

Fall 2010

VOICES

UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON
LANGUAGE AND CULTURE CENTER





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From the Director

Joy Tesh

As the fall term of 2010 closes, the teachers, administrators, and support staff of the Language and Culture Center wish you happy holidays and a safe and productive academic break from our program. The LCC office will be open through December 23, 2010, and then will close for the holidays and open again on January 3, 2011. We look forward to seeing many of you again in the new year.

If you are leaving our program for any reason, we encourage you to stay in touch with us through email or through our web site. We love to hear from you. We are eager to hear from students who continue their studies at the University of Houston or at another school in the United States or who return to their countries to continue their journey. We have a great network of former LCC students all over the world.

I recently traveled to Doha, Qatar, and while there, at a college fair, was delighted to be reunited with a former LCC student who is now in a position of leadership in a college in that country. Fluent in Arabic, English, and several other languages, he was very effective in his job. As he introduced me to his colleagues and his students, I felt a great sense of pride in all that he has accomplished. He will return to the United States to defend his doctoral thesis in the summer and will perhaps speak at our graduation ceremony. He remembers his time in the LCC fondly and continues to refer students to our program.

Surely there were times when he wondered if he would ever finish his English studies or his academic program, but he has managed to do so and now, to be in a position to make a difference in the world. He encourages other students with dreams such as his to follow their hearts and to do the hard work required to succeed. As you can tell, I was delighted to see him.

We really are a great big family, and we don't want to lose any of you. Stay in touch with us. Let us hear from you.

This fall, we have been delighted to have 458 students from 46 countries in the Language and Culture Center's Intensive English Program. We continue to work hard to make sure we give you the best program possible. All of us who work at the LCC hope you have had great experiences in our classes and on the University of Houston campus. I wish you the best as you complete the fall term of 2010, and I look forward to seeing many of you again as you return in January for the spring term of 2011 in the Language and Culture Center.



Armaghan Sadeghbeigi, Maria Eugenia Rincon, Abdoulaye Coulibaly, and Zoewendbem Camille Zabre Receive LCC Scholarships

Sandra Hartmann, Associate Director

The Language and Culture Center awards four scholarships each term to returning students who best combine academic excellence and leadership with international awareness and cross-cultural understanding. Traditionally, one full scholarship honors Joyce Merrill Valdes, the founder and first director of the LCC. A second full scholarship honors Joseph O. Davidson, who served as director of the LCC for 22 years before retiring in 2006. These two full scholarships cover the cost of tuition, fees, and medical insurance for one term of study in the Intensive English Program. In addition, the LCC awards merit scholarships of \$1500 each for one term of study in the Intensive English Program. At the summer graduation ceremony on Thursday, August 12, 2010, the LCC awarded the Valdes scholarship to **Armaghan Sadeghbeigi**, the Davidson scholarship to **Maria Eugenia Rincon**, and the two merit scholarships to **Abdoulaye Coulibaly**, and **Zoewendbem Camille Zabre**.

Armaghan Sadeghbeigi was awarded the Valdes scholarship. **Ms. Sadeghbeigi**, who is from Iran, speaks Farsi and is currently studying in level six. She began studying in level four and was able to skip a level through diligent effort. This is her second term at the LCC. After she completes her study of English, she plans to go to graduate school for hospitality management at the UH Hilton. **Ms. Sadeghbeigi** said of receiving the scholarship, "It was one of my desires to get that valuable scholarship and I was honored to receive it. I really want to express my appreciation to my teachers for encouraging me to continue. Getting the scholarship helped me to regain my confidence."

Maria Eugenia Rincon was awarded the Davidson scholarship. **Ms. Rincon** is from Venezuela and speaks Spanish. She is studying in level six. She began studying in level four and was able to skip a level through hard work. After completing the intensive English program, she is planning to begin studying so that eventually she can become a doctor. **Ms. Rincon** remarked, "Receiving the Joseph O. Davidson scholarship was incredible and made me realize that if you work hard you will be recognized. Definitely, working hard is worth it."

Abdoulaye Coulibaly was a recipient of a merit scholarship. **Mr. Coulibaly** is from Mali and speaks Bambara. He is studying in level six this term having been at the LCC for two terms. After he completes his study of English, he will study business at the University of Houston. **Mr. Coulibaly** commented, "Receiving one of the LCC scholarships was a real milestone in my life. I will keep studying very hard in order to play a significant role in the development of my country."

Zoewendbem Camille Zabre was also a recipient of a merit scholarship. **Mr. Zabre**, who is from Burkina Faso, speaks French and has been at the LCC for two terms. He began studying in level two and by virtue of his diligence and hard work, skipped to level four where he is studying now. He plans to major in architecture at Houston Community College. **Mr. Zabre** said of receiving the scholarship, "I am honored to have been a recipient of the LCC scholarship. This encouraged me and as a result, I have been studying hard during the semester."

We congratulate (left to right) **Abdoulaye Coulibaly**, **Maria Eugenia Rincon**, **Armaghan Sadeghbeigi**, and **Zoewendbem Camille Zabre** on their outstanding records in the Intensive English Program at the Language and Culture Center, and we wish them great success as they continue to study in the United States. We all look forward to learning who will be the next LCC scholarship recipients at the fall graduation ceremony.



OUR LIFE IN THE U.S.

A Happy Friday

Abdulaziz Alfahaid, 2G

Last Friday was a very long day. I woke up at 10:00 a.m., and I came to my classes. I had three quizzes. When I finished my classes, I went to a good Arabic restaurant. I ate rice, meat, and fruit. After I finished my lunch, I went to my house. I was so tired. My friends called me that night, and they asked me if I wanted to go out with them. I slept one hour before I went out with my friends. We went to a café, and we met other friends there. We talked about our families, new semesters, mid-term tests and the holidays. At 11:00 p.m., we went to the AMC Theater to see a movie. The movie was very good. It was an action movie. Last Friday was very good for me.



Last Weekend

Anas Alodini, 2G

Last weekend was very interesting. On Friday night, when I finished my classes, I went to the ELS gym. I played soccer with my friends until 9:00 p.m. While I was playing soccer, one of the Venezuelan players hit me, and it left me feeling confused. After playing soccer, I went back home. Before I slept, I took a shower. On Saturday morning, when I woke up, I drank a cup of coffee. Then I finished my homework. After that, my cousin called me. He said, "My friends will come for dinner at my house tonight around 7:30 p.m. I hope you can come, too." When he said that, I was happy. My friends and I went to my cousin's house. That evening, we had a big dinner. It was delicious. Last weekend was full of interesting activities.



The Heritage Society Field Trip

Ji-Young Kim, 3E

One Friday afternoon, our class went to Sam Houston Park. When I arrived at the park, I could see several old houses. The first house we visited is the Staiti House, which was built in 1905 and purchased by oil pioneer Henry T. Staiti. Inside the house, there are a lot of rooms. On the third floor is a ballroom that was used for playing games. It is perhaps the best room in the house and is very impressive.

Then, we went to the Nichols-Rice-Cherry House that was built in 1850 and owned by William Marsh Rice, whose estate helped create Rice University. Originally, the house was empty; however, someone contributed furniture that came from Scotland. The interior of the house is quite ornate. Outside the house, there is a kitchen that stands apart from the main building. They were kept separate to prevent fires from spreading from one to the other.

The third house was the Kellum-Noble House that was built in 1847. The ceiling of this house is very high, perhaps to keep the house cool during the hot summer months. In the house, there is a separate room where children were taught. This reminds me of the home schools of the past.

Last, we went to the old cabin that was built in 1823. Inside the cabin, there are many curious things such as a box for making butter, equipment for taking off cowboy boots easily, and a mattress for keeping bugs and small insects away. Visiting the Sam Houston Park was a good experience for us because it helped us to learn about the history of Texas while at the same time gave us an opportunity to enjoy our time with friends.



ABOUT ME AND MY COUNTRY

My Grandfather's Farm

Sami Alanazi, 1B

My favorite place in Saudi Arabia is my grandfather's farm in Riyadh. It is my favorite place because my relatives meet there. We go to the farm two days a month. When we are on the farm, we usually cook a large dinner. I am relaxed and comfortable there because in the morning, I wake up to the sound of birds, and I like the sound of birds in the morning! I can see many types of flowers on the farm. I enjoy the views. I can ask my friends to come and play volleyball on the farm. And we can swim there, too. My last visit was four months ago.

Vietnamese Food

Nhung Truong (Jenny), 1A

The food in Vietnam is delicious. Most of the food in Vietnam is made from rice. There is a lot of rice in Vietnam, so rice is important. *Com Tam* is one of the most popular dishes in Vietnam. People usually eat *bun bo hue*, *hu tiu*, *pho*, *cha gio*, *goi* and barbecue. They eat *goi* with *banh phong tom* and fish sauce. *Cha gio* is a rice waffle with vegetables, meat, and seafood. They eat rice with egg, vegetables, meat, and soups every day. For dessert, the Vietnamese like to eat fruit and drink tea or juice. I love the food in my country. The food in Vietnam is very rich and varied. I invite you to visit and try the food of Vietnam. Welcome to Vietnam.



The Lantern Festival in Taiwan

Chih-Hsiang (Willy) Chang, 1B

The Lantern Festival is an important holiday in Taiwan. During the Lantern Festival, people are always together with their families. We eat some sweet soup, and children parade with lanterns in their hands. Then there is the heavenly lantern. People write their dreams and wishes on the heavenly lantern. Then they light it and let it fly into the sky. As the heavenly lantern carries people's dreams and wishes higher and higher up into the sky, people know that one day their dreams will come true.



Fager Theater

Sadek Alsadek, 1B

The famous place in my hometown is Fager Theater. It is a small theater. It is in the center of my hometown. Ten years ago, theaters were forbidden in my country. Fager Theater is the first theater in my country. Abdoul Karem Alhubail was the founder of this theater. Fager Theater produces ten plays a year. Fager Theater announced a surprise for summer 2011. The theater will present a play with actresses! This will be a good surprise for many people in my city. Of course our government does not like the idea very much, but in our religion we do not have any problems with music or plays. I hope they will build more theaters in my country.

The Sea

Heba Alkhabaz, 1B

The most special place to me is the sea. I love the sea everywhere. In my country, my home is close to sea, and I am able to see it any time. When I see the sea, I forget everything. When I smell its smell, I feel my soul is refreshed. The sea means a lot to me, and I love it as a part of me. I tell the sea my problems, my stories, and my dreams. After that I feel comfortable. Here in Houston, I miss the sea. I have to go to Clear Lake or Galveston to smell the sea. The sea is my life.

The Major Religions and Holidays in Burkina Faso

Diane Tapsoba, 1A

Burkina Faso has many different religions. They are the traditional religion, Islam, and Christianity. These three religions are the most important and most common religions. The traditional religion uses many animals or statues. Some people use chickens for sacrifices. They kill the chicken and offer it to their gods. Other people use parts of animals such as the skin, the skull, the tail, or the horns of different animals. There are also people who use statues. There are statues of fertility, statues of protection, statues of life, etc. Other people also use mystic powders and stones. There are different powders. Those powders have many uses; for example, we can use them to make ourselves stronger, more powerful, or invincible. There are special people who can communicate with the spirits. The traditional religion is sometimes scary. Besides the traditional religion, we also have Islam and Christianity. The oldest Islamic mosque in West Africa is in Burkina Faso. The holidays in Burkina are similar to those in the U.S. We have Christmas, Ramadan, Tabaski, Independence Day, and Toussain (like Halloween). Religion has an important meaning in Burkina Faso.



Music and Me

Xin Zhang, 2C

Music is an important part of my life. In fact, I can't live without melody. Living in my world of music is very wonderful. First of all, music makes me happy and encourages me. When I lose my way, I listen to music. I have been playing the piano since I was a teenager, so I know melody well. In fact, it's my special language to communicate about my life. Second, music can comfort my mind. If I am sad or nervous, I listen to sad music and imagine what happened in this music. Maybe the leading role of this music story is someone who has had a hard experience in life. I usually like to imagine every kind of music background story. In this way, I can forget my pain and feel better in my mind. To conclude, music is extremely important to me because music makes me active, and melody touches my heart.



The Person I Admire

Anas Ahmad Alodini, 2G

Do you have a person you admire? Why do you admire this person? This person should have a special character such as smart thinking or knowing how to use a good strategy in his life. If I chose a person, I would like to choose my father for three reasons. First, my father is a responsible man. He has the responsibility to take care of all the employees in his company. Also, he cares about my family situations. For example, when one of my family members has a problem, he is always trying to solve it as much as he can. Second, my father is very honest. He is honest with all people, especially with his family. When he sees somebody make a mistake, and that person says, "I don't mean that," he believes him. Furthermore, he doesn't like anyone to lie to him. But the excellent quality that my father has is generosity. He is generous with poor people. For instance, every month he goes to the mosque in order to give them some money and food. In fact, he likes to assist or encourage anyone who needs his advice or help. My father is my model; I hope to be like him.



OUR CULTURES, OUR VALUES, OUR ASSUMPTIONS

The Vietnamese Culture, Values, and Assumptions

Chuc Chu, 6A

Vietnam is a Southeast Asian country. It is an old country with a long history. The very first Vietnam was founded 4000 years ago and at that time my country was named *Xich Quy*. My country, from the beginning until current times, has had a lot of events, and those events have help shape the current Vietnamese culture. Furthermore, Vietnam has 54 ethnic groups. The majority is called *Kinh*, and the rest of the ethnic groups are referred to as *ethnic minorities*. Although each ethnic group has its own culture and language, all of them can speak the national language, which is Vietnamese. This is because the *Kinh* make up more than 80% of the Vietnamese population and their language is Vietnamese. Three cultural values that I think all Vietnamese people know and try to keep are the family, the people living in the same neighborhood, and traditional clothes.

In Vietnamese people's minds, family is the first word we think of when we talk about life. Children are taught to love and have responsibilities for their family at a very early age. They learn that everything they do is just for one purpose: to honor their parents and their family name. They are also taught not to air their dirty laundry in public. This means that anything they do, they have to try not to make a scandal because their personal scandals will affect their family pride. And when they do something that makes their parents proud, they prove that they love their family because if they do not love their family, they do not need to work hard and try to be good. The responsibilities that children should have for their family include caring about each family member and taking care of their parents when the parents are old. Their parents have to work hard to raise them; therefore, children owe everything, even their life, to their parents and their ancestors. That is the reason why they are taught to feel responsible to their family. Vietnamese families are close-knit and this culture needs to be preserved.

The second important cultural value is about people living in the same neighborhood. The Vietnamese have a proverb saying "a stranger nearby is better than a far-away relative." In my country, when you just move into a new neighborhood, you should say hello to your new neighbors because they are the nearest people and they can offer you immediate help when you most need it. When I was in Vietnam, my family's neighbor, whose house was next to mine, was a really good person. She helped us keep an eye on our house whenever we were on vacation away from home. When she went shopping, she often bought food and goods such as brooms, plates, bowls, forks, or knives and many other essential commodities for my mother. When she had something special, she shared it with us. And when we needed help, she was always willing to help. The Vietnamese believe that if they have good neighbors, their life will be good. That's why when we want to buy a new house, the most important thing that we need to know about is our future neighbors. We need to observe carefully these neighbors. If we see that they are kind, we will move to that place, but if they are not as kind as we expect, we have to find another house. Furthermore, the Vietnamese are not used to moving. When we live in one place, we usually live there for a long time, sometimes even until we die. Therefore, the surroundings, especially our neighbors, are very important.

The third cultural value is traditional clothes. Vietnamese traditional clothes include *ao dai*, meaning *long dress*. *Ao dai* has been our traditional clothing since the Minh Mang dynasty in 1820, and it has lasted until the present time. In the past, the Vietnamese always wore *ao dai* when they went out. The material used to make *ao dai* help



people recognize the status of person wearing it. Even farmers, who were in the lowest level of society, also had at least one *ao dai* to wear to special festivals. After Vietnam gained its independence, *ao dai* were not used often because Western culture came to Vietnam, and the Vietnamese started wearing jeans and T-shirts. But the Vietnamese want to preserve the tradition; therefore, *ao dai* is still a part of our society. Nowadays, the Vietnamese still wear *ao dai* in special events and festivals such as the Lunar New Year, the teacher's day, formal parties, wedding days, and so on. Students in high school have to wear *ao dai* to school every Monday. And teachers have to wear *ao dai* when they are in class. Wearing *ao dai* helps children keep the culture and always remember that they are Vietnamese. Children are taught that no matter where they live, as long as they wear *ao dai*, they can know who they are and be proud of themselves; they are Vietnamese.

In general, although Vietnam has many cultural values, in my opinion, I think that the three cultural values mentioned above are the most important. A close-knit family raises children and trains them to be good people and, therefore, they have responsibilities with their family, especially their parents. Neighborhoods help us when we need. Traditional clothes remind us that we are Vietnamese and when we wear *ao dai*, we remember that we should preserve our special cultures. No matter where we are, we should be proud of our cultural values. Because of these unique cultures, foreigners can know who we are and where we come from. Vietnam!

What We Value in Burkina Faso

Diane Kabore, 6A

My country, Burkina Faso, is located in West Africa and was colonized by France. As with many African countries, Burkina Faso learnt many things from France and kept several of its habits. For example, the French like eating bread, and we do, too. However, we did not forget our own values, the most important of which are respect for old age, hospitality, tradition, integrity, and housing.

In Burkina Faso, we are taught to obey our parents and elderly people. That is the most important value in our country. Indeed, older people are considered wise because they have experienced life before us. So, whatever they tell us to do, we have to do it. For example, if my mother advises me to do something, I have to do it, because she is older than I am and thus knows what is good for me. Whenever people have a problem, they can be advised by any old person, even if that person is not a member of their family. For example, when a couple has a conflict, and they cannot solve it, the older people of the two families will meet to help them solve it.

Hospitality is one thing that foreigners who come to our country never forget. We like taking care of others and making them feel comfortable. For us, foreigners must be treated well because there are many Burkinabe living abroad. Taking care of foreigners may be a blessing for our brothers and sisters living out of the country. They may find some help more easily. For instance, before receiving a guest at home, we make sure we know everything about what they like and dislike in order to make them feel at home.

Another value that we have is tradition. A Burkinabe always refers to his or her tradition before making a decision. It is so important for us that the government has even integrated some of our traditions in our constitution. For example, before two people get married, they have to obtain the girl's family's consent. The ceremony of this agreement is held in the girl's house, most of the time on a Saturday afternoon, because most people do not work on that day, and so they can attend the ceremony. It is only after the ceremony that we can say the girl and the boy are engaged. For this reason, all the couples are asked to prove by any means that the agreement ceremony has been held before they are officially married by the mayor.

In addition, if there is one thing that Burkinabe are known for, it is their integrity. Our country is even called "The country of men of high integrity". Indeed, we are so proud that we do not want our name to be destroyed by any bad behavior. So, we do our best to be as honest as possible in order to keep our reputation clean. We have a proverb that says "Death is better than shame", meaning that we prefer dying to shaming ourselves.

Finally, we do value houses. In my country, people can say they have succeeded when they live in their own house and no longer pay rent. Possessing one's house is a sign of achievement, and paying rent is a shame. Therefore, many people who do not own their house do their best to get it. They may save money for that or take loans from banks.

Burkina Faso is different from other countries. It is unique and its people are, too. Our values may surprise some people, but that is what makes us different from others. I would, however, like to clarify that not all Burkinabe value the same things, so do not be surprised to hear some Burkinabe thinking in a different way. Anyway, I've only listed what the majority thinks.

Venezuelan Values and Assumptions Maria Rincon, 6B

A culture is made by its values. Values give everyone an insight into different perspectives that amaze and intrigue them at the same time. Due to the influence of Africans and Europeans on Venezuela's history, Venezuelan culture has absorbed many foreign values that have been incorporated in their daily life throughout the years. Undoubtedly, Venezuelan values, as with many other Latin American countries, are a mix of different cultural groups, so their values are rich in diversity. The most relevant values and assumptions present in Venezuela's culture are family, friendship, religion, and patriotism.



To Venezuelans, there is nothing more important than family because family is the foundation of any society. Even though in this basic unit individual thoughts are formed, the Venezuelan family goes forward in pursuit of mutual benefits. The common Venezuelan family has a strong relationship composed of love, trust, admiration, solidarity, and understanding. Basically, individualism is not an important issue in this culture. A clear example that shows the importance of family is that many people are overwhelmingly concerned about their parents' opinions, and in fact they need their parents' approval before making any major decision. Also, family traditions are preserved throughout generations. Additionally, one's family's history is important, and learning about this history makes us proud of our blood ties.

Following this further, to Venezuelans, friends are like family. Although there are no blood ties, these relationships are composed of love, trust, and admiration. Venezuelans are very concerned about their friends' opinion because they are raised to consider themselves as an individual that forms part of a big family. A Venezuelan friendship is incredibly supportive, and friends will help each other all the time. Also, this country's friendships are loyal and reliable. Because of this, Venezuelan friendships are for life; if they can put their trust on someone, they want that person always beside them because it gives them confidence. Interpersonal relationships are incredibly important, so helping their friends unconditionally is something taught to Venezuelans since they are in kindergarten.



At least 95% of Venezuela's population is Christian; therefore, religion is relevant. Going all the way back to the time of European colonization, religion is an important theme in the life of Venezuelans. A lot of Venezuelan celebrations are Christian celebrations, and their beliefs are taught to them from the time that they are children. They are taught to respect and fear their God, so each Sunday they should go to the church to receive the Eucharist. In addition, there are days that this culture keeps as holy because of religion. Actually, some current Venezuelan manners have been shaped by the country's strong connection to Christianity.



History is very important to Venezuelans because this is what explains their present and determines their future. Certainly, Venezuelan patriotism is closely related to history, making it impossible to separate the two. The people are extremely proud of their Indian, African, and European roots. For this reason, they keep a lot of traditions as such as dances, celebrations, and music. These traditions are handed down from generation to generation, giving Venezuela its unique nuances of culture. Venezuelans express out loud their ethnicity, for they are not just Europeans, Indians, or Africans; they are a mix that differentiates them from other countries. Flying the national flag during national holidays reflects properly what patriotism means in Venezuela. The flag represents freedom and the hard work of many people who wanted a better country. Venezuelans' national anthem is about the people breaking the chains that captured them, and it certainly is very inspiring. It is the song that begins any public event. Patriotism is an important value that reflects completely Venezuelans' love for their country.

IF I WERE THE LEADER OF MY COUNTRY...

Phu (Peter) Ha, 5B

If I were the Prime Minister of Vietnam, I would change the structure of the government. Our Government system right now is complicated and doesn't work as efficiently as our people expected. I would create a budget for the best students from each university and send them to top schools in the world, so that they could study there and then come back to work in the government. I would also try to reserve the best conditions for these students so that I could have the best teams for each Minister in the Government. And I would build an advanced e-government system so that every job would be operated smoothly and accurately.

Abdulrahman Almallah, 5B

I would do a lot of thing for Saudi Arabia in order to make the country into the best in the world, if were the king. First of all, I would have the Saudi workforce practice with other people who are more educated than they are. After they have acquired the needed experience and mastered the work, I would give them a good salary and status. Second, I would increase the number of laborers who are Saudis while at the same time decrease the number of foreign laborers. Third, because our population is increasing every year, I would give the people a discount on their purchase of the necessities of life such as food, water, medicines, and houses. Fourth, I would expand the number of scholarships because this would benefit not only the student involved but also the whole country. Finally, I would give a house and a loan to any Saudi who really wants to build his life, get married and start his career life and business but who does not have sufficient money to materialize his dreams.

Burhan Seker 5A

If I were president of Turkey, I would try to provide improved education for students so that they would not have to go abroad for their education as they are doing now. Also, because the current salary for workers is not good enough for them to get by, I would pay good salaries to workers so that they could work harder for the country. Most importantly, I would try to eliminate corruption in the country's political life. I strongly believe that socialism is the best solution to the problems of the country because it gives all people the same rights, and nobody is assumed to be more important than others, and everyone is entitled to the same rights no matter who they are, or what their profession is.

Jiyeon Song, 5B

In Korea, there are lots of cram schools, which are special private schools that offer lessons conducted after regular public school hours and on the weekends. Of course the students who do extra study at cram schools can get good grades on the tests they take in public schools. For this reason, students respect and rely on cram school teachers more than public school teachers. This phenomenon negatively affects Korean society in many ways. First, students don't think that public schools can teach them anything new because they have already learned from cram schools what they have to learn later in public schools. Besides, they tend to think that public schools are just places that give them certificates. Second, as most students go to cram schools, public school teachers feel that they do not need to teach their students any more. They often say thus to their students, "I'm sure that all you guys have learned these things in cram schools, so I don't need to teach you these things anymore". Some public school teachers even refuse to give their students assignments. This is obviously bad because some poor children who cannot afford to go to cram schools cannot learn anything new at public schools.



Marriage Customs Around the World

Marriage Differences between Countries Jumah Sultan, 6C

Every single person likes to marry someone whom he is in love with. Therefore, couples choose each other, hoping to create a happy family and to spend the rest of their lives together. Recently I had a very interesting conversation with one of my Chinese friends about this happiest moment in the lives of young people, which is marriage. We learned more about each other's marriage customs, and we found that the customs in Libya are different from those in China in many ways.

First, in Libya, the groom has to pay for everything from the beginning of the wedding ceremony until its end. In Libya, the groom should be financially well-prepared if he wants to get married. Before the marriage, when the groom proposes to his future wife, he has to pay a specific amount of money called "dowry" to the bride's family. This dowry is determined by the bride's sponsor, who is her father in most cases. Furthermore, the groom has to have his own house and car. Actually the car is optional, but the house is mandatory. Moreover, the groom has to cover all the marriage expenses, including the food for the guests and the payment for the musical bands, whereas in China, the groom and the bride share the marriage expenses somehow. For example, if the groom buys the house, the bride would buy the furniture. Also, the dowry payment is optional and depends on the family.

Second, the time set for weddings in the two countries is different. In Libya, the wedding starts on Monday and finishes on Friday. So, the celebration lasts for five days. In those five days, the groom will receive and entertain his friends, relatives, and neighbors. Everyone will wear his or her traditional costume to join the groom and his family to celebrate the wedding. They all become like a family and share the activities such as cooking for the guests three meals a day, or singing and reciting poems till early in the next morning. In China, my Chinese friend told me, it is just a one-day celebration, and after that the couple starts their honeymoon somewhere. In China, the groom also invites all of his friends and relatives to gather at a specific time and at a specific place where they can celebrate the wedding ceremony together in the presence of the bride and the groom.

To conclude, though marriage everywhere has the same objective, to create a happy, lovely, and strong family, different countries have different cultures and customs and the inhabitants celebrate this in different ways.

Marriage Customs in Saudi Arabia and Vietnam Hieu Huynh, 6C

Marriage is one of the most important periods in one's life. It could be the expansion of the happy times when they are still lovers, or it could be the beginning of a new suffering life that ends their bachelor lives. However, wedding in many cultures means happiness to start a new family. There are similarities and differences between my culture and Saudi Arabian culture. The similarities are that there will be parties, wedding rituals, the groom and the bride. Yet, the differences between them are more striking.

In Saudi Arabia, people usually have two days to celebrate their wedding, which is completely different from my culture, which allows only one day for the wedding. The Saudis spend one of the two days for just only men on that day, which means that there will be just the groom and the men. There will be no appearance of the bride. Then, they will spend another day, with all the ladies with the appearance of both the bride and the groom. On these days, the bride will wear a white dress and the groom will wear a traditional Saudi costume called "Thob". Dinners will be served on each day, mainly with meat and rice. These things are really different from my customs in which I just have one day to celebrate the wedding and enjoy the dinner with all invited guests.

The wedding ceremony in Saudi Arabia usually takes place at night. Once again, the bride in a white dress and the groom in "Thob" together walk down the aisle. Then, the groom's family will give the bride a whole set of jewelry which is often diamonds. After the groom has put the necklace around the bride's neck in front of the guests, they

officially belong to each other. They are husband and wife. The ceremony ends with the cake being cut and the spouses go to a hotel in a car decorated with flowers. There will be no party on this day. By contrast, wedding ceremonies in my culture always happen in the day time. The groom and the bride will exchange rings in front of guests who are usually senior relatives from both sides. The ceremony ends when they both go in a flower-decorated car to the groom's house. A party will be organized in the evening and all of the guests will say best wishes to the happiest couple of the day.

A couple seeking love come to each other and when they find out that they cannot be separated, they decide to get married. In different cultures, there are different ways to celebrate wedding ceremonies. At the end of the ceremony, the images of happy spouses hand in hand going to the paradise of their own make everyone feel happy for them. Let us say best wishes to all of the couples who are in love, who are committed to a relationship and to having happy families.

Differences in Wedding Customs between Venezuela and Saudi Arabia

Gabriel Hidalgo, 5E

Marriage customs around the world are very diverse. Although all of them are based on the union of a man and a woman "until death do us part", there are several aspects which vary from country to country. This essay will focus on comparing the wedding procedures and clothes between Venezuela and Saudi Arabia.

First, I would like to talk about Venezuela. In the past, the bride's family paid 70% of the wedding expenses. Nowadays, the wedding expenses are divided 50/50 between the families of the bride and the groom. The ecclesiastical marriage ceremony takes place in a Catholic church, in which families and friends get together. After this ceremony, the newlyweds and the guests enjoy a big party. At this party, people dance, eat and drink. The usual dances are salsa, merengue and regueton. The type of food depends on the taste of the newlyweds and usually everyone drinks alcohol. Another important point is the clothes worn in this event. The bridal gown is white, but its design depends on the bride's taste; the outfit for the groom is the black tuxedo. The men guests also wear tuxedos and the women guests wear long dresses.



Now I am going to talk about the wedding customs in Saudi Arabia. According to an interview with my classmate Mohammed Marghelani, when a couple is getting married in Saudi Arabia, the groom's family pays for all the wedding expenses. In the wedding ceremony, there are usually only three witnesses. After this ceremony, there are two separate parties, one for the ladies and one for the gents. At the men's parties, there are Saudi dancers and traditional musical instruments. At both parties, there is food, coffee, and tea. In this country, people don't drink alcohol. Later in the night, the groom moves to the women's party to cut the wedding cake. The clothes worn in this event are also important. Nowadays, the wedding gown looks very similar to the Western style, but to keep it modest, most of them feature high necklines and long sleeves. The groom wears a white Saudi "thawb", on top of which he wears a black cloak named "bisht", and on his head, he wears a red or white "shomag". The clothes of the men guests are the same as the groom's but without the "bisht".

In conclusion, there are many differences between wedding customs in Venezuela and Saudi Arabia, but the

Different Wedding Customs in Turkey and in South Korea

Umit Can, 5E

In most countries, there are a lot of customs which are specific and special for them. In this essay, I will focus on differences between Turkey and South Korea. We can easily see two big differences in wedding ceremonies and kinds of wedding gifts.

It is interesting that the wedding ceremony in Turkey is totally different from South Korea. At first, we can see the obvious difference when bride enters the wedding-saloon. In Turkey, the groom accompanies the bride. Meanwhile, two traditional singers sing songs for them. However, in South Korea, the bride's father gets her to the wedding saloon, then the groom takes her from him. The second difference between Turkey and South Korea is music. In Turkey, the music starts at the beginning of the wedding and goes on until the end of it. On the contrary, in South Korea, no music is played in the weddings. People talk to each other, laugh and participate in the wedding ceremony. The last difference between the two countries is the foods. Usually in Turkey, the wedding meal consists of rice and roasted beef. But in South Korea, giving meals during the ceremony is not a custom, but the bride's family can invite their guests to a restaurant and they can eat something there.

The second big difference is gifts. In Turkey, families of the bride and groom usually give gold to the bride, especially necklaces, bracelets, and rings. But in South Korea, they only give money. Besides, while the guests in Turkey give money to the couple and rarely anything else, in South Korea, the guests give gifts which are like small things that the couple can use in their home. Finally, in Turkey the couple never gives gifts to their parents. However, it is interesting that in S. Korea, the new couple gives some presents to their parents after the wedding.

In conclusion, we can say that the two countries have big differences in their traditional wedding-customs. The way they conduct the wedding ceremony and the kinds of gifts given are totally different.

TOURISM

Egypt

Rowaida Gharbia, 4E

When you think about a place to go on vacation, you would be looking for a destination that is worth your money and time. Egypt is an amazing country that will stay in the heart and mind of its visitors because of its rich history, beautiful nature, and the wide range of activities it offers.

The history of ancient Egypt provides visitors with valuable experiences. The Pyramids of Giza and Sphinx represent monuments of one of the oldest civilizations. In addition, visitors would learn about the history of the country in the last five thousand years by going to museums. These museums display artifacts and talk about the history of the country through the ages. Abdeen Palace, Alexandria National Museum, and Islamic Ceramics Museum are some of the many museums tourists can visit in Egypt. Historical experiences make that place unforgettable.



Nature makes Egypt more and more attractive. It has many beautiful beaches, such as Sharm El-Shek and Alexandria, where visitors could enjoy the golden shiny sand and the clear blue water. Furthermore, the unique desert and camel safari are the greatest things to see in Sinai as well as the sunrise and the sunset on the golden and charming desert. Nature in Egypt is relaxing and fascinating.

With respect to activities, Egypt has several that tourists would enjoy. For example, scuba diving in the Red Sea is one of the most famous activities all year round. In addition, for unbeatable views of Luxor's famous temples and surrounding mountains, they can take a hot air balloon ride over the Nile River. Also, for unlimited adventure, they can try family quad biking to explore the Egyptian desert. Activities in Egypt are so enjoyable that visitors would not want them to end.

In summary, Egypt is the paradise that visitors deserve. Activities, nature, and historical experiences are indeed Egypt's best attractions. As a vacation destination, Egypt is very rich and has much to offer to visitors. People who are planning their vacation should consider Egypt the number one option.

Hawaii

Tomomi Yamamoto, 4E

A lot of people visit Hawaii every year. Hawaii is a very popular destination in many countries. Why do people visit there? Hawaii attracts visitors for several reasons.



First, people in Hawaii are friendly, cheerful and kind. All people talk to visitors with a smile every time. They look like friends and family in Hawaii. Also, they have their native language, with words such as *Aloha* and *Ohana*. They teach visitors some words of greetings and history about the roots of the words because they are ready to use their native language with visitors. Visitors feel closer to them.

Another reason why Hawaii is so appealing is food. Hawaii has local food, and it attracts visitors. For example, the most famous local food in Hawaii is *Loco Moco*. It is so delicious and juicy. In addition, they have different flavors in each shop. Also, visitors can enjoy eating foods, such as fresh fruit, shrimp with garlic rice, coffee, and sweets. Visitors can eat delicious food everywhere in Hawaii.

The last reason why people visit Hawaii is a lot of beautiful places. Hawaii has beautiful seas and a clear blue sky. They makes them relaxed and open. Also, visitors go to the beach to enjoy surfing and scuba diving. Moreover, Hawaii has volcanoes. Diamond Head is very famous. Sometimes visitors can see beautiful sunrise. It is so amazing and attracts people's hearts.



In short, visitors are attracted to Hawaii by the people, the food, and the environment. Even those who have visited Hawaii want to visit it again and again.



Venezuela

Andretti Panza, 4F

For many years now, Venezuela has been known for a variety of environments to spend an amazing vacation with family and friends. It has beaches, mountains, jungles and deserts. However, there is only one place people prefer to visit. It is called Merida. Merida is one of the most interesting and beautiful places in Venezuela known for its nature, gastronomy, and tourism.

The beauty of nature makes Merida so interesting. It has the tallest mountain in Venezuela called Pico Bolivar. It rises more than five thousand meters above sea level. Also, it has a unique flower called *frailejon*, which only grows in this environment. In addition, it has other beautiful mountains and lakes, such as Mucubaji Lake or Pico Espejo. In short, Merida has an incredible landscape that makes it a very attractive place.



Gastronomy also represents a good reason to visit Merida. Tourists and visitors can find many delicious foods in Merida. The most popular food is *Pizca Andina*. This is a kind of soup with potatoes and milk that is only made by native people. Furthermore, Merida has the traditional *arepa*, which is made with wheat flour and is served with white cheese. People can enjoy delicious chicken or meat *pastelitos* with hot chocolate or a drink called *chicha*. It is a fermented beverage distilled from corn. All in all, Merida has a lot of foods to delight tourists' palates.

Merida also has many tourist activities to entertain its visitors. It has a lot of hotels, apartments, and accommodations for all budgets. Moreover, it has many shopping malls and commercial areas where tourists can find souvenirs, clothes, arts, and other regional items. All night tourists can enjoy many places like cafes, restaurants, clubs, and bars. In short, Merida boasts many great places to amuse its tourists.

To summarize, Merida is a very exciting place to visit in Venezuela. It has amazing nature with mountains, plants, and lakes. It also has an exquisite gastronomy and a lot of interesting places where tourists can have a good time. For these reasons, citizens of Merida recommend visiting their town for great enjoyment.

EDUCATION**Education in China and the U.S.**

Yuxing Zhou (Ava), 5E

In this modern world, because of the rapid development of the economy and the fierce competition for job opportunities, you have to try to get a better education. The only way for people to obtain a better education is to study in a university after finishing high school. However, not every country has the same type of education in high schools and universities.

In China, for example, if you want to get into a university, you must successfully finish the middle school and high school. In many regions, high school students have a very intensive study schedule. It is normal for most students in high schools to study for over 15 hours a day. In the first senior grade, they must learn more than twelve subjects. Some students choose to take extra classes either in science or liberal arts so that in the following year they can take only six or eight instead of twelve subjects. All the subjects they learn are basic academic knowledge. They study hard to get high scores in their graduation exam, which is the most important requirement for entering good universities. However, once they can get admission into a university, the situation is changed. Teachers at universities do not teach them as much as those in high schools. They have to plan everything themselves. Of course, many Chinese students are not used to the change, so how to control themselves and how to study by themselves are the essential things Chinese college students must learn. Education here tends to educate students about how to behave and how to have a good transition from the school to the society after they graduate.

In America, before they get into the university, studying in high school seems happy and fun. School hours are not as long as in China. They may have many subjects to take, but there are many group discussions and practices instead of homework and exercises. The studying environment in the U.S. is obviously different from that in China. The subjects students learn here are somehow easier than in China, especially in mathematics, physics, and writing. Additionally, the final scores are not the only important thing that determines whether they can get admission to the university. Besides taking the SAT, students need to write two or three essays. Average scores, good recommendations and good performance in high schools are also taken into consideration for entering universities. Later, when they are in the university, they have to study harder to get good grades in their majors. They need to learn more academics. Of course, they must learn by themselves without relying on teachers. so they can have independence after they graduate.

To sum up, the education system in high schools and universities in China and America are different in many ways. They are different in studying styles, studying intensity and study habits. Despite these differences, high schools and universities in both China and the U.S. share the same purpose, which is to enhance the quality of human resources and to improve society.

How I Was Educated

Halali Guelpina, 5E

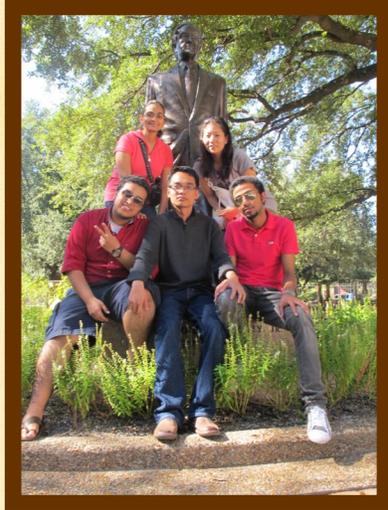
When I was six years old, my parent decided I had to go to elementary school. This was not the normal age to go to school in Chad, but the problem was that at this particular moment of my life, my family and I were not in Chad. We were in Niger, another country, and there, I was old enough to begin primary school. I was immediately enrolled in this program; it was very difficult in the beginning because I did not know how to speak the Niger language, which was different from mine. I had some difficulties in the beginning, but after two semesters, I became almost like a Niger girl. I still remember this because, even though I was young, I had to go to school in the morning and evening. This schedule was difficult even for some adults, not to mention a child like me. I always fought with my mom when she woke me up for school.

However, things began to change one year later when my father was called back by his company and when we had to return to our own country. When we got there, the director of the school where I was supposed to continue my study asked me to repeat the class that I had already taken in Niger just because of my age. My parents had no choice but had to do as told. However, one semester later, my teacher noticed that I was the smartest student in the class. Even the teachers of other classes noticed this because sometimes they gave their students a question and none of their students could answer it except me. Sometimes they even asked me to go to answer difficult questions in front of all other students. Needless to say that the other students were ashamed of themselves when they saw that even a small girl of the lowest level could answer questions that they could not. This fact made me very proud of myself and I felt superior to them.

Despite the fact that I was a good student in my country, when I first came to America, I got a lot of difficulties because the education here was not the same. For example, in my country, I could get information from the internet without saying that I had taken it from the internet. Not that my teachers did not know about this, but they went on giving me good grades because I had "done research". In America, this practice would be viewed as plagiarism and the student who did this could be kicked out of the university. This made my life as a student here more difficult.



Sports Tournament



Class Trips



Halloween

THE TEXAS RENAISSANCE FESTIVAL

The Texas Renaissance Festival Was Very Enjoyable!

Sezen Kocyigit, 2G

The Texas Renaissance Festival was last weekend. My LCC classmates and I went to the festival. The festival was very enjoyable. First, I got up early and came to school. I met my classmates at the University Center. Then we went by bus to Magnolia, Texas. After we arrived, Sam announced our “meet time”. He said, “You have a good time”. Melba and I started to visit the festival area. We visited food and dress shops. We bought turkey legs to eat. The turkey leg was very big, and it was delicious. After that, we bought a soft drink, but the drink was not cold. It was terrible.

After we finished eating, Melba’s friend, Maria, called. Maria wanted to spend time with us, so Melba told her where to meet us. We decided to go to the shows. Melba, Maria, and I went to the show area. We watched a belly dance. The belly dance was beautiful. The belly dancers were very successful. After that, we went to a funny stand-up show. Then we went to the Arena, and we saw our classmates Abdulaziz and Franci there. After the arena show ended, we took some photographs. The four of us then became a small group. My classmates and I visited another shop. Melba tried on a Russian winter hat. We walked around and saw some people wearing some different, amazing, and interesting costumes. We took more photographs. Melba and I tried the “Lunapark”. Finally, we looked at our watch. It was 6:15 p.m. We had to go to the bus. The bus area was very crowded. Everybody waited with us. We went back to school. The Texas Renaissance Festival was very big and very enjoyable. We had a good time, but we were very tired.



A Magical Place

Maria Romani, 2C

Last Saturday I went with my son and my friends from the LCC to a very interesting and magical place where we celebrated the “Texas Renaissance Festival.” We had so much fun and enjoyed our time. Many people dressed up in costumes of the Renaissance time, so it was like being at that time. We saw different performances in the theatres, for example, the mime and the exotic dancers. When the shows finished, everyone gave a dollar. My son enjoyed riding the carousel and playing some games. We climbed on an elephant, and we took a picture with my son. He was very excited. After that, we bought many souvenirs and gifts, but everything was very expensive. In addition, we tried several kinds of foods and very nice beverages. We also bought a turkey leg, but it was so big that we could not finish it!

The Greatest Experience in My Life

Irede Lima, 2D

The Renaissance Festival was the most amazing adventure that I ever participated in in my entire life. It was magical, wonderful, glamorous, exciting, and charming, and it was thrilling to take part in this imaginary world. I felt like a child because I had never been in a 16th Century Renaissance Village. It was interesting to relive the time and watch such shows as the Egyptian dancers and see people dressed as characters, such as the Queen of Egypt, the old man of Lord of Rings, the Minotaur, and many others. In fact, I was most impressed when I saw a girl, all dressed and painted green, with red eyes and sharp ears that made her look like an elf. She was very charming and beautiful. I believe many people who saw her were impressed.

I feel sorry for the students who didn’t take part in this adventure because it was so interesting to relive the history that we always saw, heard about, read about in books or when our parents and teachers told us about history. It was a fun day, and I enjoyed it so much. I loved seeing all those people happy with their families and friends, the children with swords and other mementos. It was amazing day. Thanks to our teachers who insisted that we go. In fact being part of the 16th Century Renaissance was the greatest experience in my life.

For Both Adults and Kids!

Oumar Diallo, 2D

It is a pleasure for me through this pen, to express what an emotional weekend I had. If there is an appropriate word to describe it, the word should be without doubt “wow”. It was dedicated to the Medieval and Renaissance times in history. In other words, we were at the Renaissance festival.

The Renaissance festival is a kind of gathering open to the public, to relate to them how people lived in the past. I was asking myself what I would see and how I would feel. My curiosity was satisfied when we arrived after two long hours on the bus. Excitement reigned among us when we began the adventure. There was every indication that we were in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. In fact, the costumes looked like the ones I usually see in movies. Everybody’s costume represented a special moment of history. Moreover, all social classes were represented too, from the peasantry to the aristocracy. In addition, there were some clowns, and costumes related to mythology such as vampires, centaurs, and imps. In addition, there were also many small shops in which we could buy articles all about the past. I passed all the day visiting all these little nooks. There were many activities to do and shows to watch, but the arena was the most interesting for me. I was fascinated by the knights on horses who competed with each other. Indeed, this day was wonderfully wonderful. It was really amazing to see how people missed the past. I also appreciated the fact that children enjoyed this experience with their parents.

**This Trip Was Truly Amazing**

Luis Nathaniel Simao, 2C

This year marks the 36th annual *Texas Renaissance Festival*. The festival is unique because it celebrates old times in England and other parts of Europe and the Mediterranean. The festival is organized once a year for eight weekends, and it begins in October and ends in November. At the festival this year, I saw many people with old-style clothes to represent old Europe, for example, from the English court, the French court, and the German court. I also saw many people dressed in the Italian court style. In addition, I saw Robin Hood, the Royal Guards and pirates. There were also demonstrations of work from Renaissance times, such as weaving, glassblowing, armor-making, and printing. And there were many interesting activities in the arena, too. Of course, I took many pictures. This trip was truly amazing!

One Different Weekend

Melba Velasquez, 2G

Last weekend, the LCC invited their students to the Renaissance Festival. I went with some friends from level 2G, and we had a wonderful day. It was a sunny day. After a 1 ½ hour bus trip from Houston, we arrived at the place. Before we started to walk around to see things, we planned our day to begin on the right side and finish on the left side. We saw plays, comedies, dances, and other kinds of entertainment all day. We ate delicious turkey legs and blooming onions. Before we entered the shows, we took a lot of pictures. The day gave me some new experience of the American culture. Finally, I say “thanks” to the LCC for the fun day.



CULTURAL ADJUSTMENT

My Life Has Been Enriched

Saleh, 3B

I have been studying at the LCC for eight months. I learn new things every single day. But I have learned two fantastic new things, which are the various cultures of the world and the English language.

Every semester, the LCC has a special day for the Culture Festival. It is an amazing and interesting day for me. I learn about different cultures, clothes and foods on this day. Every student brings food and drink from his or her country, and also wears special clothes. I test many foods from different countries during the party. They taste so good. I learn a lot about where the foods are from. Also, I see different dances from Africa, Arabia, Venezuela, and China. It is fantastic to see different kinds of dances.

A few weeks ago, I went on a trip with the LCC to a festival called the Renaissance Festival. It was in Plantersville. At the festival, I had the opportunity to relive the 16th century because the people who came to the festival wore old clothes from that time. Also, the buildings resembled those of the 16th century. I got a lot of information about life in the past in Europe.

Besides the various cultures of the world, I also learn a lot of English. In fact, I am lucky because I have the best teachers this semester and they help improve my English every single day. I had little English when I came to the U.S to study English at the LCC. My English has been improving every day because the teachers know how to help students learn English. I learned what the differences are between fact and assumption. I also learned how to take notes during a lecture. For example, my teachers, my classmates, and I went to Dr. Gingiss's class at the university twice and listened to lectures about dialects and slangs. We practiced the strategy of how we should take notes during lectures. After the lectures, we interviewed Dr. Gingiss's students about dialect, slang, and other subjects. I got experience about class work at the university because it is different from my English class.

To summarize, I have had the best time at the LCC this semester because I have learned many things. My eight months at the LCC have helped me to improve my English and to experience the various cultures of the world. I feel that my life has been enriched.

An Interesting Challenge

Griselda Lunatorres, 5B

Coming to the United States for graduate study has been a challenge to me because I have had to learn how to balance my English studies and my personal life. My feelings are confused about whether to continue or stop my goals. Frequently, I have asked myself if I am doing the right thing. Nevertheless, my adaptation has so far been very interesting because I have had to learn new cultural rules and a new language.

First of all, I have had to submerge myself in the basic principles of my host country to know the common rules. Rules are the keys to living and socializing with Americans. They have been built under strong social norms. For example, I have always been surprised about the formality in visiting Americans at their houses. You have to be invited by them because it is a sign of real friendship; you mean more than a simple friend for them. You are invited to enjoy their privacy, and it is not typical behavior for them. They do it after spending some time in a good relationship with you, and they are good hosts. This custom is very different from that in my country, because Mexican culture says that it is a sign of good education to invite new friends to our homes as soon as we meet them to show how much we like them. I think I have to have the capacity to comprehend that the new culture is quite different from mine, and that it will take some time to adapt myself to my new environment.

Second, to adjust myself well to the new culture, I have had to improve my English because it is going to be my best tool to express myself to the people in this country. To be comprehended by them, I have had to try to learn to speak and write in the same way they do. Also, I have had to absorb in a short time whatever I need to learn about the way people do things in this country. In America, you have to have good skills using computers, because it is the way that the people here live their life. Appointments, payments, dates, shopping, and many things more are done on computers. It is like an indispensable tool in their existence. In my country, things are different because most of the time computers are used only in offices where the computer work is done for you by the secretaries. Here in America, I have to get skills in computers because it is the way that Americans do business and many other things. I know I will not be treated with special consideration just because I do not know how to do things in this society.

SOUNDS, SMELLS & SIGHTS FROM CHILDHOOD

The Door, the Dog, and Pancakes

Charles (Min Chul) Cho, 4A

Sometimes we are reminded of our childhood home because of a sound, smell, taste, or sight. For me, the sight of a red door, the sound of a dog barking, and the smell of pancakes remind me of my childhood home.

First, the sight of a red door reminds me of my childhood home. When I was young, the color of the door to my house was red. In fact, it was the only red door in my town. When I was five years old, I got lost, and I couldn't remember the way back home. I finally went to the police station and mentioned that my house had a red door. The police instantly knew where I lived, and they helped me get home. Another reason that red door reminds me of where I grew up is that my father and I painted the door ourselves. I can never forget that red door.

Second, the sound of a dog barking reminds me of my childhood home. When I was growing up, I had a large garden and an active dog. When I came home from school, the dog would always bark. Because most people who lived in my town had dogs, when one dog started to bark, all of the dogs in my town barked.

Third, the smell of pancakes reminds me of my childhood home. I love the pancakes my mother made. When I was playing outside, my mother would start to cook, and then I smelled the delicious food. I would come home immediately because I couldn't wait to eat the pancakes.

In conclusion, I have several happy memories from my childhood. Since they cheer me up, I always think about them whenever I have a difficult time. The sight of a red door, the sound of a dog barking, and the smell of pancakes always remind me of my sweet childhood home.

My Father

Lucio Da Silva Baiao, 4A

Coconut trees can be found everywhere in my city. My father's job was to help protect the environment by preserving this kind of tree. One of my favorite activities when I was growing up was to help him with his job during the holidays. Because of this, I was able to spend a lot of time with him and to enjoy the strong smell of coconut trees. As a result, whenever I smell the coconut tree I cannot help thinking about my father.

The taste of spicy food also reminds me of my father. He was a man who loved to eat, but he had difficulties evaluating the spiciness of food. For instance, when the food was spicy enough for everyone else, it was still not spicy enough for him. Now when someone asks for my opinion about the flavor of a certain food, memories of my father always come back to me.

Cigars, which were one of my father's addictions, make me remember him. When I see somebody smoking, my father's image immediately comes to my mind. Because my father smoked, I used to smoke too and often thought of him as I lit my cigar.

Sounds, Sights, and Smells from My Youth

Pegah Zabihi Samani, 4A

Everybody has their own memories of the house where they were raised; they never forget their childhood home. Fortunately, everything reminds me of my home, which was an amazing place for me to grow up. The sound of television, the sight of rain, and the smell of flowers remind me of my childhood home.



The sound of television is still in my ears, reminding me of the house where I grew up. Every morning, my mother tried to wake me up by turning on the television with the volume turned up. These days, when I hear a loud television, I remember my horrible mornings, and I miss home.

The sound of rain reminds me of my childhood home. My room had a window that I could open during stormy weather to watch the rain. I used to listen to music and study when outside it was raining. This was very relaxing. Now when I hear the rain, I remember all of the rainy days that I spent in my childhood home.

The smell of flowers is amazing and reminds me of my childhood home. We had a view of flowers from our backyard door. I remember that every day after school when I got home, I used to smell them. Now when I smell flowers, suddenly I go back to the past.

Memories of My Grandfather

Yujia Qin, 4A

Even though my grandfather died twelve years ago, I still remember him because he was such an honorable and generous man. In fact, when I was a child, he took care of me. The smell of cookies, the sound of an old Chinese song, and the taste of ice cream remind me of him.

The smell of cookies reminds me of my grandfather. When I was a child, my grandfather always bought sweet cookies for me because they were my favorite food, and it was his hope that I would be a sweet girl forever. My grandfather always said that when I felt bad, I could eat a cookie to cheer myself up. He also told me that there were a lot of children in the world whose families couldn't buy cookies for them, but they were still happy, and they had never given up hope. Later, I understood my grandfather's words. I know that cookies were not only a treat, but they were also my grandfather's wishes for me.

The sound of an old Chinese song reminds me of my grandfather. My grandfather always sang a certain Chinese song when I was growing up. Nowadays, whenever I hear this song, it seems like my grandfather is coming back to this life and singing to me. He often sang this song when I could not sleep. Nobody knew how to put me to sleep except my grandfather..

The taste of ice cream also reminds me of my grandfather. We had our own secret, which was ice cream. I had a difficult time as a child, and he made me feel better with ice cream. He told me that if one day he was old and was not there to buy ice cream for me, I should buy an ice cream and eat it and he would be there with me again.

If I had not known my grandfather, my childhood would have been different. I am thankful that he raised me and gave me a wonderful childhood. The smell of cookies, the sound of the Chinese song, and the taste of ice cream always remind me of my dear grandfather.

Echoes from My Childhood Home

Shih-Kuei Chen, 4A

My ears used to be sensitive to all the sounds I heard around me when I was a child. Most often, I heard the sounds of cartoons on TV, of barking dogs, and of pots and pans in my mother's kitchen. These sounds made me feel warmth and happiness. Ever since I grew up, I have had fewer and fewer opportunities to hear those sounds again. However, they are always there, somewhere in me, and have become part of me, and whenever I hear them again, I am always reminded of my childhood home.

The sound of cartoons from the television in my parents' house made up my childhood. I liked to watch television when I was a child, and my parents could never stop me. I loved the songs from cartoons because they had a bright melody and a catchy tune. I usually sang the songs from cartoons with my classmates at school. In contrast to the wonderful memory, the noise from the television also annoyed me since the television was so old that sometimes the cartoon characters were difficult to understand because of the static.

The sound of barking dogs reminds me of my pleasant childhood. One year, my father gave me a dog for my birthday. The dog was very cute, and we all loved him. We decided to name him "Happy." Happy was not a quiet dog; he always barked when I went to school, and then he barked loudly when I came home. Of course, if any guest visited our family, Happy was always the first one to greet them. Although he is no longer alive, I will always remember Happy's loud bark.

The sound of pots and pans in the kitchen remind me of my childhood, too. The sound of my mother cooking made me hungry when I was a child. To give us a balanced diet, she insisted on cooking our meals every day, and her skills were excellent! When I got home from school, the sounds of pots filled with delicious meats and vegetables welcomed me home. As she cooked noisily in the kitchen, she would yell at me, "Are you sleeping?" and I always shouted back, "Yes, I am sleeping!" This was the game we played while my mother was cooking.

My Childhood in Libya

Mohamed Miloud Erandi, 4B

We think of our childhood when we see or hear something that was familiar when we were young. Memories of childhood are wonderful because at that time we were not worried about anything, not even if we had done something wrong; being children, we were always excused. There are several things that remind me of childhood: the sound of birds, the sight of children playing sports, and the taste of spicy foods.

First, the sound of birds reminds me of childhood. I was living in a place with many farms, so anywhere I went, I heard the sound of birds, especially in the early morning. Moreover, we raised many kinds of birds on our farm, which was close to my house. Consequently, whenever I hear any kind of bird, I remember my amazing childhood.

The sight of children playing sports is the second thing that reminds me of my youth.



When I played with the children in our village, I was often the leader. Furthermore, I was well known for playing soccer, so I was always chosen to play with them. Those moments are long gone now, but the sight of children playing always makes me relive the moments of my magnificent childhood.

Last, the taste of spicy food sometimes reminds me of my childhood. I have been eating spicy food since I was a child. We always ate in a group, and the kinds of food I ate during my childhood had a delicious and unique taste.

To summarize, the days we lived in our childhood were most beautiful, and we will be happy to remember them every once in a while. In fact, my childhood was beautiful and magnificent, so it will always be in my mind. It's true that that period of our life can't return, but we can always relive them in your imagination, especially when there is something that happens that reminds us of them: the sounds, tastes, and sights from our childhood are forever living in us.

My Father

Abdullah Abdulaziz Albanyan, 4B

When someone asks you about your favorite relative, you will remember the person who changed your life. My father is my favorite relative, and there are many things in my life that immediately remind me of him. These are the smell of flowers, the taste of pizza, and the smell of cigarettes.

When I smell flowers, I'm immediately reminded of my father. He devotes a special corner of the garden at our home to flowers. In addition, there are several kinds of flowers on our farm.

The taste of pizza reminds me of my father. A pizza—especially seafood pizza—is the best dish to him; he always cooks it for our family. He has one of the best pizza restaurants in my country. His special sauce and dishes make his restaurant great. As a result, I'm always reminded of him, even when I am with my friends.



The smell of cigarettes reminds me of my father because it makes him nervous. He always tells me about the dangerous contents of cigarettes and how they are terrible for our health. He told me to stay away as far as I can from someone who is smoking.

My Childhood in Vietnam

Tram Nguyen, 4B

Almost twenty years ago, my family lived in a house in Saigon, where I have a lot of my memories. The smell of noodles, the taste of *bun bo*, and the sound of Vietnamese music remind me of my childhood home.

The smell of noodles makes me miss my mother. My mother owns a noodle shop and knows how to cook every kind of noodle. I still remember that each morning when I woke up, I had a delicious bowl of noodles. My family had breakfast together, and my father always told us a funny story while we ate. That's why when I smell noodles, this family memory always comes back to me, and it makes me want to cry because I usually have breakfast alone now.

The taste of *bun bo*, a beef noodle soup, makes me miss my childhood home the most. My mother cooked *bun bo* whenever we had a party with my relatives. My cousin and I always ate two bowls of *bun bo* because it was delicious. Whenever I miss my hometown, I try to eat *bun bo*. The spicy taste reminds me of a happier time when everyone from my family was still beside me.

Vietnamese music is my father's favorite music. I still remember when I was getting ready to go to sleep, my father turned on the CD player. The soft melody of these songs made me comfortable, and I fell asleep easily. As a result, listening to Vietnamese music when I go to bed has become my habit now. When I listen to those melodies, I feel like I'm at home and can enjoy a night without worrying about anything.

Homesickness gives me a terrible feeling. However, I know that I am a lucky person who can still smell noodles, taste *bun bo*, and listen to Vietnamese music in a foreign country. Hopefully, I can go back to my hometown and spend more time in my childhood home.

My Mother

Waleed Khalid Eilia Al-Hadad, 4B

Most mothers around the world support their families by raising children and ensuring their comfort. If I had wings, I would fly across the sky to meet my mother. The sound of birds, the smell of flowers, and the sight of the sea always remind me of my mother.

When I was a child, my mother liked to sing to me, and her sweet voice always transported me to a peaceful place. Now I am living away from my mother, and the only sweet voice I hear is from the birds on the trees.

outside my window. Recently, I realized that my mother and those birds have the same rhythm, and so whenever I listen to them, I always miss my mother.

Flowers always remind me of my mother, too. She carefully chose her perfume and filled our home with love and an exquisite smell. In addition to wearing perfume, my mother also improved the fragrance of our house with beautiful flowers. By living in Houston, which is filled with flowers, I am constantly reminded of my mother. Like my mother, flowers have the ability to relieve me of the stress of my daily life.

The sea also reminds me of my mother. The sea gives life to creatures, and my mother gave me a chance to be in this life. Like the sea, my mother gives everything without giving up. She never complained and kept her problems to herself.

Although my mother and I are separated physically, her character still influences me. A mother's voice, and even her smell, can remain in her child's mind, forever.

My Cousin, Na-Young Kim Miryoung Kim, 4B

There are three things that remind me of my cousin Na-Young Kim. First, it is the smell of perfume. My cousin chooses Dior and Polo, depending on her mood. She wears Dior when she has an important meeting because she believes that it makes her seem stronger, more attractive, and more beautiful. She saves it for special times. She wears Polo, which is her favorite, for all other occasions.



I also think of Na-Young Kim when I go to an art museum. She is now working for a design company, and she draws well. I remember that when I was young, I usually went to her house, and there I saw her paints, pastels, and sketch books. Even then, her interior designs were already incredible and her paintings were inspiring to me. Even now I am still fascinated by the colors she used on her first paintings.

Traditional Korean foods like *duk bokki*, *sujebi*, and rice cakes also remind me of my cousin. She can't cook other dishes well, but these are her specialties. I remember that one day my cousin and I were hungry, so she decided to cook something for me to eat. Her *duk bokki* tasted spicy and sweet. She made her *sujebi* with flour and water, and she made rice cakes for dessert. All of them were so delicious that whenever I see these kinds of Korean food, I always miss my cousin Na-Young Kim.

Music, Meadows, and Coffee Thao Ngoc Thanh Duong, 4A

One of my biggest dreams has been to study abroad and graduate from a famous university. With all my spirit and enthusiasm, I came to the United States of America to carry out my goal. In the new place, I have had to adapt to the culture and the new way of life. I have been incredibly homesick. Everywhere I go, the sound of the guitar, the sight of meadows and rivers, and the smell of coffee remind me of my childhood home.

The sound of the guitar has a special significance to me. When I was a child, my father played the guitar to make me sleep. Then, when I was in high school, playing the guitar brought me an exciting new friend. We met in guitar class. When I was in trouble, he was always by my side, and he played songs on the guitar. The sound of the guitar makes me feel peaceful.

The sight of meadows and rivers also reminds me of my childhood home. Not too far from my childhood house, there was a meadow where I used to get together with my friends and where we usually flew kites. Also, my family used to go for a picnic on the meadow each month. As there was a river running across the meadow, I usually swam with my brother and father in the river whenever we went picnicking there. But what I liked most was to lie down on the bank of the river and count the number of bright stars in the dark sky.

The smell of coffee is the last thing that reminds me of my childhood home. Not only is it my favorite kind of drink, but also it is like my best friend. During my college years, I used to go drink coffee with my closest friend at the park near the college and talk about how to solve our problems. Now that I have even more problems to solve, I still drink coffee. It makes me concentrate and helps me figure out the best solutions to my problems.

The View from My Window Khoa Nguyen, 3E

When I was young, my family used to live with my grandparents in Vietnam. From the window of my grandparents' house, a wonderful place where I often sat to study, I could see land surrounded by many kinds of fruit trees. All these trees had given us fruit for many years.

Farthest from the window on the right, my grandfather planted a row of plum trees. They were *Tan Phuoc* plums, very delicious and well-known in Vietnam. Each tree gave us many plums to eat and to give to our neighbors in the village.

Nearer to the window were five green-skinned pomelo trees that were laden with fruit – sweet, delicious, and full of vitamin C, which protects us from many diseases. These trees looked most beautiful in their blossoming season when their beautiful, fragrant, white flowers came out and everyone wanted to look at them all day.

Closest to the window, there were jackfruit trees with many ripe fruits whose smells filled the garden. I remember these trees most because in the early morning, a lot of birds would land on the branches and sing loudly. Maybe they wanted to wake me up so that I could go to school on time. In the afternoon, after I came home from school and finished lunch, their songs would lull me to sleep. The songs the birds sang were sweet, pretty melodies which I have always remembered until now.

My Mother
Khai “K” Truong, 5

My father passed away 10 years ago. My family suffered a lot after that and would not have been able to stand up and to go on living had it not been for my mother.

My mother is a strong person. After the loss of her dear husband, she chose not to spend her life humbly. Women in my country used to stick to traditional woman careers such as accounting and teaching. My mother, however, was different. She decided to be a businesswoman, which makes me very proud of her. In fact, she has always been willing to try her best to deal with difficulties and challenges with an extremely positive attitude.

Sometimes, I wonder how she was capable of overcoming such a loss, and to continue to work to raise both of us. Actually, she is an optimistic person who always makes efforts to maintain our family’s happiness, from both material and spiritual viewpoints. In particular, it is not easy for a businesswoman to be able to take good care of her children. However, people have always admired her for how she has been able to balance her time between her work and her children.

For as long as I can remember, my happiness has come from my mother’s sacrifices. She cherishes the hope that her children can live in the best conditions possible. This sometimes makes her forget to live for herself. I remember once about five years ago, I suddenly got sick at when my mother was about to go to another city for a reunion party with her high-school friends. Though it had been awhile since she had last seen her friends, and although she had spent time preparing the reunion speech and musical performance for the occasion, she

decided to cancel the flight so that she could stay home and take care of me. That’s like her. She never feels comfortable if her children are sick at home and she is not there with them. My mother always puts her own happiness aside and puts ours as her top priority.

My mother is an incredible role model whom I admire. That she never gives up on adversities teaches me to have faith in life even though it may get a little bit difficult sometimes. In fact, it isn’t necessary to express how much I love her; what I have been doing with my life proves that I love her with all my heart.

WHAT I DON’T WANT TO LOSE
My Old and Beautiful Doll
Karina Diallo, 6C

Everybody has in his or her life something that they love a lot that reminds them sentimentally of their dear past. Mine was and is a Russian doll, which reminds me of Russia, my grandmother, and my infancy.



First of all, my doll, a beautiful Russian lady, was made in the Russian old-fashion style. She wears an enormous pink dress with some interesting designs in the back. Her hair, made from natural human hair, used to impress everyone. She has fantastic curly blond hair. Her face reminds me of Russian queens with their magnificent accessories and huge dresses. Masha – the name I gave to the doll - is a perfect copy of a Russian queen.

Secondly, one of the most important thing about Masha is that she was given to me by my grandmother from my mother’s side, who passed away long time ago. My grandmother and I were very close, and Masha used to remind me of her and makes me smile. My grandmother used to offer me a lot of toys and dolls, but Masha was different. She was the most beautiful and the fanciest.

The last important fact about Masha is that it always reminds me of my infancy and awakens many memories. I remember that I used to take Masha with me everywhere; I used to hide her in my bag during classes, and play with her during breaks. I told her my secrets and I knew that she would never repeat them to someone else. I got used to sleeping with Masha, and when I was afraid of the dark, she helped me to relax. Masha was my favorite doll and is now the most powerful reminder of those beautiful moments I had in my childhood.

Masha means a lot to me and represents a way to keep my memories alive with me. My Russian doll was and will always be a special part of my life.



The Immature Heart
Jia Gu, 6C

When children grow up, they get stronger and smarter because of their continuous study and their life experience. But at the same time, something important is disappearing. For me, the most important thing I do not want to throw away while growing older is my immature heart.

Although I felt desperate to grow up and be an adult when I was a child, things turned out differently after I entered the adult world. I found out that maturity is just a perfect goal which is constantly sought after but which can never be achieved. As we all know, nothing in this world is 100% perfect because everything has two sides. While chasing our goals, we experience pain and loss. A child's heart will keep us active and powerful. I always remember when I was a kid, even a cheap toy could make me really happy. My mother said that she was surprised that a tiny thing could so quickly cheer me up.

When I went to college and started my adult life, I began to understand why my mother was surprised. In the adult world, the reason of happiness and excitement may not be getting a toy. The standard of happiness keeps getting higher. Someone may say, of course, it should be a high standard because we are not children anymore. But if we look at it from another standpoint, that kind of opinions should be questioned: why can't people feel happy with small things? Life is not like a Hollywood movie, so why not? The answer is not complicated at all: a child's heart can keep people happy.

The immature heart not only keeps people happy, but also powerful and full of creative energy. A child can paint the river into a bright yellow, fishes into a light green, and the sky into a peach pink, because in each child's mind, there exists a specific universe. They can use their imagination and inspiration to create things. Maybe it is not proper to have this kind of imaginative power in formal life situations, but in our personal life, there is no need to give up this right at all. Imagination is the root of creation. Humans imagined of flying like birds in the sky hundreds of years ago. Housewives did not want to wash clothes anymore, and therefore we now have washers and dryers everywhere. The power of creation is amazing, and this power comes only from our immature heart.

Overall, I think an immature heart is important for both children and adults. One day, I will grow old, even very old, I will continue to my immature heart as the most precious thing in my life and will never throw it away.

Jane Forever
Xi Teng (Angel), 6C

People come, people go. Some people become part of your life; some are just momentary visitors. That is life. However, even though something is pretty old, it's hard to be buried under the sands of time. No matter how far the distance between it and you, you just cannot let it out of your life because it does mean so much that you are sentimentally attached to it, just like the friendship between Jane and me.

Jane has been my best friend since we were in kindergarten. I'll never leave our friendship behind as she gave me the most beautiful memory of childhood, and she was the only one who always accompanied me and never ever gave up our friendship.

The days without Jane were just like a world without sunshine. She helped me a lot, especially during my childhood. I used to be such a shy girl that I was even afraid of talking with people I knew, let alone strangers. Jane changed me. Jane was truly extroverted and easy-going and had many friends. So she often brought some new friends to me as she knew me so well. When we communicated or played together, she told me how to build friendship with others. Day by day, changes happened to me. I became willing to start conversation with others, played with different kids, and I enjoyed it. As unselfish as Jane was, she never hid anything from me, and always told me what she knew. Then I learned that if you want others to open their hearts to you, you must leave your heart and mind open. In those days with Jane, I learned much from her and I was gradually becoming more easy-going and extroverted. Thanks to Jane, I had a wonderful, unforgettable childhood, which meant much to me. That's one reason that I could not throw away our friendship.

Later, I moved to Shanghai with my family. On my 11th birthday, I said goodbye to Jane with tears. I felt sad leaving her. My mother said I would meet many new friends, and with the passage of time, I would not feel so sad. But it did not happen that way. Jane and I sent emails to each other every day so we nearly became each other's secret diaries, and it developed into a habit for us. Anything could be the topic, which pushed us to think, talk and write more and we were improved by it. When I met something unpleasant, I would tell her, and I would be given the warmest comfort that could cheer me up. Though we were separated, we kept in touch, and gradually, a kind of invisible attachment formed between us, which was a special tie that cannot be cut by time and distance.

The friendship of Jane and me is old indeed as it started early, but it's strong and tight as it has lasted long under our careful cultivation. People usually say things are easily forgotten with time, and ties attached to people tend to be broken by distance. However, it has never happened to Jane and me, and I believe it won't, either. When something new shows up, something old dies away; that's life. But the friendship of Jane and me seems to be always new despite time and distance. She is my Jane forever.

FUNNY ESSAYS

Be an Outsider Jeongmin Lee, 5E

Do you feel like to be alone? Are you no longer interested in making friends? Do you enjoy loneliness? If you do, read this essay. There are a couple of effective ways to make people hate you so that you can enjoy your loneliness. The best way, I think, is to be a spoiled man!

To be a spoiled man, you should get angry with whatever your friends say. This seems difficult at first, but if you continue to do it, it will be easier. If your friends say, "Let's go eat lunch," answer them with anger, "I don't like the way you speak to me." This will make your friends feel awkward and they will leave you. Also, you should be aggressive. When you feel bad, throw things. If you throw things so that they hit your friends' heads, you will be successful! Another way to be a spoiled man is to be impolite with whomever you meet. Just ignore them. No matter how old they are, pretend not to hear them, and go on about your business. Your friends would definitely stay away from you.

However, if being a spoiled man doesn't work, you can choose another way, which is to be a dirty man. This way is effective because it not only makes people hate you, but also makes them stay away. Don't take a shower. In the beginning, you might feel bad. But put up with it for just few days so that you can get used to that. After a few days, you will have a bad smell. Also, never change your clothes. I recommend that you wear white clothes. They get dirty easily so you will look dirtier. Of course you may suffer from some a skin disease, but I think you're willing to do that for your purpose.

To sum up, the most effective ways to make your friends stay away are to be a spoiled or dirty man. I really recommend that you try these ways. A word of caution: You could feel severe loneliness! If you do, don't blame me!

How to Drive your Teacher Crazy Gabriela Hidalgo, 5 E

Are your teachers driving you crazy? If they are, and if you want to take revenge on them, here are two easy steps you can follow.

First, you have to interrupt the class continually. You can do that by always coming late to class. It does not have to be one hour late. Instead, you should arrive only a few minutes late, but you have to make sure that the class has already started. Once you arrive, it is important to make as much noise as possible by shaking hands with all of your classmates. And if possible, try to say hello to everyone noisily. If doing that is not enough to interrupt the class, then before taking your seat, just move the desks and the chairs in a really noisy way.

Sometimes interrupting the class is not enough to drive your teacher crazy. If this is the case, you can always apply the second step, which is never to do what your teacher tells you to do. First, never do the homework. If possible, borrow the homework from your neighbor and make sure that the teacher notices it. Second, do not turn off your cell phone during the class even if your teacher has already said that turning off the cell phone is one of the class policies. Finally, if all these steps are not enough, you can always come to class without the books and announce that in a really loud and defiant voice.

Again, are your teachers driving you crazy? If they are, and if you want to take revenge on them, those are the two easy steps you can follow.



How to Break Up With Your Boyfriend

Yaming Qiu, 6C

Recent research shows that the average female has broken up with her boyfriend seven times before marriage. There are hundreds and even thousands of ways to end a relationship between lovers. Usually, these ways can be divided into two types: breaking up with your boyfriend in a straightforward manner and breaking up with him indirectly by avoiding contact.

The first way to end a relationship is to give your boyfriend a significant sign of breaking up. For example, you can call or text-message him that you have to talk with him. Then, you decide on a day and place to sit down and talk. Normally, the girl should say that she finds him too good for her or she thinks he is not the right person for her or, impolitely, he is such a bad person that she wants to get rid of him. Girls need lots of courage to choose this kind of breaking up because they cannot control reactions from their boyfriends.

The second way, which is my favorite, is to break up with your boyfriend gradually by loosening your connections. The greatest advantage of this second way is that it allows girls to avoid awkward conversation. They can start by decreasing phone calls and dates in order to let their boyfriends know that they do not care about them anymore. This may drive their boyfriends crazy and may force them to quit the relationship themselves. However, some boyfriends love their girlfriends so much that they never want to break up. If this is the case, the girls have to choose to terminate the connection and make sure they cannot be found by their boyfriends until their boyfriends give up the relationship.

No matter which way you choose to break up with your boyfriend, it is a hard decision to make. The best way to end your relationship depends on your and your boyfriend's character. Talking face-to-face can end this in a short time. On the contrary, avoiding connection will take a longer time. So, girls, get yourselves prepared in case you need to break up with your boyfriend.

Making Your Roommates Crazy

Yu-Liang Lin, 5E

Most people have roommates when they are students. Having a nice roommate is always a dream for everyone. However, I am not going to teach you how to become a nice roommate. Instead, I will tell you the necessary methods to become a person who can drive his or her roommates crazy. There are two easy ways to reach this target.

The first main point is to keep your apartment dirty. This is the basic element that a bad roommate must have. For example, always forget to wash your dishes and plates after you finish your meals. Also, even when your roommates ask you to clean the room, don't do it! Just ignore their request. If you cannot ignore them, then try to find an excuse. If these cannot make your roommates crazy, you can put your own trash in the living room, especially the unfinished food and drinks. It will be perfect if you put lots of stinky trash on the couch where your roommates like to sit.

Another important factor that makes your roommates crazy is noise. Remember to always make as much noise as you can. Although the time is very late, do not turn down your computer and CD-player. Playing rock or heavy metal music is a nice choice. Whenever you are talking or answering the phone, use your loudest voice. The final and most effective method is perhaps hosting parties. Before the day of your roommates' tests, invite a lot of friends to your apartment. Then, drink, laugh, and scream all night until the sun rises. By the way, do not tell your roommates that you are having a party before your friends come. This can make them much angrier.

Dirty environment and noise are the most common factors that drive people crazy. If you follow the above steps, you will find that making your roommates annoyed is very easy because these are the behaviors which most people in the world cannot stand.



Dave's Page

IMMIGRATION UPDATE

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

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

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

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

F-1 STUDENT STATUS

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

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

Also, remember that the law requires you to report any **change in your address** within ten days of the change. Please bring your address changes to the LCC and we will change it in the UH system as well as notify DHS.

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

If you obey the immigration laws, you will not have a problem. If you have any questions about the rules or what you must do, see the LCC Student Counselor or the SEVIS Compliance Coordinator, Sam Long. We are here to help you make sure you are successful in your studies at the LCC.



WHAT ARE YOU DOING NEXT SEMESTER?

Under DHS' SEVIS tracking program for F-1 students, at the beginning of each term we have to enter the data of what you are doing into the SEVIS system. It is VERY IMPORTANT that you let us know what you will be doing next term so that we can enter the correct information in the SEVIS system. If we do not know and do not update SEVIS, the SEVIS system will automatically terminate you which means you will lose your student status!

Your teacher will ask you what you are doing after you finish this term. It is VERY IMPORTANT that you tell us what you will be doing so we can enter the information into the SEVIS system. If you do not tell your teacher or you did not give us the inform You can also email us.

If you plan to take a vacation for the spring term, you must fill out a "Vacation Request" form. These forms are in the LCC office.

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

STUDENT ACTIVITIES

The time has passed quickly this term! Our first trip was to the Rothko Chapel and the Menil Collection and then to The Galleria . New students and returning students got to know each other a little better.

A few weeks after that we had the LCC Class Photo and the Sports Tournament. Students had a good time taking a break from studies. **Winners were: Bowling:** 1st –Hieu Huynh, 2nd – Marco Merino Garcia, 3d – Manuel A. Gonzalez. **Billiards:** 1st –Mohammad Aljadaly, 2nd – Anatoily Malishevskiy. **Table Tennis:** 1st –Jumah Sultan, 2nd – Huy Duc Vo.

On November 6th, we went to the Renaissance Festival. This festival is held each fall in a recreated English village of the Renaissance time period. The village is located in the woodlands north of Houston. Many people dress in period costumes. There are shops and places to eat. We were entertained by musical groups and other performers such as jugglers and dancers. There was also a jousting contest where knights riding horses fought each other. We had an interesting and fun day.

Next came the LCC Culture Festival. Because it was rainy, we had it inside. Thanks to all who helped make the Culture Festival a big success by bringing delicious food. This was a special time as it is the same week as the American Thanksgiving. Not only did we have traditional Thanksgiving turkey, but we also had a good time tasting the dishes of different cultures and learning about each other by sharing this Thanksgiving lunch together. Thanks to the students who brought their music, danced for us, and dressed in traditional clothes.

On December 8th, we have our final field trip. By the time you read this, we may have already gone to San Antonio! It's a great way to end the semester, joining your friends, classmates, and teachers and having a Mexican lunch at Casa Rio on the famous Riverwalk. After lunch is the time for exploring the rest of the Riverwalk, visiting the shops, going through the Alamo, and enjoying San Antonio. I hope everyone sees the Riverwalk after dark when all the Christmas lights are on. It's very beautiful.

THE LCC FALCONS SOCCER TEAM

Once again the LCC had a winning team in the Falcons. They were cleaning up in their games and moved easily into the tournament. Unfortunately there were difficulties in the second game. Although the Falcons won, both teams were eliminated. We hope returning players will be the core of another successful team. Thanks to the players and Servando Hernandez who was in charge of the team and to Sultan Alanazi for his leadership.



STUDENT COUNSELOR'S OFFICE

The counselor's office is here to help you with your problems, help you find information you need, and advise you about concerns ranging from immigration to academic to personal. In addition to Dave Burns, Sam Long and Servando Hernandez are here to help you. Come see us if you have a question, have a problem, need information or advice, or just want to talk!



Friendly Faces



CULTURE FESTIVAL



VOICES

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