's license and when the instructor asked me how long I had been in Canada and I said two weeks she laughed at me. I wrote the test and

passed my sign test and only failed my written test by one question. The instructor was very surprised and I went back the next week and passed. Within a month I took my road test and had my Saskatchewan driver's license. I succeeded quickly because I practiced questions online and read the driver's handbook. My wife helped me to study and found me the online practice test. I also met a friend from my home country who lived half an hour away and he took me driving in the town of the test and he explained to me some of the driving rules in Canada. I spent time and studied hard which helped me to succeed.

The next thing I wanted to get was my CPR/First Aid. This course was three days long and it was a lot of new things to know. I prepared by getting the manual before the course so I could spend time practicing before class. I passed the course with 94% and was proud when I got my certificate.

After this I went and took an English placement test and that is when I was accepted into the LINC Home Study program. It took a few months to get my first teacher but then I started online classes once a week at level 3. I started at level 3 because my writing placement test was a three. I was already at level 5 in speaking and listening and level 7 in reading after being in Canada for 9 months. When I knew I would be moving to Canada I worked really hard in my home country of the Dominican Republic to learn English. When I first met my wife I didn't speak any English and I made sure I practiced daily to get better. I am still taking the LINC Home Study course and they have helped me to improve in all areas of English, especially writing. With my improved English I have been able to successfully pass three out of five classes needed for my GED. I have my Dominican Bachillerato, which is grade 12, but I want to get my Canadian grade 12, too.

I would suggest that anyone who is moving to Canada learn the basics of the English or French language before arriving in Canada. If you don't know one of the main languages of Canada your move will be even harder. I think learning new skills and improving your English language will help you to adjust faster, find jobs, and be able to do whatever you want to do in life.

My Arrival in Canada

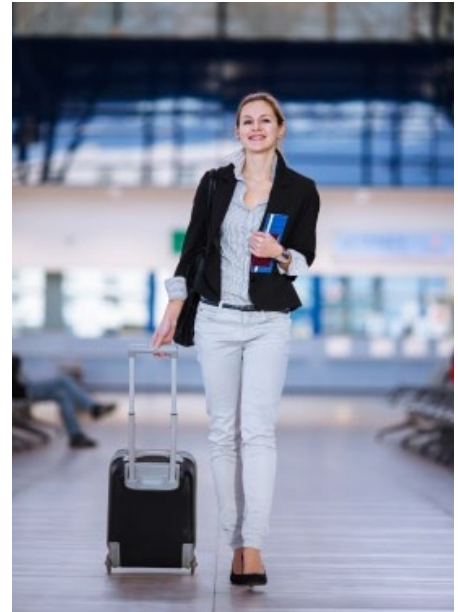
Konstantyn S. | Level 4 | Erin O.'s Student

Many years ago, I watched a movie about a big country. This country had many lakes, lots of animals, and very friendly people. This country is Canada.

I arrived in Canada 5 years ago on March 19th, 2010. My flight started in Kiev. I flew to Vienna. In Vienna I had to change aircrafts to go to Toronto. This flight was my first flight to another country. I was frightened, and I almost missed the flight. From Toronto to Saskatoon, I felt like an experienced passenger.

At first, I could not speak with Canadian people because I studied different English in college. My friends helped me in stores, at the bank and at work. After six months, my wife and daughter came to Canada. After one week in Canada, my daughter went to school. Now she is seven years old and this year she is in grade two. My wife works in a grocery store. My wife and I study English in LINC Home Study. This program is very helpful for us.

My wife and I are very happy because our dreams came true and we live in Canada. Every year we have trip to ocean and every summer we have holidays on the lakes. I think Canada is the best country in the world. Canada gave us an opportunity to turn our dreams into reality.



My First Year in Canada

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



As many of you, dear friends, my first year in Canada was a terrible shock in all areas. The first thing I would like to tell you is about my background in Ecuador. Back home in Ecuador I never studied the English language. When I was at school I studied French, then when I went to university I took English for the first time in my life, and yes everybody said English is a hard language. So at school I had the chance to take French as a subject. For over six years I studied French and after finishing school I went to continue my French studies in a French Language Center. How wrong my way was, and my choices in life too, but friend, you will never know what the future is going to bring you.

At university I did not have any choice about language, so I was forced to take English. I was so terrible at English: writing, pronunciation and phonetics. I failed the first English level, then I passed to the second level, which I failed also, then I guess I eventually passed the third level. Anyway, I do not want to bore you with this silly story. The main point is: English has been very difficult for me.

When I wasn't expecting, somebody asked if I was interested in working in a large company in Canada. I said to myself, oh this is a great opportunity to know a different culture. The farthest place that I had been was Galapagos Islands. I worked there for four months, then I missed my family so much and I went back home again. So I told my wife, honey, there is an opportunity to go to work in Canada, yes in Canada, and I would like to try it. The job contract is going to be just for a couple of years and I will come home next summer. She almost died, but at that time that long trip was not sure yet. Then I asked her, should I do the application or not, and after we thought and discussed about it many times, she said I don't want you go so far but you can try it. She really trusted me, and she is still trusting me a lot. I sent my application in July, 2007, and I took the flight to Saskatchewan, Canada in March, 2008.

Then my new life history began, and without English, neither family or friends I felt like dying. Today I am still here at the same place, and my dear wife as well as my two children are still back home after seven years next March. Dear friend, you can do it too. It is so hard, but with a strong will and courage, you can make it happen.

Our Trip to Canada

Vlady I. | Level 5 | Joseph N.'s Student



Immigrants know how long it takes to get papers to come to Canada. So after two years of waiting in Ukraine we finally got our Permanent Resident documents. We bought our tickets right away and were ready to leave Ukraine after three weeks. The magic day was Wednesday, November 28, 2012.

At 6 a.m. we (me, my husband and one-year-old daughter) left our apartment and went to the nearest airport located in another city three hours' drive away. Everything was good and organized: new tenants would move into our apartment later that day and the furniture was scheduled to move out on the same day too. When we arrived

at airport, we were advised that our flight was delayed for one hour because of the fog. Actually, we had to change 3 planes - Odessa - Istanbul - Toronto - Regina - and waiting time was a couple of hours between flights. After some time we were informed that the plane was going to be delayed for more than three hours or even cancelled. So I figured that we would be late for our second plane or won't leave Ukraine that day. Turkish Airlines advised that they were going to change our tickets to Friday. With our one-year-old child we had to go back home to our city, where we didn't have a place to stay because there were tenants in our apartment. I was so upset. On our way back I called my tenants and asked them to move in on Friday. Thankfully, they were agreeable with that. Anyway, we came back to our apartment with no furniture and stayed there for two more days.

The second "magic" day was Friday, November 30, 2012. We had the same agenda as on Wednesday. And when we came to airport the second time, our flight was delayed for one hour because of the fog again. I couldn't believe that at first. After they extended delay time for 1 more hour my husband said to me, "If we don't leave today, I'm not going to come back to this airport again. I'll stay in Ukraine. It's a sign!"

After a couple of hours of waiting I realized that we were late for our next flight already. Turkish Airlines gave me these options: to leave today, stay one night at a Turkish hotel and leave for Canada the next day or come back to airport on Monday again. For sure I chose the first one and we left Ukraine after a couple of hours.

It was the worst flight in my life, we get lost in the airport and we took the wrong bus to the wrong hotel at 11 pm in Turkey - all these were nothing for me because I was so excited to move to Canada and we were on our way.

Next day we came to Istanbul airport and on the screen were displayed 100 flights and only one was delayed for 4 hours. It was our flight to Toronto. I was stressed out and asked myself: Why is it happening with us? It took some time to find the Turkish Airlines office in Istanbul airport. They advised that we would be late on our flight from Toronto to Regina, so we had the options to stay one more night in Turkey or leave the same day for Toronto, stay one night there and fly to Regina the next day. I knew that it was -20 in Regina so we traveled in winter jackets and winter boots. But in Turkey it was + 20, so we felt really hot all of our time there. Anyway we left Turkey the same day. On the 10-hour flight with a one-year-old child, everybody was so tired. Finally at 11 pm we came to Toronto airport. We got our 5 pieces of luggage, passed an immigration officer, stayed in the long waiting line, but we were in Canada! Thankfully, Turkish Airlines provided us with a hotel. We had a very short night and the next day left Toronto on time. That last flight was the hardest, especially for my daughter.

On Sunday, December 2, 2014, in the afternoon we landed in Regina. We were so excited. My mom met us at the airport and told us that the whole city of Regina had already been waiting for us for 4 days. But when we went outside it was so windy and cold, at -25. My husband said to me, "It's so cold here. I wanna go back to Ukraine."

I travel a lot, but this trip was the longest and hardest in my life so far.

My First Day In Canada

Robeena N. | Level 5 | Constance W.'s Student



I came to Canada on January 11, 2011 to Toronto. My husband and his family came to pick me up at the airport. I was very happy to see my husband. It was very cold that day. It was snowing outside. I saw snow for the first time. I thought cotton balls were falling from the sky. I had a big smile on my face. I enjoyed watching the snow so much. At night time we all came home to Ottawa and I was very tired.

When I arrived in Ottawa at my husband's house, I noticed everything looked new to me. I noticed that there was always electricity and my mind was happy. In

Pakistan the electricity is not reliable. When I went in the washroom I did not wear shoes; that was new for me. The dishwasher was also new for me. The windows in the house were different than houses in Pakistan. In Pakistan we do not have basements.

Also the weather was opposite. The roads were big and smooth and the driving was on a different side of the road.

There were so many differences but I was excited to be in Canada.

Coming to Canada

Yao L. | Level 4 | Christine L.'s Student



Canada was not my first choice to live. Around 2000 I failed to get a visa to the USA. Then I thought that the next logical place to go would be Canada because it was close to the USA. I applied for a Canadian visa. The Canadian visa was easier to get than the USA visa. In April 2006, I came to Toronto. I felt the weather was still cool for April, and the buildings were low. It looked like a big village.

I am from Guangzhou, Canton, China. It is very warm in April, around 30 Celcius. There are about 15 million people in my hometown, which is about half of Canada. There are fewer buildings in Toronto and it is a lot smaller than I am used to.

I now live in North Bay where the average winter temperature is -20 Celcius! I had to buy lots of warm clothes, but I'm still very cold in the winter. The winters are very long here, so I keep busy by working hard. I started working in a Chinese restaurant. Then after six years, I bought my own Chinese restaurant and work there with my mother and sister.

The people are nice in North Bay. On holidays some Chinese people get together for a party at my house. Most of them work in restaurants or schools, as teachers. Some are international students and they go to school at Canadore College. Many are studying to become pilots and about 70% will go back to China to work.

I tell my friends and family back home that they should come to Canada. The food is safer to eat and the air is cleaner and nicer than in China. The people are really nice and quiet. There aren't very many people here, but we like it.

Bus Fuss

Lucia V. | Level 5 | Emily S.'s Student

My family and I came to Canada two years ago. When you come to a new country, you have mixed feelings, such as happiness to have arrived in a better country, sadness to be leaving family back home, hope that everything will be all right, and fear because you don't know how long it will take. I think that it is my responsibility as a mom to try to give my children everything that is necessary to start a new life, including security and emotional stability.

In the first week, I had to begin the settlement process, including translating some documents to register my kids at school. At that time, my husband had just begun to work, so I had to do this by myself. I looked up the information on the website and found the address of the office and the person who might help me. My next step was checking all the things I needed: documents, address, and phone number, and most importantly, the Google Maps instructions with everything written down—bus route number, departure times, stop numbers, everything. The next day, I decided to invite my oldest daughter to come with me, because I felt she needed to get out and see the town.

We were ready. We walked to the bus terminal and waited for Bus Number 7. In fact, it was a little weird, because the bus arrived 3 minutes before the scheduled time. We didn't think anything of it and just got in. The bus started to move but the first stop wasn't the same as I had in my plan. Then my daughter began to notice that the times and stops didn't match, and she said, "Mom, I think we are lost!" I looked at her and smiled and answered, "No, we are not," but I couldn't hide my face. It was turning red and showing that I was a little scared. So my daughter took a deep breath and went to ask the driver.

I should mention, my English was not great. I didn't feel confident about it. My daughter came back and explained that we had taken the wrong bus. We had taken the 7a instead of the 7, and it went the opposite way! Now we had to choose between waiting on the bus, returning to the terminal, and going back home or taking another route with several transfers on the way. I thought, "I don't know this town, I don't understand when people talk to me, and I am responsible for my daughter." So I decided to go back home. I said that to my daughter. She looked at me and told me, "No, Mom, we can do it; we need to do it, so even if this takes us all day, we are going to make it—we have to do it!" This was a special moment, because I understood that my baby had grown up, and now I had a best friend, a partner in this adventure of building a life in Canada.



Never Give Up on Hope

Hao Y. | Level 7 | Emily S.'s Student



When new immigrants first come to Canada, it is always hard. Even if the economic well-being is rather better than decades ago, still, the inner anxiety is the pain that every newcomer has to suffer. We got pulled out of basically everything we were familiar with, and no matter how successful we were, it goes back to Zero.

People who come here as new tend to shy away from society, not only because there are language barriers, but also because of the culture shock they have encountered. Humans have the ability to automatically protect themselves from uncertain things to avoid further harm. When it comes to social interaction, newcomers become isolated.

Some will lose their confidence and eventually give up and go back to their homelands. But the majority of us are determined to stay and live another life starting from scratch, with the hope that someday, we'll realize our dreams and ambitions and get back to the same quality of life we used to have.

The process is tough, but we shall never give up on hope, which will guide our way like a lighted shed in a cold, dark winter. We shall believe that as long as we have our goals in sight, we will finally reach them.

The good thing is, we have already started to witness success from some immigrants. They have built up a life here, sometimes even outperforming locals. Some are even starting to have a voice in the policy of this country. That's truly amazing.

There is a saying that "quitters never win and winners never quit!" What I will do as a newcomer is to work hard and keep going, until I reach my destiny. One thing I do believe is that I came here to succeed, not to fail.

Keep the hope, keep on going!

It was a beautiful Day

Mohamed N. | Level 7 | Jonathan B.'s Student

It was a beautiful, bright and sunny day and everyone was happy and we had a great feeling and we were smiling like a fool. We were at the ceremony on that day to get our Canadian citizenship.

It is great after you have left your world behind to create a new one. You leave behind those relatives and friends and start to settle down in Canada and work hard to climb to succeed in your new life.

After everyone took his place, the ceremony began, the judge and guests entered and we took the Oath and repeated the national anthem of Canada. Then they announced that now we are Canadian citizens. They started to give us our citizenship certificate and the guest filled in some words. After that we took photos with the judge, guest and our family.

It was really a great feeling on that day.



My Life Before and After Imigrated

Almaz B. | Level 3 | Nahed S.'s Student

I am from Ethiopia. I was born in Bahardar city. I attended school in Ethiopia and graduated from high school. I missed my school and friends. When I was a teenager I helped my mom. I didn't go to collage because I didn't get the chance. After that I got married and had kids but fortunately my husband got a good chance and travelled to Canada. I was happy and sad both things it was a difficult time for me.

After he arrived in Canada he started our process immediately but the process took five years. We came to Canada two years ago thanks to God and to my husband . Actually Canada is a beautiful and peaceful country I am working and learning with LINC Home Study now.



A Life of Beauty

Sun Y. | Level 6 | James H.'s Student



I immigrated to Canada in 2001. When I arrived in Canada, I did not know how to support myself. It was even harder for me because I did not speak English. So the first thing that I did was to ask around. When I did, the people around me told me to go to the immigration centre. When I got there, they suggested I do two things. First, they suggested I enrol in a language school so that I could learn more about Canadian culture and become fluent in English so that I could communicate with people. Second, when I told them that I had an esthetician certificate from Korea, the immigration worker recommended that I apply for an esthetician position in a nail salon. Soon after my visit to the immigration centre, I applied for a position as an Esthetician and I got hired. While working as an esthetician for 3 years, I built a lot of clientele. When I had enough experience and clients, I decided to open up my own business. But it was not easy to start a business because there was a lot of competition. With a lot of trial and errors, I have now owned a nail salon for more than 10 years, with 1001 regular clients that come throughout the seasons. Also I have close to 380 followers on my nail salon Facebook page. My salon is always looking for new

methods to apply to artificial nails, waxing, pedicures and facials to bring the best satisfaction to the clients. I am happy with my job, and I love working with a wonderful full time esthetician who is working for me. I thank God everyday for giving me this business to support my three children who are going to university. I thank him also because this business has allowed me to meet different clients who have helped me to improve my English. I know that my English is still not perfect but I want to try more. Thankfully, this year, I have met a wonderful LINC Home Study teacher who has always encouraged me to study, and I think my writing and speaking has improved a lot from last year.

My Adventure in Canada

Ivette C. | Level 5 | John W.'s Student

When I arrived to Canada in January 2011, it was a wonderful moment for me because I finally received my Canadian resident card. This time I could live with my husband in Canada. It had been two long years of living far away from my husband, Mike.

We were married in 2009, but were living in different countries, and both missing each other. Finally, in September 2010, I received my resident card and we decided I would come to Canada in January 2011. I arrived in a small town in central Ontario without too many opportunities, no bus service, no friend and no opportunity to have an English class.



At this time, my mother-in-law passed away. Thankfully, I found a very nice friend who spoke Spanish. We built a good friendship. I watched TV in Spanish, too, and spent a lot of time speaking with my mother and sisters by the Internet. It was three months later when I began an LINC Home Study's, English online. Also, I found some others like me, and went one day a week to practice English conversation.

This first year in Canada was so difficult because I missed my mother, my sisters, my friends, my house, my car, the hot weather in Colombia, my freedom and especially my independence. During this time of change, my husband worked long hours, and I was alone almost all day. One day my friend talked to me about volunteering in a nursing home. I thought this was a good opportunity for me because I would get out of the house, meet more people and speak English with Canadians.

The time passed. Easter came and went, and then the summer arrived. The growing flowers in my garden were beautiful. I went to the beach with my husband and my friends. We attended a few festivals, went to parties and concerts. After this perfect time, the weather started to change and soon in November, I saw a lot of snow on the grass. No-o-o-o!!! I asked myself. What am I doing here?

Christmas and New Year passed. My life continued, and I went one day a week to volunteer at a nursing home, but I had many difficulties because I didn't have transportation, the weather was sometimes cold, sometimes windy, sometimes raining. All these changes in my life made living in Canada more difficult.

I decided to take a driving test. I found that I could take the test in my own language, Spanish! I studied and prepared myself. I took the test in June 2013. I pass, and I got my G1. Now, I could to drive with my husband! After one year, I could apply for my G2.

One day, my friend who was working at the nursing home, told me they needed a person for the laundry

SETTLEMENT

department. I thought this was a good opportunity for me, because I would get out of the house. This would give me the chance to meet new people, make money, and to improve my English. Probably because I was volunteering at the nursing home, they accepted my application! I got the job, but I worked in this department by myself, all alone. I did not have the opportunity to speak with other people. I was so busy! At lunch time, I spoke Spanish with my friend. When I arrived home, I felt so tired that I didn't want study English.

That winter was so terrible for me! Why? I had a difficult job, and I saw no progress in my English. I lost my goal. I lost myself, but I always continued with my LINC Home Study class on line. My teacher helped to me a lot. He always motivated me. We not only spoke about English in class, but also he helped me to know about different changes in my behavior due to the terrible winter weather. He gave me ideas about finding a job, continuing my education and other interesting topics. Finally, I made the decision to quit my job at the retirement home, and to put more time into studying English. My life changed a lot!!!

Now I am going to a privately funded literacy school. This has been very helpful to me. I have new friends, and they speak English! Although I went to school in my country many years ago, new technology has changed the style of life, and how we communicate. At this new school, I take a computer class, practice my punctuation, and grammar. I even practice my mathematics skills, and other interesting topics. Now I want to continue my learning and prepare for my future. Fortunately, I was able to pass my G2 driving license, and now I can drive myself!

The winter is a difficult season for everyone, even Canadians. I read a lot about this, and I know people need to wear the proper clothes to keep the body warm. People take hot showers in winter, drink a lot of water, and you should maintain your house in winter by clearing the snow and ice. Also, the winters are long and dark, so you need to have a lot of bright light in your house during this time. After a few months, you can enjoy the beautiful summer in Canada!

Moving to another country is a very difficult thing to do, but when I came to Canada the people here enjoyed helping me to settle in this new country. Even though my English was not good, the people here were always kind, friendly and encouraged me to speak. At the retirement home and at the school, everyone wanted me to be involved and seemed to want my company. Although the winters are very difficult where I live, my experience in Canada and with other Canadians has been very positive.

Facing Life as an Immigrant

Adriana R. | Level 6 | Rima B.'s Student

Immigration has been present throughout the human history. To seek for new opportunities in other countries have been the choice of many people. There are different or multiple reasons for each case, but in general terms, the common denominator is to begin a new phase where people can improve different aspects of personal life. At this point, immigrants should think about an important fact: the positive side of immigration is learning about different cultures and immigrants must be able to improve not only economically but intellectually and emotionally.

Immigration is the process by which people move from their place of origin to a new territory. This is a drastic change in culture, language and values. Many of the psychological phenomena that appear in immigrant's life are related with what people left behind, such as family, friends, emotional ties and the personal history of each one. For these reasons, people can feel fear of the future, loss of identity and feeling of guilt for leaving the loved ones.

When immigrants arrive to the host country, they jump into new situations and need to adapt quickly to them. As a part of the adaptation process, a state of mental, emotional and physical tension called "stress" is activated, pushing the individual to be vigilant and observant, which means in an alert state of mind, but when the stress exceeds normal levels, it initiates a state of anxiety and nervousness that prevents individuals from doing activities properly; generating a sequence where errors, fear and concern, due to demanding circumstances worsen anxiety. If it is extended over a long period of time, there could appear other psychological problems as depression, guilt and feelings of loneliness which might lead the individual into fear, refusal or failure to adjust into the new culture.

In most cases, people overcome these fears, and gradually are successfully involved in their new life. Individuals are different and how they cope with their new life depends on their personal skills, but it is good to be open to learning both, the new language and the lifestyle in the host country. Fitting and diving into the new culture does not mean changing the identity, or forgetting the roots, but adding to what the person already is. It means, becoming more than the sum of the two cultures.



Choices

Mervat Y. | Level 6 | Terese C.'s Student



Life is very short, so we always try to have a better life for us and our kids; and to do so, sometimes we have to make big decisions and adapt to new circumstances. One of these big decisions we made is changing the place where we live, in other words, “immigrate to another country.” Immigration is a very big step in one’s life; it needs a high degree of flexibility and adaptation.

I currently live in Canada so I have had this experience but it was difficult because I was used to living in my home country Egypt for more than 36 years. Egypt and Canada are so different in so many ways; so, I’m going to compare them in some major areas like education, economy, climate and population.

First, education in Egypt has a very modest rate among the best systems in the world as a result of its poor quality. It has very low salaries, administrative problems, and high student dropout rates. Even though it is free until the university, it still needs a lot of improvement especially in curriculum development, as the curriculum is not related to the knowledge one needs in working life. In addition, Egyptian education isn’t recognized throughout the world; whereas in Canada, Canadian education is among the best in the world, and Canadian high school graduation diplomas are recognized internationally. In Canada, most school boards offer non-religious education, although in a few provinces some religious schools are also publicly funded.

Second, Canada is a developed country; it has a very large economy based on the service sector, but also Canada is unusual among developed countries in the importance of the primary sector, with the logging and oil industries being two of Canada’s most important. Canada also has a sizable manufacturing sector, with the automobile industry and aircraft industry. Canada has a very low rate of unemployment and a high standard of living. On the other hand, Egypt is an undeveloped country; it has a very modest economy, based on importing and agriculture. Egypt has a very high unemployment rate and the instability of the current government is not helping the economic situation.

Third, with more than 86 million people, Egypt is the largest Arabic country in the region. Most of its population is young which makes it a very young country. While Canada’s population is only 30 million; most of them are older people. Canada also has extreme cold winters which extend to autumn and spring. By contrast, Egypt has very good weather all year with clear and sunny skies which makes the country very alive.

Finally, in my opinion, everyone can’t have everything; one has to choose according to one’s priorities. For me, I sacrificed the wonderful climate and my social life for my kids’ futures.

Life in Canada for Newcomers

Yoseph E. | Level 7 | Fernand V.'s Student

My name is Yoseph. I'm from Ethiopia. I came to Canada with my twin boys. I was sponsored by my wife. Now I have been in Canada for four and half years. Within those four years lots of things have happened in my life. Today I am going to write about some of these happenings.

When I first came to Canada I was worried about how to survive in this new life, weather and culture. For me everything was new because I had never gone too far away from home.

When I arrived in Canada, it was spring time and I had very nice weather. After one month I went to ESL classes, while I was looking for a job. I had been a photographer and a photo editor in my native Ethiopia but here I couldn't find anything in my field. I had poor English communication skills and a strong accent.

Life is hard for newcomers. You have to start everything from scratch. I went looking for any job. I believe that God must have been with me and I became lucky: someone told me go to an agency. I went there, took the test and I passed. I started a new job in a car seat company. The bad thing was that I couldn't continue with my ESL classes and had to stop my English lessons until I got accepted by LINC Home Study.

My first impression is that Canada is a beautiful country. Everywhere I look I see green parks, children's playgrounds, cute houses that almost look identical but with different flowers. In winter comes cold and snow. I saw snow here for the first time in my life, I enjoyed it then but not anymore. Most Canadians are helpful and friendly but some are unfriendly.

I like Canada: the freedom and the legal system. In conclusion, I have messed up a lot, but I think that Canada is a very good country to live in for my children: they will have many opportunities in the future.





Skills

Canadian Workplace Culture

Natalya I. | Level 4 | Jacqueline A.'s Student



A few months ago I read the book “Canadian Workplace Culture” by Matt Adolphe. In this book, the author lists 10 unspoken rules that may help you to fit in the Canadian workplace. I made some notes for myself and I will be happy to share the information that can be useful for you as well.

Changing cultures is difficult for everyone, because every culture has its own cultural norms and rules, including the workplace culture. Looking for a new job for a new Canadian is not an easy process, but fitting in at a workplace can be especially difficult. Therefore, in order to succeed in the Canadian Workplace, we

should learn the unspoken rules of how to adapt in a new culture and make some adjustments to fit in.

The first rule that I have learned is to put the feelings of others first. This rule is about conversations and communication in the Canadian workplace. In order to fit in at a new workplace, we have to read the non-verbal signs of our colleagues and be prepared to put our interests aside. For example, if you had a great weekend and you want to share the details with your colleague, but he looks a little unhappy or upset, you may want to put your happy subject aside and just listen to what your colleague wants to share/say. Conversation and listening in the workplace are true opportunities to show that you are always willing to put others first. In Canada, if you have a habit of putting people first and being a good listener, you become a valuable part of any team.

The second rule is to work hard at the job and at fitting in at a new company. The key to being successful in the Canadian workplace is to never let yourself feel that you are indispensable. How hard you work determines how valuable you are, and not how indispensable you feel. First, you need to observe the company culture and conform to it as best as you can. Second, always be aware that people are watching you very closely. Third, success in any workplace is based on how well you understand and adapt to it. You are being hired not only for how good and professional you are, but because you may have the ability to fit in at the company.

Another rule that I found interesting is about using everyday conversation strategies in your workplace. There are several topics that will always be safe for conversations with your co-workers. The weather is the hottest topic for Canadians and you can always start to speak about it. Also, Canadians are using small talk that can start from anything, such as movies, TV and some current events. If you will not try to participate, you might be instantly judged and avoided, so stay up to date with the news, movies and events. However during the conversations, there are many things we should avoid. For example, some people like to talk about politics in the workplace, but some really don't, so try to keep conversations using safe topics.

This information I found interesting for myself, and I hope you found it interesting and useful, too. The Canadian workplace isn't better or worse than any other workplace in the world. It's simply different and has different rules. Your success depends on how hard you work at following them. With time and experience you will adapt and better understand the Canadian workplace culture.

Getting My Class 1-A Driver's License

Pehn M. | Level 5 | Jacqueline A.'s Student



In Canada, the biggest working skill challenge that I have been successful in is getting my Class 1-A driver's license. (In Saskatchewan Class 1-A means heavy truck driver's license with air brake) Since my second year in Canada, I have been employed at a trucking company. The first couple years at the company I was working as a cleaner. During that time I impressed the boss and he tried to lead me to be a driver. I thought that was impossible. I cannot be a driver because driver was not my dream job and I did not even see any vehicles in my village before I came to Canada. He let me ride with some professional drivers for many months. Finally, he sent me to a driving course. As I was an inexperienced driver, I was facing a lot of trouble when I took the course.

In the first week of the course, I was so nervous when I got into a truck because the semi looked so big and so scary to me. When the truck started moving, I forgot everything I was supposed to do with the truck. In this case, double clutching and shifting were too hard for me. By the end of the week, the instructor called my boss and said I

was not ready to drive yet. I heard my boss say, "let him try until the end of the course and we will see what happens." My instructor also told me that my improvement was zero. I was so disappointed by what he told me, but there was nothing I could do about that.

On the weekend, I knew I was really blessed because when I was sitting in my chair in my bedroom and I was full of worry, I got an idea that I could practice shifting gears myself. Then, I sat in my chair and started moving my hand and foot slowly like the technique of double clutching and shifting gears. I had practiced faster and faster, over and over for two days. I thought it was a really handy secret technique because I could move my hand and foot as many times as I want. I did not worry about my instructor and that the truck would give me bad reactions if my hand and my foot act incorrectly.

In my second week, I knew I did much better because anytime I needed to act, my hand and foot worked smoothly and correctly the same way as I did at home. Then, my instructor said, "why did you do so bad last week?" I replied, "your semi looks smaller this week," and he laughed at me. "I shrank my truck on the weekend". Honestly, as soon as I could double clutch and shift gears accurately, I felt much more comfortable to drive.

By the end of the second week, I took a road test. I was so worried about passing or not because I was still nervous when I was observed by somebody. Anyway, I paid careful attention to what the examiner told me. I tried my best. I drove all the way until I was a block away from the yard, but my truck engine never died. The truck never jumped. I never messed up on gears and clutching. When I was a block away from the yard the

examiner told me I passed. Then my truck engine was killed in a second because I was too happy and I forgot to shift the gears. The examiner told me “ok let’s stop here” I thought I failed because I was out of control. Then, she explained what I did. “I think you did great. By the way, you looked a little too nervous. I have to take one point off for that reason. Anyway you passed.”

In that moment, my boss called me. He sounded so exited and he asked me, “Are you happy?” “Yes I am happy”. I told myself “I am not so happy because I know I will be driving your truck sometime from now. I really don’t like trucking.” At that time trucks were still looking scary to me. Unfortunately, the week after that, there was a position that needed to be filled immediately and I was told take over the position. I had no option to say no and I just accepted. I thought that the company that I work for normally trains a new driver at least 2 weeks. I was trained one day and then sent out by myself. As I was not trained properly, I had a lot of trouble in the first couple weeks. After that, I did better and better and now I think I like the job very much. The skill that is not my dream and I have successfully completed is getting my driver’s license.

Learning English

Jafar H. | Level 6 | Linda C.’s student

One of the great difficulties that I had in my life was not understanding people when I first came to Canada. That was so disappointing for me. I had a really a lot of confidence before I came to Canada and I thought that I won’t have any problem with my English until I came to Canada. Since I was a kid, I wanted to learn English, so one of the first things that I did, enrolling myself to the YMCA for English class. At the same time, I started working with my father in law at his store in the mall. I still remember one day I was in the store and my father-in-law was eating his lunch at the back of the store where no one was able to see him. A man came and asked for something. I didn’t understand him at all, so I asked my father-in-law to come and see what that man needed. Since my father-in-law had heard and understood that man, he told me to give him one of the hangers on the rack. I was wondering, how my father-in-law understood him and I didn’t. I was thinking to myself, can I talk and understand people like my father-in-law one day? I would think I would never understand people like my father-in-law. So I started looking for my weakness. At the beginning I was afraid of speaking to people until I noticed that the same people that I was afraid of were helping by correcting me with rephrasing the word after me. So I got to a conclusion that no matter how I felt, I would not give up and I worked hard to understand English better.



Skills

Taras L. | Level 6 | Jacqueline A.'s Student



Being a successful person and supporting our families is our priority and responsibility in this world, as well as the key to a prosperous and fortunate life. To become such a person we have to be literate, hard-working and ambitious. Moreover, we have to strive to achieve what we have planned and never slow down, as this fairly often causes laziness and bad luck.

All we know is that every workspace requires talented, skilled, dedicated and experienced employees. When applying for a job, many of us have encountered the same

problem. It seemed that we found the posting for a job we were looking for, but we were not accepted due to a lack of experience. To avoid this issue, everyone has to acquire and gain relevant skills from various experiences for the job we want.

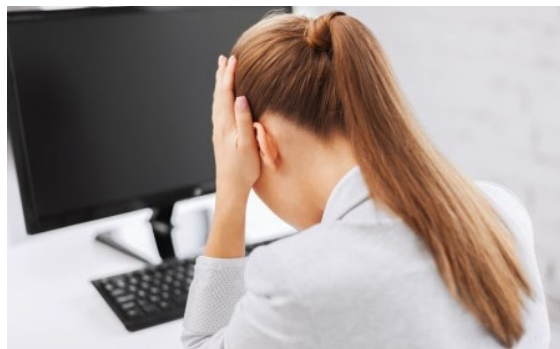
Finding and getting a job nowadays is way easier than it used to be. Now a job can be found through the Internet without even leaving the house. There are thousands of various positions we can find on the Internet every day that suits everyone. If luck is not on our side yet - volunteering is a good start to find a decent job. Volunteers are always wanted and required. Despite that work for volunteers is unpaid for some period, they gain impressive experience, meet important people and can look for a job they like to deal with. It is a very big asset if there is the volunteer's background in a resume. Moreover, being a volunteer, you can show to your potential employers that you are a hard worker, and if you really are they will keep you and ensure you a fantastic working atmosphere with an acceptable salary or wage.

As I have written at the beginning - skills and experience are the two most essential components we need to succeed when we are looking for a job. I emphasise that the best ways to obtain various skills are studying, volunteering and attending diverse courses and classes. Every following year, we will encounter different challenges in our life and at work. To avoid that, we have to study and be familiar with everything. The more experience we have, the easier life is going to be. The more time we dedicate to studying, the better job we will be able to find.

Complain Less, Study More

Tian T. | Level 7 | Jonathan B.'s Student

Sometimes, I'm reluctant to face the fact that I am in a new country, and I have to study English, this strange language. Many people think Mandarin Chinese or Cantonese is the most difficult language to learn. As a Chinese, I thought English is the wildest language in the world. Why do I say this? There are no grammar rules and exceptions in Chinese like English past, present and future tenses drive me crazy... and words which have silent pronunciation of for example 'k'. How can I find the clue to remember all those wild rules?



I'm jealous of my husband a lot. I always think he has innate superiority in learning languages. He can speak six different languages! I have no idea how he does that. When I want to give up learning English, my husband and my daughter always encourage me to keep on learning. They told me, I am lucky with the silver lining that I am in Canada. I have the environment of the English language. I used to feel it daunting when I spoke English in front of people. I have a little confidence right now, even though I have a Chinese accent. Every day I tell myself: Life is life, complain less-study more.

"Life is not the way it's supposed to be, it's the way it is. The way you cope with it is what makes the difference." Virginia Satir.

Houston to Honduras, Por Favor

Delmy F. | Level 5 | James H.'s Student

I want to tell you about my first trip to the USA around ten years ago. At that time I really learned that English is a very important language to learn.

I flew to Houston, TX. I went there to visit my sisters for two weeks. My flight there was good but it wasn't the same on my way back to Honduras. My cousin Neptaly gave me a ride to the airport at 6:00 a.m. He had to go to work. For that reason, he just left me at the front gate. Although I didn't speak English, I told him that I could do it. I had some knowledge of English. I thought that was good enough to manage any situation. So I walked inside the big room and I joined the passenger's line.



The line was very long and it took a lot of time to get to the front counter to talk with the officer. When I arrived there, she told me that I was in the wrong line because it was for Nationals trips but I didn't understand. I knew something was going really bad and I started to feel nervous. She tried to explain to me the situation but I was really lost. So she started to find somebody to speak Spanish on the phone. When she found someone, that person started to explain to me and gave me the right direction to get in the correct line because the problem was that my cousin left me at the wrong gate. The international gate was so far away from the national gate and I had to walk a lot to get there. By the time I arrived there, I was too late. It was just 20 minutes before the plane took off and I had another problem there. I had in some perfume in my handbag which were prohibited. For that reason they needed to look through all the bags. It made the situation worse because I couldn't get on the plane. I missed it. I started to cry like a baby.

Everybody tried to tell me, not to worry and that everything would be fine. They gave me another ticket to get another plane the next day. I was worried because I needed to go back to work the next day. I really wanted to come back that day. I called Honduras to explain the situation to my boss. After I called my sister because I needed somebody to come for me at the airport but she was sleeping during the day because she was tired. I tried a lot times until she got my call phone and nobody was in the house to pick me up.

So finally, I took a taxi home. My sisters were making jokes about me because many people cry to stay in the USA but I was crying because I couldn't get out. I really loved my country and I wanted to come back. Since that day I knew that I needed to start some English courses.

My Experience with Volunteering

Adil M. | Level 4 | John W.'s Student

I belong to the human race, and this pushes me to integrate by participating in social activities such as volunteering. Giving of my time and my energy for the benefit of other people without obtaining a financial reward is the definition of volunteering.

Indeed, volunteering was always for me a good way to help others, especially for me as a new arrival, it's a great way to fit while combining work with pleasure.

One day, on my way to the Francophone center in Toronto, I found a workbook that contained information and a website on the Pan American Games to be held in Toronto between 10 and 26 July 2015. The Parapan American Games that will also take place in Toronto between on 07 and 15 August 2015. The organizers of these two major sporting events needed the help of over 20,000 volunteers. That's when I decided to be part of the Pan American experience, so I returned to the website and I start applying to be a volunteer. They were quick to answer me with a positive response, after having some time to check all the information that I had sent.

After a few weeks, I had a telephone interview. In the end, the supervisor congratulated me and told me that I had been accepted to be a volunteer. I think this was partly due to having worked as a volunteer at the World Cup in Germany; and my ability to speak several languages undoubtedly helped my application.

Now, I only wait for the final call from my supervisor. He will tell me, according to my skills, what position I will have during the games. All volunteers then will have pre-training that will help them to work in their position successfully.

Finally, I am sure that my participation will be positive, and that all the volunteers will play an important role in creating a better environment for the success of this great event!



Computer Course for Seniors

Zhao W. | Level 6 | Maha S.'s Student



Why not take the computer courses at our community college?

Still doubt the value of these courses? They are surely worth it! In modern society, being unable to use a computer is a great regret for many seniors. When you complete these courses, you will at least grasp the basic knowledge of computers and the simple usage of the Internet, and you will no longer feel strange with or be frightened by these powerful tools. Then, you can do the many interesting things that you have wanted to do for a long time - such as searching for information about self-care for elder people, sharing your experiences on gardening, or finding someone to play chess with.

Worried about the complexity of the courses? Not to worry! Take TV for example, watching TV is much easier than designing a TV, isn't it? Indeed, you don't need to master electronics before you enjoy watching TV. Similarly, using computers is far simpler than developing computers; since we are just the users and not the developers.

Additionally, our courses are specially designed for seniors. They are divided into many phases, from beginning to skilled; you can choose a level suitable for you. What is more, you will get one-on-one and hands-on instruction during your study. That is really helpful! Being a senior, you may have endeavored and overcome many troubles in the past decades. You surely can handle these challenges today!

In short, taking our courses is one of the most meaningful ways for your intellectual well-being! Don't idle the time of third age! Let us see you at the community college!

The Best Time to Learn a Language

Ambika L. | Level 5 | Terese C.'s Student

Language is the one of the main ways to communicate with people around the world. Language is a human ability. When babies are born they start to learn their mother's language at home. When they get older like 4 or 5 years old, they go to school. Some children need to learn another language, while others learn another language for a hobby. When children are in primary school, that is the best time to teach them a second language.

I think small children in primary school learn quickly. They have finely-tuned ears and also great retention. They don't get themselves worked up over their mistakes like adults. They practice more. They don't fear making mistakes or mispronouncing words like adults do. They are not shy. They don't have any kinds of problems when studying. They don't have any pressure to do homework or any family responsibilities at home. Small children can catch words faster than adults. For example, my eight-year-old son started kindergarten 4 years ago when we came to Canada and he learned English very quickly in school.



Children who study a language in secondary school have more pressure when studying, like homework. They have to spend more time on all subjects. They have to submit their assignments on time. They can't give more time to learn a second language. They fear making any mistakes or mispronouncing words. These children usually have more responsibilities at home than younger children. For example, many high school children are assigned chores like cutting grass or cleaning and washing the dishes.

Therefore, if parents want their children to learn a second language, they should have their children join a second language class in primary school rather than secondary school.

Being an Esthetician

Veerpal K. | Level 4 | Zakia S.'s Student



I am an esthetician. I have been working in this field since last five years. I chose to work as an esthetician because I love dressing up and keeping up with latest trends in fashion and makeup. I also like to help others to look good in their everyday lives.

I work in a beauty salon and love working there mainly because I love team work. We are ten girls working in same salon and I enjoy working with them because we work as a team and help each other when needed. I start work at 10 o'clock in the morning and this time is perfect time for me because I don't have to leave early in morning. At work, I do threading, waxing, facials, manicure and pedicure. People like my work a lot and many of them give me tip as well. Sometimes, I help my fellow hair dressers as well and do hair color and hair wash for them. This makes my colleagues very happy with me and I get some experience as a hair dresser as well. I love to learn new things. When we have free time, we try some new things on each other, so we learn different hairstyles, haircut or makeup technique.

I have worked very hard to be in this position, because when I came to Canada, I did not have any experience in this field. I started working as an assistant in the salon but worked very hard to learn as much as I could. My manager saw my hard work and kept giving me more challenging jobs. I now have new skills and lots of experience because of my hard work and dedication. I really enjoy what I do at work. I feel very lucky to be able to do what I enjoy. I wish one day I will open my own salon. I feel anyone who is new in Canada and is thinking of a new career should consider this career as well.

How Volunteer Work Can Help You Get a Job

Lucia R. | Level 6 | Zakia S.'s Student

I would like to describe how my volunteer work helped me to get a job and have a career that I love.

I started working as a volunteer at the Glengarry Memorial Hospital twelve months ago and was assigned a helper's job at the swimming pool. I volunteered for two days a week. My work included helping people who needed physiotherapy.

The hospital staff was very impressed with my work, and they suggested that I take a course offered by National Lifeguard Services (NLS) to become a certified lifeguard offered. They told me that I would have better job prospects after doing this course.

I had a Lifeguard Certificate from Colombia, but unfortunately it was not recognized in Canada. Their advice motivated me to take this course again despite the difficulties involved in attending classes for four different courses. To become a Certified Life Guard, you must successfully complete four course offered by NLS. The first course was Bronze Cross and Bronze Medal, the second course was First AID, the third was Red Cross and CPR and the fourth course was the NLS Core Course.

All this courses where out of town. For the first three courses, I had to travel to Cornwall; this took 45 minutes. The NLS Core Course took ten weeks. I had to leave every Friday at 4:00 pm, and returned home at 11:30 at night.

When I finally received my NLS certificate, I was immediately offered the job at the hospital. Now I'm working for ten hours a week and I'm enjoying my work very much.

I am hoping that anyone who reads this article will be encouraged to follow similar steps to find a career. Volunteering is good in many ways and sometimes it can lead to good career opportunities as well.



Glossary

Here is some vocabulary from this month's newsletter. Do you know what the words mean?

Bait (pg.7)

food used to attract fish, animals, or birds so that you can catch them

Buoy (pg.7)

an object that floats on the sea, a lake etc to mark a safe or dangerous area

Puck (pg.8)

a hard flat circular piece of rubber that you hit with the stick in the game of ice hockey

Spinning (pg.9)

the activity of doing aerobics exercises on an exercise bicycle

Ban (pg.11)

to say that something must not be done, seen, used

Recession (pg.20)

a difficult time when there is less trade, business activity etc in a country than usual

Recruiter (pg.23)

an individual who works to fill job openings in businesses or organizations.

Enthralled (pg.26)

to be fascinated by something that takes all your attention

Fjord (pg.26)

a narrow area of sea between high cliffs

Glacier (pg.26)

a large mass of ice which moves slowly down a mountain valley

Migration (pg.27)

when birds or animals travel regularly from one part of the world to another

Affable (pg.28)

friendly and easy to talk to

Fleece (pg.32)

the woolly coat of a sheep, especially the wool and skin of a sheep when it has been made into a piece of clothing

Slumber (pg.49)

sleep

Inopportune (pg.52)

happening at an unsuitable or bad time

Cosmology (pg.52)

the science of the origin and structure of the universe, especially as studied in astronomy

Atypical (pg.52)

not typical or usual

Patent (pg.60)

a special document that gives you the right to make or sell a new invention or product that no one else is allowed to copy

Ingenuity (pg.61)

skill at inventing things and thinking of new ideas

Compost (pg.75)

a mixture of decayed plants, leaves etc used to improve the quality of soil

Organic (pg.75)

relating to farming or gardening methods of growing food without using artificial chemicals, or produced or grown by these methods

Sizable (pg.96)

large

Daunting (pg.103)

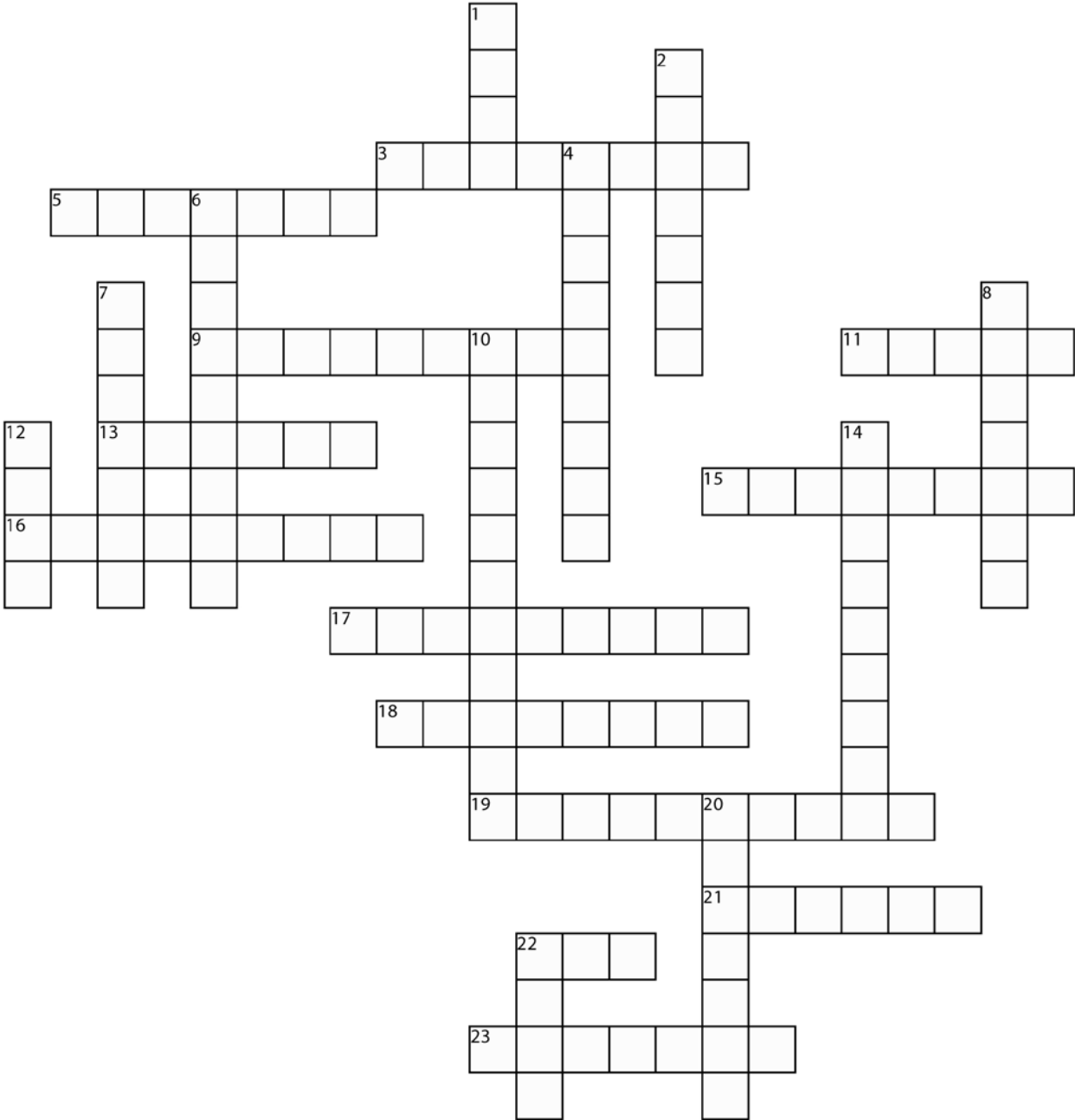
frightening in a way that makes you feel less confident:

Integrate (pg.105)

to become part of a group or society and be accepted by them, or to help someone do this

Glossary Crossword

Complete the crossword below



GLOSSARY CROSSWORD

Across

3. not typical or usual
5. sleep
9. a difficult time when there is less trade, business activity etc in a country than usual
11. a narrow area of sea between high cliffs
13. a special document that gives you the right to make or sell a new invention or product that no one else is allowed to copy
15. the activity of doing aerobics exercises on an exercise bicycle
16. the science of the origin and structure of the universe, especially as studied in astronomy
17. an individual who works to fill job openings in businesses or organizations
18. frightening in a way that makes you feel less confident
19. to be fascinated by something that takes all your attention
21. the woolly coat of a sheep, especially the wool and skin of a sheep when it has been made into a piece of clothing
22. to say that something must not be done, seen, used
23. large

Down

1. an object that floats on the sea, a lake etc to mark a safe or dangerous area
2. a large mass of ice which moves slowly down a mountain valley
4. skill at inventing things and thinking of new ideas
6. when birds or animals travel regularly from one part of the world to another
7. a mixture of decayed plants, leaves etc used to improve the quality of soil
8. relating to farming or gardening methods of growing food without using artificial chemicals, or produced or grown by these methods
10. happening at an unsuitable or bad time
12. a hard flat circular piece of rubber that you hit with the stick in the game of ice hockey
14. to become part of a group or society and be accepted by them, or to help someone do this
20. friendly and easy to talk to
22. food used to attract fish, animals, or birds so that you can catch them

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 Summer 2015 issue is June 5th.

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.

