



Language
Education
at a Distance

NEWSLINC

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF LINC HOME STUDY | WINTER 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 Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada

Contact Us

If you have questions or feedback about the LINC Home Study program or NewsLINC, please email us at: help@linchomestudy.ca

'Seasonal' Section Cover - Photo Credit: Charles Z.

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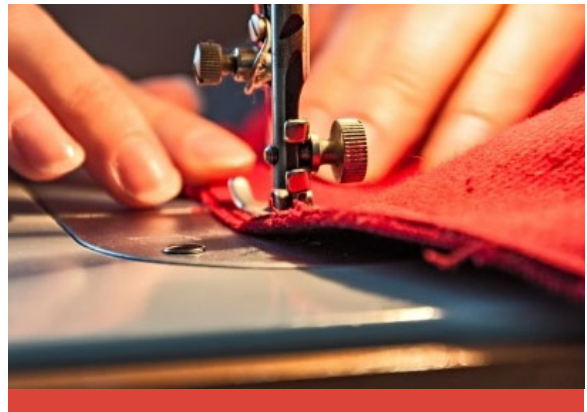
Activity

My Sewing Class

S. | Level 7 | Lesley H.'s Student

I have really been interested in sewing class since I was pretty young. I learned sewing for the first time when I was in high school. Then I improved my knowledge by practicing on my own. I joined a sewing class for the second time in the first week of October. I go to sewing class at the community centre once a week.

In the beginning of sewing class, the instructor taught me how to measure the body to make pattern for an a-line skirt. Then she taught me how to put the pattern onto a piece of fabric, to cut the fabric, and sew the fabric to make an a-line skirt. She also taught me what number of needle we use for different kinds of fabric and how to use the sewing machine properly. After that, she taught me how to make patterns for a circle skirt and a petal skirt.



My sewing instructor is very nice. The way she explains to the class is very detailed and patient. She has excellent experience and marvelous ideas. She is very neat, organized and persistent, as well. She spends a lot of time to explain when we get confused about making our pattern block. She knows how to handle her students very well and give them encouragement. She keeps posting all the new information we need and is a very punctual person. It is a pleasure to join her sewing class.

I am taking this program in the community centre. This community centre is close to where I live. There are a lot of other programs that we can join, too. For instance, beading class, yoga class, healthy food class, and so on.

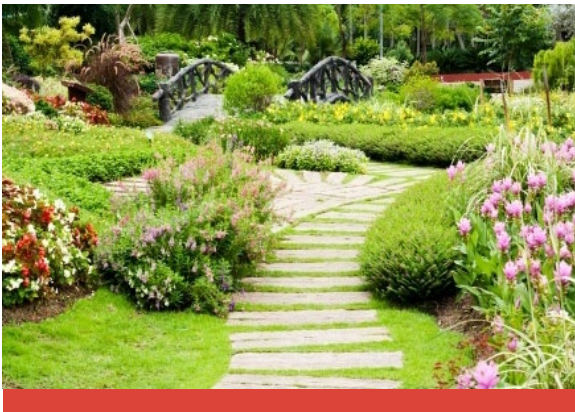
I have made some new friends over there. The atmosphere in the classroom is very nice. There are 12 students in my sewing class. Some of them are from Sri Lanka, the rest are Chinese and Brazilian. They are very friendly and we help each other most of the time. It feels like home over there.

I would like to brush up my skills in sewing some more. Recently, I just finished learning how to make some modifications of the skirt. Eventually, I will learn how to make different kinds of patterns for basic bodices, and how to cut the fabric. So then I can sew those fabrics into a shirt and make a manipulation from the basic bodice to the princess dart, shoulder dart and waist dart very soon.

I am getting excited and can't wait until the next level starts!

My First Garden in Canada

Judy Z. | Level 6 | Lisa G.'s student



When my husband and I bought a new house in Charlottetown in the spring of 2014, I was so excited because I was going to have a really huge front and back garden. However, I decided not to plant anything the first year, but instead to wait and see what had already been planted. I wasn't that impressed with what I saw, so I decided to plant different flowers in the front and vegetables in the back the following summer. I soon found out that planning a garden is much easier than planting a garden.

First, I had to dig up the grass from the area where I wanted to have my plant beds, and then I had to separate the soil from the grass by knocking small patches hard against my fist. That work was extremely hard and I wanted to give up, but I didn't even though I developed a bad allergic reaction from the grass. My eyes became swollen, red, and very irritated afterwards.

Second, I had to purchase small plants and seeds at the local garden centre. I bought 30 lilies, 15 dahlias, 9 peonies and some vegetable seeds.

Third, I measured the flower and vegetable beds and drew sketches in order to arrange them. The acreage of both beds totals 450 square feet.

Fourth, I dug holes and planted my new flowers and bulbs following the planting instructions in the front yard. Next, I covered them with soil and mulch. In the back yard, I scattered the vegetable seeds on the other bed.

After that, I waited and waited and waited...

At last, all the lilies, dahlias and peonies sprouted young buds. I was so happy. The flowers were in bloom from June until October, except for the peonies, which should bloom next summer or the one after that. I was not successful with the vegetable seeds. None of them sprouted, so I decided that I would start the vegetable seeds indoor first the following spring.

The work wasn't finished yet. A couple days ago, I bought 600 tulip bulbs; they need to be planted before it starts snowing. I put a 150 of them in the ground last Friday. I will plant the others after this rainy weekend.

Although the gardening work is very hard and dirty, I still love it. I bet my front yard will be very beautiful in full bloom next year. Anyway, I will not have to work as hard each year because all of the flowers I planted are perennials. They come back every year. I will just enjoy the nice view without the hard work.

The Championship

Kambiz V. | Level 5 | Theresa R.'s Student

When I was young, I participated in the Teenager's Championship with my horse named Fefel. I was the champion in my city. I beat the others with a high score. However, I did not manage to make it to the championship at the national level. This was because, on that day my horse was not in a good mood. I was eighteen years old when I experienced the biggest failure of my life.

Many years later, I trained some other horses so I could win many times, but still did not win the nationals. I remember the horses which helped me win so many competitions. However, I will never forget the time when I missed the chance to win the championships because of a small fault.



*PHOTO CREDIT: Istvan
"Horse and Rider" licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0*



Arts

I Met Bryan Adams

Arkadiusz G. | Level 6 | Lily B.'s Student

Canadian singer, song writer, and guitarist Bryan Adams played in Spodek Hall in Katowice, Poland, on July 9th, 1996. It was first concert of Bryan Adams in Poland. For me, it was my first concert with a foreign singer. I also actually met Bryan Adams in person, and I will never forget this amazing meeting.

I was there with my two best friends. We had almost driven through the whole country by train all night long just to get to Bryan's concert. The concert was named "18 Till I Die" Tour," which was the best of Bryan's tours at that time, and it was absolutely excellent. I also know for sure that this was the best Bryan Adams concert I have ever seen or listened to since. Bryan really surprised all of us when he invited Tina Turner on stage as a special secret guest. Tina's voice was powerful and she looked stunning. At one point, we thought the show had ended, so we left the hallway leading to the main arena. This is when we met Bryan Adams and his group.

Meeting Bryan Adams in Spodek Hall was a shocker for me. The hall itself is a rounded arena with passages all around, and you can clearly hear everything that is shouted or sung on stage from any of the passages. Suddenly, we heard the audience shouting and screaming loudly "Bryan, Bryan, Bis, Bis..." We were still in the hallway when Bryan and his band ran to the small stage located on the opposite side of the arena. They were clearly very near to where we were standing. For us, this was a huge surprise. We started moving towards Bryan, but security tried to keep us away from him and his team. At that precise point, Bryan showed a sign to his security that he wanted to meet us. We were quite shaken and approached them. They were quite happy to see us, and we did a high five with all the band, including Bryan, and after that, we ran and followed him. Again, we were almost at front of the whole stage. At that point, the audience focused on our group and almost pushed us onto the actual stage. Perhaps they thought we were part of Bryan's entourage. What a moment it was!

I have been to many concerts in my life, but that concert was the best. We were very excited, and we had so much fun. What a great and memorable time it was. Whenever I hear Bryan's songs, I am always brought back to that unforgettable meeting in 1996. It seems like yesterday. Yes, I've actually met Bryan Adams!



*PHOTO CREDIT: Marco Maas
"Bryan Adams Hamburg" licensed under CC 2.0*

My Favorite Canadian Singer

Morteza S. | Level 7 | Lily B.'s Student



PHOTO CREDIT: Georges Biard
"Céline Dion" licensed under CC 3.0

Céline Marie Claudette Dion is my favorite Canadian singer. She is actually one of the most famous singers in the world.

I remember well the first time I listened to her voice. I was so moved by this voice because it woke up emotions and feelings like love and joy, and still when I listen to her, I get goose bumps all over my body. I also really like Celine as a person because she is very kind, and she values the family stand a lot. She is a very famous singer, a successful business woman, and a lovable mother.

Celine Dion was born into a big family in a very small city north of Quebec City. Her mother was a homemaker, and her father worked as a butcher. You can tell by the way Celine is, how much her whole family values their children and raises them in a lovable atmosphere. Her family has always loved music and has made sure the children would be growing up with it, so Celine was lucky because she grew up in a family with a great passion for music.

Celine has shined since she was very young. Her first singing performance was at her brother's marriage, and she was only 5 years old. That wasn't the end of the road for Celine. At the age of, 12, her mother and her brother collaborated with each other for her first record. They send her record "Ce n'était qu'un rêve" to René Angélil.

Rene was moved by her voice, and he really believed Celine could be a star, so he mortgaged his house for her first record "a voix du bon Dieu". She first became popular in the local area, but that wasn't the end of the road for her career. Her popularity spread to other places, and not so far down the road, she eventually became the one of the popular singers in Quebec. She also married René Angélil, and they have 3 children together.

Celine competed in 1988 at the Eurovision concert as a singer for Switzerland, and she won the competition for them. She could catch up very fast in popularity with world famous singers after she had her first English album out around the world. She has won many awards in her career like: Yamaha World Popular Songs, Best Female Performance, Discoverer of the Year and many more. She is one of the rare singers who can sing in different languages like: Cantonese, German, French, English and a few more. Even though she cannot have a perfect accent, it is amazing to see how she wants to keep her fans happy and communicates with them with their language.

Not so long ago, Celine started to perform on one of the stages in Las Vegas. Nothing really can stop her having an amazing passion for music and her family, and she has managed and balanced her career and family life very well. This is why she is my favorite Canadian singer.

Contrast

Aitak S. | Level 6 | Rima B.'s Student

What is contrast to you? How many contrasts do you know? What does contrast mean? Contrast is everywhere, among every creature, in forms, colours, values. Even in people's opinions and beliefs, it is there. Sometimes contrast is sharp and visible, sometimes contrast is hidden. Occasionally it is free to express itself, but sometimes it is not absolute. Without contrast, work of art would be monotonous, as the same as nature, or life. To me, as an artist, contrast is art. It is the art of showing the differences and similarities between things. Art of how you may express an idea or emotion which is not clearly present, but it is there. That is the art of being an artist.

I had a solo exhibition with this theme to show many creations where the difference is not obvious. For example, most people think art must be beautiful, however, in modern art world, beauty is not everything. "Beauty is nice and hard to find any problem with it, and that's a problem" (This Is Modern Art. Dir. Matthew Collings - Channel 4, 1999. Film).

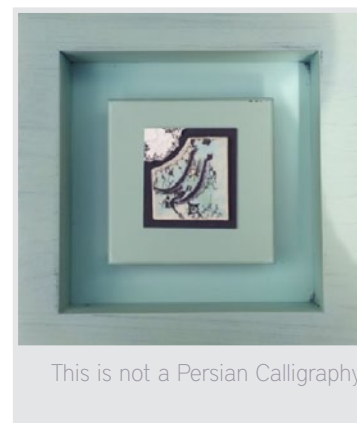
In my exhibition, I tried to show the contrast between traditional beauty and what we, the human eyes, see:



Influence



Golden Girih: It is an altered traditional technique of tile making



This is not a Persian Calligraphy

What I am showing is the effort of noticing subtleties and deepening more pleasurable experiences which are in contrast with contemporary life, which is repetitive, unbalanced and non-free.

The show was held Aug 27th, 2015 – Sep 6th, 2015 at Burr House Gallery, 530 Carrville Rd. Richmond Hill, ON and it was successful. My colleagues at the guild and visitors enjoyed it and I sold some of the art work. Next step for me is continuing my style of calligraphy, making and holding an exhibition in a bigger and better known gallery in downtown Toronto. To this aim, I should practise more, stay focused, and enlarge my vision for a more pleasurable experience. I may use another material, and not clay, and study the other ways of doing calligraphy on the tiles. Glazing techniques is the other aspect which I have to work on more. Afterward, I would invite my entire LINC Home Study family to visit my next show. You are more than welcome to visit the link below to see my online portfolio:

www.issuu.com/aitaksorahi/docs/portfolio

www.Aitak.ca (Under construction)

The Way to Happiness

Mouna H. | Level 6 | Lesley H.'s Student



Last month, I read a book that I really love called “The Secret”. In this book, the author explains many logical theories that the majority of people use without understanding them. The first one is good thoughts attract more good ones. In fact, when a person has a good thought, he feels comfortable and happy. In this situation, he can see opportunities around him and take advantage. Then, he feels more confident and happier. Every successful person has positive thoughts. In contrast, a bad thought makes a person feel sad and stressed. When he remembers only one bad thing in his life, his brain tries to expose him more

and more to others that happened in the past. In a few seconds, he feels the pain of all those bad things and the brain makes a generalization that there are no good things in his life. The person feels more and more stressed and he can't see any opportunities around him. He has a lack of confidence. He sends a message to his brain: “I can't succeed. I am a failure”. The brain only helps him to live with those concepts. If he doesn't stop those bad thoughts, he will continue to have problems and attract all bad things.

In addition, we should pay attention when we formulate our sentences. We shouldn't use the expression “I don't want” because the brain doesn't consider the word “don't” and will then focus on attracting what we don't like. We should formulate positive sentences, too. For example, we should say, “I want to succeed” not “I don't want to fail”. A person can't stop thinking. Even when they sleep, they continue to think about their daily events. Thinking is a continuous activity. When we want to change our life, we should only change our thoughts. We should be conscious and start to control our thoughts. It isn't something easy, but with time it will become spontaneous. In general, most people focus on changing others, but they don't understand that it is easier to focus on changing themselves and then change their life for the best.

I have control over myself but not over others. If everybody in our community tries to change his life, our life will become easier and we can progress to the best. Don't try to change others. It is an impossible mission. Only focus your attention on you. We have a lot of things to change in our life. When others see that we have a better life, they will try to imitate us. To start our new life we should count one hundred good things in our life every day. It is not as hard as you imagine. For example, I feel gratitude because I am healthy and I can use all parts of my body. At the same time, to feel so grateful, imagine how many persons suffer because they can't walk, they can't use their hands or they feel sick and stay all day stuck in their bed. When you wake up, you can see all things around you, your body, your family, the sky, the sun, the moon, birds, trees, animals. You are really a lucky person. You should remember this; it will bring you satisfaction and happiness.

To be sure that you have positive thoughts, always ask yourself, “Do I feel happy?” If the answer is yes, you are safe but don’t forget to repeat this question as many times as you can. If the answer is negative, try to change your mindset rapidly because you will attract more pain and sadness to your life. Every person in this world has problems, but the difference between them is the manner in which they treat them. Some of them think that problems are part of life and they will take their time and then they will be resolved. Others feel despair and imprison themselves into those problems. I think that happiness is something in our inside and doesn’t depend on the outside circumstances.

Music in My Life

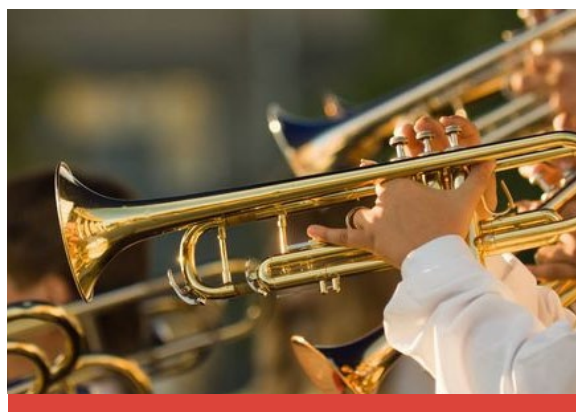
Vitalii V. | Level 4 | Erin O.’s Student

In this article I would like to write about how music came into my life. When I was very young, my parents and I went to every possible concert. I liked how people played different music on different instruments. I also wanted to learn to play every instrument. In the school where I studied there was a brass band and I really wanted to play in it.

One day, I went to the conductor of the orchestra and asked him to take me in the orchestra. He let me play the trombone. I really enjoyed playing in the orchestra. We played different kinds of music: classical, jazz and military. Our orchestra participated in various festivals, competitions, and concerts. I especially liked to take part in the festival “Jazz Horizons”. It was a great festival that happened 3 days a year, 12 hours a day. That was awesome. And since that time, I was filled with jazz music.

For the past 15 years, I did not play the trombone and orchestra. I just have not had the opportunity to play. And now, in Canada, I had the opportunity to play the trombone in the Tisdale Community Band. I get great pleasure from playing in the orchestra, and I am very happy that I have the opportunity. We play all sorts of music, especially jazz.

Jazz is the music of the imagination, but with its own standards. Not everyone understands and accepts it, but those people who understand it when they listen to fall into a trance.



Broadway

Larisa M. | Level 5 | Jessica W.

“All know that the Broadway is the smartest New World Street. It is an aorta on which the best blood of our system flows. Everything that is on our continent refined, passed through this street. Here the best exhibitions are organized, there arrive caravans from all over the world”

-Edgar Allan Poe

Broadway is the oldest and longest street of New York (25 km). Actually in New York there are four streets with the name Broadway: the streets with the same name are in Brooklyn, Queens and Staten-Island. However, the greatest fame was gained by Manhattan Broadway. Near the Broadway there is the well-known Theatrical quarter therefore the name of the street became a synonym for the American theatre.



I want to tell you about The Gershwin Theatre, located in the western part of 51st Street in the “Paramount-Plaza” building in theatrical quarter of Manhattan. The auditorium is designed for 1933 persons it is the most capacious theater of the Broadway. In the foyer of theatre there is a Hall of Glory of the American theatre. On June 5, 1983 the 37th awards ceremony of the Tony awards took place. Because of this connection the theatre was renamed the “Gershwin” — for the last name of the brothers Ira (poet-song writer) and George (composer). Why do I want to tell you about this theatre but not any of the others 40 theatres which are in Theatrical Quarter? Because it was my first and, probably brightest, visit to the Broadway.

Since October 30, 2003, and to this day, of one of the most successful American musicals — “Wicked”, has been playing at the “Gershwin”. “Wicked” is the musical authored by Stephen Schwartz (music and lyrics) and Winnie Holzman (libretto) based on the novel *Wicked: The Life and Times of the Wicked Witch of the West* by Gregory Maguire. That day when I gathered for this musical, for me, the feeling of a holiday didn’t leave me; something magic was just about to happen to me. Even the cloudy weather and sprinkling rain couldn’t spoil my mood.

The Broadway was fantastic, noisy and bright. On the Gershwin Theatre there was a big playbill of the musical “Wicked” with a mysterious smile on the green face of the witch. It was a matinee a performance, therefore, there were many children. When I looked at them, I understood that at that moment we were similar in the expectation of a miracle.

The hall was filled quickly; the last call rang out, and the noise of voices in the hall began to calm down and light in the hall began to die away. When a light flashed in a scene, I was struck by the violence of the colours and by the gloss of the scenery and by the music pouring down. The performance was incredibly fascinating,

and the music was fantastic. The narration in The performance on behalf of two witches of the country of Oz: Elphaba- a derelict girl with green skin, future Wicked Witch of the West and Glinda- the attractive and ambitious girl who subsequently became the Kind Witch of the North.

The musical tells the story of the two girls growing, their rivalries in their fight for one beloved is told, and also the fight against the tyranny of the Wizard, by whose efforts the residents of the country Oz were incited against Elphaba. But, no less fascinating action took place and in the auditorium hall. Children were the most active characters of the performance; they loudly showed indignation when Glinda struck Elphaba and roughly rejoiced for the victories of Elphaba over the Wizard. There was a feeling that they were ready to climb on the scene and to help to correct the unfairly created lawlessness. Also, it was incredibly sad when the performance came to an end, not because the feelings about the end of this fine action, but because the residents of the country of Oz didn't understand that the wicked green witch was actually beautiful and kind.

As a consequence, I can say that have been on the Broadway, but I have probably never felt such a fantastic feeling of pleasure, as I did at my the first time, at the musical "Wicked".



Bios

I Was Born in Cali, Colombia

Liliana M. | Level 5 | Christine L.'s Student



I was born in Cali, Colombia. I grew up in a home with one brother and two sisters, and my mother and father. I lived my childhood in Bogota, Colombia. My childhood was normal and very happy. My family celebrated my fifteen birthday with a special party. I received from my best friend (my father) a beautiful gold and emerald ring that still has great meaning for me.

After I got my high school diploma, I went to university and got my degree as a preschool teacher. I married my boyfriend, Jairo, on February 5, 1985. My first daughter was born. We called her Liliana Carolina and she is special to me. Now she is one of my best friends. My second daughter was born on October 27, 1992. We called her Laura Catalina. She came into my life at a very special moment, and she is my other good friend.

In September 1993 we made a decision to move to the U.S (Miami) where we lived for fifteen years. My son was born on November 19, 1998. I named him Daniel Andres. He is the baby of my home.

I worked in my own company called "My Fantasy Day". This company made special parties for kids. We rented out ponies, horses, bouncers, sold food (hamburgers, hotdogs and pork sandwiches) and had machines for making cotton candy, popcorn and ice. These parties were every Saturday and Sunday. We worked with summer schools. This experience was very special because I had the opportunity to see my children grow up playing outside, in contact with nature which gave them values and respect for life.

On January 9, 2009 we made a decision to move to Canada. When we crossed the border I saw for the first time, a lot of snow and very cold temperatures. This first impression was not good because I crossed the border at night. Quebec City was cold and had a lot snow. We did not see people in the street. The next day we went to Hamilton where my niece lived. She waited for us to arrive at night. Later that same night we went to the hospital because my son had congestion in his chest and he could not breathe well. He is allergic to cigarette smoke, and was exposed to cigarette smoke in the restaurant where we had breakfast. This was a scary start to our life in Canada, but everything worked out.

Two months later I went to school to take ESL classes at the San Charles Education Center. I stayed in this school for three years and reached Level 3. After that, a friend told me about the opportunity to take the PSW course and the opportunities for work. This course was intensive and difficult for six months. After that I got my diploma and started my work.

My work is very important to me because I help and love the elderly. Today Canada is for me a good, safe country and brings good opportunities. My family is happy we are here.



Canada

Why I Immigrated to Canada

Jing C. | Level 5 | Alena S.'s student

“Why do you want to immigrate to Canada?” my relatives and friends asked me when they learned about my decision. “I find Canada has a better environment, health care system or the political system,” that was my answer one year ago. But right now, my answer is “Because I love Canada and I want to stay here for the rest of my life with my family!”

Since the moment I took my family to Canada, I found out that I have fallen in love with this country. It’s hard to describe the feeling of my heart, it is just like eating a candy that someone gave me and guided me to a candy house.



I love that feeling when I see people’s warm and friendly smiles everywhere in Canada. The smile is so different in my country. First, in China, people are usually shy to express the love and enthusiasm for other people. Even some people do not say “I love you” to their child all life just because they are shy to say it. Second, for some reason they don’t care about their feeling for strangers. They will always have uncivilized behaviour in public places. Moreover, I don’t like how some people smile - nurses and doctors in the hospital, the servers in the restaurants, the bosses, etc. Their smiles are not warm or real and in a second they disappear like never before. In such an environment, I feel lonely and lost.

I feel warm and cared for here. Five months ago I was in hospital here and all the doctors and nurses provided me with a very good care. They always gave me a caring smile, a warm hug and encouraged me to be brave to get through the pain. They smiled for a stranger. By the way, maybe they really didn’t care about me, but in their smiles I felt some warmth and friendliness.

Finally, most people in public places are friendly and polite. In crowded places, people would be quiet and consciously line up. I have more and more chances to see smiles there. For me it means I am happier and happier in my heart and I want my family to live in such a positive place with me.

I love Canada. In this place, I feel warm, happy and free. I believe that I will live happily here.

My View of Canada

Taras T. | Level 4 | Ian Z.'s Student



Canada is the one of the best and beautiful countries in the world. The feature is in its people, its climate, its landscape and its way of life.

Canada is often associated with cold weather and snow, but in reality, its climate is as diverse as its landscape. In addition, Canadians enjoy four different seasons. Summers can be hot and dry on the prairies, humid in central Canada, and milder on the coasts. Spring is generally pleasant across the country. Autumns are often crisp and cool, but brightened by rich orange and red leaves on trees. Winters

are generally cold with periods of snow, but in the West Coast they are mild and wet, for example in cities such as Vancouver and Victoria.

I must admit, that Canada is a country of outstanding natural beauty, and it has a wide variety of landscapes: the mountains, the prairies, lakes and rivers all with many national and provincial parks to protect natural habitats. Most images of Canada refer to the mountains, bears, snow or the Rocky Mountains with the amazing turquoise lakes, though there is truly more to this vast landscape.

To tell you the truth, I really like the way of life in Canada. Let me give you a few examples. First of all, people are very kind and friendly, I mean they will always hold the door for you, or give an old person a seat in a public transportation. Secondly, drivers are polite and they will let you merge in if you need to. The third fact is that Canada is the country where families are valued.

Canada has many famous and great people, and, I must admit, it refers to almost every area of life, such as movies, music, sports, arts, science, business and many others. Jim Carrey, Oscar Peterson, Celine Dion, Stephen Harper are names known worldwide. By the way, I think everybody knows Tim Hortons from Canada. He founded a Canadian cafeteria known for its coffee and doughnuts. The national sport in this big country is hockey. Two teams are the most popular: Montreal Canadians and Toronto Maple Leafs. They represent Canada in The National Hockey League.

As you can see Canada has a lot to offer and no wonder it is a final destination for many people from all over the world.

Colourful Canada - A Family's Trip Across Eastern Canada

Baobing W. | Level 7 | Junko T.'s student

Many people asked me, why did you come to Canada? It is a very tough question to answer. However, I am sure it is definitely the right decision to come here after half a year. My family enjoys the blue sky, white clouds and fresh air; my son enjoys the happy life with his new young friends in the community and school. To learn about Canada more, we decided to visit some cities in the summer holiday.

History of Canada

People may not know the history of Canada before they go to Quebec City. It is really beyond my imagination that the French built this city about five hundred years ago. The weather was nice when we were there and the feeling of walking in the old street in the city was quite amazing. Cathedrals, Parliament House and the sculptures narrate the stories of the city's development one by one. Standing by the barrette, you could see the ships in Saint Lawrence River and the huge silos in the port. The running conveyors and the smoking chimneys show us the port is still busy even in the 21st Century. Five hundred years have passed, smoke changed from black to white, longshoremen changed to the automatic conveyors, however the busy port itself is still here and there hasn't been any change to it.

Modernity of Canada

In Ottawa, there are more cathedrals compared with the rest of Ontario and they are grand in terms of their size and decor. Notre-Dame Cathedral Basilica is one of the famous cathedrals in Ottawa. In the brilliant building, you felt no different from the cathedrals in European Continent. Across the street, there is the famous Art Centre "National Gallery of Canada". You can see the huge Spider Sculpture in front of the Gallery, smell the modernity of the city, and needless to say see the up-to-date artworks in the building. The light show of Parliament Hall uses the fashion edge-technology to tell people the history of Canada. The mixture of different cultures, history and fashion, make Ottawa so mysterious and attractive.

Art of Canada

Before I went to Montreal, many people told me it is the most artistic city of Canada. The answer was definitely right when I arrived and walked in Montreal. This is not because of the Celine Dion's wedding Cathedral, Basilique Notre-Dame, but because of the street graffiti around every corner of the city. According to my point of view, the graffiti shows the city's spirit to pursue freedom, pursue democracy and pursue love. I am very sure I will come back soon to enjoy the freedom and love which the city give to me.

The ten days of holiday was long but very short as well. We enjoyed the landscapes of Canada and have started to plan the next year's journey. The challenge is there are too many charming places to go and we don't know how we can choose.



PHOTO CREDIT: Baobing W.

Have you ever been to the Algonquin Park?

Zahra S. | Level 6 | Rima B.'s Student



Going to the Algonquin Park, is an experience that I fully recommend to anyone who wants to see complete beauty of fall in Canada. I hadn't gone to Algonquin before, when I went there during the Thanksgiving long weekend with my family. It was different experience of the fall and I was very excited to have gone to the park. As one of the largest parks in Canada, Algonquin offers many adventures and experiences for people with all skill levels. Whether you want to go there for backpacking trips spending multiple days in the bush, or simply to hike the trails, Algonquin has it all. Our trip to Algonquin was to see the fall colors of the

leaves, for which the park is famous. These fall colors are most prevalent in the middle of October. As well as the fall colors, we explored the lakes on a canoe. That part of it was incredible as well, and allowed me to experience the nature of Algonquin Park.

The first day we arrived at the park, there was a two hour traffic jam simply to enter the park. This was due to the combination of the Thanksgiving long weekend and the fall colors. Because of the traffic jam, we arrived late at the outfitting store where we were planning on renting our canoes, so we couldn't rent them that day. This all happened on the Sunday of the long weekend. Although we couldn't enjoy the waters on Sunday, as it was too late to head out, we still enjoyed the scenery of the park and made the best of what we had for that day. Then we went to a hotel and stayed there for the night. The next day was the canoe day. We headed out of the hotel early in the morning and got to the canoe site early. Then, after renting the canoes, we put our lunch in the canoe and rowed out to a campsite in the wilderness of Algonquin. We rested there a bit, having a snack and collecting some wood for a fire. Then we rowed to an island, where we planned on having lunch. The island was in the middle of the lake and due to the weather, it was really windy where we were sitting. However, we found a fallen tree and made a fire behind it where the wind couldn't get to. We cooked our lunch over the fire and had lunch. Then we packed up and came back to the mainland. However, on our way back, again due to the windy weather, we could not paddle back. It was the same story for everybody else. They could not paddle back, so a rescue boat was out picking up everyone's canoe and taking them back.

After canoeing for the whole day, we decided to go on some of the trails to see the fall colors. We looked at the information booklets and chose a trail that was recommended for seeing the fall colors of the park. Walking on that trail was an exciting experience too. We were surrounded by beautiful colors in the trees. Later, as we were coming back, we saw a shadow moving on the other side of the river. There was still enough light for us to be able to see it was a moose, and we got really excited. We then stopped for a few minutes to look at the moose, which was drinking water. After that, we started to go back home. The experience of Algonquin Park was very exciting and memorable. That is why I would recommend that you go to Algonquin Park if you haven't already.

A New Ontarian

Alla K. | Level 7 | Rima B.'s student



Last Sunday, as a new Ontarian, we decided to visit the city of Owen Sound located more than 100 kilometres from our home. It is a beautiful little city near Georgian Bay. There could be many reasons to visit Owen Sound. Ours was to see a fish ladder, the first in Ontario.

After passing through Collingwood, we noticed a huge inuksuk, an ancient man-made landmark resembling a human. Of course, it was an imitation of the ancient landmark, but a very good imitation! It was standing in a garden centre at the opposite side of the road. Made of big lumps of limestone, the stone man looked terrific, so we wanted to take a picture of him, but the sunlight was too poor.

Cold and rainy weather, being at the start of our trip, gradually changed into warmer on our way along Georgian Bay on one side and apple orchards with ripening fruit on the other. We stopped at a village and bought some produce at a vegetable stand. Canadian farmers work! The Canadian government tries to keep local farms running despite strong competition from the countries with warmer climate (hence easier growing) and cheaper labour.

The city of Owen Sound met us with warm and sunny weather and beautiful churches. There are so many of them there, big and small, of all architectural styles and denominations. It took a while to find a fish ladder. While looking for it we visited a 40-hectare park and learned a story connected with it: a family, who had bought the land and started the park, donated it to the city. The city has turned the park into one of the most beautiful in Ontario.

We also enjoyed the view of a waterfall (there are four of them around). Once there was a flour mill close to a dam near the waterfall, and people used to travel many miles to get there. They had to stay for a few days while their wheat was being ground.

We found the fish ladder at last! Did you know that the salmon is not native to Ontario? Chinook salmon, native to Pacific Ocean, is a new Ontarian, like me, though since 1960-ies. This noble fish, introduced to control the invasive Alewife fish population, feels very good here. Environmentalists build fish ladders, special waterways that make it possible for salmon passing through dams, when travelling from Sydenham River, where the fish spends its childhood, to Georgian Bay to gain weight and mature. We saw the fish ladders but there was no fish there: it was still too warm for salmon to start migrating. The real show will be at the beginning of October. People say it is a spectacular view.

On our way home we took a few good pictures of the inuksuk. At the sunset, the light was bright but mild enough for the rich stone texture to be seen. Fascinating experience for a New Ontarian!

My Trip to Niagara Falls

Gloria S. | Level 7 | Jonathan B.'s Student



PHOTO CREDIT: Charles Z.

Although my family and I have taken many wonderful vacations none were as much fun and exciting as our weekend in Niagara Falls. Before we made the decision to go there we considered many places, but we chose Niagara Falls, because it is one of the most beautiful places in the world. We drove from London, Ontario to Niagara Falls. We arrived at Country Inn Hotel near the Falls late at night. Even though the room was small, it had a great view over the Falls. The staff was friendly and the location was very convenient. We had a late dinner at a nice Italian family restaurant close to the hotel.

The first day we walked down to the Falls. I have never seen such a wonderful sight. We began our tour by entering The Journey Behind The Falls. Then we took a boat ride in the Maid of the Mist and we were able to get in the front from the boat. We saw amazing views of the Falls. This was one of the best things we have ever done.

The next day we went walking around the downtown area and there are a lot of restaurants and shops and we also went to the Falls View Casino. Another great experience was seeing at night light shows and fireworks over the Falls. Before we had to return to London we took many pictures and bought some souvenirs; everything was very nice.

In conclusion this was one of the best vacations that I have shared with my family, we all felt amazed and grateful to share time together in this wonderful place.

My Trip to Eastern Canada

Wangyan L. | Level 4 | Theresa R.'s Student

This August, I had a seven day vacation with my mother and my husband. We went to three provinces of Eastern Canada. This included fourteen cities. I saw a lot of beautiful views. They were different from any that I have seen before.

Peggy's Cove is more than three hundred years old. It is located in Halifax in Nova Scotia. I saw the green sea beneath the deep blue sky. The sky was blue with soft white clouds. The huge rocky coast was sculpted by fierce wind and torrential rain for many years.



A lady who sat beside the big red lighthouse was singing "My Sunshine" and was playing the accordion when we arrived there. It was a fabulous picture. We also landed in P.E.I. after we visited Cavendish Beach by ship and saw whales in the St. Lawrence.

There is another exciting place. It is the "Anne of Green Gable" house. It is a famous story by L.M. Montgomery. I read the book and watched the movie about it before I started. The Green Gable House is the author's mother home. I seemed to see Anne who was writing at her table when I stood in her house. It's a good feeling. You should know this wonderful story and go to the Green Gable House if you come to Canada.

Canadian Life

Sergiy K. | Level 5 | Erin O.'s Student



I came to Canada with my family in February 2012. When we came to the Regina Airport, it was about 11 p.m. Our friends met us and drove us to Ceylon.

My family and I are from Ukraine. I started working at Border Line Feeders as a mechanic and yard worker. My boss and other workers are good and helpful. Some of them are very funny.

In Ceylon, Saskatchewan, we have a bank, a hotel, and a post office, but we don't have any grocery stores. So we go to the city twice a month to buy food and other items. Sometimes we visit our Ukrainian friends.

The Canadian government provides very good health care services. I can get any information through the Internet. It is very easy to do a lot of things. In Canada, your desires coincide with your opportunities.

Canadian people are very friendly. Therefore, it is easy to deal with them. There are lots of differences between the Ukraine and Canada, but I like to live in Canada.

Cypress Hills

Lalani D. | Level 5 | Samuel M.'s Student

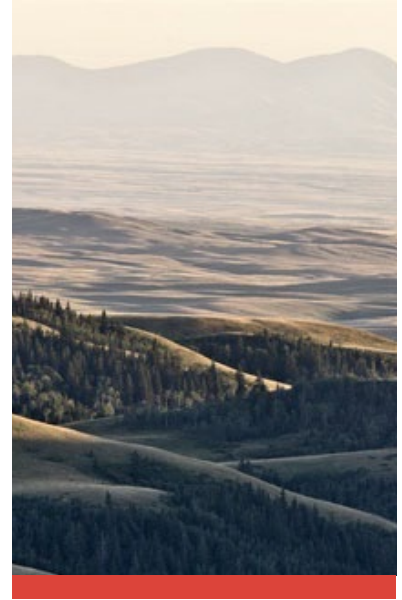
The Cypress Hills are geographical region of hills in southeastern Saskatchewan and southeastern Alberta. The highest point in the Cypress hills is at head of the mountain in Alberta at 1,466 meters. The highest point in Saskatchewan is at 1,392 meters.

The Saskatchewan side of the park is divided into two blocks. Such as Centre block and west block.

I loved Cypress Hills Interprovincial Park. That was our (my family) first time in Cypress Hills and we loved it. We camped there three days also rented the cabin.

We stayed in the resort in the centre block. Beautiful scenery and lots of historical sites. There are various hiking trails for all ages. We hiked trans Canada trail and another one. (I forgot the name.)

There is also an abundance of wild life such as elk, moose, deer, squirrels and mountain lion. But we saw only moose and deer and squirrels.

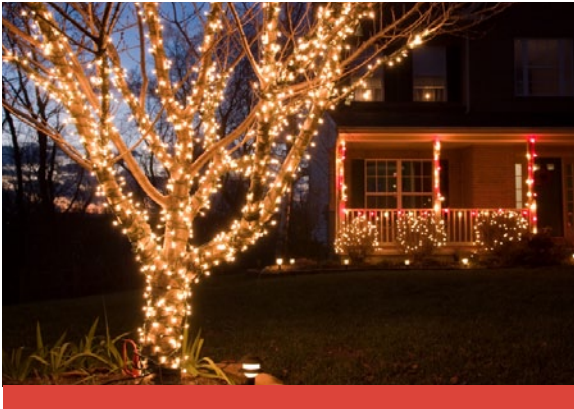




Celebration

My Impressions on Christmas

Diana A. | Level 5 | Ian Z.'s student



Christmas is a holiday that all Christians around the world enjoy. But there are so many ways to celebrate it. In Colombia it is a very family oriented tradition. We start on December 8th, when all cities are beautifully decorated with ornaments, lights, and candles on windows and doors as a representation of Virgin Mary's path to our home. Nine days before Christmas Day we start with a tradition call "novenas" when every day we read, pray and sing Christmas Carols related to Jesus birth. We also eat special sweet and delicious food.

We finish celebrations on January 6th, with The Kings celebration.

I found Canada's Christmas so different, but it isn't less warm. I remember our first Christmas day in Canada almost five years ago. Some people in church offered us a Christmas Dinner, and we couldn't believe how generous people here are.

I think it doesn't matter where you are because Christmas is a beautiful, happy and warm celebration that let people show all the best of themselves. I wish we lived every day like it were Christmas time.

Christmas in Mexico

Juana N. | Level 4 | Linda C.'s student

Christmas in Mexico is one of the most important spiritual celebrations, we go to church to confess, because Jesus will be born in our hearts. Nine days before Christmas, we do the posadas, it's nice because in this days we remember when Maria and Jose try to get a place for Jesus birth and nobody give the place. We pray the holy Rosary and sing Christmas songs about Jesus birth. In Christmas we celebrate with dinner with family and friends .



Baby Snoneh Celebration

Maysoon E. | Level 5 | Nahed S.'s Student

One of the traditional celebrations in Palestinian society is a baby Snoneh . The name "Snoneh" came from the word teeth in Arabic (Sen), the celebration starts with the first baby teeth appearance which is the most difficult stage of a child's life.

The baby's family prepare Snoneh dessert which is made from boiled wheat, dried fruit, and pomegranate seeds, grains and decorate the candy, packaged and distribute them to friends and relatives.

The preparation of this type of candy is a unique way to celebrate the child's growth and the emergence of his teeth with family and friends, to leave sweet memories.



PHOTO CREDIT: Maysoon E.

Harvest Festival

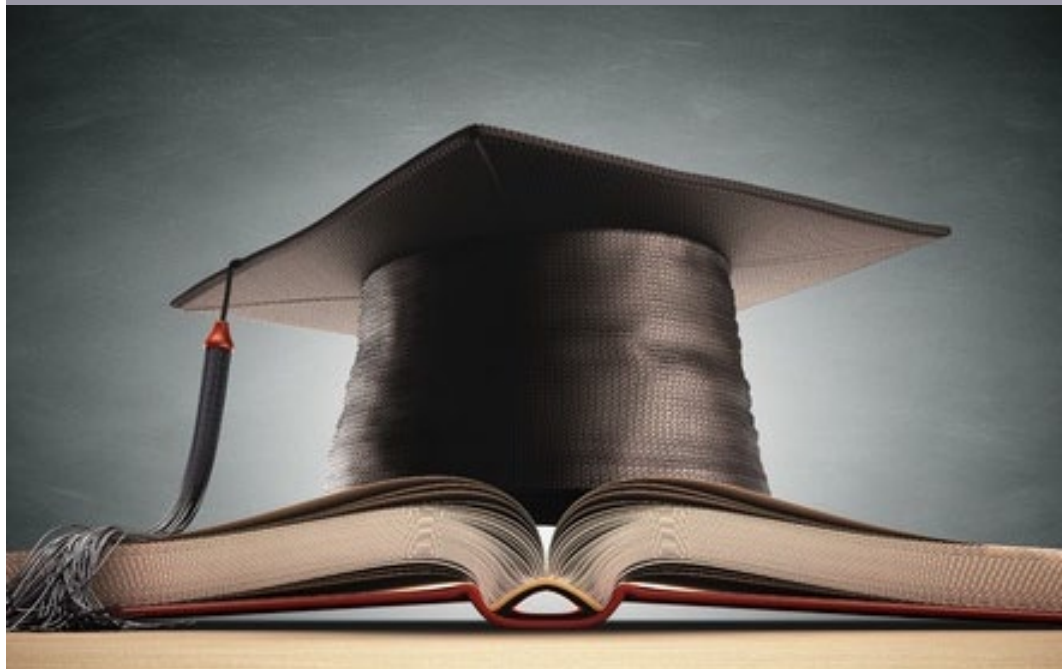
Qurrat A. | Level 6 | Sarah H.'s Student



The festival of Baisakhi is an ancient tradition of the Punjab region. It is a harvest festival which marks the beginning of a new year. It is celebrated in mid- April. Baisakhi is especially important in Sikhism. In Pakistani Punjab; Baisakhi is widely celebrated by Sikhs in Western Punjab with celebrations in the Panja Sahib complex in Hasan Abdal and various historical sites in Lahore.

This day is also observed as a day of thanksgiving by the farmers, whereby farmers pay their tribute to God for an abundant harvest. They also pray for future prosperity.

It is a tradition that people gather to harvest wheat. Drums are played and people do a folk dance called "bhangra", which motivates people to work. Fairs are held at different places.



Education

Colombian Education System

Helmar B. | Level 6 | Jonathan B.'s student



The Colombian education system is similar to the education system in Canada. Colombia has public, private, religious, and international education programs.

The public program is free; it means no fees for anything; this includes transport and sometimes lunch, from kindergarten up to university. In addition to the formal education, the public program is complemented by a “day care” for children of single working mothers; which is known as “*madres comunitarias*” or community moms, in English. At these places, the kids under elementary school age can play games, and enjoy a good time, sharing with other children.

The religious and international education programs are in the private system. They are designed in accordance with their policies or beliefs. However, each kindergarten, school, college and university has to be approved by the Colombian government, which is the head of education.

Colombia is a democratic republic and doesn't have an official religion, but the themes that are taught cannot be against the National Constitution. The Minister of Education regulates the curriculum and some of them are very expensive but others are of high quality and are affordable.

In conclusion, the Canadian and Colombian Education System, works in similar ways of course with some differences and some similarities.

Education System

Galyna B. | Level 6 | Jonathan B.'s student

All wise people emphasize the importance of a good education system because they know how important a good education is. I don't know about the Canadian school system well enough from beginning to end, but I know that in the USSR, the system works very well (as I was raised on that system). Comparing the two systems, I see three very big drawbacks here.

First drawback is about mathematics. Calculator!!! Can you imagine all Canadian students are allowed to use it at any possible time they want to? In the USSR it will be horrible even if you put it in your school bag. All kids from second grade should be able to calculate in their mind. All little kids know very well multiplication and division chart, so good, that if they wake up in the night they can give you an answer. I don't see that with Canadian kids.

Second minus point is about the literature. In my opinion they don't read enough as compared to USSR. In the USSR, students study poems, which can help increase brain development and memory.

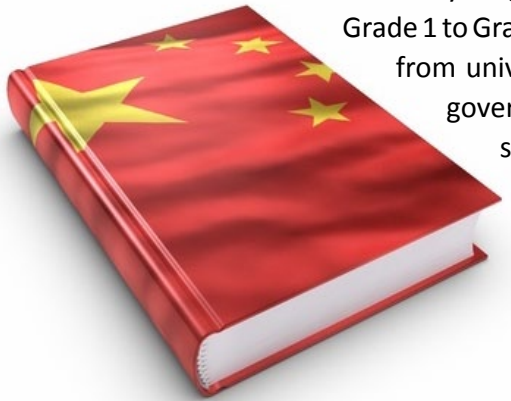
The third minus point is a lack of discipline. I am shocked how bad this is. Students can easily leave the room without asking the teacher, can eat or drink in the class, can speak or text on the phone or just listen to music in their earpieces. I think that is really disrespectful to the teacher. That doesn't happen in the USSR system.

In conclusion I would like to say that Canadian adults try to be really good with their kids. They give them everything - all their heart and soul, all their time and attention, and of course freedom. And in my opinion, a little bit too much freedom.



The Chinese School System

Min Y. | Level 6 | Laura W.'s student



When I was young, education was a family responsibility. Parents had to pay from Grade 1 to Grade 12, but university was free at that time. After students graduated from university, they didn't need to find a job by themselves because the government arranged jobs for them. Some of the lower income bracket students who couldn't afford tuition applied to schools that waived the tuition fees, but they still had to pay for textbooks and other extra-curricular activities.

About ten years ago, China's government had an education reformation, and since then, public education has been free from grade 1 to grade 9, but parents have to pay for daycare, kindergarten, grade 10 to grade 12, and university. Special education also is available in the public school system for children with special needs, such as physical disabilities. There are also many private schools in China that charge very expensive fees. The school time is almost the same as in Canada from September to June, Monday to Friday, with a winter break during Chinese New Year.



General

Saving our Forests and Wildlife

Sivasamy S. | Level 7 | Anne F.'s student



I must thank Anne, my teacher, for posting a picture on Facebook related to a huge wildfire in Alberta. It was a heart-breaking picture. Two deer were caught in the middle of a wildfire and helplessly watched their living place destroyed by fire. That made me understand how this wildfire happened. I thought it would be worthwhile to share what I learned about wildfire. According to Natural Resources Canada (NRCAN), Canada has approximately 10% of the world's forest resources. On average, 8,300 wildfire incidents have been reported in the last two years, which have destroyed an estimated 2.3 million hectares. This is

too much! The total financial cost of these wildfire disasters are estimated between \$800 million to \$1 billion. These are the latest numbers, and if we research history, there were several wildfire disasters that caused the loss of hundreds of lives, billions in financial loss, and thousands of displaced residents over the past decades.

We must thank our firefighters! The loss could have been worse if these heroes were not there. They risked their lives and rescued the people and animals. In some incidents, they sacrificed their lives in the rescue mission. These fires are caused for several reasons, including hot weather, heavy lightning and heavy wind. One investigation report stated that 30% of wildfires happen due to human error. For example, discarded cigarettes pieces and irresponsible camping activities can easily cause wildfires. On the other hand, fires can also benefit the ecosystem through natural regeneration. Although we may not be able to prevent wildfires that ignite for natural reasons, human errors that cause fires can certainly be prevented.

While we reflect on the services of firefighters who have made a valiant effort to save our land and people, we should all act responsibly to prevent wildfires and to avoid any further damage to the forests and the wildlife.

Going Home

Jennifer Dela P. | Level 7 | Samuel M.'s Student

Before we landed in Canada, we already planned of having a vacation to the Philippines after 3 years. Since our children were too young when we migrated in Canada, we thought that they might already forget their relatives in the Philippines.

After doing so much budgeting and saving, we were able to have a six week vacation from July 13 until August 18. We decided to have it during my children school break in order to save from paying daycare expenses.



When we arrived in the airport, my children were so excited. My daughter even drew the plane she saw in Saskatoon. My son was so amazed with the mountains he saw when we were in the airplane. They both enjoyed the foods being served to them while in the plane as well as the movies.

When we arrived in the Philippine airport, my children started complaining about the weather that it was too hot which I always reminded them they were in the Philippines already not anymore in Canada. They were too shy when they saw their grandmother, aunties, uncle, and cousins. We had difficulty travelling because my son got dizzy while inside the van. It was so nice that we arrived in the morning so we were able to go around the mall and ate in a restaurant and were able to adjust our body clock.

The only placed we visited was the beach that is famous for its waves because of our limited budget. Most of the times, we were just at home eating our favourite foods and my children playing with their cousins. My daughter even said, "Why are Filipino foods delicious?"

When it was about time we need to go, I was crying and my daughter was laughing at me. It was only in the plane that she realized we were leaving that she cried when we were sleeping. Even when we were at home she wanted to go back to the Philippines immediately and play with her cousins.

It was a very nice visit that I think my children will cherish. We will try to save again and hopefully to visit them again in 2017.

Trip to Mars in 2024

Mahsan A. | Level 7 | Lily B.'s student



Going to Mars is a big decision when there is no return. People who want to fly to Mars and ultimately die there are considered to be crazy by many. I have read about and listened to the videos of some of the candidates who have been chosen to go on the trip in 2024. I was most interested in the story of Dina, an Iraqi-American, who passed the final stage of interviews and is going to Mars and settling there. I can totally understand Dina's reasons for going to Mars, but I would never be able to make such a sacrifice. I'd like to write about the pros and cons of going on such a one-way trip to another planet such as Mars.

If I were Dina, I would go to Mars. In most middle-eastern countries, there is a general belief that women are not able to do things as well as men. It is thought that successful women are the only ones who often marry a rich man and have a lot of children. If I were Dina, I would never want to return to the earth. On Mars, I wouldn't have to cover my hair, and I wouldn't be forbidden from running and exercising outdoors. If I left my family in Iraq and never missed them, then I could do the same if I left earth and went to Mars. I would be free there, and I would do big accomplishments as a pioneer astronaut woman on this planet.

In contrast to Dina, I could never leave earth forever. I not afraid of dying there, but if I left earth, I would miss my family very much. Although I left my parents and siblings in my first country and haven't had the opportunity to go there for almost twenty months, I know I will see them soon during the New Year's holiday. Also, I have my own family here and a beautiful daughter that I would never be able to leave even for one day! It's not possible for me emotionally to go to Mars forever.

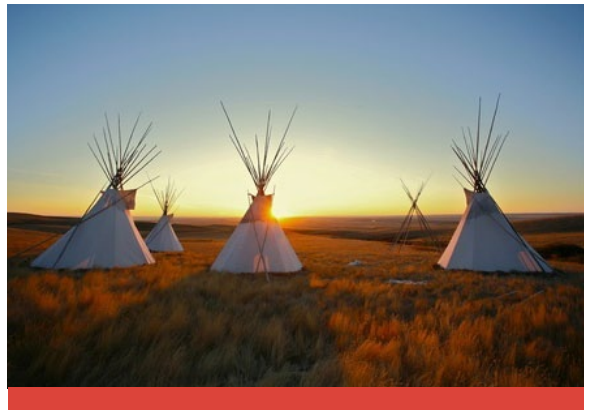
Apart from the emotional aspects of leaving the earth, I believe that I can achieve a lot of accomplishments here. I plan to be registered as a Canadian professional engineer, and I would like to obtain a Master's degree in Canada. Moreover, every day can be an accomplishment for me when I see my daughter growing fast, walking, talking, and going to school in the future. Hopefully, she will go to university, marry and have children. I feel free and happy in Canada and don't want to leave it. Maybe in Dina's view I'm crazy, but I like to be crazy in this way!

Living in a Teepee

Mahsan A. | Level 7 | Lily B.'s student

It is hard to imagine being a native Canadian who lived hundreds of years ago. First Nations people had to work hard to survive. For example, they hunted and cultivated their own food, made their own clothes, and built their own houses to live in. However, I would like to experience living in a teepee of the Plains tribes for only a few weeks. Of course, it would only be in the spring, summer, or fall and never in the winter.

A teepee was the most beautiful type of aboriginal home from days gone by. It was made of logs and with the covering of the skin of animals. Native people carried them wherever they went, so they had these homes for a long time and never abandoned them. As a result, they could be personalized with color and decoration, especially on the skins of animals. If I were a native person, and if I'd had the choice of living in either a longhouse or a teepee in those bygone days, I would have chosen to live in a teepee with a lot of decorations and paintings on the hides. I would have decorated my teepee with many fringes and feathers. It would have been fun in the summer!



I need my personal space to rest in that is separated from other people and families. I could never have lived in a longhouse with so many other families. In order to achieve this personal space, I would have preferred to live in a teepee. Their teepee was like a tent and had its covering to separate their family life from their social life. I could have rested inside in peace, been alone for long periods of time, and enjoyed socializing with my people outside. I would have danced with them in ceremonies and listened to their stories.

Today, native people can live in teepees during special ceremonies or when they are hunting. However, these days, some people have chosen to live in a teepee occasionally or even use it as a permanent home since they have seen the advantages of living in a teepee. For instance, a researcher and his assistant were involved in research about goats, so they lived in a teepee on the top of a mountain for a six-month period. It last until winter, and they experienced heavy snow, but it felt cozy inside, and they were satisfied with the teepee. They concluded from their experience that a teepee is warm in the winter and cool in the summer, as well as being portable, spacious and inexpensive. Also, people who want to go back to nature have lived in teepees as their permanent homes for long periods of time. They use solar panels for electricity, wooden stoves for the heat, and nearby springs for their water supply. They can keep beehives and sell honey. They are completely satisfied with their green lifestyle.

I would love to live in a teepee up north during the spring, summer or early fall. I simply cannot imagine living in a teepee in the winter. A teepee has the fun of camping outdoors while enjoying nature at the same time. Its covering allows the sun to shine in through the day, and during the night, the moonlight comes in from a smoke hole at the top of the teepee. I love nature, but I don't know how I could possibly survive there without my laptop and the internet!

Moving Across Country

Zhihong S. | Level 6 | Louise A.'s student



Moving a household is very hard work, particularly for an immigrant family. You have to plan and organize a great variety of things before your moving date. Most immigrants are not good at using English skills in the first years of immigration. My family immigrated to Canada in April, 2013. My husband and I are proud because we moved our household from New Brunswick to Ontario this summer. It was a really unforgettable experience.

First of all, we made a plan to solve the main problems in May, including applying to a child's school, renting a condo and choosing the moving date. My husband and I were busy selecting and applying for the new high school for our child in Richmond Hill, Ontario. When we had received the acceptance letter from the new school in May, we immediately connected with a local agent to rent a condo in Ontario. We compared prices and qualities of condos, and then we found a wonderful condo in Richmond Hill. The new home is nearby our child's new school. My family is so satisfied with our new home.

During this time, we hesitated how to move our furniture and belongings. What is the best option, to rent a truck or hire a delivery company? According to our search of some information and online moving tips, we finally decided to rent a 17' U-Haul truck and move by ourselves. I booked the reservation through the U-Haul website, and they immediately confirmed the reservation. The U-Haul truck was not only easy to drive and load but also gave more space and protected our goods.

Changing address was another important thing before moving. I had a schedule that listed all the company names for which we needed to give our changed address. Some of them we had to cancel, for example, the energy company, insurance companies and previous apartment agreement. For some of them we needed to change the address, for instance, the credit center of banks, the Internet service company, etc. It could save money and time when you select the right time to change your address and cancel your order. In my opinion, you must give notice to the manager of your house rental about the moving out date as soon as you have a confirmed date, then you may have a chance to not pay additional rental fees. In my case, we also ordered a mail forwarding service by Canada Post to prevent missing important mail.

We travelled two days and then arrived at our new home. Before we headed off to our destination, we had checked traffic, road and weather conditions along the way. Fortunately, we had plenty of time to move our household. We took a rest when we felt too tired to drive. Eventually, we succeeded in settling in a new city and new province.

In a word, moving a household from one province to another is difficult work for immigrant families, but we had a memorable experience which was a historic event for my family.

Continuous Learning

Xiao C. | Level 7 | Laura W.'s student

Many people will have to take courses, upgrade their skills, and attend educational institutions for a large part of their lives. I agree with this. With the progress of science and technology, great changes have taken place in people's lives. If people do not study, they will not be current, and cannot keep up with the times.

I am a kind of example. There is a kind of communication software that has been very popular in Chinese circles in the past one or two years. It is called Wechat, and is used on your mobile phone. In the beginning, I did not think I needed it. I thought all the communication I could do by my phone. I did not need to set up such complicated software. I refused to accept my friends' suggestion.



Slowly I found as a result, all the friends around me shared information and communicated by Wechat. Sometimes they did not need to make a phone call to every friend, and they just sent the information to the circle of friends, then everyone can see. When I did not use this software, I felt left out of this kind of information. When I realized this, I immediately began to learn how to use it, and as soon as possible entered into their circle of friends.

This is my own a small example, but in fact, no matter in life or work, a lot of things are going through a technical revolution, so I think people should live and learn continuously.

The Library in India and Canada

Vanitha V. | Level 7 | Laura W.'s student



The amount of information available on the internet is huge, but libraries are still valuable resources in Canada. The joy of reading a book from a library is much bigger when compared to reading a book on the Internet. Libraries conduct various programs for kids which are not available on the Internet. Also, libraries help new immigrants and elderly people in various ways. Libraries are always there to help people who do not know how to access computer. Some people are totally unaware of the Internet and technology, so for these people library is the main source of knowledge. Thus, I would say that even though internet

has huge information, the library is still a valuable resource.

The number of public libraries in India is smaller when compared to Canada. There are not enough libraries to meet the growing population in India. The government does not provide adequate funds for setting up a good public library with proper infrastructure and manpower. The condition of major public libraries in rural areas is very poor. Many of them do not have their own buildings or proper resources. They do not refresh the books with new prints frequently.

However, in recent years libraries in urban places have started to give some importance to raising its standards to the next level. A few libraries have incorporated self check devices and smart card facilities. Some of them have a separate high tech section for visually impaired people. Also, some libraries are even equipped with big auditoriums. Nevertheless, all these libraries do not conduct any special programs for kids like the ones in Canada do.

The Indian Medical System

Kanathi S. | Level 5 | Michele H.'s student

These are a few things I want to share about the Indian medical system. In 1947, before India became an independent country, the medical system was very traditional. It was preceded by the street doctors, (no valid Medical Education Degree) when there weren't any hospitals. People were treated with home remedies at home.

Now, we can see a lot of changes happening in the Indian medical system. The medical system has improved. The World Health Organization (WHO) took place and made changes to the Indian Medical System.



Nowadays, in Indian, there are few professions called Nobel Professions, They are doctors, lawyers, engineers and the police. People have to invest lot of more money for a medical education.

What are the requirements needed to enter in to Medical Education in India?

A few points:

1. Need 2+ education related to science-based subjects like – Biology, Physics, and Chemistry.
2. Have to qualify with an entrance test with below a 3000 ranking – Medical entrance called MCET.
3. These are the steps to fulfill in order for the students to obtain a MBBS degree.

India needs 50,000 doctors every year, but only 5,000 doctors graduate yearly. Nowadays, the medical education system is a very costly affair. The average person can't afford this.

After Independence, there were changes:

1. Now, people are aware of medical education.
2. Nowadays, lots of hospitals are using better technology, every treatment has more expenses.
3. People spend more money to become doctors.
4. Presently, there is only one doctor for every 100 families – 100:1
5. But as per the Indian Medical system, the target for 2020 – there will be one doctor for every 10 families.

Hopefully, all the best will come for the Indian medical system to fulfill their dreams. Thanks for giving me this opportunity to share few words about Indian Medical System.

When Someone Let You Down

Saida K. | Level 6 | Rima B.'s Student



People will sometimes fail you; this is a reality you can't just ignore. You will face many obstacles and challenges in your life, and those challenges would leave an indelible mark in your soul. This will make you to re-think of your relationships with close ones.

Some people just fail you and let you down intentionally, but regretfully you don't discover them until later. This type of act is immoral and cruel, letting you down when you are in need. Selfish friends are deceptive. You ask yourself when you deal with such people, "Am I stupid and naive?"

You feel gullible and used, and wonder if you are naïve and stupid for trusting too much. Days are filled with frustration and anger; nights are sleepless. Eventually, you make peace with yourself, rearrange your thoughts and prioritize your relationships. This is not selfishness; this is managing your emotions and becoming productive again.

Others let you down because sometime we have unrealistic expectations for them. We always think that they should meet our belief and trust. When they do not, we feel confused and chaotic. But I think this is hard and unfair. I learned to try to limit my expectations of others, so I could keep a good relationship with people that really matter and are important in my life.

At the end, people will sometimes fail you; this is a reality you can't just ignore. Despite that, you should live your life, feel happy and be positive. Try to lower your expectations so you can keep a good relationship with the loved ones. Do not let deceptive people affect your perspective of life. Remember that you are loved, have a good self esteem and be more determined about the way you trust people. Dealing with your emotions will help you to become productive again.

Meeting an old friend in Canada

Kayvan S. | Level 6 | Sarah H.'s student

When I was teenager my middle school was very exciting and enjoyable. I had a classmate who was very intelligent. After we finished at our middle school, he left our city and none of our classmates had any information about him or his life.

About two months ago I was going to Food Basics to buy some food for my family. As I was walking, I heard a voice which was very familiar. When he got nearer to me, I could see that his face was familiar too. So I became curious and asked him, "Are you Mehrdad?" He became astonished and replied, "Yes, who are you?" I laughed and introduced

myself and explained about where we had seen each other before. Both of us were engaged in a conversation for about an hour. The subject of the conversation was about our middle school. I told him about our ex-teachers and our classmates which was wonderful.

After that he told me about the reason of his presence in Canada. Both of us were happy and all of the good feelings that we had during our education in that middle school became alive again. He gave me his phone number and his e-mail address. I promised to contact him as soon as possible. Then we left with the hope that we will see each other again in our homes.



Some Suggestions to Improve Your Health

Mai D. | Level 5 | Jessica W.'s Student



More and more people are getting the obesity disease and high blood pressure in modern life. So, do you want to improve your health? Here are some suggestions for you to follow.

First, you should drink enough water because 70% of your body is water. However, you shouldn't drink soft drinks a lot. Secondly, you should sleep enough, 8 hours per day, and you should relax and laugh. In addition, don't worry about everything. In my country, everybody usually practices exercises at the park in the morning. They make friends and talk together about everything at that time. So,

they are very happy and they feel energized. Sunshine between 7am to 9 am is so important to make vitamins and to help your bones grow. So, you should go in the sunshine more often. Besides the sunshine, oxygen is also important for your blood and your brain; therefore you should breathe fresh air. I can say that sun, fresh air and water are gifts from God to us. Foods such as fruits, vegetables and fishes that aren't fatty and don't make high blood pressure are also important in your life. Besides the physical factor, the mental factor is also important for your health. So, you should travel somewhere with your family or your friends to relax after working hard. Finally, you should go to the doctor for a checkup of your health and get some advice to improve your health.

Your health is so important for your life. If you have good health you can do anything that you want. So, taking care of your health is your responsibility if you want to have a good life.

A Helping Hand

Julie C. | Level 7 | Terese C.'s student

I would like to tell you about an article that we read at my book club about an old man who volunteered to help a teenager who was in a wheelchair. The teenager, Collin, had been in a car accident when he was 14 years old and his spinal cord was so damaged that he would never regain the use of his legs and would have limited movement in his arms. In the past, he was a three-sport athlete. Now, he would spend the rest of his life in a wheelchair.

An old man, Ernest Greene, had just retired at 63 years old and volunteered in his church. One day, he heard that Collin's parents needed help because they didn't have enough money to hire a full-time caregiver. Ernest said he didn't need money, had all the time in the world and wanted to give them help. So he also learned some basic caring for Collin. Ernest left his house at 6:00 a.m. to drive to Collin's house and took him to school. He always accompanied Collin, tried to fix his problems and encouraged him especially when he grew sullen and withdrawn. In Collin's senior year of high school, he began coaching kids in a church basketball league.

When Collin went to college, Ernest still helped him. He said he could wait a little longer to enjoy his retirement. Finally when Collin had finished the college program, he insisted Ernest push his chair across the stage at graduation because he was Collin's hands and feet and deserved to get some of the credit. Ernest was 72 years old.

This article inspires people on how to face their defeats and frustrations and how to overcome all problems. Look at yourself and you will understand how lucky you are. Even though you may suffer a difficult situation, just remember what Collin has faced and conquered. If you could give a hand, there are some people who need help. The greatest pleasure comes from helping others like Ernest did.



The Information Highway

Sadaf S. | Level 5 | Theresa R.'s Student



Computers have made our life easier. We don't need to go outside. We can do a lot of work while sitting in our home. For example, we don't have to go to the bank to pay bills. We can pay our bills online. We can purchase groceries online. Some universities offer the facility of online courses. If we don't have time to go to the university, we can take online classes. Therefore, computers have helped us in many ways.

Today, everyone has all their important information on their computers. If an error occurs on our computer, we can lose all our information. The most threatening aspect of computers is hackers, if someone hacks our computer, he can take all our important information. Some people have lost a lot of money due to hacking. So everyone should be very careful, while using their computers.

Computers are faster than humans. Computers can make fewer mistakes than humans. Computers have changed the workplace. Computers have taken the place of manpower. With computers, we can do more work in less time. In data entering, in printing, in publication, computers can do work more efficiently. Manpower has been reduced in the workplace. This is also a drawback, because job opportunities have also been reduced due to computers.

Who are we mom?

Mirlinda C. | Level 6 | Tuula L.'s student

I am a mother of three children. My daughter is in grade two, and the middle son is in kindergarten, while the youngest son is three years old, and he is staying at home with me.

One day when my children came home from school while I was making lunch, my son asked me: "Mom are you sad because I feel that you are unhappy, and miss your family?" He asked me if I wished we could go now and visit my family. I was so surprised because he is just five years old and was asking me about my family. Then he asked me "Where am I from? What am I mom? Am I a Canadian or what?"

What he said made me think about my country because I grew up so differently in another world. When I was a child, we didn't have computers, Xbox, and other gadgets, but we had great time playing with each other. However, I want our children to know where their parents are from. I understood when I listened to my son because he needs to know his roots. I really like to let my children know where we are from because I think this is important for everyone who immigrated.

I want our children to learn about their grandparents, their religion, and the traditions of the country their parents are from. Knowing their parents' traditions and language is important because they can learn about their own history and can speak the language, to visit that country one day and have knowledge about their heritage. This is what and who we are in the family.



One thing I regret

Chung H. | Level 7 | Fernand V.'s student



When I graduated from Nanjing University a few years ago, we had to have our graduation photos taken. Just one day before this event, I received an offer for interview from a company in Shanghai. That interview was to take place on the very same day as the graduation ceremony.

I had already received three job offers before, but I was still very interested in that fourth offer. I was very confused what to do but I ended up buying return train tickets to leave at mid-afternoon of the day of my graduation.

I had predicted that the events would be finished before my departure for Shanghai. I was wrong! The graduation ceremony took so long, that there would only be time to take very few photos.

I had to leave to take the bullet train to Shanghai. I had the interview and was actually offered a position which I ended up not taking.

When I returned to the University later in the afternoon, the ceremony was over. I saw smiles on the faces of my classmates who had attended the complete ceremony. I only felt envy. If I had stayed – and not gone to Shanghai – I would have had a lot of fun too.

It has been many years since this event. Every time I think of it, I feel regret.

Lessons from the explosion in Tianjin

Zhi Z. | Level 7 | Alena S.'s student

On August 12, a massive explosion happened at the port of Tianjin in China. The casualties of this accident were 159 dead people, 797 injured, and 14 people, mostly firefighters, missing. It has been the worst one since the founding of the Republic of China in 1949. It was unbelievable that such a large disaster could have happened, but it truly happened. People all over the world felt very sorry at the death of the people in the disaster.

After the accident, Chinese government took quick actions to the accident. It has been almost one month since the accident, and the accident site has almost been cleaned up and the follow-up also has almost ended. However, Chinese government should not just let the accident go away and the leaders have to learn some lessons from this disastrous accident.

Firstly, the firefighters must be professionals and only professionals know to use the right way to put out the fire according to the material on fire. In China, the firefighters are not professionals and they are just the same as the soldiers in the army. The firefighters serve in the fire department for 3 or 4 years and just have simple training of fire extinguishment. As a lack of knowing what caused the fire, after the first explosion, when the firefighters arrived at the site, they just blindly put out the fire with water. It was definitely wrong to put out the fire of the chemical with water! If they had not put out the fire with water, they would not have lost their lives! After the accident, I read some news knowing that the firefighters in the USA, Japan and some other countries are all professionals and they can work for all their life. Hence, they are all familiar with the buildings in their service area. I hope Chinese government will learn this from this accident and will recruit the professional firefighters.

Secondly, the warehouses have to be situated a safe distance from the residential areas. In the warehouse, there may be hundreds of tons of goods and if it is on fire, a risk of explosion is very high. A big explosion can cause a very bad damage to the building and people nearby. In the Tianjing accident, as the warehouse was close to the residential area, most of the people injured were residents who lived close to the warehouse and also residential buildings next to the warehouse were badly damaged. After this accident, all the companies and government leaders have to bear in mind that when choosing a place for a warehouse, it is very important that the warehouse is a safe distance from the residential area. All the existing warehouses without the safe distance from the residential areas need to be moved.

Last but not least, the accident is ascribed to human factors due to corruption and individual benefit between



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GENERAL

powerful officers. In the news conferences, many journalists always asked the questions: why the warehouse was situated there, why the warehouse company could not give an inventory of all goods, why the goods in the warehouse were far more than its capacity and who are the owners of the company. No one from the government answered directly these questions. As I know, China has the strictest laws and regulations in the world and according the law and regulation, the warehouse should not have been built in the current place and the company should not have had the permission to store chemical goods. I am sure the government leaders had known about the violation of the law and regulation. But, due to corruption and benefits between them, they just blindly closed their eyes and let those things happen against the law and regulation. As the Chinese Security Minister said, I hope Chinese government will determine and harshly punish those who are responsible for this incident. And also I hope Chinese government officers learn that complying with the law and regulation is very important and they will not take any risk for their own individual benefit.

Finally, I hope Chinese government can learn those lessons from this incident and no similar incident happens again in the future.

My Life as a Nanny: A Poem

Gabriela R. | Level 7 | Anne F.'s student

It is hard to write down thousand of thoughts that I would like to share!
But, no, I'm not a writer. Maybe, sometimes (not right now) a storyteller.

What do I like about being a Nanny?

I like the appreciation for my efforts in the eyes of children.

I like the hugs and their little hands coming to hold mine for a walking
chatting as well as in silence.

I like their silly smart jokes that make me laugh even in the middle of the
night or on the weekends:

Gabbie, how do you spell: I <3 cup?

I love see you pee... What! :D :D :D You're turning my grays green!!
(like the Hulk!)

I like to be part of their important steps to their future.

How is my life in Canada being a Nanny?

Interesting and rewarding!

Gabriela is a proud and happy nanny caregiver of a wonderful family in Ontario. She is a level 7 student.



A Generous Man

Melchizedek B. | Level 5 | Carla M.'s student



Back home in the Philippines, there was a doctor in our town who always treated patients whether they were rich or poor, and he didn't ask for a consultation or doctor's fee. One day, our neighbor accidentally touched a live wire, and she was electrocuted, and lost her vital signs.

The doctor immediately responded to this emergency, and performed CPR. Our neighbor survived, and the family of the patient praised, and thanked him. The name of the doctor was Dr. Cirilo R. Bitagon, and he is my father.

Chinese Cooking and Canadian Cooking

Zi Sheng C. | Level 6 | Jessica W.'s Student

I am not very good at cooking, but I know a little about it. I enjoy both kinds of cooking, but I think that Chinese cooking is healthier than Canadian cooking. I like Chinese cooking as it uses steaming to cook many foods such as steamed stuffed buns. They are yummy. Chinese cooking also uses stir-frying to cook many dishes, like beef with vegetables or pork with vegetables. They are delicious. In addition, I like Chinese boiled soups such as chicken with ginseng or watercress with pork bones. Chinese soups are good for your health. However, Canadian cooking uses deep-frying for foods such as French fries, chicken, fish, beef, and pork.

Canadian cooking uses the oven to bake buns, roast beef or pork, chicken, fish, vegetables and desserts too. They are delicious. Canadian cooking uses grilling too. In brief, they are all good foods, but overall Canadian cooking is fattier and uses more oil. I like to eat all kinds of foods. They are only cooked in different ways.





Heritage

The Fairy Tale of Lake Saif-Ul-Malok

Haroon D. | Level 7 | Lesley H.'s Student

Lake Saif-Ul-Malok is one of the beautiful lakes in Pakistan. It is located in the Niran and Kagan valleys, in the northern part of Pakistan. At an elevation of 3,224 m (10,578 feet) above sea level, it is well above the tree line and is one of the highest lakes in Pakistan. In that area, Lake Saif-Ul-Malok, Ansu (Tear) Lake and Lulu Sar Lake are good tourist points. These are glacial lakes. A glacial lake is a lake with origins in a melted glacier. Mountains around them are covered with snow even in summer time.

There is a fairy tale about Lake Saif-Ul-Malok that will attract tourists to visit there. Local people tell that story to tourists and people pay some money to hear that story.

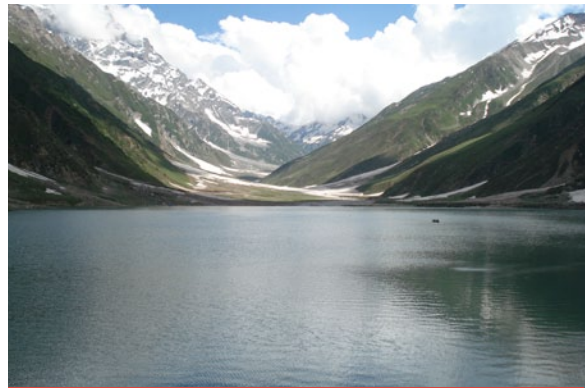


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Once upon a time, there was a king named Hassan from Egypt. He had a son whose name was Saif. Prince Saif saw a dream. He saw this lake and fairies and he saw their Queen. Her name was Badar Jamal. She was very pretty. He told that dream to his father and told him that he loved that fairy and wanted to marry her. His father said, "How can it be possible? You are a human and she is a fairy. It is impossible." But the Prince loved her and tried to find her. He started his journey to find her. After a long time, the Prince met with a Saint and told him that dream. The Saint prayed for him and told him that location. The Prince asked him how he could get that fairy. The Saint told him, "When you reach that lake, start praying for 40 days then you will get her." The Prince reached that place and he was very happy to see the lake. He started praying to his God. After 40 days, he captured two genies. They told him the time when fairies came on the lake and gave him Solomon's cap. When somebody puts on that cap, they will be invisible. They will see everything but nobody can see them.

The fairy came on the lake for a bath with her friends. The genie took her dress and gave it to the Prince. After taking a bath, the fairies wanted to go back but Badar Jamal couldn't go because she didn't have her clothes. The Prince gave her clothes back and took her to Niran. They hid themselves in a cave. When other fairies returned, everybody asked about Badar Jamal; even the Giant, who was her lover. He came back on the lake and tried to find her. When he knew the Prince Saif took her with him, he was very angry. He kicked very hard on the edge of the lake and water rushed down and made a river, which was made from that lake. The Giant found that cave and tried to enter it, but the cave was very narrow and it was hard for the Giant to enter. After that, Prince Saif married Bader Jamal and took her back to his country. In the local language "Malok" means to meet someone. That's why that lake's name is Saif-Ul-Malok. It means, "Saif met her here".

Bali

S. | Level 7 | Lesley H.'s Student

Bali is one of the thousand islands in my home country, Indonesia. Bali has excellent panoramic views. Mother Nature makes Bali a peaceful and serene place for every visitor. There are a ton of amazing resort places in Bali; for instance, Ubud (Monkey Forest), Kuta beach, Pura/temple Besakih, and so on. Bali is a fantastic recreation area. The majority of people in Bali believe in Hinduism. Bali is called "Indonesia Hollywood" as well.



Bali is a very famous and beautiful island. It is located in between Lombok and Java . They speak Balinese and English. Bali has a warm climate. It has very high humidity in summer time. There are a lot of rainforests, too. Bali has a very strong culture also. There are a lot of marvellous sculptors and dances in Bali. For example, Barong dance (lion dance), Kecak dance (monkey dance), Calanarang (dance about evil and God), and so on. We call Bali a place for God as well, because every ceremony time is about praying to God and Bali has very high spirituality. You can see tiny canang sari (offerings) every day in every place. They believe "it will bring bad luck, if you step on it".

Actually, The Monkey Forest in Ubud is a temple in front of the forest. The Monkey Forest is an institute that studies monkey's social interaction and behaviour with their surroundings. The temple itself tries to tell us how to understand relationships between human to human, human to environment, and human to the supreme God. We call these the three ways to reach spiritual and physical balance.

Pura Besakih is the biggest temple and the most unique temple in Bali. They call it the mothers' temple and it is located at the foot of Mount Agung. Every devotee from any caste can go to this temple. This temple is divided into three sections. The first one is representative of Siva (the destroyer) in the centre with a white banner. The second one is representative of Brahma (the creator) in the right with a red Banner. The third one represents Visnu (the preserver) with a black banner. This temple has a miracle sign for the 7 layers of the universe.

Beaches and palaces are two important places to visit in Bali. Nusa Dua beach, Soka beach, Lovina beach, Dreamland beach and Kuta beach are famous beaches in Bali. We can do scuba diving in Nusa Lembongan or Tulamben, surfing in Southern Coasts or Bukit Peninsula, white water rafting in Ayung's west side, water bombing in Bali's premier water park, see walks in Sanu or Tanjung Benoa, parasailing in Tanjung Benoa, Paintball games in Jalan Alas Arun, Canyon Tubing in slop river and simply watch a marvellous coral reef around the sea. The President palace, Ubud Royal palace, Ujung water palace, Kintamani village, Kebun raya eka karya, and Bukit jambul rice terrace are beautiful places to see, too.

Because of all that, Bali is very amazing for domestic and international visitors. Bali is an enormous island, different from other island in Indonesia. They keep the fantastic culture and at the same time, give a lot of pleasure to visitors. I hope you will visit Bali one day.

Me, My Country and Culture

Madiha B. | Level 6 | Spomenka B.'s student

My name is Madiha B. I am from Balochistan. My first language is Baluchi. First, I will talk about my country, Balochistan. It is the largest province in Pakistan. It is a very beautiful place. My motherland is full of natural resources, such as oil, natural gas, gold and coal. We have one of the deepest seaports, and a lot of of potential to bring in business from foreign countries.

Despite having so many resources, our people are suffering due to lack of government support. The government does not provide them with basic necessities. The people of

Balochistan want to get education, but there are no proper schools or universities, only few educational institutions which the government does not look after. They have become grazing grounds for goats, sheep and camels. Furthermore, the basic needs, such as water and electricity, are not provided by the government. People have to walk for miles to get a pail of water. It is the same with natural gas which comes out from our lands, but our people are still burning wood to cook or to keep themselves warm in the winter.

Finally, I want talk about something truly beautiful - our culture. My cultural dress is called Balochi dress. It is embroidered by hands, and one dress is made in four or five months. Everything you create on it is from your imagination. We keep our ceremonies alive and do them in traditional style still in this century.

My grandfather migrated from Balochistan to another province for better life for his children and grandchildren, so I completed my degree in sociology from Karachi University. After that, I got married and now I have two beautiful daughters and a lovely caring husband. It is a happy ending after all.





Recipes

Sticky Rice Cake

Man W. | Level 6 | Alena S.'s student

“Sticky Rice Cake” is my favourite cake, which I often make for parties. It’s simple, but very impressive, tastes sweet, sticky and very delicious. This elegant golden rice cake is perfect to finish off a dinner party or to have as an afternoon treat with friends. Please give it a try and enjoy!

Ingredients

1 bag of sticky rice powder (You can find sticky rice powder in FreshCo., it costs \$0.99/bag)

3 eggs

3 cups of milk

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup (or 1 cup) of sugar

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup of oil

1 cup of cranberries

1 cup of pecan nuts



Directions

1. Into a large bowl, add sticky rice powder, sugar, oil, eggs and cranberries and beat until the mixture is well combined;
2. Pour into a greased 13-in x 9-in baking pan;
3. Roughly chop pecan nuts into small pieces, and sprinkle on the top of the mixture;
4. Bake at 350° for 30-40 minutes or until golden. Cool on a wire rack. Yield: 12-16 servings.

Brazilian Fish Stew

Marinalva S. | Level 4 | Jing C.'s student

Ingredients

- 1.5 pounds tilapia fillets or Pacific cod fillet, cut into pieces
- 1 pound peeled shrimps (optional)
- 2 teaspoons minced garlic
- 2 onions, chopped
- 3 large bell peppers, sliced
- 3 large tomatoes, sliced
- 1 bunch cilantro or parsley, finely chopped
- 3 tablespoons fresh lime juice
- 1 tablespoon salt
- 4 tablespoons olive oil
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cups unsweetened coconut milk



Method

1. Stir the tomatoes, lime juice, garlic, salt and 2 tablespoons olive oil in a large bowl. Add the fish with marinade, then cover and refrigerate the mixture at least 20 minutes.
2. Heat the remaining 2 tablespoons olive oil in a large pot over medium-high heat. Fry the chopped onions and peppers for 2 minutes. Transfer the mixture in the large bowl to the pot and bring it to a boil. Stir it occasionally. Pour in coconut milk. Reduce heat to medium and simmer 25 minutes until fish is soft. Sprinkle the cilantro.
3. Serve with steamed white rice.

How to Cook Chinese Style Fried Bean

Zhao Yang W. | Level 5 | Junko T.'s student

The most outstanding character of Chinese style fried bean is that it combines naturally the crispy taste and the oil fragrant smell together; hence, many people like to eat it. Fried bean can be stored in a dry place for months. This universal recipe is fit to cook many kinds of fried bean. For the flavour, it is good for either salty or original. For the ingredients, it can also fit a long list of different kinds of dry beans or similar nuts, such as soy-bean, pea-bean, broad-bean and peanut. After reading this recipe or even just peeking at it, you will be surprised that it is so easy to cook cheap but delicious fried bean, which is as simple as making clear the differences of the pronunciations between sheep and ship. Now, let's begin:



1. Immerse a suitable amount of dry beans into a great deal of water with a fit container, for example, a bin. Let it stand alone for three hours or till the beans are soaked thoroughly.
2. Drain soaked beans and get rid of surplus water with a strainer or a colander.
3. Pour some vegetable oil (according to your custom, usually oil for $\frac{1}{2}$ volume of the soaked beans is enough) into a wok or frying pan; heat oil to more than 100°C (some kinds of oil such as canola oil or corn oil need not be pre-heated);
4. Put drained beans into the wok (or frying pan); fry beans with high heat at the beginning, then middle to low, stir beans frequently, till no water vapour arises and 2-3 “pea-pa” sounds per second; turn off stove. (You can use electric deep fryer to cook fried beans too. In such a case, please follow the instruction of the fryer. Usually, it needs to be fried about 10 minutes with a deep fryer.)
5. Drain fried bean. Used oil can be stored for next time. Add some seasoning you favour onto fried bean, such as salt and hot pepper powder, and blend it well.
6. Patiently wait minutes before enjoying it till hot beans turn cool and become crispier.
7. Whether it is successful or not this time, try again and again till you do not need the recipe any more or you can do better according to your own experiences. Remember, for Chinese foods, cooking is not a technology but an art.

Libyan Couscous with Busla

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

Ingredients

2 1/2 cups couscous
Approx. 500 mg meat (preferably lamb) about 4 pieces with bone
1 onion chopped
2 1/2 large tablespoons tomato paste
1/2 tsp red pepper
1/2 tsp turmeric
1 tsp salt
1tsp Libyan spice (“harrarat” check a store that stocks Middle Eastern spices)
Pinch of cinnamon
2 tsp any cooking oil
1 cup of chickpeas (soaked in water overnight and drained before use)
Approximately one liter of hot water
Approximately 10 medium yellow cooking onions sliced for the busla.



PHOTO CREDIT: Amel E.

Preparing the meat sauce

First, peel and slice about two medium onions. Heat some oil in a pot, and add the chopped onion. Sauté until golden then add 2 1/2 tbs. of tomato paste. Cook and stir until the oil becomes reddish in color, turn down the heat. Add the meat pieces and cook and stir. Add 1/2 tsp of red pepper, 1 tsp of salt, 1 tsp of turmeric and 1 liter of boiling water, cover and cook on medium high for about one hour.

Preparing Busla

Put 10 sliced onions in a steamer. After about 10 minutes add about 1 cup of chickpeas, let cook until onions become soft and then sprinkle in some cinnamon and put this mix into another pot. Add to this busla three large serving spoonfuls of the meat sauce and let this mixture cook until it becomes thick on low heat.

Finally, in a large bowl, mix 2 1/2 cups couscous with 1/2 cup of water and mix well. Put the couscous in a steamer for 30 minutes, then add some sauce and break up any lumps. Sprinkle some harrarat over the couscous.

Serving

In a large clay bowl, put the couscous at the bottom and cover it with busla then add the meat pieces and cover the meat with more busla and sprinkle some harrarat over the dish. Serves 4 people and goes well with a fresh salad.

Pancit Canton Noodles

Glenda S. | Level 6 | Tuula L.'s Student

Pancit Canton is a traditional food in the Philippines. It is served on every occasion. Pancit changes in cooking from the north to the south of the country. People use different kinds of noodles and different kinds of meat. This recipe is one of the most popular variations of this favourite dish.

Ingredients

1 pack (250 grams) pancit canton noodles or any rice noodles
200 grams of pork tenderloin, sliced into small cubes
1 spicy farm cooked sausage, sliced
1 small onion, peeled, sliced
1 teaspoon minced fresh garlic
8 to 10 pieces of medium raw shrimp, peeled
10 to 12 pieces of snow peas
1 medium carrot, sliced
1 small head of cabbage, chopped fine
2 cups of chicken broth
1 tbs of oyster sauce
3 tbs of soy sauce
1 small bunch of parsley chopped
3 tbs of canola oil

Instructions

1. Place 3 to 4 cups of water in a large pot and bring to boil.
2. At medium heat, blanch the vegetables for 1 minute in the hot water.
3. Remove the vegetables from the pot.
4. Put the vegetables in a bowl immersed in ice cold water.
5. Pour canola oil in a large pot.
6. Fry onions and garlic lightly.
7. Add the shrimp, then cook for 5 minutes at medium heat. Remove the shrimp from the pot.
8. Add the pork to the pot and fry for 10 minutes.
9. Add oyster sauce, soy sauce and salt and pepper to taste.
10. Add chicken broth and water. Bring to boil for 5 minutes.
11. Add the pancit canton noodles in the pot and let cook for max. 5 min to allow them to absorb the sauce, then mix well.
12. Add shrimp, parsley, vegetables and mix well.
13. Put pancit canton in a serving dish and serve hot.



Delicious Honduran Rice Pudding with Raisins Recipe

Adela V. | Level 5 | Erin O.'s Student

Ingredients

- 1 lb. of jasmine rice
- 2 cans of evaporated milk
- 1 can of condensed milk
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1-3 cups of raisins
- 2 cinnamon sticks

Method of preparation

1. Cook the rice with water and the cinnamon sticks.
2. Drain the water and remove the cinnamon sticks.
3. Add ground cinnamon, vanilla and raisins when the rice is cooked and soft.
4. Add the evaporated milk and sweetened condensed milk.
5. Mix everything well.
6. Let it cool down and dust it with ground cinnamon.

Advice

Don't overcook the rice, leave it tender.

Ready to enjoy!



Shashlik

Kostiantyn S. | Level 5 | Erin O.s' Student

This is a very good recipe for cooking meat on coals. We prepare this dish when eating with family or friends. It is best to eat with fresh vegetables. I think this dish is tasty and healthy.

Ingredients

- 2.2 lb. pork shoulder
- 5 medium onions
- 1.5L water
- ¾ cup of vinegar
- 1.5 tbsp salt
- ½ tsp spices (paprika, black pepper) according to taste

Instructions

1. Cut meat into 2-inch cubes.
2. Slice onion into rings.
3. Pour in water, vinegar salt and spices.
4. Knead marinade into the meat. Cover and refrigerate for at least 4 or more hours.
5. Thread meat onto skewers. Grill on charcoal grill for about 15-25 minutes (until tender).
6. Turn over every 3-5 minutes.

Bon appetit!



PHOTO CREDIT: Kostiantyn S.

Salvadorian Empanadas

Rocio R. | Level 3 | Theresa R.'s Student

Ingredients

2 small chicken breasts
1 green pepper
chicken broth
1 onion
1 tomato
3 potatoes
pinch of salt
1 cup corn flour
1/4 cup water



Method of preparation

First , peel the potatoes and dice them into small cubes.

Also dice the tomato and onion.

Second, boil 2 small chicken breasts and add salt.

Third, pull apart the chicken breast into small pieces

Then, fry the pulled chicken breast, add green pepper, onion, tomato, chicken soup base and salt

After three minutes add the small cubes of potatoes and cook for another three minutes.

Next, prepare the dough, mixing the corn flour with water, and add paprika.

Finally , make small round shapes with the dough. In the centre of round shapes put the chicken and potato mix, and close the round shapes of dough making half moons.

Finally, deep fry the half moons for 5 minutes on each side under low flame.

Enjoy!

White Kimchi

Hosug J. | Level 6 | James T.'s

White Kimchi is a delicious, non-spicy pickled Napa cabbage stuffed with a variety of colorful vegetables. I first made Kimchi in Canada.

Ingredients

Napa Cabbage (1 whole Napa cabbage, about 4 pounds)	
Radish (1 pound)	
Carrot (1pound)	Water (10 cups)
Apple (1 pound)	Fish sauce (1 tablespoon)
Pear (1 pound)	Grated ginger (1 teaspoon)
Sweet potato (1 pound)	Grated garlic (1 teaspoon)
Green onion (1/2 pound)	Sesame seeds (1 teaspoon)
Sea salt (2 cups)	Sweet rice powder (1 tablespoon)



PHOTO CREDIT: Hosug J.

Preparation

- Cut Napa cabbages**
 Cut the Napa cabbages in half, then cut a slit through the stem. Mix 10 cups of water and 2 cups of coarse salt in a large enough bowl to fit all the cabbage halves. Fully immerse the halves in the salt water and leave them for at least 6 hours .
- Wash & drain**
 Wash them thoroughly 3-4 times. Drain all the water out by placing them over a strainer upside down. Leave them for an hour.
- Make broth**
 Mix 1 tablespoon glutinous rice powder with 1/2 cup water, simmer over low heat until it thickens and after that, let it cool.
- Make seasoning mix**
 Cut apples, onions, and pears into slices. Grind them with a blender. Mix them together and season with salt and fish sauce.
- Cut vegetables**
 Finely cut the radish, carrot, sweet potato, pear and green onion into sticks.
- Mix vegetables with sauce**
 Combine the vegetables with the seasoning ingredients of salt, garlic, ginger, sesame seeds and fish sauce. Pour some of the broth from step 3 and add some of the seasoning mix from step 4 and combine.
- Apply seasoning and wrap the cabbage**
 Apply the seasoning mix in between the leaves of Napa cabbages. Make sure there is enough vegetable bits in each layer. Wrap the cabbage with outer leaves. Pour the remaining broth and seasoning mix over the cabbages in the container.



Seasonal

Poem About Winter

Sashikala M. | Level 6 | James T.'s Student

Winter is the season when the whole
world seems to go to sleep.

The weather is cold, and
The trees and plants seem
to die.

People work hard and creative
People are sick and sneezing,
Because the weather is so Freezing.

Yummy things like hot chocolate and cookies
spice up the winter season.

Christmas is almost here
A holiday filled with such cheer,
People exchange gifts and enjoy with
their families and friends.

Kids go and jump on the snow and make snowmen,
Adults enjoy their ice hockey games and ice skating and
Skiing with a glass of wine.

Winter is fun, but I don't like winter.
It is coming soon.



PHOTO CREDIT: Charles Z.

Winter in Canada

Zhi Z. | Level 7 | Alena S.'s student



I have been in Canada for almost 10 years. However, when I talk over the phone with my friends or relatives in China during winter, they always ask me how the weather is here, in Toronto. According to their knowledge and compared with the weather in my hometown, it is very cold in winter and it is unbelievable for them that I can bear the temperature below -20 degrees Celsius here. It's true that it is very cold, but I like the winter here more than in my hometown.

Firstly, although it is cold here in winter, it is warm inside the house or building. In each house or building, there is heating equipment, such as furnace or air conditioner to keep the house warm. No one feels the cold when staying inside the house. But, when I was in my hometown, there was no heating system inside the house and it was damp during the whole winter. Due to the damp air, I always felt it was the same cold inside the house as the outside. I had the feeling that the damp air was penetrating my clothes and blowing directly on my skin. When I went to bed, the quilt was cold like a stone and it could not even warm up in the whole night. But here, in Toronto, I don't have such a bad feeling.

Secondly, most of the days here in winter are sunny. On sunny days, everyone is always in a good mood and works more efficiently. However, in my hometown, most days in winter are cloudy, overcast or rainy. It rains too often in winter and there are always 3 or 4 consecutive cloudy or overcast days before and after rainy days. Without seeing the sun, especially on rainy days, people always feel unhappy and depressed.

Last but not least, there is more fun here in winter than in my hometown. People here celebrate Christmas in December, New Year in January and Family Day in February. During Christmas season, there are many parties and other holiday events, such as Boxing Day, a big event for shopping. People in my hometown also celebrate New Year, but they don't have so many events. Moreover, there are my favourite sports here -- skiing and skating.

However, there is also something here, which I do not like. The first one is the snowstorm. I am afraid of shovelling the snow. After each big snowstorm, I was exhausted with shovelling. Every year, the snow on my driveway piled up as high as me. The other thing is that it is too dangerous to drive on a cold day where there is heavy ice or snow on the road. Once I had such a frightening lesson that I will never forget it. One day when I was turning left onto a main road at an intersection, my car went into a spin and turned around, and at that time I was scared to death. The good thing was that all other cars had stopped and an accident was prevented.

Despite some little negative aspects of winter, all in all, I like winter more here than in my hometown and feel more comfortable here.

Do you like winter in Canada?

Nategheh M. | Level 7 | Alena S.'s Student

Even though winters in Canada are too long, I like it as well as the other seasons. Canada with a beautiful nature has eye-catching landscapes during winter. Life during cold seasons in Canada by wearing special warm cloths, safe public transportation and convenient home facilities is not hard. Furthermore, everyone can enjoy winter sports and entertainments based on their budget.

I like winters in Canada because I can enjoy the beautiful nature. Winter with snowflakes increases the beauty of Canada's nature, which is a combination of trees, some mountainous areas and water bodies like rivers and lakes.

Without winter, Canada would lose an advantage of having native animals that can only survive in very cold weather. Frozen Niagara Falls in the winter and polar bears are some of the amazing scenes that I can see in Canada.

I like winters in Canada because life is not so hard in winters. No one can feel cold by wearing special warm clothes, which are designed for cold climate, such as Canada's. Safe roads, secure public transportation systems to travel inside and outside of the cities are provided to make people free of fear. Inside buildings including houses or apartments, there are decent heating systems and sealing structures to prevent heat loss, as well.

I like winters in Canada because I can enjoy different winter sports and entertainments. Each family can benefit from winter in Canada based on their budget. Canada offers a variety of entertainments from free to expensive, like making snowmen, ice sculpturing, tobogganing and sliding. People can watch or participate in snow sports, which are very popular and well-known in Canada, such as skiing, snowboarding, ice-skating, or some winter team sports, such as ice hockey. More than that, there are really beautiful resorts everywhere in Canada that are at people's service during winter's cold weather, with facilities as hot bathtubs or outside hot pools.

Finally, year after year, I realize that I like winters in Canada; however, short days in winter and cold weather for long periods of time sometimes make me depressed. I encourage the others and myself to enjoy the winter beauties, available facilities and entertainment to make the life colourful and hot in Canada's white and icy winters.



PHOTO CREDIT: Charles Z.

Like the Same Cardinal

Bahar T. | Level 7 | Nicole H.'s Student

I was six and you were seven
It was that lovely winter of 1987

You came in snow with a sweet laughter and a boyish
sparkle in your eyes
With a red hat, jacket and gloves

You had a bowl of white snow with sugar and raspberry
marmalade
I could see your heartbeats in your eyes

You stretched your hands towards me to give me your marmalade prize
It slipped and splashed on my snowy white dress
And you escaped with a rush of red shy on your cheeks
And rainy innocence in your eyes

Since then the red of your raspberries coloured not only my dress, but also my heart
The night snow covered your footprints and I lost all the ways to your eyes

It seems you migrated that night...
But I'm still there and my heart is like the same Cardinal which never migrates and stays in snow; warm and
brave but defenceless, and whistles sweet love songs for a boy with a bowl of snow and raspberry marmalade
in his hands and bright twinkles in his eyes.



Since I Came to Canada

Elda N. | Level 7 | Morley M.'s Student



I have learned a lot since I came to Canada. I arrived at the Toronto Airport in November seven years ago. It was snowing and I was amazed at how much snow there was coming down. An airport ground crew had to de-ice my connecting flight before take-off to Ottawa my final destination. In Ottawa, it was still snowing nonstop. The next day we had to shovel four times. The piles of the snow were so high that it was difficult to pile on any more snow. It was quite an experience to be in a cold country for the first time. From that incident, I learned to dress properly for winter always wearing warm hats, mittens, thick socks,

winter boots and jackets when outdoors to avoid frozen toes, hands and ears. Every winter, I go to the Ottawa Winterlude festival with family and friends. We look at the beautiful huge ice sculptures, take pictures and have fun sliding around on the ice. At Winterlude, we always eat a beaver tails a popular delicious Canadian deep-fried pastry. Even though we wait our turn in long lines at Winterlude, I don't mind because I'm always dressed warmly.

When is Spring Coming?

Kim Chi P. | Level 5 | Lisa G.'s Student

When November comes,
A cold breeze comes with it
Starts at the end of the year
And ends in March

"Santa Claus is coming to town"
Everyone is cheering and shopping
Getting prepared for Christmas
For their favourite holiday

Snow starts to fall more
Silence is all that is left
Hail, snowstorm, freezing rain
When is spring coming?



Winter in Canada

Johora H. | Level 7 | Lisa G.'s Student



*PHOTO CREDIT: Chensiyuan
"Ice hotel canada" licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0*

When I landed in Canada at the Montreal-Trudeau airport, it was an extremely cold January evening, and I was feeling very apprehensive about my decision to immigrate to Canada, especially having come from an equatorial country.

The next morning when I awoke, it was snowing. I pulled back the curtain and I was just amazed at what I saw. The little frosty flakes floating down looked magical, and the landscape was breathtaking: everything was covered in white.

At the end of January, I visited the "Ice Hotel" with my family. It is located near Quebec City and is completely constructed from ice, including the guest rooms, the grand hall, the bar, the grand ice slide, and the chapel. Even the chandeliers are made of ice. When I laid eyes on the Ice Hotel for the first time, I became speechless. The architectural design, for both the interior and exterior was beyond belief.

The next day, we attended the Winter Carnival in Quebec City. This winter celebration includes winter sports such as snowboarding, ice canoeing, snowshoeing, hockey, cross-country skiing and dogsledding. The best feature of this carnival is the snow sculpture contest. Sculptors from all around the world turn blocks of ice into incredible works of art.

Before coming to Canada, I had never thought winter could be so enjoyable. However, I have discovered the joys of winter. My kids and I now build snowman, make snow angels, go snow sledding, and have snowball fights, etc. instead of sitting in front of the TV all weekend. Canadian winters are truly fantastic. Not only is the snow-covered landscape amazing, but so too are the fun activities we get to do.



Settlement

My First Impression of Canada

Augustin P. | Level 5 | Brenda V.



When I applied for immigration, my first destination choice was Montreal because the language spoken by the majority there is French and I speak French. However, because my wife has two brothers in Ontario, we came to Ontario, even though the language here is English. We knew that it would be very tough for us in terms of integration. We arrived in Mississauga at the end of September 2014 and we found the city impressive. We lived with friends for five days and then we rented a basement apartment. We found people in the neighborhood very awkward. They acted as if we did not exist. Some people said hello and some didn't. In September, it is fall and sort of cold. We had English classes close to the place where we lived and we used to get there by walking. It was very rare to see people walking outside. We only saw people in cars. We found it weird and

sometimes we thought that in this country everyone must have a car. Sometimes when I went to the bus stop, I came across a few people and I noticed they didn't talk to each other, and they kept a certain distance between each other. This moment in my life gave me a feeling of fear and shame. It got worse when the first day we wanted to apply for LINC classes close to our home and the teacher refused us because his class was full. At this time our thoughts of Canada were different than the ones we had when we were in Cameroon.

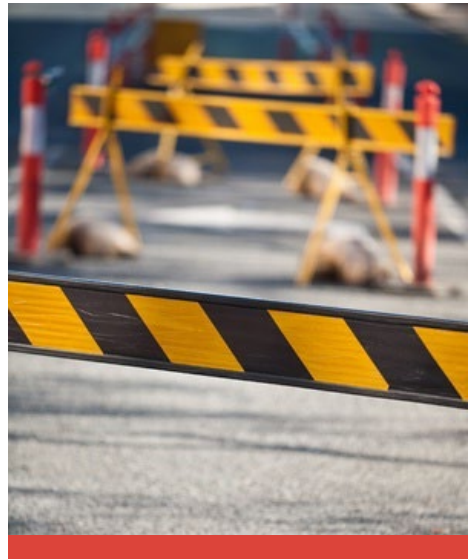
Fortunately summer came and we moved into an apartment in a building. There are a lot of immigrants and there is always somebody to talk with. In summer there are lot of outdoor activities. For instance, we went to the beach, we went to Montreal and we had fun. We don't have friends who speak only English, but we speak with people when we go shopping and when we are looking around, especially when I'm with my baby. Finally, things are working out and I can say that our integration is on its way.

Overcoming Barriers

Racha G. | Level 6 | Christine L.'s Student

I have faced some barriers since I came to Canada. When I was young, I always asked my mother to leave Lebanon and to immigrate to Canada but she wasn't able to make this big decision. Canada is the dream of everyone. It is a beautiful and secure country, but to live here is not easy. Usually, immigrants face the same barriers such as the different culture, the language and how to find a job.

The first barrier was the different culture; really it's a big difference between people here and those who are in my country. The way of thinking, of living, of dealing with others, with problems and how to solve them were completely foreign to me. At the beginning, I felt that I couldn't do anything in this country and I preferred to stay at home. It wasn't easy for me to talk to anyone, as I was afraid to say something would be taken the wrong way by the other person.



The second barrier was the language. I realized that my problem wasn't only in speaking English, but in understanding when someone spoke to me. This was very difficult, and here the local expressions are not easy at all. At the beginning, I felt lost. I had to finish our immigration papers and apply for Medicare and a driver's license. I still remember when I didn't understand someone. I was shy to let people know that I am not an English speaker, so I told them I couldn't hear them. I was sure that I had a big problem and I had to practice my listening. I started by watching the news, the talk show programs, and movies with English subtitles, but they didn't help me in the beginning. After a month, I started with LINC Home Study to improve my listening and speaking. It has been really helpful and useful because it teaches me not only the language but lets me know and understand better the Canadian culture and the community that I have chosen to live in.

The last barrier that I have found in Canada is how to find a job, if you don't have the Canadian experience. This was really a shock for me because how can I get Canadian experience if I am a newcomer and I have spent my life working in my country and my experience is from there? I thought that as an employee, I should be given a chance to work in a company to get the Canadian experience; otherwise I can't get it. But when I started discovering all about Canada and how Canadian business worked, I realized that I am not able to compete with someone who is from Canada and, therefore, it is harder to enter the Canadian work life. That's why I decided to go back to school, to learn the Canadian system. I enrolled in a co-op program to help me to overcome these barriers.

Even though it has been hard work, and it has been challenging, now I'm so happy. I've improved and I've learnt a lot of things. Now I believe that learning in Canada is the professional way and it will help me to think "out of the box". Canada is a great country with so many opportunities. I would recommend it to anyone who wants to come. Just do it.

Living in Shiraz and Toronto

Mahmoud A. | Level 7 | Jonathan B.



Before immigrating to Canada, my family and I used to live in Shiraz, Iran. Shiraz is the capital of Fars province, and it is located in the south of Iran. The weather in Shiraz is neither too hot nor too cold and it hardly snows during the winter. In Shiraz most of people speak Persian, which is also the national language and since it's not a very expensive city they don't have to work hard. Besides, they usually have job security and do not have to change a lot of jobs during their lifetime or to earn a decent living.

In Shiraz, the weekends are on Thursdays and Fridays unlike her in Toronto where it is on Saturdays and Sundays. One of the popular hobbies on weekends is going to parks for the whole day, and eating, drinking, or even taking a nap there, like having a picnic.

After immigrating to Canada, my family and I live in Toronto. Toronto has the most population in Canada. The weather is quite unpredictable in Toronto and it snows a lot in winter. Since Toronto is so expensive, people have to work hard. Besides, they usually do not have job security and they may change a lot of jobs in their lives. In Toronto, weekends are on Saturdays and Sundays, and each weekend if you go to the downtown are in this city you can enjoy the various festivals taking place due to the many different cultures celebrating some kind of festival or the other, food, dance, music, Chinese New Year, etc. I liked living in Shiraz as well as now in Toronto.

The Challenges of Finding A Place to Live

Shireen E. | Level 7 | Michele H.'s Student

The process of searching for a suitable place to live has been always overwhelming for both landlord and tenant. It's now becoming even more difficult since the field of real estate has progressed rapidly over the past few years.

Recently, it's well-known that an intermediary, called a realtor, has become a part of the deal. No doubt that realtors make it easier finding a suitable place, especially for over busy people. On the other hand, they share a part in increasing the market prices since they are paid by the landlord.



In my opinion, another obstacle is the enormous rise in the number of new immigrants to Canada rather than the increase in the construction field. As a consequence, a competition between buyers or renters started and an auction market has been created, with competing, multiple offers for the same place. Not only have prices dramatically increased, but also buyers don't have enough time to inspect the property thoroughly because they have to make a decision within a few hours, even minutes.

To conclude, it's never easy to find a suitable place to live, but luckily the whole process is under the regulations of the government through the Landlord and Tenant Board.

My Advice to New Immigrants

Dat T. | Level 7 | Milanka V.'s Student



I would like to give some advice to those immigrating to Canada soon. These pieces of advice are from my own experience. I have been living in Canada for over 4 years now, so I know that the language is a big barrier for immigrants to get a good job and get along without any support. Many immigrants have difficulty understanding other people, participating in everyday communication and completing documents, for example. Another obstacle is getting a professional license or a certificate. After arriving in Canada you should connect with a professional association and find out how to start. Be prepared that

many diplomas and other educational certificates are not recognized in Canada right away. If you need to get a license to work, you have to go for assessment again when you are already here. There are some helpful things that new immigrants should know about, such as volunteering. We know no one wants to work for free, but there are benefits and you may consider this for a short while. Volunteering in the area you want to work will help you prove that you know what is expected at work and will give you some contacts. Join community group, professional associations, sports team or any other group that will connect you with people you would not normally meet. You will need to work extra hard to make those connections. For me the transportation is also very important, so try to get the driver's license as soon as you can. But, in my opinion, most important is to improve the language skills as you make plans for your life in a new country.

Tips from My Initial Six Months in Canada

Yolanda Y. | Level 7 | Erin O.'s Student



As a newcomer, it is always strenuous to settle down in a new country in the beginning stage of immigration. Based on my first half year's experience, I am pleased to share my feelings and inspiration about how to settle down from several aspects, hopefully giving some tips or suggestions to new immigrants.

First and foremost, you need to have a Canadian home. As the saying goes, east or west, home is best. Being a new immigrant, it is imperative to rent or buy a house or an apartment which can be regarded as your home. Many factors including but not limited to location, price, transportation and logistic service should be considered. Due to a lack of familiarity and stability, my family rented a house instead of buying, and the process turned out smoothly with helpful information from friends, accommodation websites and housing forums. Once you have a residence, you can follow up with other settlement issues like acquiring a driver's license, health card, school for kids. Also, I find that actually living in a place helps you get familiar with how the daily routine of life is in your new community.

Another issue of paramount importance is to expand your network of people. In my experience, it is more significant to have a willingness to communicate than the actual ability to have a high level of language usage. It is crucial to realize that you are new here, so being open-minded to interacting with local people is always preferable and immersing yourself into a community or a circle of friends will help you get more information and assistance. There are dozens of ways to encounter new people and gradually make new friends via attending ESL classes or parent meetings, participating in some routine activities like going to church or playing sports, along with others. With your enlarged network, settlement and adjustment will become easier and quicker.

Another key consideration is to accept and overcome system differences between your native country and Canada. Loving my health care professional job, I decided to search for a similar job in Canada. However, the medical licensure process turns out to be very complicated in Canada for international medical graduates and professionals. I have encountered educational and professional system differences, facing a series of barriers such as foreign qualification recognition and credential assessment. Although I had already done some preparation for that, it seems inevitable that I must spend a great deal of time and energy to achieve this goal. I recommend you pay attention to this professional issue as soon as possible if you are in the same boat. It is another example of how challenging it is to be new immigrants in a different country.

I have mentioned what I have learned in the initial six months in Canada with my goal of sharing the pros and cons through my experiences. Although it is a challenge to start a new life as an immigrant, I firmly believe that nothing is too difficult if you set your mind on it. You could lead a brighter life in Canada with an optimistic attitude and a strong eagerness to learn.

My Life in Canada

Sivasamy S. | Level 7 | Anne F.'s Student



I still remember the day I landed in this wonderful country. We arrived here on a typical winter day after a long journey from Sri Lanka. I was excited to hear the announcement upon our landing. I got a window seat, and I started looking through the window. The flight was going to reach Pearson Airport. Now I could see the Canadian land. When I looked through the window, I saw most of the places covered by white snow. I have seen similar movies or pictures or calendars, but when I saw it for the first time, it was awesome.

It took approximately 27 hours to reach Canada from Sri Lanka, including transit time which is more than a day. We were all very tired. I worried how to arrange shelter for my family. Luckily my friend, who lived in Montreal, travelled to Toronto and waited for us at the passenger pick up area. It was a big relief for me after I saw him. We met each other after almost 12 years. The roads were wider than my country. Several places were piled up with snow. It took some time in this land to find out where my family and the new generation will live. At that moment, I couldn't believe that I was finally in North America. My friend took us to a Sri Lankan family and they provided lunch. We finally fell asleep because of the difference in time. This was my first day.

The next day, my friend told me that we should apply for the SIN no and the health card as soon as possible. He also advised me that I should join any odd job and start earning money; otherwise, it would be difficult to manage the expenses. As I moved to Toronto, I met people from different cultures and countries. This gave me some confidence so that we can survive.

The cold weather gave me a hard time during my early days in Canada. However, my children liked that and they love to play in the snow and still love that. Some time I thought I should have stayed in my own country because it was difficult to find a job in my profession and also my lack of proficiency in English. However, I attended a job fair which was a breakthrough in my life in Canada. I met an employment counselor. I explained my problems to him, and he referred me to some settlement agencies, such as the YMCA and Access Employment. I could able find a volunteer job in my profession (accounting). As a consolation prize, I accepted, and that helped me find a paying job in Canada. However, I still realized that I needed to improve my English language proficiency level. Unfortunately, I didn't get a chance to attend a classroom lecture due my work and family commitment. One day, I walked to the YMCA Toronto and read an advertisement about a LINC Home Study program. I didn't waste time and asked the reception and expressed my interest to join. After the evaluation test, I enrolled in level 5. Now several years later, the LINC Home Study program has really helped me to improve and manage my English, especially in the work environment. Tons of thanks to my teachers!

Now I have a full time job, and I am still studying English in the LINC program. I am very happy now, and I am thinking I should have come to this country much earlier. Today, I have a decent networking group, which has helped other newcomers, Now I am studying for an accounting certification. Life is very busy (of course, it is less busy than city traffic), but I am still happy. My wife and kids love this place. Compared to my country, Canada is very peaceful and almost everyone respects other people's rights. Hurray!

Coming to Canada

Shengjie Z. | Level 3 | Theresa R.'s Student

I came to Canada from China in 2013. I came with my family -my husband and my daughter. We were excited to see a different country and culture. The first image I had about Canada was that it was very large and the people were very friendly.

Canada is very good, but I also miss China. I miss the food, my friends and my family. I had a brother and his family here, so we didn't need to find a place to live.

My brother showed us around. He took us to Niagara Falls. He took us to the restaurant to eat Canadian food and also to the Chinese supermarket.

And I got a driver's license for the first time. Now I have my G2 so I can drive by myself. Now I can go out without my husband and I can bring my children to different places by car.



Buying a House in Canada

JaeHyun L. | Level 6 | Samuel M.



There are various residential types in Canada. It should be considered what type of residence is required. It is required to research on the factors such as convenience for shopping, easy approach to the work place or schools, quietness, safety condition.

For house plan, financial budget should be considered for available house. In that point, there are two factors, available own money and possible mortgage limit. And the mortgage ratio is related to house owner's creditability and income record.

Personally, I choose my house in the range of under 10 years old building age and medium size. The other important factor was that easy selling possibility.

It is not easy to know about house if someone do not have any experience living in the house before. So I recommend to ask for various advice and information. Finally he can offer at his wanted price from originally listed regular price.

The buyer and seller can exchange some counter offers by several times and in some case, they can reach to the final offer as well depending on the easy negotiation. If they have agreed on sale price, next step would be house inspection process and make the closing date.

I described the general buying process to be considered in buying house, but it is just general process and in some case, there can be more other things depending on the each person's situation.



Skills

Tips, challenges and experiences for finding work in Canada

Svetlana B. | Level 7 | Alena S.'s Student



For the most of internationally educated professionals, who immigrated to Canada, the process of finding work is a challenge. As the internationally educated professional in the accounting field, I have had some difficulties as well. No doubt, that job seeking process is as unique and creative as an individual, but I want to share with you some effective tips based on my experience.

My first tip is to find a program, which offers a work placement or a volunteering opportunity. This is not only helpful addition to the resume, but the perfect chance to

expand your list of contacts.

At the beginning, I took the enhanced learning training course in accounting after which I got the short term assignment as a volunteer from which I was referred to my current position of an Administrative Assistant. From my point of view, the active job seeker should use any chance to move forward. You never know who or what can help you, whether it is a person or useful information that you can use one day. Please, don't just sit around and wait for your "dream job" to open.

The second tip is to find a job mentor. He or she can tailor and tidy up your resume, assist in preparation of answers for the most common questions that are required at the interview.

I had a retired professional accountant and he helped me with creation of the cover letter and resume. Furthermore, he helped with tips and advice to make my job search as successful and speedy as possible.

In conclusion, I believe that it is always a good idea to follow the basic rules:

- Use any chance to build and expand your connections.
- Remember it never hurts to ask.
- Polish your resume writing skills by constantly applying online.

Hopefully, these tips and my experience will be helpful for someone who is on the way of obtaining the better job in Canada.

My Job at Walmart!

Noor S. | Level 4 | Diane R.'s Student

I worked part time for 3 ½ years at a family owned pizza restaurant and decided I wanted a better job. It took 2 years to find my cashier job at Wal-Mart but it was worth it.

I started to look online for other jobs in big companies. I wanted to work for a big company so I could speak English more, have benefits, better pay, more opportunities and a better work environment. At first, I didn't get any interviews. I applied to Shopper's Drug Mart 10 times. I applied to Wal-Mart 3 times. I applied to Zehr's 2 times. I applied to Bulk Barn, FreshCo, No Frills and Tim Horton's. I applied EVERYWHERE! It was frustrating.



My LHS instructor, my cousin and my local YMCA helped me with the applications. Some of the language was difficult but it got easier. I finally got an interview with Shopper's Drug Mart after 1 ½ years of trying. I was so excited but also nervous. This was 6 months ago. I prepared for the interview with my LHS instructor. The interview was difficult and I didn't understand everything but I asked them to explain and they did. The Shopper's Drug Mart managers who interviewed me were very nice. But, I didn't get the job. I was very sad and felt that I would never get a better job. I couldn't sleep.

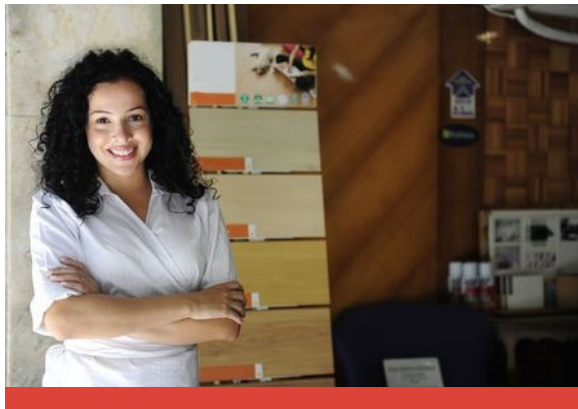
Next, I got another interview at No Frills. It was still difficult but I did a little better. Then I decided to keep trying for Wal-Mart. My LHS instructor and I looked at their website and they posted new jobs every Monday. My homework was to check the website every Monday for jobs. Finally, there was a cashier job in my city. I had cashier experience from my pizza job. I applied. The application involved answering 80 questions. My cousin helped me with the questions but she didn't understand all of them either. They called me for an interview. They interviewed us in a group. It was hard, but my experience with Shopper's Drug Mart helped.

Then, on Aug 31st my 6th anniversary of coming to Canada, Wal-Mart hired me as a part-time cashier.

The work is fast paced and the training was not easy. But I am getting better everyday. I LOVE my new job! One day I will be manager!

The Pros and Cons of Owning a Small Business

Tie C. | Level 5 | Erin O.'s Student



Based on a report from Statistics Canada, as of 2012, there were over 1.08 million small businesses in Canada which employed over 7.7 million individuals in Canada. Key Small Business Statistics proposes the two defining characteristics of small business: having at least one paid employee; having annual sales revenues of \$30,000 or more. ^[1]

For newcomers, it is probably a valuable opportunity to establish small businesses in Canada. First, a small business is very independent and flexible. Owners can not only choose and change the business direction, but also choose partners or manage it by themselves. Second, it can provide various goods and service to public. Because of their immigrant backgrounds, newcomers can import goods from their home countries for sale in the Canadian market. Third, small businesses potentially have more financial returns as compared with being employed by others. As the old saying goes, “One can hardly get rich working for others”. A friend of mine who used to be a cook in China told me he that he would like to run his own restaurant instead of working under others. Fortunately, his dream has come true and he is now a franchisee of a famous sushi brand in a tourist town in New Brunswick, and he says that he enjoys being his own boss.

Despite the various pros of owning a small business, a few cons are found in today’s competitive environment. First, owners may lack professionally managerial skills. Owners may manage the business by their working experiences or through family business teaching. They may not have the required skills such as accounting, finance and human resource management skills. Second, owners are often under stress. Typically, the owner’s life and family are affected by pressure because of the high failure rate of small businesses. Even if they work very hard, they are still under various levels of stress. Take the above-mentioned friend for example, who also has his own worries in business, especially in winter when the weather does not cooperate. In fact, he sometimes has to close the restaurant at the early evening in winter time. Third, it is difficult for small businesses to get financial help. Because of the high risks, owners may not get enough funding from banks, especially during the first few years. ^[2]

Since owning a small business is filled with risks, potential owners should seek to limit the risks as much as possible. In any case, it is never too late to learn more skills and hold enough capital when an owner is determined to invest in a small business.

References:

[\[1\] Key Small Business Statistics, Statistics Canada, August 2013, www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/061.nsf/vwapj/KSBS-PSRPE_August-Aout2013_eng.pdf](http://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/061.nsf/vwapj/KSBS-PSRPE_August-Aout2013_eng.pdf)

[\[2\] Kristi Harrison\[et al.\], The Basics of Canadian Business \(Toronto, Nelson, 2008\), P125](#)

My Success Story

Pushpa G. | Level 5 | Nahed S.'s Student

My name is Pushpa. I came from Sri Lanka two years ago. I moved to Canada with my three kids and husband, for a better quality life and good education for my kids. I have often felt lonely. It has taken a lot of effort to adapt to my new life here in Canada. I felt so frustrated, because it was a new culture and I had trouble with the language. I have had to improve my English language and learn new skills in order to work. These were just few of my challenges that I had to deal with.



First, I started to learn how to drive in Canada. I took driving lessons with Young Drivers. After that, I got my driver's license. I felt happy because I could drive where I wanted. Second, I joined an adult school to study English and Chemistry, because they were required to enter college. At the same time I decided to study English with LINC Home Study. This program was so convenient with my daily schedule. I chose my class time after a discussion with my teacher. Teachers are very helpful and make friendly learning environment. I have been in this program for more than a year. Now, I have realised significant improvement of my English language skills. Now I have no hesitation to talk with people. LINC Home Study has added new values for my life. I am so happy that I started this English course. Third, I am lucky that I entered the college for a year program. At the same time I got a job. I graduated from college this summer. Now, my other goal is to take the two year practical nursing program from the college this fall. However, looking back over the last two years of my life, I am happy that I have achieved so many things like getting my driver's licence, improving my English skills, graduating from college, and getting a job etc.

My First Canadian Job

Wai C. | Level 5 | James H.'s student



When our family had immigrated to Canada and settled down to our living, I thought about finding my first job in Canada. I remember on that day, I went to the Italian grocery shop near to my home and asked the grocery manager to hire me for any position. I thought I didn't have any working experience in Canada, so I could not care what kind of job I got. In the meantime, the manager hired me and asked me to start working the next day. I was excited to get this job because I had a chance to get my working experience. However, I worked in the deli department on the first day and had some problems. In the deli department, I needed

to recognize all kinds of meat and know their ingredients. Moreover, I also learned how to use the deli machine and give service to the customers. Nowadays, I have been working with my colleagues for two years and am happy working with them and get more service skills from them.

Glossary

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

Modification (p.7)

a small change made in something such as a design, plan, or system

Bodice (pg.7)

the part of a woman's dress above her waist

Mulch (pg.8)

a substance that you put on the soil to improve its quality, to protect the roots of plants, or to stop weeds growing

Sprout (pg.8)

start to grow, producing shoots, buds, or leaves

Perennial (pg.8)

a plant that lives for more than two years

Stunning (pg.11)

extremely attractive or beautiful

Goosebump (pg.12)

small bumps on your skin that are caused by cold, fear, or a sudden feeling of excitement

Monotonous (pg.13)

boring because of always being the same

Solo (pg.13)

done alone without anyone else helping you

Guild (pg.13)

an organization of people who do the same job or have the same interests

Spontaneous (pg.14)

something that has not been planned or organized, but happens by itself, or because you suddenly feel you want to do it

Playbill (pg.16)

a printed piece of paper advertising a play

Matinee (pg.16)

a performance of a play or film in the afternoon

Indignation (pg.17)

feelings of anger and surprise because you feel insulted or unfairly treated

PSW (pg.19)

Personal Support Worker

Habitat (p.22)

the natural home of a plant or animal

Prevalent (pg.24)

common at a particular time, in a particular place, or among a particular group of people

Inuksuk (pg. 25)

monuments made of unworked stones that are used by the Inuit for communication and survival

Dam (pg. 25)

a special wall built across a river or stream to stop the water from flowing, especially in order to make a lake or produce electricity

Abundant (pg.32)

exists or is available in large quantities so that there is more than enough

Prosperity (pg.32)

when people have money and everything that is needed for a good life

Drawback (pg.35)

a disadvantage of a situation, plan, product etc.

Glossary

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

Waive (pg.36)

to state officially that a right, rule etc can be ignored

Teepee (pg.41)

a round tent with a pointed top, used by some Native Americans

Longhouse (pg.41)

a long communal dwelling of some North American Indians (as the Iroquois)

Indelible (pg.46)

impossible to remove or forget

Gullible (pg.46)

too ready to believe what other people tell you, so that you are easily tricked

Hacker (pg.50)

someone who secretly uses or changes the information in other people's computer systems

CPR (pg.55)

Cardiopulmonary resuscitation

Glacier (pg.57)

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

Overcast (pg.72)

dark with clouds

Equatorial (pg.76)

near the equator

Imperative (pg.83)

extremely important and needing to be done or dealt with immediately

Glossary Crossword

Complete the crossword below

The crossword puzzle grid consists of 31 numbered starting points for words:

- 1: Down, 7 cells
- 2: Down, 7 cells
- 3: Across, 8 cells
- 4: Down, 3 cells
- 5: Down, 3 cells
- 6: Across, 6 cells
- 7: Across, 5 cells
- 8: Across, 10 cells
- 9: Down, 3 cells
- 10: Down, 6 cells
- 11: Across, 5 cells
- 12: Down, 3 cells
- 13: Across, 8 cells
- 14: Across, 8 cells
- 15: Across, 5 cells
- 16: Across, 7 cells
- 17: Down, 6 cells
- 18: Down, 4 cells
- 19: Across, 7 cells
- 20: Across, 8 cells
- 21: Across, 5 cells
- 22: Down, 2 cells
- 23: Across, 7 cells
- 24: Across, 7 cells
- 25: Down, 4 cells
- 26: Across, 9 cells
- 27: Across, 10 cells
- 28: Down, 2 cells
- 29: Across, 5 cells
- 30: Across, 7 cells
- 31: Down, 3 cells

Created on TheTeachersCorner.net Crossword Maker

GLOSSARY CROSSWORD

Across

3. common at a particular time, in a particular place, or among a particular group of people
6. a large mass of ice which moves slowly down a mountain valley
7. to state officially that a right, rule etc can be ignored
8. boring because of always being the same
11. someone who secretly uses or changes the information in other people's computer systems
13. impossible to remove or forget
14. a printed piece of paper advertising a play
15. start to grow, producing shoots, buds, or leaves
16. extremely attractive or beautiful
19. the natural home of a plant or animal
20. extremely important and needing to be done or dealt with immediately
21. the part of a woman's dress above her waist
23. feelings of anger and surprise because you feel insulted or unfairly treated
26. something that has not been planned or organized, but happens by itself, or because you suddenly feel you want to do it
27. a long communal dwelling of some North American Indians (as the Iroquois)
29. monuments made of unworked stones that are used by the Inuit for communication and survival
30. a performance of a play or film in the afternoon
31. Cardiopulmonary resuscitation

Down

1. a disadvantage of a situation, plan, product etc.
2. a plant that lives for more than two years
4. Personal Support Worker
5. a round tent with a pointed top, used by some Native Americans
8. a small change made in something such as a design, plan, or system
9. an organization of people who do the same job or have the same interests
10. too ready to believe what other people tell you, so that you are easily tricked
12. near the equator
17. dark with clouds
18. done alone without anyone else helping you
22. a special wall built across a river or stream to stop the water from flowing, especially in order to make a lake or produce electricity
24. small bumps on your skin that are caused by cold, fear, or a sudden feeling of excitement
25. exists or is available in large quantities so that there is more than enough
28. a substance that you put on the soil to improve its quality, to protect the roots of plants, or to stop weeds growing

Comments

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

[E-mail: help@linchomestudy.ca](mailto: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 Spring 2016 issue is March 11th.

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.

