

UNIVERSITY of HOUSTON

# VOICES

A Publication from the Language and Culture Center



Celebrating FALL  
2016





# The LCC Team

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## VOICES – Fall 2016

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## Contents

The LCC Team .....	2
From the Director's Desk .....	3
LCC Scholarships .....	4
Counseling and Student Services .....	6
Healthcare & Admissions Workshop .....	7
LCC Student Council .....	8
Teacher Spotlight: Doug Jones .....	9
Class Pictures .....	10
My Country .....	16
LCC Experiences .....	18
Learning Experiences .....	20
Flashbacks .....	22
Class Field Trips .....	24
Fall Adventures .....	26
The Renaissance Festival .....	28
Halloween .....	32
Fall Festival .....	36
Thanksgiving .....	38
Christmas .....	39
International Fall Holidays .....	40
UH Football .....	41
Culture Fest .....	42
Whodunit? .....	46
Conversation Club .....	50
LCC Professional Involvement .....	51
LCC Calendar .....	52

# From the **Director's** Desk

by Joy Tesh – *Director*

We never like to say good-bye, but we are happy that you have almost completed the fall 2016 term at the Language and Culture Center (LCC) at the University of Houston. You have studied with classmates and friends in the dynamic city of Houston in an exciting Tier One Research University, which celebrates and welcomes international students. As you have shared experiences with students from all over the world in LCC classes, you have engaged in intercultural communication, and you have made friends. These friendships will be important to you throughout your lives.

“NAFSA: Association of International Educators is the world’s largest nonprofit association dedicated to international education and exchange, working to advance policies and practices that ensure a more interconnected, peaceful world today and for generations to come.” On the NAFSA website ([www.nafsa.org](http://www.nafsa.org)), you might read: “Since early civilization, students and scholars have traveled to other lands to join scholarly communities outside their own home countries.” The site goes on to quote former presidents of the United States on the importance of receiving an international education. In 1977, former president Jimmy Carter, who is now 92 years old and still working every day to promote world peace, wrote: “Only by knowing and understanding each other’s experiences can we find common ground on which we can examine and resolve our differences.... As the world becomes more and more interdependent, such mutual understanding becomes increasingly vital.”

Students who are willing to study outside their home countries give us hope. Thank you for choosing the LCC and the University of Houston. Thank you for helping us work toward mutual understanding. We have spent a beautiful fall together. There is much to enjoy on our campus and in our city at this time of year. I hope that as you did your homework and studied for your tests, you also took the time to look around and realize that you were in an extraordinary place at an extraordinary time.

This fall, we have been delighted to have 245 students from 40 countries in our program and on our campus. As the fall term of 2016 closes, we wish you a safe and productive academic break. Fall classes will end at the close of graduation ceremonies on December 15, 2016. The LCC office will remain open through December 23, 2016, and then will close for the Winter Break and open again on January 2, 2017. Online registration for the spring term will begin on January 10, 2017.

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 <http://lcc.uh.edu>. 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 from students who return to their countries to continue their journey. We invite you to join a great network of former LCC students, now living and working all over the world.

Please accept our heartfelt congratulations as you complete the fall 2016 term of study in the intensive English program. We look forward to seeing many of you again as we celebrate the new year during the spring 2017 term in the Language and Culture Center.



# SHUANGMEI LIU, YASMINE SOUISSI, RECEIVE LCC



Dr. Jodi Nelms - Associate Director

The Language and Culture Center awards three scholarships each term to returning students who best combine academic excellence and leadership with international awareness and cross-cultural understanding. One scholarship honors Joyce M. Valdes, the founder and first director of the LCC. Another scholarship honors Joseph O. Davidson, who served as director of the LCC for 22 years before retiring in 2006. A third scholarship posthumously honors Brad L. Powell, who worked for 12 years in many capacities at the LCC until serving in his last position as Program Director of Counseling and Student Services. These three full scholarships cover the cost of tuition, fees, and medical insurance for one term of study in the Intensive English Program. At the summer graduation ceremony on Thursday, August 11, 2016, the LCC awarded the Valdes scholarship to Yasmine Souissi, the Davidson scholarship to Shuangmei Liu, and the Powell scholarship to Augustine Laurence Tibirou.



## SHUANGMEI LIU WAS AWARDED THE DAVIDSON SCHOLARSHIP.

Ms. Liu is from China. This is her fourth term at the LCC, and she is studying in level four. When she finishes her studies in English, she plans to study accountancy at the University of Houston. Ms. Liu remarked that, "It was delightful and inspiring to get the scholarship. The LCC has engaging, helpful, generous, and active teachers. Various students come from different countries of the world. We are like a great family. This is the best way to learn about English and different cultures. Thank you, LCC teachers, for guiding us in the right direction."

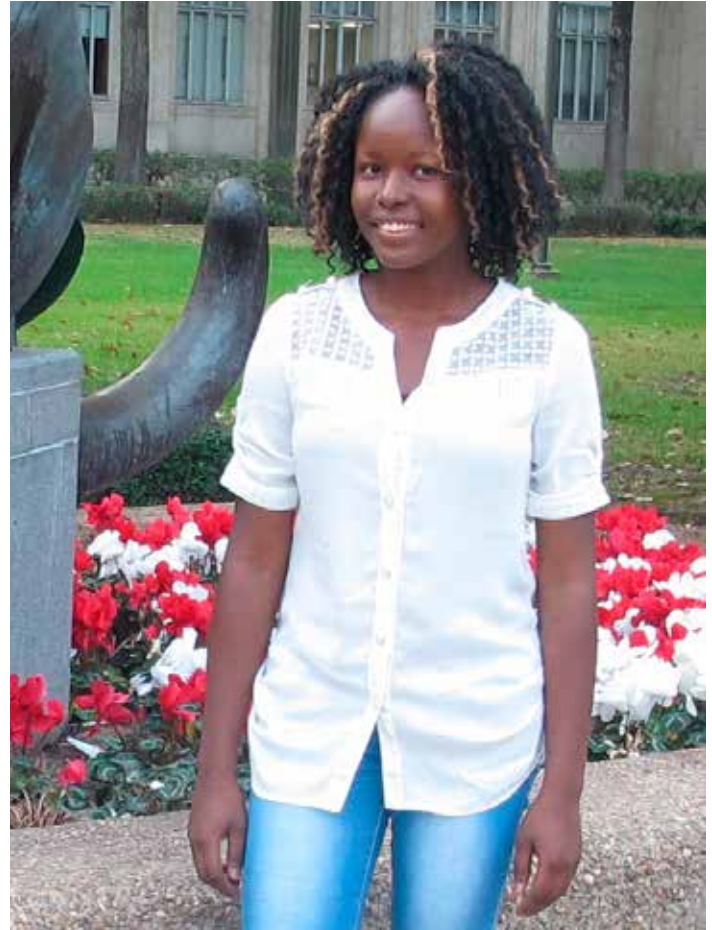


# AND AUGUSTINE LAURENCE TIBIROU SCHOLARSHIPS



**YASMINE SOUISSI WAS AWARDED THE VALDES SCHOLARSHIP.**

Ms. Souissi is from Switzerland, and this is her third term at the LCC. She is studying in level 6 this term and plans to pursue a Master's Degree upon graduating from the LCC. When asked what it meant to her to receive an LCC scholarship, Ms. Souissi said, "I think the scholarship is really helpful for students to continue their study. It has helped me perform in class and improve my English because without it, I probably wouldn't have been able to finish."



**AUGUSTINE LAURENCE TIBIROU WAS AWARDED THE POWELL SCHOLARSHIP.**

Ms. Tibirou is from Burkina Faso. This is her third term at the LCC, and she is studying in level 6. After she graduates from the LCC, Ms. Tibirou plans to earn a degree in pharmacy. Ms. Tibirou said, "I was so excited when I learned that I was the recipient of an LCC scholarship! This meant a lot to me, and it has motivated me to push myself further. I would like to express my sincere thanks to the amazing staff of the LCC, including everyone working in the main office, my dedicated teachers, and all my classmates, whose help was essential for my success."

We congratulate Shuangmei Li, Yasmine Souissi, and Augustine Laurence Tibirou 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 2016 graduation ceremony.

# Counseling and Student Services



Adam Chen – Program Director of Counseling and Student Services

In Fall 2016, the Counseling Team was very excited to present different activities and events to LCC students. We welcomed new students and visited the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, the Galleria, and the Waterwall Park. We went to the Texas Renaissance Festival, where we met entertaining performers, saw unique arts and crafts, and ate delicious food. Moreover, we went to Moody Gardens in Galveston where we found so much to see: the breathtaking Ice Land Ice Sculptures, the magical Festival of Lights, and so on.

In addition to advising LCC students daily on various topics, the Counseling Team coordinated five different workshops: the Admissions Workshop, informing students about how to apply to the University of Houston; the Healthcare Workshop, informing students about how to seek healthcare and utilize health insurance; the Career Services Workshop, informing students about how to look for jobs on campus and utilize resources provided by University Career Services; the F-1 Workshop, advising students about how to maintain F-1 status; and the Relationship and Consent Workshop, helping students understand the importance of consent and identify key resources on campus. We hope that you found the workshops informative and helpful.

Regardless of whether the occasion was work or play, we felt fortunate to spend the term with you, and we wish you great success.

I would also like to recognize the LCC Singers and their directors Bushra Zaidi and Katey Porter. The choir members worked hard to learn new songs, and they performed during the International Education Week and at the LCC Fall 2016 Graduation Ceremony. We are so proud of the choir members, Bushra and Katey. You have done a fantastic job!



Sam Long – SEVIS Compliance Coordinator

Your fall term at the LCC is officially over! Before you celebrate, I have important information I want to share with everyone, especially F-1 students.

The next term at the LCC is spring. All students are required to enroll in spring unless you:

- Transfer out successfully to another school.
- Leave the USA to return home and not coming back to the USA.
- Are not an F-1 student.

All students are required to report their spring plans to us. You will meet with your

teachers on graduation day to confirm your final plans. If you have not made any plans for the spring term, speak to a LCC Counseling Team member immediately!

I am required to update all F-1 student's spring plans to immigration. If you do not report, update, or confirm your plans with me, you will be terminated in SEVIS and lose your F-1 student status.

This is serious and may jeopardize your future immigration status. I do not want you to lose your non-immigrant F-1 status. Please talk to me if you have any questions or concerns.

Enjoy your winter break!



# Healthcare & Admissions Workshops





# LCC STUDENT COUNCIL



## LCC Student Council Cecelia Obami

*4D - Congo Brazzaville*

Having the opportunity to be one of the student representatives was the most incredible thing that could have happened to me here at the LCC.

I was lucky enough to be a student representative for two semesters during which I have developed many skills. For example, leadership, interpersonal skills, and the ability to negotiate can't be taught but

must be learned through experience. As a student representative, my role was to represent my classmates and report all the things we talked about to my classmate, which developed my leadership skills; also, I served as a liaison by bringing suggestion and feedback to the LCC from my classmates, which develop my interpersonal skills. As everything has a price, being a Student Representative cost me my lunchtime, but it was worth it.

I have learned so much at the LCC than I could ever imagine, and I am thankful for that. The Language Culture Center is not just a place you just come to take English lessons. The Language Cultural Center is a global program where you feel home in this huge country, where you meet incredible people and friends for life, and it is where you can learn more than just English.





# TEACHER SPOTLIGHT: DOUG JONES

by Dr. Jodi Nelms, Associate Director



The reason that so many students return to the Language and Culture Center (LCC)--and recommend it to their family and friends--is because the teachers in the LCC are outstanding professionals in the field of Teaching English as a Second Language. In

each edition of Voices, we profile one of our teachers, and this term we have chosen Doug Jones. Doug recently celebrated twenty years at the LCC so highlighting his work and his character at this time is most fitting.

Doug received his Master's Degree right here in the English Department at the University of Houston in 1995. He says he knew about the LCC because we were housed in the same building and that he was curious about our program from the very beginning. As many ESL professionals do, Mr. Jones began his career teaching in several programs. He worked at HCC early on, but he also served as a substitute teacher at the LCC. He remembers the experience vividly, and it confirmed that he wanted to be a part of the LCC family. When a teaching position came open at the LCC, he got in touch with Joy Tesh, and Joy very wisely offered Doug the position. I personally cannot imagine the LCC without Doug, and I am sure this is true for many of us.

In 2008, Doug took on the responsibilities of testing manager while continuing to teach. In 2010, Doug became the Program Manager of Assessment and Technology, placing him in charge of testing, the CALL Lab, and LCC technology. I can say with a fair amount of certainty that his professional life has never been the same since that moment. At some point, a point in time that is unclear for Doug and for all of us at the LCC, he became the go-to person for teachers using technology in the classroom. He reminded me that when he took over as testing manager, placing students into classes was done by hand with paper and pencil. Today, we have a computer program that has streamlined the process of placing students.

Mr. Jones has taught every level at the LCC, except for Level 1, because we did not offer this level at the time Doug was teaching. He taught Level 5 when he first began his ESL career, and after that, he focused mainly on Level 6.

Jenifer Edens frequently taught with Mr. Jones and is also from the same area of Texas where Doug was raised. Jenifer shared with me that "Doug's genuine concern for our students and his commitment to offering them the best experience possible has been evident in his approach to teaching, testing, placement, and the CALL Lab." Ms. Edens has worked with Doug for ten years, and she says that she has

"never witnessed him demonstrate anything less than the highest degree of professionalism" while here at the LCC. She continued to tell me that she finds him knowledgeable, organized, helpful and positive. She suggests that we should all listen carefully to Doug because from time to time "you'll catch one of his quiet but hilarious remarks." Ms. Edens concluded by saying, "If that weren't enough, he has the most awesome bat costume ever!"

Doug shared with me that 2010 was a year of big change for him. It was at that point that he realized he could not do everything by himself and that he would have to put a lot of trust into his program assistants. He believes in creating a good environment in the CALL Lab for those he supervises, and I am positive that these student workers benefit tremendously from his well-planned and passionate model. Doug has a solid work ethic, and I can think of few better to mentor and guide our staff. His job description has continued to change over the years, and the one constant is that he loves the people with whom he works. In my meeting with Doug, I learned that he finds the best part of his job to be watching Mark Vuong and Apoorva Pingali, two of his supervisees, learn their jobs and get as much excitement from their work as he does on a daily basis.

From Anna Hood, one of Doug's colleagues, I learned that others are also impressed by his ability to "wow us at meetings with his detailed reports, which demonstrate how he thoughtfully evaluates the technology and assessments we are using." Anna adds that she appreciates how he quietly does so many different things, from managing the CALL Lab to overseeing placement and progression tests. She reminds us that it is Doug's leadership that ensures our students are "tested, placed in classes, and have a welcoming space to use a variety of software to improve their English."

Doug is a vital part of the LCC. He understands more about Filemaker Pro than anyone on our staff. He is now our point person for equipment inventory, and his research on technology and software used for teaching and leadership is exceptional.

The last class that Doug taught was Level 2 with Jeanne Peine. Jeanne often tells me that Doug has always been level-headed, calm, and extremely helpful. She, like many of us, enjoys his dry and clever sense of humor. Most recently, Jeanne continues to add, "I feel that Doug goes into his office and performs magic with all things technical. He once dressed up as a wizard for Halloween, and where LCC technology is concerned, he really does seem to be a wizard!"

We celebrate the outstanding work of all LCC teachers, and this term we acknowledge Mr. Jones' dedication to his former students, his colleagues, and to the future of the LCC. We thank you, Doug Jones, for your important and highly valued contribution to our teaching program, and for sharing your gifts with the Language and Culture Center for the past twenty years.

# CLASS Pictures



1 A and B



2 A



2 B





3 A



3 B



3 C



# CLASS

Pictures



3 D



4 A



4 B





4 C



4 D



5 A



# CLASS Pictures



5 B



5 C



5 D





6 A

6 B

6 C

# My Country

## My Hometown's Weather

**Rahaf Almansor**

*1A – Saudi Arabia*

I am from Dammam city. It is in eastern Saudi Arabia. The weather in my city is very hot. The summer is humid because of the sea. The winter has the best weather, but it doesn't rain. We have palm trees during the fall. In the spring, the weather is pleasant, but still it is always hot. I love my hometown, but I do not like the weather.

## My Hometown

**Yuhan Xiang**

*1A – China*

I am from Zhejiang, China. I believe it is a perfect city. Because Zhejiang is near the sea, it is very rich. It has three big mountains, so the air is clean, and sky is always blue. Zhejiang has many delicious dishes, but this food is only present in my dream as I am in the U.S. for ESL studies. Many great men have visited Zhejiang for the G20 summit. My city is famous for hospitality. People are very friendly. If you have any difficulty, people will help you. I am proud to be from a place like Zhejiang.

## My Hometown

**Roland Klahitar**

*1A – Chad*

Ndjamena, the capital of the Republic of Chad, is my hometown. It is the biggest town in terms of population (around one million people live there) and area in Chad. More than 50% of business activities and administrative activities are centralized there. Because Chad is a big country, there are three distinct seasons which vary in duration by region. In Ndjamena, the rainy season is from July to September; the weather is cold from November to February, and the weather is hot from March to June. Chad is geographically located in the center of Africa. Because of this position, Ndjamena is the headquarters of many African international institutions, but we have had many wars in Chad, so they have moved many of these institutions to other African countries. Ndjamena has a strategic French army base used by the French army for the security of the sub-region and one international airport called Hassan Djamous (a once famous military strategist). For people who want to discover Chad, Ndjamena is a melting pot for different cultures and people.

## My Hometown

**Hamad Almenhali**

*1B – United Arab Emirates*

I live in a small city called Baniyes. It was founded in 1973 in Abu Dhabi. The town is a wonderful place and the people there are friendly, but the weather is very hot. It changes in the winter and becomes pleasant. It has a huge mall. It also has a lot of popular restaurants. There are many fun things to do in my city. I miss my hometown very much.

## My Hometown

**Jinsung An**

*1B – Korea*

My hometown is Seoul in Korea. It is Korea's capital. Because one million people live there, it is very crowded. The traffic is terrible, but it has many beautiful places to visit. It has several tall buildings. Also, it has many famous movie entertainers like Psy and Lee Byunghun. In addition, Korean food is very delicious and spicy like Kimchi and Bulgogi. It is also famous for sports like Tae-Kwon-do and archery. It has four distinct seasons. Seoul is a very safe place, and most of the markets are open for 24 hours. It is a perfect place to live. I am happy to be from Seoul.

## My Hometown

**Eisa Almalwi**

*1B – Saudi Arabia*

I am from the big city of Jeddah. It is located in the western part of Saudi Arabia. The weather is hot and humid. The population in Jeddah is about four million. The big malls and restaurants make Jeddah a famous city. It also has a beautiful coast. Many people come to Jeddah to enjoy the sea view. It has many factories because Jeddah is an industrial city. It is also considered the gate of the two holy mosques in Makkah and Al-Medina. The schools and colleges in Jeddah are excellent. It has one of the best universities in Saudi Arabia called King Abdulaziz University. I love being from my hometown, Jeddah.

## My Hometown

**Abdulrahman Almashama**

*1A – Saudi Arabia*

My home town, Qateef, is in Saudi Arabia. It is in the east of the country. It is very beautiful because I have my family and friends there. Every day I go to the mosque to pray. There are many people at the mosque. They are very nice and friendly. I like to celebrate Ramadan in Qateef because of many reasons. The food my mother makes is delicious. Next, the fast is shorter. On Eid Al-fitr, my parents give everyone money. Next, during the day, the weather is very hot, but at night it is very pleasant. Qateef is also famous for food like Kabsa, Mandi, Shawarma, Kabob, Biryani, and Baklava. It has a big mall. People enjoy shopping there. Last, I love my hometown very much.

## My Hometown

**Abdullah Bukhari**

*1B – Saudi Arabia*

I love my hometown Mecca. It has people from different countries. It is a very busy place; therefore, the city has 24-hour security for the people. The weather is very hot for most the year; for just one month the weather is warm to cool. For food, we have many different types of food like Kabsa, Shawarma, Baklava, and Halwa. It has several fast food places too like Halal McDonalds, KFC, and Cheesecake Factory. Mecca is also known for having Allah's house,



“The Holy Kaaba,” which is very important for the Muslims of the world. Every year, people from different countries visit Mecca to perform Ummrah and Hajj. In addition, it has the oldest university of the country called “Umm Al-Qura (UQU)”. Last, Mecca is a wonderful city for people to live in and visit.

### My Hometown

**Line-Marcelle Metemo Ndeka**

*1B – Gabon*

My hometown, Libreville, is very beautiful. It is in Gabon, Africa. Every day we can visit the beach because the temperature is very high, and people relax and enjoy the cool water. The streets are very small, but Libreville is a fun place to be. The population has the mind of a community, so everyone likes to live together. Also, the population eats fresh food like fish, vegetables, and fruit. On August 17, the people of Libreville celebrate Independence Day. Every October, the city organizes a race for breast cancer and everyone wears pink. In short, Libreville might be a small city, but it has many fun things to do. I love my hometown.

### My Country Kuwait

**Abdullah Alenezi**

*1B – Kuwait*

A lot of people around the world love my country Kuwait. Because it is a very liberal place, people enjoy freedom. Second, it is beautiful in the winter. We have a thing called “Mazad” which is open just in February because of the National Day, and the weather is rainy. All the Kuwaiti people celebrate, and all the malls have sales during this month. Finally, everyone who knows Kuwait loves it.



## A Great Place to Study

### Xuefei Guan

*2B – China*

The Language and Culture Center is an amazing place to study English. Our teachers are very nice and patient. They are our guides in studying English, and they are also our best friends. There are many students from all over the world in the LCC. They have different cultures and habits, and they teach me new ways to look at the world. The textbooks of the LCC are very interesting because they include a lot of beautiful pictures and plentiful information. In addition, the LCC is at UH, which has a beautiful campus, clean classrooms, and a lot of exciting activities. I like the Language and Culture Center very much!

## Excellent Reasons to Learn English

### Mohammed Alsharari

*2A – Saudi Arabia*

The Language and Culture Center is the best place to learn English. Comfortable installations, spacious areas, and fun are things that I love. Teachers also are really funny and clever. They help you to deal with any problems. In my opinion, I believe that the LCC is one of the best places to learn English in Houston!

## I am very happy in the LCC

### Abdullah Mohammed

*2B – Iraq*

I am very happy in the LCC. It is the best English school. It has great classrooms, technology and books. In the LCC, you have to speak only English in the class, so we are learning fast. The LCC teachers are great. They do everything to teach us, and they are like friends with us, so we are never shy. They are so lovely. They had a small party for the students' birthdays and Halloween. We have amazing activities in the LCC like field trips to the Houston Zoo and many other places. We have great fun. My classmates are great. They are from different countries and speak different languages, and sometimes we eat lunch. The LCC is the best school I have seen in my life.

## I Like the LCC

### Hussam Bashakur

*2B – Saudi Arabia*

I like the LCC because it has many activities, teachers, and students. It is big. I like my teacher because she teaches me. My classroom is beautiful because I have smart friends. My books have many exercises. This is my school.

## I Love the Language and Culture Center

### Wen-Hui Yang

*2B – Taiwan*

I love to study in the Language and Culture Center. I have two beautiful teachers, and my classmates are friendly. Alida teaches us grammar and writing, and Barbara teaches us Listening and Speaking. The classes are very interesting. My classmates are very friendly, and we usually study together after we eat lunch. Sometimes the Language and Culture Center has social activities. After I attend the activities, I feel so happy because I meet many friends. I have many wonderful memories of the Language and Culture Center.

## I Love the LCC

### Shaoqing Wang

*2B – China*

I love to study in the Language and Culture Center. This is the first time I see a school that is so big. When you go to the LCC, everyone who looks at you will give you a smile. It feels like home. And I like

my teachers. They are very nice. Every morning I look at her, and she has a smile. If I have a need, they will help me because we are like a family. In the classrooms, we study English together. After class, we eat free lunch in the Religion Building. It is interesting for me. I am very thankful that I am at the LCC to study because it is like home. Everybody is nice. I love the LCC.

## My Experience at the LCC

### Dairene Beatriz Vega Cabrera

*2B – Venezuela*

These are some reasons why I like the LCC. They have good professional teachers for all levels. In my case, when I started my classes, I did not know to how to write a good paragraph, but I have two wonderful teachers that teach me academic English, and now I can write a good paragraph. My classmates and I have interesting books about nature and other things, so we can learn more English with them. They also have beautiful presentation. Another reason why I like the LCC is my classmates because they are amazing and friendly people. In addition, the LCC has different social activities with all the people that study here. For example, we can go to the Conversation Club on Wednesdays and Fridays. These are some reasons why I like to study at the LCC!

## My School

### Murtadha Alhelal

*2B – Saudi Arabia*

I have a plan in my mind to study in the LCC. First of all, when I came to the United States, I was scared because it was different from my country. I am a student in the LCC, and I like to study here. I love my teachers and my classmates too. The LCC chooses great books for us. My teachers encourage us to study harder. So, everyone that wants to study should go to the LCC.

## My Second Family — the LCC

### Ainiwaer Nadila

*2A – China*

The LCC is a good place to learn English. There are big and bright classrooms and friendly classmates. They are from different countries. We can go to the LCC singing club and conversation club after class. We have good teachers. They care about us. We have heavy books, but I like to read them. The LCC is like my second family. I love it very much.

## Study at the LCC

### Thi Chu

*2B – Vietnam*

I like to study at the LCC. First, we have many outside activities, like field trips. They help me study more than in class and everybody becomes closer. The next one, the teachers are very nice. They explain everything I don't understand. Besides, the classrooms are good, and the books are easy to follow. One of the reasons that I like to study at the LCC is that my classmates are very kind. They help me feel interested when I go to school. Although we can't speak English very well, we can understand each other. I hope I can continue studying at the LCC.

## Thanks LCC

### Seok Choi

*2A – Korea*

I love the Language and Culture Center, and I appreciate the LCC office and teachers. When I go to the LCC office, the staff is very kind, and they explain many things to me. Sometimes they have many activities, such as Conversation Club, Field Trips, Halloween, etc. The LCC teachers are very kind and passionate, and they have good teaching methods. They always encourage their students. They



have a warm heart and patience. They give many opportunities to their students to learn English. I love the LCC office and teachers. I appreciate the LCC office and the two beautiful kind teachers.

## The Language and Culture Center

### Suhail Saeed Alderei

2A – United Arab Emirates

I will talk today about the LCC in the University of Houston. I am in Level 2A, and we have 14 students in our class. We study about grammar and writing and other subjects. In the LCC they have a lot of classrooms for students. They have many teachers. We have two teachers. The first one is Barbara, and the second is Alida. I have a brother in the LCC. His name is Sultan, and he is in Level 3. I have one friend. He is from China. In the LCC, we can talk, and we do different activities every week. Finally, I want to say thanks to the LCC. They have good teachers and classrooms.

## The Language and Culture Center

### Quynh Luu

2B – Vietnam

The Language and Culture Center is a large English center of the University of Houston. It has many classrooms that are clean, beautiful and quiet. Many students come from other countries in the world. Teachers at the Language and Culture Center are very friendly with the international students. The center has many good English books. They help me practice English a lot. In addition, the center has different social activities for international students. I joined a field trip with classmates. I also joined the Language and Culture Center singers. I am so happy when I practice these activities. The Language and Culture Center is a famous English center in Houston and the United States of America. I love the Language and Culture Center very much because I want to be successful in my future career, but first I have to learn English well.

## The Language and Culture Center

### Thanh Chau

2B – Vietnam

I want to talk about my class in the Language and Culture Center. First, my class is very funny. The class is level 2. I'm studying in class 2B. Sometimes, the classes study together. I like to study in my class. We are always discussing and speaking about many other cultures. I like to listen and I am very happy. After I study, my class has particular activities such as Festival, free lunches, etc. Currently, my class is good and happy. We always help and practice exercises together when there is difficult homework. I love my class and I really want to study with it forever.

## The Language And Culture Center

### Tien Do

2A – Vietnam

I really like to study English at the Language and Culture Center because it is a perfect English center. I have many reasons to like it. First, Barbara and Alida, my two teachers, are extremely friendly and professional, so I feel happy when I go to class every day. It helps me study English faster and understand lessons easier. Secondly, my classrooms are very big and modern, but there are few students. I always feel comfortable when I study there. The next reason, my books, which are very beautiful, are also quite expensive. They have many pictures, stories and useful information. This is very important because I am not bored when I study English. The last reason is the Language and Culture Center has many clubs to enjoy, for example Conversation Club, Singing Club, and CALL lab. These are places where I practice English with American people every day. Finally, I love the Language and Culture Center because it helps me improve my English skills very much.

## The LCC

### Abdulhakim Alsaghah

2B – Saudi Arabia

I like the LCC because it is the best institute in Houston. My cousin told me that he studied in the LCC, and it is very good if you want to learn English. When I came to the LCC, I studied English. I liked it because the classrooms are in a different building. It is big and beautiful. The teachers' names are Alida and Barbara. They are very good teachers. They are beautiful, and they teach very well. We learn reading, writing, listening, grammar, and speaking. We have good books if someone wants to learn the English language. They are very important if they want to learn how to speak, read, listen, and practice grammar and writing. Finally, I love my teachers and classmates.

## The LCC

### Monirah Al Dossary

2A – Saudi Arabia

I would like to talk about a famous university in Houston. The University of Houston is huge. It has many students from all countries, so there are many different languages in the LCC. This lets me know different cultures from around the world. I have many classrooms in the LCC. They are big with a lot of technology that I can use. I like my teacher because she is smart, friendly, and nice. The teacher is helpful, so I can learn many things in life. Before I came here, I heard many friends talk about her. Now I believe them. When I came here, I went with the teachers to buy some books. I think the books are clear, organized, and good. They have a lot of information. However, I do not like the price because it is expensive. Finally I wish to bring my children to this famous university in the future.

## The LCC

### Ting Jia

2B – China

Today I will talk about my school. It is a very good school. I like it. When I first came here, I saw the building was very beautiful. My class name is 2B. When I study here, I have good classrooms and good classmates. The LCC teachers are a lot of fun. They are nice to the students. Their names are Alida and Barbara. I like to go to school because the teachers teach from very interesting books. The LCC has free food and a gym for students. Sometimes teachers eat lunch with us, and then I go to the gym. Every day is a nice day in the LCC. I think the LCC is a very good school. This is why I like it.

## The LCC

### Xuyen Nguyen

2A – Vietnam

I am studying English in the LCC at the University of Houston. This is a good place and it helps me with a lot of things to study. It is so big. It has many classrooms that are very large and clean. My lovely teachers teach me more knowledge, so I can improve my English very well. I love them. The LCC always has many social activities that are so helpful because I can meet friends from many different countries around the world. Many friends help me study about their culture and experiences. I join social activities, such as Conversation Club, the LCC Singers, and so on. I think it is a good chance for me to study and an important help to improve my ability in English. I will try and study hard. I love the LCC so much. I hope I will have more beautiful moments here and study more new things. Certainly, the LCC is really good for me.

# LEARNING EXPERIENCES

## A Cultural Surprise

**Tindnonman Bouda**

*3A – Côte d'Ivoire*

I learned many things this term but the most surprising was about taxes in the U.S. The day after I came to Houston, I went to the supermarket and there I chose the things that I wanted. I calculated the total before going to the cashier to be sure that I did not have more than I had money for. When I checked out, the clerk told me that it was more than I calculated, and I was confused because I had checked it before. I said there must be a mistake, and she understood that I was new in the country. So she began to laugh and told me that there is a tax for everything in this shop except water. I was shocked and embarrassed. I had to leave some things because I did not have enough cash. Now I always buy things with my card to avoid this situation. It is the most interesting thing that I have learned.

## A Surprising Thing in the United States

**Jingxian Qi**

*3A – China*

A surprising thing I learned this term is that shopping in the U.S. is more convenient and comfortable than in my country. First, the staff are very friendly and polite when you go shopping in an American store. They say “hello” to customers and ask them, “How are you?” when people walk into the shop. Also, their attitude is very polite even if you do not buy anything. They are always enthusiastic. In my country, if you do not buy anything, the clerk will ignore you. Furthermore, American clerks will not force you to buy anything. For instance, if you try on a lot of clothes, you do not feel embarrassed when you do not want to buy them. They never force you to buy but rather just give you some advice so you can make up your own mind. In my country, the store clerks always try to get customers to buy their products and sometimes even lower the price to persuade people to buy them. In my opinion, clerks should respect customers in order to make more sales, and then they can both benefit.

## American Culture

**Phuc Tran**

*3A – Vietnam*

After living in America for more than two months, I have discovered that American culture is polite. First of all, Americans are used to saying “Hello”, “Hi”, or “How are you?” to people they don't know. I can easily talk to them and make more friends. This culture makes me feel people are friendly. In addition, Americans always get in line for payment when they go shopping, so it is helpful for customers and cashiers. In Vietnam, when I go shopping, I don't need the express line if I go fast and put my items on first. I might also have a friend or relative as the cashier, so I will get priority for paying. I also noticed that, in restaurants, most of the waiters serve very well, so they get tips from diners. This is a difference between Americans and Vietnamese because

Vietnamese rarely give tips. America is a civilized country, and Americans are polite people. I learned many things when I arrived here. I'm sure I will learn about more beneficial actions from American culture.

## My Change

**Mariangel Oberto Reyes**

*3A – Venezuela*

When I arrived in the U.S, I was so excited to improve my English and meet new people from different countries and their culture. I had some expectations in this new stage of my life. The most important thing was how to change my life to become better. First of all, I feel that I changed from the person I was before to the person I am now because I had to adjust to my life. My mom and dad were not in Houston like when I lived in Venezuela. For that reason, I had to assume some responsibilities. I had to clean my house, buy food and prepare meals, which I had never done before. In addition, I was already used to waking up early, but here I not only wake up early but prepare my lunch for my brother and myself. Also, our lunch should be ready at 11:30 a.m. because we have class at 1:30 p.m. Moreover, I had to get used to going out in the afternoon when the sun is so bright. Furthermore, I changed my ideas about what a good student is. When I studied advertising, public relations and English in Venezuela, I thought I was a good student, but now I feel that excellence is not always getting 100. It is when you can see your English progress in the way you use it to communicate with others. On the other hand, I have become a student that participates in class without fear of failure and asks if I have a question. Now I am more open to talk with other people although my English is not perfect yet. Beside this, I have good teachers who help me update my previous knowledge and teach me new material that I didn't know. I remember when my writing teacher gave me my midterm test score, I could see how my writing had improved compared to the paragraphs I did at the beginning of the term. Now I can write this article and combine all the knowledge that I received from her. Also, I consider myself a grateful person for all the things that God put in my way. Thanks to him and my father that always advises me that this decision will be better for me and my professional growth. Although I had to leave my family and separate from them, they are my motivation to become a better person. Thanks to them I am what I am now and thanks as well to the University of Houston, especially to the LCC Department for giving me the opportunity to learn about other cultures. Also, when I finish all my English classes, I would like to become a future UH Coog because I hope to complete a Master's in marketing. As has been noted, my life has taken a 180° turn, but I think that all things happen to bring benefits, and in my case, my personal and professional growth here at UH will lead to better opportunities in my life. Thanks for all the memories and knowledge that I have had in this fall term.



## My Experience in Houston

**Yvette Rodriguez Bartra**

*3A – Peru*

When I came to Houston to study English, I thought about buying a car during the first week because Houston is a big city and the distance is very far from my home. However, the Texas DPS rules state that it is necessary to live here for one month before taking the DPS exam. After learning about the rule, I decided to take public transportation. One Saturday before the English classes started, my sister and I decided to practice the bus route from my house to the university. We walked to the bus station; at that moment it started to rain really hard. I had never experienced a rain like that. It was like a strong shower. I am from Lima, Peru, and it never rains there like it does in Houston. We returned home, and two hours later it was sunny. We were able to make the trip to the university by bus. First of all, I was surprised about the bus schedule because they are on time every day. I can organize my time and can predict the time that I will arrive at my destination. The bus trip takes the same time as if I drove to the university. In addition, the service is really good, fast and safe. The buses have air conditioning, and they are not crowded like in my country. Also, the Houston Metro provides a 50% discount on fares for students. Finally, I can save time riding the bus, and I'm able to read and study during the trip. It was very comfortable. I will continue to use public transportation until the holidays and then buy a car. I want to experience driving in Houston. I recommend taking public transportation here and always checking the weather every day because in September it always rains and it is necessary to have an umbrella all the time.

## My Experience in Texas and the University

**Hayder Abdulkareem Al-Abdulzahra**

*5A – Iraq*

My whole family had moved to Texas while I was in Dubai. I worked very hard to get a visa and come here to pursue my dream. I came here to Houston without knowing anyone and owning only a few belongings. I heard that Houston is one of the largest cities and very affordable to make a living, and this is very true. The first thing I love about Houston is the food. There are so many food options here that it is overwhelming to make a decision on what to eat. The portions are gigantic for decent prices. I understand why everyone has joined gyms. Second, the weather is very confusing. I cannot pack away my winter wear. One day it is cold, and then another day is hot. When the weather is windy, I like the vibe of the city. The atmosphere is very relaxing to me. The third thing I love about Houston is the university. I have met various kinds of people here with all sorts of personalities. The professors are very smart and determined to help you succeed. The campus is full of energetic and motivated students. There is a sense of community within the participating students, especially with all the different organizations created for them. Overall, this state shows a lot of diversity. Also, people in Texas have a lot of pride for their state. It seems like Texas is like its own country.

## Something Interesting This Term

**Hsing-Chieh Cheng**

*3A – Taiwan*

This term I enjoyed learning about many different cultures from my classmates and teachers. First of all, my classmates came from different countries. In class, we needed to discuss many questions. For example, in China and Taiwan, they don't cite sources in essays. But students in Spain, Kuwait, America and Africa need to cite sources. That is different from Asia. In addition, people in Middle Eastern countries can't shake hands with people of the opposite sex. They think it is strange and impolite. But in Asia, shaking hands is a polite behavior. My teacher told us that people don't like to shake hands for a long time in America. This was interesting because I learned about three different cultures. Most importantly, the food cultures are different, too. Americans like to eat fast food, and their staple food is meat and bread. On the other hand, Asians like to eat rice and noodles. They don't like to eat too much meat because they think it isn't healthy. In the Middle East, most people can't eat pork because of their religion. Then, in Africa, their staple food is corn. One of their dishes is Pap, which is made from corn, and it looks like congee or porridge. Pap is eaten with beef, chicken and vegetables. There are many different food cultures in my class. I have a great time in the LCC. I am not only learning English but also making many friends. I hope that I can continue to learn both language and culture.

## The Sound of a Keychain

**Hang Thi Le**

*4A – Vietnam*

The sound of a beautiful melody can remind you of a special person. For me, it is not a song but the sound of keychain that reminds me of my father, who would always hang his keychain on his trousers. The keychain woke me for school every morning when he walked down the stairs. He was strict. After school, I wasn't allowed to watch television without his permission, but I did it anyway sometimes. Because his keychain made noise as he walked up the stairs when he returned home, I could quickly turn off my favorite shows before I got caught.

## The Taste of Baked Chicken

**Merseigne Ilunga**

*4B – Congo (Kinshasa)*

The taste of baked chicken reminds me of my mother. When I was growing up, her chicken was one of my favorite dishes. She is a talented chef who can cook everything from Congolese cuisine to food from other countries perfectly. She was usually busy at work and didn't have time to cook for us, but on the weekends, she always made something special, and the most delicious food was her baked chicken. She used vegetables and spices from my country to season it, and when it started to bake, even if I was far away from the kitchen, the wonderful smell got my attention. After it had baked for about an hour, everyone in my family ate more than one plate, and we were all happy after dinner. Every time I smell chicken here, I have memories of all the enjoyable weekends with my family. I've tried to make baked chicken like hers, but it doesn't taste the same. In fact, she actually told me that even if I have all the ingredients, it will not taste the same because she is the only one who can make it perfectly.

## The Scent of a Forest

**Gloire Eunice Benga Ikambouayat**

*4A – Gabon*

The scent of a forest reminds me of my father. For our vacations, he usually took my family to the woods and told us about the plants and trees. He also taught us how to trap animals and how to find our way in the woods. I enjoyed walking in the forest with my father, and I think it was a special place for him because he had his own memories of the time he had spent with his own father in the woods. I hope that one day I can do the same with my children.



## The Taste of Lentil Soup

**Hassan Al Sultan**

*4B – Saudi Arabia*

The taste of lentil soup reminds me of my mother. When I was a child, my mother always cooked Adas soup, a traditional dish from my country, which is made with red lentils, onion, and chicken. The Adas soup smelled so delicious that it was difficult for everyone in my family to wait for my mother to finish cooking it. In the winter, she made it to help us stay warm. When I was a child, my mother often made it for me when I sick. I think of my mother every time I taste this soup now.

## The Taste of Omelets

**Npon Phairatchaves**

*4A – Thailand*

The taste of omelets reminds me of my mother. When I was young, my mother woke up early every morning to cook breakfast before I went to school. She loved to cook for my father, my brother, and me. She was always cheerful while she was cooking, and she did it from her heart. Sometimes I helped her make the omelets, and anytime I have one in the United States now, I miss her.

## The Taste of Tea

**Humoud Ali Alostad**

*4B – USA Citizen*

The taste of tea reminds me of my grandfather. Every Friday, my family spent the day at his house. After lunch, we would sit around in the living room to listen to my grandfather while he drank tea and encouraged us whenever we felt unhappy. He was an intelligent man, and instead of giving us advice directly, he would tell us stories. I still think of him and his stories whenever I drink tea.

## The Sight of a Teddy Bear

**Gin Ngoc Dinh**

*4B – Vietnam*

The sight of a teddy bear reminds me of my father. When I was six years old, he gave me one that I loved. Its face resembled my father's because it was square and always had a smile. My father always smiled at me when I felt sad or wanted to give up on something. He always supported me and encouraged me to stand up by myself. The color of the teddy bear, which was dark brown, was similar to the color of my father's skin. He worked on a farm in the sun, so his skin had become dark.



## The Scent of Coffee

**Jessica Morettino**

*4A – Italy*

The aroma of coffee reminds me of the time I spent with my father when I was a child. He made coffee every morning, and the smell came into my room and woke me up. I went to the kitchen and had breakfast with my parents as the smell of coffee filled the house. When we finished eating breakfast, I liked going with him to his coffee company, which was a magical place for me. I loved spending hours there, watching him work. I liked going to his office with him, where he had a beautiful coffee plant. I could also see all the coffee beans from different places. I could touch them, and he would teach me everything about the process, from the harvest to packaging. I could see in his eyes how much he loved his work. Today when I open a package of coffee, I like to smell it with my eyes closed so I can relive those memories. Now that I live far away from him, it's one of my favorite ways to feel close to him.

## The Scent of the Ocean

**Huong Thi Kim Nguyen**

*4A – Vietnam*

The scent of the ocean reminds me of my father. When he was a fisherman, he had a large boat with five employees, so he often worked on the ocean for at least two weeks at a time. When he came home, I loved all the fresh shrimp, fish, crabs, and squid that he brought for my family. Since he had the smell of seafood on his clothes when he returned, this scent always reminds me of my father, his sunburned face, and how strong he was because of his job. Even though he was exhausted from his hard work, he always smiled when he was with his family.

## The Sound of a Soccer Match

**Huy Nguyen**

*4B – Vietnam*

The sound of a soccer match reminds me of my best friend, Ha. When I was a child, I always felt bored because my parents didn't allow me to play outside. Nevertheless, one day when Ha invited me to play soccer, I sneaked out of my house. We lost the game, but I still felt happy and excited. After that, we played together and defeated almost all our competitors. We live in different countries now, but Ha and I are still in touch. I'm thankful he was an important part of my childhood.

## The Sound of Chopin

**Jihang Yin**

*4A – China*

My father is a music professor at a university, so he often listens to classical music, including compositions by Chopin. Whenever he was unhappy about something, he would play the piano for me and tell me information about the composer. His dream is for us to play Chopin's concerto together, so I've been practicing that and hope we can do that the next time I go home.



## The Sound of French Songs

**Cam Thi Dao**

*4B – Vietnam*

The sound of French songs reminds me of my mother. She has a beautiful voice, and she loves to sing French songs. Her French is excellent because she learned it in school when she was young. She sang with her warm, rich voice while she was cooking, knitting, or doing housework. I remember that she would sing French songs such as "C'est la Vie," "Je Suis Malade,"

and "C'est Moi." She would sing to me every night to help me fall asleep. One day while I was sitting next to her as she knitted, she sang "Comment Te Dire Adieu," and she told me with a cheerful smile that if she had not become a teacher, she would have been a singer. I miss her since I live far away from home. I especially miss her singing, which gave me a wonderful childhood filled with soft melodic French songs.

## The Sound of R&B Music

**Eunbee Choi**

*4A – Korea*

The sound of R&B (rhythm and blues) music reminds me of my younger brother, who lives in Korea. He loves music, and he listens to it all the time, whether he's eating, taking a shower, or resting. His favorite music is R&B, and he likes to sing it and play it on the piano. Depending on the song, his singing makes me feel joyful, sad, or peaceful. Sometimes we sang together, which always made me feel happy. My precious memories of these times make me smile.

# CLASS FIELD TRIPS







# FALL ADVENTURES

## The Climbing Wall

**Angel Oberto**

3B – Venezuela

I will never forget the first time when I came to the UH and went to the Campus Recreation Center on a Sunday. I was really surprised because I saw a huge climbing wall. I have always felt real passion about climbing although I haven't practiced for years when I was in my country. The reason I couldn't continue climbing is because in my country it is difficult to find good places, and I can't even imagine a climbing wall inside of a university. For that reason, it was totally unexpected and at the same time exciting for me when I saw that huge climbing wall at UH. My fascination for climbing started when I was 14 years old. In my country, there was an amusement park that had a climbing wall. I went every weekend and climbed the rock wall for hours. Even today I can remember that feeling the first time I reached the top. It was a feeling of confidence and supernatural force inside me. In the same way, when I climbed at UH, that feeling of 11 years ago came back to me, and it has made me feel that I can do anything no matter how difficult it looks at the beginning. I came to UH to learn English, something that for me has always been a little difficult, but since I started to climb the rock wall here, I have started to believe that I can also learn English. The most important in climbing is not to reach the top the first time. The most important is to keep going and never give up. Likewise for my studies, if at the beginning I can't, I think the most important thing is to keep going and study with a desire to learn English so I will be able to speak English with my dad and be an inspiration for my younger brothers. Also, climbing the rock wall at UH has opened a door for me to be a belayer. Right now, I am practicing to take a test to become a belayer, which is a person on the ground who secures the climber. Climbing the rock wall here at UH, I have had the opportunity to remember that nothing in life is easy, but if we can trust in ourselves and we persevere, only the sky is the limit.



## My Day at the Museum

**Nijiati Yierfan**

3A – China

One Thursday my classmates and I had an interesting experience at the Houston Museum of Natural Science. There were many different exhibits. One exhibit I really enjoyed was the dinosaur skeletons. The dinosaur skeletons were bigger than other exhibits, and it was so spectacular. We talked about the history of dinosaurs, like when they were extinct and what they ate in their time period. Then I observed some different kinds of dinosaur skeletons. They looked strange; for example, there were aquatic dinosaurs, land dinosaurs and flying dinosaurs. In addition, there were some small dinosaurs that looked like dogs. Furthermore, we saw a movie about storms in the movie room with our teacher. I think that movie was produced very well and it gave me a lot of information. After that, we took pictures together and found

another exciting exhibit. We saw gems of different sizes, shapes and colors that were from different countries. They were so dazzling. I hope I can visit again.

## Houston Museum of Natural Science

**Li Li**

China – 3B

The most interesting activity was to visit the Houston Museum of Natural Science this term. There are a lot of model animals and pictures in the museum, such as dinosaurs, antelopes, fish, orangutans and so on. Many of the animals shown there are rare or endangered. What's interesting and surprising in the museum is the sharks. When I came into the museum display of fish, there were lots of sharks hanging down from the ceiling. They looked like they were swimming in the ocean. A shark is a fish but has many differences from a fish. There are 400 types of sharks in the world. Most sharks live in the ocean, but a few live in the river. If a shark stops swimming, it will sink and can't breathe. Sharks swim so fast but can't swim backwards. Some sharks can exist for months without food. For example, some sharks eat food only every two months. Sharks grow new teeth every 8-10 days. Some sharks lose 30,000 teeth in their lifetime! Sharks are not horrible but amazing. I like sharks very much. I like the Houston Museum of Natural Science. I could learn more knowledge about animals and see the animals I have never seen. I think this is a very interesting thing.

## The Museum

**Rahaf Alostad**

3A – Kuwait

I will never forget the time when I went to the Houston Museum of Natural Science with my class on Thursday, September 30. I had a wonderful experience! When I went there, I saw a lot of exhibits like the dinosaur skeletons. There were large and tall dinosaurs. They had a lot of different dinosaurs. Also, they had one of the tallest and largest dinosaurs in the world. They found it in Texas, and I took a lot of pictures of it. Then I went with my group to see the Egyptian mummies because I was very interested in them. I had never seen mummies before. I love to read about ancient history and how they lived. I watched a movie about them. I was so excited to see real mummies. We saw three dead people with their clothes and accessories. It was such a wonderful day. I learned a lot of fascinating information. I had a lot of fantastic experiences, and I hope to go there with my family and friends again.

## Wings Over Houston Airshow

**Jiaming Chen**

6C – China

I was glad that I went to the airshow on October 22, 2016. I was excited that day because I had never seen real war craft before except on TV. Actually, it was the 32nd time they have performed in Houston. I brought a folding chair and food at 9:00 a.m. because I wanted to sit somewhere near the terrace. By the way, the food



they sold was expensive, so my choice was smart. I saw the F-35 Lightning II and F-16 Viper, which are part of the U.S. Army. Because they were loud and fast while flying, I could sense how effective they are in battle. I also watched the show, “Tora! Tora! Tora”, which showed the sneak attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941. While the Japanese war craft flew around in the air, there were grand explosions hundreds of miles from me. Through the heartrending music and narration, people were standing and mourning for the people who passed away in World War II. At 3 p.m., I watched the famous Blue Angels, the second oldest formal aerobatics team. Seven war craft were flying together. Everyone was clapping for them when they turned over. Sublime patterns were made in the air one by one through seven straight smoke lines. When they flew slowly in front of the audience, everyone was cheering for them. At the same time, we completely forgot the hot sun. In the end, the aviators came to the audience to express their thanks and took pictures with people. I also had the honor of getting a picture with one of the outstanding aviators. The show was remarkable.

## 3A & 3B CLASS ACTIVITIES



# THE RENAISSANCE FESTIVAL



## Renaissance Festival

**Xinzhu Wang**

*3B – China*

I will never forget the first time I took part in the Texas Renaissance Festival. When my classmates and I arrived at the big park, I was astonished that there were so many people dressed up as movie characters, cartoon figures or people in the past. I took pictures with them because they were extremely attractive and new to me. After that, I found a place where there was a huge crowd. I discovered it was a fire whip performance! The excited audience yelled as they watched the performance. Suddenly, one performer whipped a rose quickly from the mouth of another performer. What a dangerous performance! Fortunately, no one got hurt and people felt more excited than before. I kept walking around until I felt a little hungry. I bought a turkey leg for myself. The turkey leg was as big as a hand, and I had never seen such a big turkey leg before! At the end of the trip, a park worker stamped a dinosaur on my hand as a souvenir. Although I felt exhausted when I got home, it was an unforgettable experience.

## The Renaissance Festival

**Hend Albalawi**

*6C – Saudi Arabia*

Being on the LCC trip to the Renaissance Festival was the luckiest thing that ever happened to me. My story started from the first moment that all the LCC students met. Standing in front of the Hilton Hotel at 9:00 am, while waiting for the bus, one could not ignore the students' faces. They were full of energy and excitement. As soon as the bus arrived and students got on, they started turning on their music and danced in the aisle while some students chatted. It was amazing to see how students from different countries integrated and interacted. When we arrived, individuals and groups spread out. Personally, I did not understand how this location was arranged. I felt that I had moved into a past

time. Moreover, people who were dressed in Renaissance costumes were totally convincing for me. They acted as if they had come to our era and culture. It was the most amazing trip I have ever had.

## Experience at the Renaissance Festival

**Bich Nguyen**

*5B – Vietnam*

Last Saturday I had a great opportunity to go to the Renaissance Festival with some of my classmates. It was held in Todd Mission, Texas, which is located northwest of Houston. The Renaissance Festival is the nation's largest theme festival.

On Saturday morning, my friends and I gathered at the University of Houston. After that, we took the bus to go to where the Renaissance was held. It took about one hour to reach there. When we arrived and joined the fair, I was overwhelmed by the size of the fair and the number of people. A lot of attendees dressed up, presenting an enchanting world full of Kings and Queens, Lords and Ladies, Pirates... This place was totally fun and magical. It was also my first time to go to a festival like this. They had horse rides and beautiful shops of candles, jewelry and clothes. The shop owners were as witty as the folks in the festival. Besides, there were some fun comedy shows and magic shows. You could never get bored watching them. The fair lasted until night, but since we went by the LCC bus, we had to leave at 5 P.M. We were back at school at 7 P.M. Going to the Renaissance Festival was one of my most memorable days so far. It was also a great experience with my new friends in the United States.

## A Fantastic Trip

**Hanchen Fang**

*6C – China*

I went to the Renaissance Festival in October. I wondered why almost all the people who were at the festival were dressed up. Their clothes were old fashioned and strange to me. Holding a sword in his hand, a man dressed up as a gladiator approached us. I had never seen anything like that before! Maybe I had, but it was only in a book which referred to the Coliseum in Rome. Anyway, I saw a lot of interesting things during the trip. As you know, the Renaissance was an important stage in European history. Some





great creations came out of it. I remember my history teacher saying to me that the best way to understand history is to join it, which means if we want to learn something deeply, we'd better to try to put ourselves in that situation to know what exactly happened. At this festival, many people were enjoying history and thought of ways to take part in it. Thus, a sword was not only a sword; it showed an enthusiasm for history. Dresses were not only dresses; they were demonstrating respect for history. Also, there were a few people doing a Scottish dance, wearing kilts. I tried to join the dancers, but I gave up because that Scottish dance was so hard! I knew they were American, not Scottish, but how could they dance so professionally? They told me they like Scottish culture in the Middle Ages. It really got me thinking. The Renaissance was a meeting of different cultures at that time. Today, we have a Renaissance Festival for our different cultures. We can learn different cultures with no limit today. That means this Renaissance Festival was a great opportunity to let everybody know about the differences between their cultures. Anyway, I had a great time at the Renaissance Festival because of the costumes and different stories from different cultures. I also learned a lot from it. Across time and distance, culture is always interesting to all of us.

## Renaissance Festival

**Augustine Tibirou**

*6C – Burkina Faso*

On October 15, 2016, the Language and Cultural Center organized a field trip to the Texas Renaissance Festival. I was filled with excitement because it was my first time to attend that event. Instead of going in the school bus, my friends Jasmine, Hilda, and I decided to drive. The day before the event, we picked up our tickets at the office. The day of the event, Jasmine came to my apartment at 11:00 am to pick me up. It took us about two hours to get there. Finally, when we arrived, we

realized that we hadn't followed directions, so we entered a parking lot where we had to pay. We also realized that we didn't have cash, and they didn't take credit cards. So we went to a gas station to get some cash after we bought something, but they told us that we couldn't get cash back. Then we tried the ATM machine, but the transaction didn't go through. Finally, we went back to the park, hoping that they would accept credit cards. Upon entering, we noticed that there was a general parking area, so we parked there. We walked about 10 minutes to get to the place. There, we tried all the ATM machines without success. We continued visiting places like the Magic Forest, watching some performances and visiting exhibits of jewelry and clothes. The theme of the day was fairies. People, especially the girls, were dressed up, wearing wings and crowns made of flowers. It was amazing to watch them and learn about this culture. Tired and hungry, we decided to eat. I bought turkey legs, which I really enjoyed eating. It was hard to find some food for Jasmine because she is vegetarian, but we finally got broccoli with cheese for her. After that, we continued our visit, taking pictures and laughing. Finally, at around 5:00 pm, Hilda came. We decided to stay for the last spectacle, followed by fireworks. I have never seen a big fireworks show like that. It was amazing and unforgettable. I really enjoyed this trip, and I hope to go back next year.





# THE RENAISSANCE FESTIVAL









# HALLOWEEN

## A Halloween Party

**Hao Chen**

3B – China

The most interesting event during the semester was the LCC Halloween party. I went to the Halloween party with my classmates and my teacher. It was my first time to attend a Halloween party, and I was surprised at that time. Some people there drew on their face or wore some costumes. For example, they dressed as a zombie or drew their face like a ghost. The most important reason why I was surprised was I hadn't ever attended a party like this in China. Another important reason was I could meet a lot of students from all over the world in the party. I made some new friends, and we played games together. Although my English is poor, I still enjoyed the party and games. Also I could improve my English in the party because I talked to the other students, and they helped me with my mistakes. It was very useful to improve my English. The party surprised me and I liked it.



## A Halloween Party

**Thang Vong**

3B – Vietnam

I was very interested in the Halloween party on campus. That night, there were a lot of students from all over the world. We had many exciting activities in the party and free food was available for us. I met some classmates and we enjoyed everything together. I was a little surprised because this was the first Halloween party in my life. Everybody painted their face to look

like horrible ghost, spirits, and devils. They scared me sometimes! After that I saw a lot of strange activities such as bobbing for apples and the mummy game. When I joined in the mummy game with my classmates, they put toilet paper around me to look like a mummy. Although it was late when we finished, we danced, sang, and yelled. It was a very crazy dance because everyone danced like a mummy or whatever they liked. I felt that was the most interesting, crazy party I have ever attended.

## My Personal Experience with Halloween

**Alice Tougouma**

5A – Burkina Faso

Houston's ScreamWorld offers five attractions - Jake's Slaughterhouse, Edge of Darkness, Zombie Graveyard, Asylum Maze, and the Swamp. I went there on November 28th with my cousin and his girlfriend. Here is my experience.

The ScreamWorld experience began as soon as we got to the location. It started with an outdoor chain-link maze with powerful strobe lights, so we almost couldn't see where we were going. We had to find our way through it while being scared by four to six actors there in full makeup.

After that, we waited in line for thirty minutes to get into the

haunted house! Once we stepped into the house, we saw plenty of skulls everywhere on the walls, and each of those were spitting fire. Then, in front of us was a huge ugly swamp. There were zombies and bugs swimming in the swamp. Above this, there was fog everywhere, and I could barely see my cousin in front of me. While we were walking, I suddenly heard "Aaaaargh". I turned around, and there were some zombies in my face. I got so scared that I almost ran to my cousin. As we were moving forward, we saw a butcher's shop full of cannibals. Those people were cutting and eating human flesh! That was horrible, and I almost threw up. I even got goosebumps. This time, I didn't stay; I went straight to my cousin and caught his hand.

At the end, I got pretty scared. But I realized that it was fun. My cousin and his girlfriend didn't stop laughing at me until we made it home! Honestly, I really had a great experience I had never had before. I will always remember my first Halloween in the United States.

## My first and Only Halloween

**Kenza Diallo**

5A – Côte d'Ivoire



In my country, you don't celebrate Halloween. You can go to a friend's party or go out with some people, but you will never have children knocking on your door for candy. This is not the kind of day that really matters in Ivory coast. People probably don't even know which day is. So I have celebrate that day only one time.

I was in Paris. There was a war in my country for some politics issues. To keep us safe, my father took us to Europe. I was young, like 8-9 years old. On October 31st, my cousin and I decided to go knock on doors for candy. We were living in an apartment building. We were with a baby-sitter, going down and up in the building knocking on every door. It was really funny to do. People were so nice, they gave us so much candy that we could have gone into a diabetic coma. The funniest part was when my cousin, who was only 5 said something to a man. We were on the 4th floor. My brother knocked on the door. An old man come and ask us what we wanted. We told him that it was Halloween, and we were here for the candies. He looked at us, and said that he didn't have any candy and that we should leave. At that moment, my little cousin came in front of him and said very calmly "If you don't have candies I'm gonna beat you up." Oh god, at that moment, we took him and ran to the elevator. It was hilarious, as he was only 5 years old. How could a 5 years old boy say something like that? We ended our quest for candies and went back to our apartment.

The worst part was that my aunt didn't want us to eat the candy. We were so frustrated, but it was a good night. If one day I have the chance to do it again I will.



## A Pumpkin's Halloween Story: A Retelling of Stingy Jack

**Elsy Daniela Miranda Perez**

6A – Venezuela



This is the end. I'm the next one, and I can't do anything about it. My mom warned me about this dreadful day years ago, when I was only a sprout. She told me that only a few of us would survive this weird Halloween tradition humans have. This is our purge, our awful destiny. I'm facing my imminent death; so I will do the only thing I can right now: torment myself with beautiful memories so I can feel my species' existence had a meaning before humans began to see us as recreational Halloween toys.

My mom told me it all began many years ago in Ireland. There was once a man named Stingy Jack, who was very selfish and used to take advantage of people. He's the reason I'm stuck in this mess, so as you can imagine, I despise him. He once encountered his best friend, the Devil himself, and decided to play a trick on him. He managed to persuade the Devil to turn into a coin, so he could buy drinks for the both of them. Upon converting into a coin, the Devil was prevented from changing back to his ugly usual self because Jack decided to keep him like that next to a silver cross, so the Devil would be unable to transform. The only way the Devil was able to turn back to his original form was by making a deal with Jack in which he agreed not to bother Jack for a year; and in case he died, the Devil wouldn't claim his soul.

One year later, the Devil and Jack met again, but the latter tricked the Dark Lord again. He made the Devil climb a tree to look for a fruit, but when he was up in the tree, Jack took advantage of the situation and carved a cross in the tree, making it impossible for the Devil to come down unless he made another deal with Jack. This time, the deal made the Devil unable to bother him for ten years.

When Jack died, God didn't want him in Heaven, and I don't blame him. On the other hand, the Devil couldn't accept Jack's rotten soul in Hell because of the first deal they had made. So, the brilliant idea the Devil had was to send Jack back to his suffering with a burning coal, which he put inside a pumpkin he had carved out so he could light the path in the dark.

This sort of lamp is known as "Jack-O'-Lantern," and since people love to make a tradition out of other people's suffering, it became a Halloween-thing-to-do.

You may wonder how any of this is related to my current misery. My mom's usual bedtime story, which I just told you, has been reminding my brothers and me of our looming ending. I don't know when or why Americans started to think that pumpkins were the best Jack-O'-Lanterns, but I can assure you, it's not funny to be a pumpkin living in Texas. Oh God, she's looking at me. This is it. I'll die in the hands of a

15-year-old girl who wishes to become a mainstream pumpkin-carver and post her creations on Instagram. All I can say is: "Hello darkness my old friend." Goodbye everyone.

## The Night of the Dead

**Mohammad Abdulla**

6B – USA Citizen

Halloween, as it's known, is a Christian holiday. This holiday is between fall and winter. The holiday has many names, and one of the most famous names is Hallow's Eve. The way that Christian celebrate this holiday is fun. They start by going to stores to buy costumes and decoration for their homes. The costumes are the most fun part of this holiday. People get whatever they want. For example, most kids get super hero costumes. However, grownups most of the time get scary costumes to scare kids or just to show off when they give candy to children. Most of the time, the decorations that people get for Halloween are scary ornaments. The reason for that is to make people scared when they walk up their driveway to get candy. On this holiday, kids go to people's houses knocking on their door, saying, "Trick or treat." The trick is basically that the owner of the house will show a trick to the kids instead of giving them candy. However, in this century, most people just give candy to children. Therefore, these days children, by the end of Halloween night, have dozens of candies in their bags.

Halloween first started in Europe, specifically in Britain, as the festival of Samhain, Samhain is an old Celtic celebration. The Celts thought that there was a wall between this world and the world of ghosts and spirits. For them, this meant that ghosts and spirits enter our world at the beginning of winter. Therefore, the Celts had to have a party that was all about striking fear in ghosts and spirits that roam our world. Christians later changed it to All Hallow's Eve. In the end, when Irish immigrants moved to the USA, they made it known in the United States of America, and that was during the 19th century. In the 20th century, it started to become more and more popular, and they started pumpkin carving and trick or treat parties.

In short, Halloween is one of the most important festivals in the United States. It is a fun festival for kids and parents going to decorated houses trying to get as much candy as they can.

## Halloween

**Deniz Can Yonemori Duman**

6B – Japan

One of the famous festivals in the United States is Halloween. It is kind of a costume festival and most people wear costumes and join the festival. One month before the festival, stores start selling Halloween items such as costumes, masks, house decorations, and candy. Then, a few days before Halloween, people usually finish decorating their houses, buy costumes, and candy; some people think up tricks for children. Halloween is celebrated at the end of October, and when Halloween starts, some events happen around the country. For example, there are Best Costume and Best Decorated House competitions. In that competition, juries choose the best

# HALLOWEEN

costume or the best decorated house, and the winners usually get some prizes. Another example of such events is Halloween clubs. There are some clubs where you can dance and drink while wearing costumes, and usually these clubs only accept people who are wearing a costume. Also, there are some Halloween parades. You can see amazing costumes at the parade. And lastly, children usually go to their neighbor's houses to collect candy. When they approach a neighbor's house, they say, "Trick or treat," and they get candy from their neighbors. Moreover, there are some neighbors that children show their tricks to in order to have fun. There are many more events like that, and I believe that everyone can enjoy the festival.

## My Discovery of Halloween

**Francis Musoka**

6A – Congo (Kinshasa)

Having been educated in a Belgian school which promoted critical thinking, I often found myself confronted with controversial issues. The orthodox religious education I had been given in a devout family didn't allow me to actively participate in certain celebrations. Inevitably, the middle school student that I had been at that time could barely associate those seemingly opposite values with a positive experience. Consequently, I perceived Halloween as deleterious to my personal development. Surprisingly, my approach to Halloween progressively drifted away from it being a detrimental celebration to a positive experience that reunites people regardless of their origin.

Growing up in a devout family where several relatives were actively involved in religious organizations profoundly influenced my education. All activities were significantly ruled by Christianity. Therefore, while my classmates were given the chance to openly celebrate Halloween, I was receiving my preliminary education about Halloween's deleterious impact. In fact, Halloween was believed to be profoundly harmful to spiritual development. The intense opposition between my preconceived beliefs and my vivid desire to be part of Halloween led me to introspection. My last two years in high school progressively enlightened my

mind on the Church's influence upon several aspects of life. As an important part of my education in literature, I was taught about the Renaissance and the Enlightenment. Subsequently, realizing that certain areas of my beliefs were partly distorted, my preconceived notions were deeply shaken.

Being given the opportunity to pursue a college education in Belgium, I realized how damaging Halloween could be in a different environment. Along with several Western European countries, Belgium is a society that has been freed from religious influence. Therefore, certain festivities are celebrated almost without moral restrictions. As a freshman, I didn't expect to live in a country that didn't consider moral or religious values at school. For instance, one of the main Halloween event advertisements on campus hilariously displayed certain of the iconic personages from the Bible. Obviously, the lack of consideration toward other beliefs was an extreme experience to withstand. As a result, despite the festive aspect of Halloween I could scarcely associate it with a cheerful feeling.

Celebrating Halloween in the U.S. completely revolutionized my approach to it. Despite the lack of tolerance in certain areas, the U.S. is the first country that altered my perception of Halloween significantly. My last Halloween was certainly the one that provided me with the feeling that I belong to a community. Witnessing the gathering of people from different backgrounds under the same celebration, I progressively started to appreciate the cheerful and exciting aspect of Halloween. Moreover, the astonishing capability of Halloween to break down walls among different ethnic groups, religions and beliefs gave me a new perspective.

My Halloween celebration discovery has been a formidable journey that taught me the inestimable value of questioning preconceived beliefs and notions. Surely, certain aspects of Halloween are still foreign to me because feelings and emotions from years still abide. Indeed, as we grow up, words fade, yet emotions and feelings associated with them remain.

## Nightmare on the Bayou

**Hilda Emilia Chavez Cuyubamba**

6C – Peru

It is now October, and I am very curious about how Halloween is celebrated in Houston. Throughout all the month, there are different events like fairs, festivals, pumpkin hunts, haunted houses, and many other things. All of them caught my attention, and I must admit that I have tried a couple of them. The first on my list was the haunted house Nightmare on the Bayou, and I must say that it was quite the opposite of what I imagined. I do not know how I encouraged myself to go alone.

I bought my ticket. I got in line, and I waited quietly to start the terrifying journey in Nightmare on the Bayou. I was put with a group of three girls, all of them about fifteen years old, but taller than me. While waiting at the door, one of them asked me if I was afraid because I was alone. Of course, I said no, although I must





admit I was a little afraid. When we were entering, one of the girls took my hand and told me that there was no problem if I was scared. I just smiled and said thanks. As we were walking down a dark passageway, I noticed that the girl's hand was sweating, a clear sign that she was nervous. Her two friends were walking in front of us. At the beginning, we were walking slowly, but as soon as the first character appeared behind us, we started running. Indeed, at that time, I panicked. We kept walking while hearing screams, loud banging noises coming from the walls, and people crying. However, my fear was not just about the terrifying scenario, it was also about falling or tripping on something, because it was only with difficulty that I could see where I was walking.

As the journey progressed and was almost over, contrary to the girls, who were screaming and shaking, I was no longer scared. I could only laugh. Of course, they looked at me weird. Besides, the girl who was holding my hand asked me if I was okay. Maybe she thought that my laugh was because I was nervous. Therefore, I think I frightened the poor girl, which makes sense. Laughing on a journey in which you are supposed to be afraid is not normal. Although the place and the characters were really scary, what made me laugh was the reaction of the girls; for example, one of them crashed into the wall in her desperation to avoid one of the characters, who I think was a butcher. Later, another girl kicked one of the barrels that decorated the passageway blocking our way and not letting us move forward. I did not expect to end the circuit laughing. On the contrary, I expected to end it scared. Nevertheless, it was a good experience that I would like to repeat; perhaps the next time I will be frightened.

## The Origins of Halloween

**Julio Cesar Miranda Perez**

*6B – Venezuela*

Undoubtedly, it's that time of the year again. People go from shop to shop buying pumpkin carving tools, skeleton and witch costumes, and the new and outstanding house decorations for this special occasion. Halloween has arrived and people are ready for it. It is not unusual for people to get excited about holidays, but Halloween is certainly special for Americans. Of course, Halloween originated centuries before it became a commercialized activity all around the world, so sit back and enjoy the brief history lecture about the origins of Halloween.

Do you know who the Celts were? Well, they were inhabitants of certain areas in Europe back in the Iron Age, and, as you may guess, they had weird traditions 2000 years ago. One of their main traditions was called the Samhain, in which they celebrated their new year on the first day of November. This ceremony marked the end of summer and the start of the dark and deadly winter, but for the superstitious Celts, the souls of the dead caused trouble on this day because the boundaries between their world and ours were blurry. As everyone knows (or at least what the Celts believed), the best way to make the souls of the dead happy was by making animal sacrifices and wearing costumes of animal heads



and skins (thankfully with the passage of time, we decided to omit the sacrifices from the traditions, and we just wear funny skeleton costumes).

The Roman Empire had the habit of conquering lands, and they craved the Celts' land. When the inevitable happened, they combined their traditions and added two festivals to the ceremonies: Feralia, a commemoration of the dead, and Pomona, a tribute to the goddess of fruit and trees. These, when incorporated into Samhain, resulted in the apple bobbing tradition.

When England colonized what is now America, some of the traditions were inherited. America, with the passage of time, made its own version of Halloween (whose name comes from all Hallows Eve). Immigrants from Ireland helped make Halloween popular in the nineteenth century. Then Halloween became a tradition where Americans dressed up and knocked on the doors of people asking for money or food, which is what is known nowadays as "trick-or-treating." Isn't it amazing how they went from animals sacrifices to knocking on doors?

Even though the origins of Halloween are very different from what is practiced today, the essence of a society congregating and doing rituals or traditions related to death is still the same. What is important is that societies become involved in certain traditions, and that makes cultures worldwide rich and interesting.

## The Screamworld Haunted House

**Ngan Pham (Nancy)**

*6C – Vietnam*

This is the first time I have participated in the Screamworld Haunted House. I was so excited to experience different feelings in this house, which is famous for horror. At first, everyone in my tour heard a ghost's scream. Then a group of monsters seemed to cut open a human body to take his innards out to eat. Someone in my tour began to be scared by this scene. A tall, ugly man appeared with a big saw in his hand and scared people. Visitors started to scream and run away, with the man still following with his saw. What a scary scene! The more we discovered at the Haunted House, the more fear we felt. The next moments were full of death, blood and ghost screams. Despite their fear, the people in my tour had a wonderful experience in this house. Everyone felt better after releasing pressure with screams. This was a memorable tour.



# FALL FESTIVAL









# THANKSGIVING

## Thanksgiving

**Huy Phan**

*6B – Vietnam*

Thanksgiving is one of the most popular holidays which is celebrated every year in the United States. The original reason for this holiday was to celebrate the harvest season and thank God for what he had given to human beings (<http://www.allabouthistory.org/meaning-of-thanksgiving.htm>). To celebrate Thanksgiving, people eat turkey, grilled corn, and pumpkin because these dishes were the Indian food that was brought to the immigrants to eat in hunger and cold. Americans now celebrate Thanksgiving in remembrance and gratitude for the fact that they were rescued. It was the first immigrant group that had suffered extremely cold winter, and half of them had died. In their miserable condition, like a miracle, an Indian who knew English led some Indians to bring pumpkins and turkeys to help and show the immigrants how to farm, fish, and hunt. That savior of immigrants was named Tisquanto. In present times, on this occasion, people cook delicious food for their family and friends. A Thanksgiving dinner menu usually includes turkey, mashed potatoes, gravy, marinated meat stuffing, cranberry sauce, pumpkin pie, and bread.

## The Thanksgiving Holiday

**Yasmine Souissi**

*6A – Switzerland*

Ever since I used to live in my home country, Tunisia, I have been hearing about the famous American holiday, Thanksgiving. I saw it celebrated in many movies and was curious about it. At that time, for me, this holiday meant families and friends happily gathered around a table filled with American food. The most important item on the table, however, was the turkey. I wondered in particular about how big it was, how it was cooked, and how tasty it must be. But since I have moved to the United States, my perception and view of this holiday have changed. Because I don't have family here, my fantasy of this holiday, didn't come into effect. I haven't experienced the same celebrations I have seen in the movies. For me, Thanksgiving just means Black Friday. Not having anything else to do, I choose to go to the malls and see people excited and eager to find the deals they want. Additionally, since in the United States vacations are not abundant, this period is an opportunity to enjoy time off and go on road trips, or simply discover the neighboring cities, which is something I very much enjoy doing. What I also discovered is that Thanksgiving is one of the very few times when all family members see each other during the year. One obvious difference on that day is the unusual traffic, which is less than the normal days. Also, it is one of the rare times where you see lots of cars parked along the driveway or by the curb in front of most houses. Thanksgiving is a time to be united with family, and, for many, it is an opportunity to reunite with family members whom they haven't seen for months or sometimes years.

## Thanksgiving Day

**Yaomu Zhou**

*6B – China*

Thanksgiving Day is a traditional festival in the United States. In 1941, the United States Congress announced that every year the fourth Thursday in November would be Thanksgiving Day. On this festive day, the whole family can enjoy food and happiness with each other. They usually eat turkey, pumpkin pie, creamed onions, and mashed potatoes. Also, all members of the family, no matter where they are, will come together. Going back to the beginning of American history,

Thanksgiving Day originates from the immigrants of Massachusetts who were British Puritans. They were dissatisfied with the Church of England because of its oppression and demanded religious reform. As a result, they decided to leave and move to America in order to begin a free new life. In 1620, when they arrived here, they received articles of daily use from the natives, who also taught them how to hunt, catch fish, and grow corn and pumpkin. With the help of Indians, the immigrants had a good harvest. At the Thanksgiving celebration, according to custom, Americans thank God and Indians. That day is Thanksgiving Day.

## My First Experience with Thanksgiving

**Yara Alhebeba**

*5B – Saudi Arabia*

In my country we do not celebrate Thanksgiving, so last year was my first time to experience it. In spring 2015, I moved to Seattle to complete my education. When the fall came, I noticed that there were many holidays, so everyone had a plan. Some would spend time with family; some would travel, and some would be with friends. At that time, all of my friends had gone to another school or back to their countries. Thanksgiving was coming, and I did not have any plans except watching Netflix. I was in class when everyone was sharing their thoughts about what they would do on Thanksgiving, so my teacher asked, "Yara, what are your plans for Thanksgiving?" I simply said, "Nothing." My classmates suggested that I should meet my family, but my family was too far away. They were on the other side of the world. Then my teacher said, "Well, you are not the only one who gets to spend Thanksgiving away from your family." I replied, "Why are you not going to see your family?" He said, "My family is scattered all around the world, so this Thanksgiving I will not be able to spend it with them." In addition, one of my classmates was also not doing anything on Thanksgiving. After class, my classmate told me that we should hang out on Thanksgiving, and I should bring my brother. So I agreed and told him that a movie or dinner would be great. On Thanksgiving, we shared stories from our childhood and laughed about the silly things that we used to do. Then we walked around the neighborhood. There was no one on the street except us; it was a little frightening. However, it was peaceful. We had a great night, even though it was my first time celebrating Thanksgiving with a friend. We also picked a new restaurant to try. In the end, it was a fabulous night. We became closer friends after that. I hope this Thanksgiving will be great as the first one.

## Thanksgiving Day

**Nayibe Buitrago Mondragon**

*6B – Colombia*

Thanksgiving is one of America's most treasured holidays and traditions. While there are some constants in the way we observe the day, it can mean different things to different people. The American Thanksgiving holiday began as a feast in the early days of the American colonies almost 400 years ago. In 1620, a boat filled with more than 100 people sailed across the Atlantic Ocean from England to settle in the New World. The pilgrims settled in the state now known as Massachusetts. Their stay was difficult for them; many of them died from diseases because there was nothing to eat. Because of the winter season, they could not plant anything.

The following spring, they befriended the Indians. The Indians taught them how to grow crops and how to hunt and fish. In the Autumn of 1621, plentiful crops of corn were harvested. The colonists had much to be thankful for, so a feast was planned. They invited the local Indians





to celebrate it. The Indians brought deer to roast with the turkeys, corn, and beans. After the United States became an independent country, Congress recommended one yearly day of thanksgiving for the nation. At the end of the Civil War, Abraham Lincoln asked all Americans to set aside the last Thursday in November as Thanksgiving Day.

Thanksgiving is more than just the freshly roasted turkey or the tangy cranberry sauce. It is a time when everyone should join together and have a feast to celebrate everything they have. It is a time when you should count your blessings. It is a when you give your time to people that are less fortunate than you are, but most importantly, Thanksgiving is a time to be thankful.

## CHRISTMAS

### An Unforgettable Christmas

**Chia-Ling Tsai**

*6B – Taiwan*

In my country, average Taiwanese families do not celebrate this festival as American families do. However, when I was a ten-year-old girl, I had a special and unforgettable Christmas. As we know, Santa Claus brings children gifts while they are sleeping, but my mother told me that Santa Claus would come to our house and give me a gift directly. I was so surprised, but I still looked forward to seeing him. On that day after dinner, I helped my mother clean the table and wash the dishes; meanwhile, I was excited about Santa Claus's coming. Around nine o'clock, the doorbell rang. My mom opened the door. I saw Santa Claus standing at the door. The man was in a red suit, a red hat on his head, and with a white beard on his face. In his hand, he was holding a big red bag which contained many presents. He looked like the Santa that I had seen on TV. I was so happy to see him. He gave me a gift and my mother took a photo of Santa Claus and me. He wished me Merry Christmas; then he left. Although I knew that Santa Claus was my mother's coworker dressed up in a costume, I still had a great time. That was the most awesome Christmas I had!

### Christmas in Angola

**Teresa Carvalho**

*6B – Angola*

As in other Christian countries, Christmas is celebrated in Angola. It is a big event where people tend to be more kind, loving, and helpful to each other. The celebration occurs over two days, on the 24th and 25th of December. On the 24th, the celebration is mainly the midnight mass - "Missa do Galo" - and a family dinner. On the 25th, the biggest event is lunch with all the family. After the "Missa do Galo" the family gathers at one house to enjoy the dinner, mainly made of turkey cooked in the oven and codfish boiled with potatoes, eggs, carrots, kale, and green beans, and seasoned with parsley, olives, garlic, and onions in olive oil. Desserts are served - different types of sweets like cakes and puddings. Gifts are shared by the family before they go to bed. The next day, the family gathers to have lunch together. Similar to the dinner the night before, the dishes served are mostly from Portuguese cuisine, rice with "caldeirada de cabrito" - goat stew - and "roupa velha" - old clothes - where all leftovers from the codfish dish are mixed together in olive oil, onion and garlic. Different Angolan dishes are also served. This event is very important for Angolan families because it is an opportunity for people to be together in real happiness.

### Christmas in Burkina Faso

**Ouebazougoura Tangahire**

*6B – Burkina Faso*

In the morning, everything starts with church. Men, women and children get dressed in their most beautiful clothes. All of us pray,

and sing, and dance for the newborn Jesus. At 12:30, women go back home and leave the men and boys at church. They leave to cook some delicious dishes. Around 1:30, the family gathers to eat and celebrate this wonderful day. After eating with the family, it is time to visit the neighbors. We especially visit every house on the block and share our food with each other. At night, parents usually stay at home to clean up while young boys and girls go out to enjoy themselves with their friends.

### Christmas in Venezuela

**Luis Benites**

*6A – Venezuela*

Living in Houston is a privilege; however, living away from home is really difficult. The American culture is very interesting and amazing, but my hometown culture is way better. I want to talk about Christmas in Venezuela. In my country we celebrate really hard. We dance, we share, we set off fireworks and do other things. I like it because the environment is so unique and wonderful. I like to spend time with my family and friends, and at Christmas we are all together celebrating a new year of life.

### Noel in This Land

**Tran Nguyen**

*6B – Vietnam*

Somewhere, the familiar Christmas songs reach my ears. In the cold air, people rush back early for the winter season of Noel. It is taking me back to a homesick mood, reminding me of Christmas time in my hometown. Unlike Christmas in Vietnam, in America, people usually tend to party at home and gather together next to the flames of the fireplace. All members in the family eagerly wait to opened gift boxes under the glittering lights of a Christmas tree. However, it is different in Vietnam, especially in Saigon. Christmas is one of the most popular festivals. Most churches, houses, and malls everywhere are decorated with the symbols of the Christmas season to attract the attention of visitors, so these places are always crowded at night. Christmas is not only celebrated by Catholics, Christians, or Protestants, but by everyone of different religions and ages. This is a chance for people to gather and exchange the joy of the gift boxes, and they are often photographed together at majestic decorated Christmas locations, eating together in luxurious restaurants. That is how the Vietnamese Noel is -- great and joyful. However, this different scene does not get me down because somewhere, somehow, there is somebody thinking of me and preparing a special gift for me. It's time for me to go outside and buy lovely gifts for my beloved.

# INTERNATIONAL FALL HOLIDAYS

## My Fall

**Toan Luoc Vong**

*5A – Vietnam*

My fall is leaving me silently.  
There are blues surrounding me without concern.  
My body cannot be refreshed by the breezes.  
The soul inside me is hurt gradually.  
Side by side, with cold walls all the time,  
Deep breaths but from the air conditioning,  
I promised myself to go hiking with some time.  
Hopefully, the fall will pardon me for my distraction.  
My mother starts her fall tomorrow.  
Halfway around the earth, that's the distance.  
One phone call is all her little man can do.  
Why can't the clock stop to give us more time?

## The Magic Meaning of Xantolo

**Jessica Lugo Ortiz**

*5B – Mexico*

Two days before each November second, the magic arrives on the streets in La Huasteca, Mexico. Everything you can see is full of color, and the scent of Marigolds, a special flower, fills the place. Indigenous women prepare all kinds of delicious food. Wonderful dances and rituals take place on every corner; and it's there where the meaning of death is alive again in our hearts. The real meaning of Xantolo is not just a simple celebration to remember dead people. The blending of cultures and giving thanks for our blessings are two important aspects of this celebration. Xantolo is a celebration which perfectly shows the meeting of two worlds. When you are present in this celebration, you can see not only the Pre Columbian ceremonial practices but also the Catholic ones. Both, together, create a magical view: colorful handmade items, rituals, paintings, poetry, dance, etc. These are just some of the art that this celebration has contributed to the world. This is how the dead are remembered and honored. We show that they are living not only in our memories but also in our hearts. In addition, this celebration demonstrates the transition between scarcity and abundance. In Mexico, the diet is based on corn, which grows between April and October. For this reason, this is also a time to be thankful to God for the blessings and to share these blessings with the people who taught us to cultivate (our ancestors). This is the way to express how proud we are of our heritage. The magical meaning of Xantolo has been undervalued. It is important that we celebrate this every year so that we never lose our identity.



## The Mid-Autumn Festival

**Yang Zuo**

*5A – China*

The Spring Festival, Dragon Boat Festival and the Mid-autumn Festival are the three most important festivals in China. Just like its name, the Mid-autumn Festival comes in the middle of autumn ó on August 15th, according to the Chinese lunar calendar. The origin of the Mid-autumn festival

is an old legend. It is said that in ancient China there were ten suns in the sky. Therefore, the weather was so hot that it was hard for people to survive. As time went by, more and more people died because of the ten suns. Fortunately, a good archer, named Hou Yi, bravely shot nine suns down with his bow and arrows. After that, only one sun was left shining in the sky. To reward Hou Yi for his brave behavior, the queen of humans gave him an elixir. Those who drank it would live forever. However, Hou Yi didn't drink it. Instead, he came home and showed the elixir to his wife, Chang E. Chang E was a very beautiful woman, and she was eager to live forever. On the night of August 15th, when Hou Yi was not home, Chang E drank the elixir secretly. As soon as she swallowed the elixir, Chang E got off the ground and flew towards the sky. She couldn't stop herself until she reached the moon. As she wanted, she became a fairy in the moon, and she could live forever. However, she would never see Hou Yi again. Then, Chang E realized what she really wanted was not living forever, but her beloved husband. But it was too late. Since then, people have commemorated Hou Yi and Chang E on the night of August 15th by eating special food and watching the moon together. Nowadays, the Mid-autumn Festival is a holiday when family members reunite and have fun together. In my family, all of the relatives gather at my grandma's house on Mid-autumn. We cook a delicious Mid-autumn meal and eat moon cakes as well as enjoy the glorious full moon together. At that moment, parents always tell the legend about Hou Yi and Chang E to their kids. Every one of us has a great time. To most Chinese, the Mid-autumn Festival is not only a holiday but a symbol of family and love.

## Traditional Customs in the Vietnamese Tet Holiday

**Trung Tran**

*6A – Vietnam*

Tet holiday is a sacred time for everyone in Vietnam. It's not only the days we celebrate our new year but also the days we gather around with our family and enjoy the holiday. Once we're together, there are some traditional customs that we always do on Tet holiday. One custom is the Tet Market. Tet markets have a different atmosphere from the usual ones. We go shopping these days, usually not to "have enough food to eat" but because it's a habit. We want to have fun and enjoy the bustling scene of the markets. During Tet, people sell things that we don't usually see around, such as Dong leaves, pickled scallions, B-nh chung, B-nh d'ý and a massive amount of flowers. Going to the markets in Tet holiday is a once-in-a-year pleasure for Vietnamese people. We also have special house decorations for Tet. To decorate the house and enjoy the atmosphere, from the past to the present time, people still continue to hang red couplets. These couplets are written in black ink on red paper and often referred to as red couplets. A third tradition is "lucky money". In Tet holiday, adults always put money in a small red paper pocket and give it to the kids as "lucky money". We believe that this will bring luck to the kids for the whole year. Generally, Tet holiday is the symbol for the good and sacred customs of our people. We still have a lot more things to do on Tet. Although doing these things sometimes tires us out, we still keep doing it now and will continue in the future.



## The Most Interesting Thing I Did This Term

**Khassoum Savane**

*3B – Côte d'Ivoire*

I did many interesting and surprising things in Houston, but the most surprising was attending a university football game. I couldn't believe my eyes when I saw the big stadium on the campus and the biggest surprise was when someone told to me that American universities have their own football conferences. In my country there is not any kind of conference for students. The University of Houston's stadium is bigger than every university stadium in my country. In addition, I really enjoyed the game which is different from soccer and rugby although they are similar. One of the most interesting activities for me was the band which marched on the field during the half-time; there is no band in soccer. Also, before the UH football game, I had never seen a cheerleading performance. They danced and did a routine, and it was very spectacular. Another interesting thing for me was the mascot. I had already seen a mascot but Shasta is the funniest. There are some mascots in rugby, but they are more serious. And in soccer, mascots are very rare. From the first time I attended a UH football game, I have never missed one game, and now I want to try to play American football.

## Attending A University of Houston Football Game

**Noor Alaswad**

*3A – Saudi Arabia*

Last month my classmates and I went to the stadium at the University of Houston and that was the first time I watched a football game live. Before the match began, all the fans were so excited. After about thirty minutes, the match became more interesting because our team controlled the match and it seemed like we were going to win. I also got a chance to get to know new friends from the other class. We had a wonderful time, and we

took pictures of our class. Although the game was three hours, we did not feel the passage of time because we were enjoying the game. After about one month since that day, I still watch our team's games on TV. So, that day I became a big fan of football.

## A Football Game

**Zixuan Qin**

*3B – China*

This term I watched an American football game at the UH stadium one Saturday. This football game made me realize how much Americans love this sport. The game began at 7:00 p.m. There are many groups from school who were talking with each other. All of the football fans were wearing red shirts. They were excited and yelled when UH's team scored the first touchdown. At half time, the band played music and marched on the field. Finally, the UH football team won this game and then there were fireworks. That football game will be a wonderful memory.





# CULTURE FEST









# CULTURE FEST







# WHODUNIT?

## CLUE

**Jessica Lugo**  
*5B – Mexico*

Clue is a board game whose theme is a mysterious murder committed in a mansion by an unknown character. The final goal is to discover who did it, which weapon he or she used and where it was committed.



First of all, everyone chooses a character. Then the pack of cards is sorted into three different groups: suspects, rooms and weapons. One of the players takes one card from each group and puts the three cards in an envelope. (The cards in the envelope reveal the solution to the crime.) After that, the remaining cards are shuffled and dealt out to the players. Each player keeps their cards covered so no one else sees them. Rolling the dice is the next step. For example, if I get 8, I would move my character horizontally or vertically 8 spaces, with the intention of entering one of the rooms. Once inside a room, I should make a suggestion about the crime (who, where and which weapon). If one of the players affirms that I am wrong - that means that he or she has one of the clues I mention - he should show me that card. The game ends when someone solves the crime by guessing all the cards in the envelope correctly.

The strategy which helped me to solve the crime was elimination: first the person, the weapon next, and the room at the end. During the game, I had to focus on the other players' suggestions; this helped me to exclude some of the items.

## Escaping from Crazy Cat Escape Room

**Trung Nguyen**  
*5B – Vietnam*

It was a beautiful day. That day was a special day because it was Friday. Friday, yes, I could say "TGIF", which I learned on some social networks. However, it wasn't the reason that I was so excited. I was happy because I would go to Crazy Cat Escape Room that day.



Escape Room, I had heard it for a long time since I was in Vietnam. I had never had the chance to try it because there is only one location in my country and it's so far from my home. On that day, I could challenge myself by mysteries from the rooms.

When we arrived, entering the building, I thought it was a simple building and nothing seemed attractive. We had to sign up to join in the game and choose the room. At first, everyone wanted to enter the first room as we heard that was the scariest room. However, it was the easiest room, so no one wanted to choose that room anymore. Maybe humans need something to challenge themselves. That would be interesting. I chose the third room & the hardest room. We all received a name tag, and I felt lucky because it wasn't a female name. "Taylor? Hm, it's not bad. But wait, what? A pet caretaker? No way! I don't even belong to the family in this case. How can I receive the heritage? That's not fun!" That was all I thought, but it was not a big deal with me.

We were separated into two rooms. It was an ordinary room, but they had tried to decorate it as real as possible. It was really an amazing effort. We started looking for clues, using clues to solve puzzles. There were several books on the bookshelf. I'm not a book worm, and actually I don't prefer reading books. As a result, I ignored them. In fact, that was a big mistake because there was a key in book that could help us open a lock. At that time, I realized that books have plenty of benefits. When I looked around, I saw Lisa trying to open a lock without using numbers. That was a hopeless effort. While I was thinking that, it opened. Seriously? She has some skills that I thought were only in the movies. I shouldn't judge people by their appearance. We tried to solve plenty of puzzles and had difficulty with locks. Although we used all our effort, we didn't open all the locks in time. However, it was still a happy time that I'll never forget.

We got back to school. I learned several things from this activity. I have to improve my English skill to communicate better. One day I will go back and win the game.

## Escape Room

**Yu-Shiang (Simon) Lin**  
*5B – Taiwan*

"Escape Room? Is that scary? Is that the cool thing I have heard about before?" That's the first thought that came in my mind when my teacher was introducing it to us. I felt pretty excited because it was the first time to go to an escape room.

When we got there, there were three different levels. Of course, I chose the hardest, or what's the fun in doing the escape room? Because for most of us it was the first time to have the opportunity to do this with so many friends, we all went crazy when stepping into the room.

At the beginning, we divided into two groups in two different rooms with one locked door between us. It was a pretty fantastic design, and we needed to find clues and keys to open the door first so that we could solve the mystery together in the end. Both teams exchanged clues under the door and tried to crack the locks and the mystery as fast as we could. Then we finally unlocked the door, but this was just the first step of this escape room.





With one mystery or lock solved, we all became more excited but also nervous because the clock was ticking, too. When, eventually, we learned how to crack the last mystery, the time was up. It was such a pity, knowing the final key was locked in the box but we didn't have time to open it. If we had had five more minutes, we definitely could have won.

But still, I did have a good time. With every mystery solved or clue found by me, I really enjoyed the sense of accomplishment. Also, I felt very happy about helping my team to go further. I really appreciate the LCC and the teachers giving us such a great field trip.

## At The Palace

Jiazheng Zhan – *China* @

Jessica Lugo – *Mexico* 5B†

It was 118 years ago during the Qing dynasty of ancient China in the month of December. Paradoxically, it had been raining for more than five days in a row even though the palace's geographical location was a temperate continental climate and had low precipitation, especially in winter. It was believed that this was an indication of the god, Yu-huang, that something bloodcurdling was on the way. The Emperor called Gina, who was a gypsy with a gift for seeing into the future and who worked for the Taiqvlng Palace. She predicted that some would lose their lives soon. Unfortunately, she was totally right.

This story happened during a turbulent period. Like most of the former emperors, the Emperor's marriage had been arranged by his parents. That meant that his wife, the Queen L, Zhi, wasn't the woman he loved most, even if she had absolute power over all of the women in the whole palace. "She's older than me and not the most beautiful one of my girls," the emperor thought. So he decided to select two other gorgeous girls who were his concubines, called Wei and Feng. There was a fierce competition between the concubines because everyone wanted to be the top of the concubines so that they could be above the queen L, Zhi. Wei, a very kind young woman, was so young that she didn't even realize that she had to fight with the others to survive. Furthermore, the fact was they had to strive secretly in every moment in order to get the opportunity to be loved by the Emperor. The woman who got pregnant and had a son with

the Emperor first would have the bigger and more magnificent house, more servants, jewelry and so on, but also the greater importance and the higher position in the hierarchy.

It was a tradition for concubines to give their queen a wonderful gift. One day, Wei gave the Queen a couple of pears, a bouquet of flowers and a gorgeous red dress called a Qi Pao. Despite the fact that the Queen knew the guilty intentions of Wei, she smelled the flowers and wore the Qi Pao just to be kind. At the same time, Feng gave the Queen a magnificent hair comb. It was so beautiful that it made the Queen caress it admiringly.

The Queen told Feng that she would like to go to the kitchen to see how everything was going. Wei insisted on accompanying them. When they were leaving the Queen's room, Wei fainted suddenly. A doctor was called to come quickly and diagnose her. On the recommendation of the doctor, Wei was ordered to stay in and rest all afternoon. After dinner, the servant girl gave a cup of Chinese medicine to Wei but was unexpectedly tripped by a rope; the medicine spilled out of the cup onto the silver jewelry, which was lying on the dresser. Suddenly, a silver bracelet became black rapidly. Both the servant and Wei were shocked by this phenomenon, which meant some arsenic had been mixed into the medicine by someone who wanted to kill Wei. Wei felt so panicked and went to the main palace. Furthermore, when she arrived, a eunuch rushed into the palace and screamed that the Queen was dead in her room without any wound on her body. The Emperor was so angry and paid great attention to this event. An army was sent to find out the perpetrator of the murder.

Meanwhile, the young emperor had a heavy task and responsibility to manage his country, and he was also full of ambition and had forward thinking. Because of the tragic incident, he wanted to organize a revolution to break the unenlightened dogma and refresh his citizens' thoughts. However, the Empress Dowager, whose name was Xi, resisted his efforts. As a result, the two had a bitter quarrel. The Empress Dowager plotted to kill the Emperor. She knew that the Emperor had a habit of drinking a cup of wine before he started his meal. Obviously, he drank one cup of wine that day as usual. Suddenly, his lips got purple. He foamed at the mouth and died in a short time. All of the citizens and the people who lived in the palace fell into a huge panic because of the consecutive strange deaths.

Finally, the truth was discovered by the army. The arsenic had been put in the medicine by Feng, as was predicted, because she had discovered that Wei was better in the Emperor's eyes than she was. They also found some deadly poison on the hair comb, which had been given by Feng to the Queen. This poison came into the Queen's head when she tried to use it. Feng had used all the cruel ways to remove all the barriers by killing people in order to achieve her goal of being the queen of this dynasty. What a malicious woman!

Surprisingly, Feng went crazy when she knew that the Emperor had been killed. The Queen Dowager Xi had used some feces of a special kind of bird, which had been fed a poisonous insect and plants. The feces had no peculiar smell but were highly toxic. Only Xi had this specific poison. She wanted to stop the Emperor's revolution, and

she realized she was dying. The revolution would have started if she hadn't made the Emperor die ahead of her. In this way, Xi murdered the Emperor.

In the end, Feng was decapitated by the army to pay for her crimes, the murders of Wei and the Queen.

## Anna's Murder

**Hayder Al-Abdulzahra** – *Iraq, @*  
**Binh (Billy) Nguyen** – *Vietnam, 5A*

It was a bright cold day in April. The winds were howling through the trees outside. Meanwhile, the phone was ringing inside the house, "Hello! Smith speaking ... Yes, yes, yes, she is fine." A 65-year-old man hung up the phone with a pale face, took a deep breath and then said, "Poor Anna!" He walked outside slowly as if he had a heavy burden on his back. Opening the main door and looking toward the beautiful statue in front of the house, Mr. Smith felt sorry about his daughter's divorce. Anna was 38 years old; she should have had a happy family by now instead of a divorce. He didn't want to see his child depressed. A fast decision crossed his mind. He picked up the phone and called all his sons and daughters: William, the oldest brother; Harry, the third child; Anna, the second oldest sister and Jessica, the youngest one. He invited them to come for dinner that night. It had been a long time since they had gathered together.

Anna was the first person to show up, so she helped her father prepare dinner. William and Harry came together after Anna. By 5 pm, all of the members had arrived. They made a fire in the yard to barbecue beef and pork. At 6:00 p.m., all of the food was already on the table. Jessica was the last one to join because she had to finish her work. She set the table with spoons, forks, and bowls. Anna looked at Jessica, annoyed. With a bad temper, she shouted, "At least, you are helpful!" Immediately feeling offended, Anna yelled back, "Hey, what the heck is wrong with you?" Seconds later, Harry and William came running toward them to stop the madness. Harry pulled Jessica out of the dining room, then whispered to her, "Hey, watch your words. She just got a divorce yesterday. Father wants her to feel better this evening." Jessica understood and shook her gently. She immediately felt bad for her dear sister. Mr. Smith had finally joined them at the table. He wore a brown waistcoat and some gray trousers. The children looked at their father in awe because he looked 30 years younger. The table was full of delicious food placed in individual pottery bowls and plates. All of this pottery had been made at the Smith pottery workshop. Mr. Smith had spent all his life creating an abundance of beautiful and unique pottery products. Each piece arranged on the table was worth more than \$5,000. Mr. Smith gently smiled at all his adult children and started speaking, "Everyone, it has been a while since we have all been together. I'm so happy to see all my children. Let's enjoy this dinner." Then he raised his glass of champagne, "Cheers!"

Noise resounded through the whole room. Harry turned on the music. The atmosphere was getting much more fun. William continued to grill the beef and pork in the yard outside the dining room. The smell spread throughout the place. As always, Mr.

Smith started speaking about pottery. At the corner of the table was Charlie, the family potter who worked for Anna. He had been working for her for about nine years. He had been devoted to his job earlier but had now become quite depressed. Mr. Smith said to him loudly, "Hey Charlie, your bad mood shows on every one of your products. If you want to make perfect pottery, you must always be in a positive mood." Charlie nodded his head and said sorry to his teacher. Mr. Smith kept going, "So far, Anna is still the best potter that I've ever seen. Hey, William, try to catch up with your sister.

Meanwhile, Anna was getting drunk. Perhaps, she couldn't listen to any of what her father had to say. Throughout the dinner everyone drank a lot, but Anna had drunk the most. Glass after glass, she got tipsy and started to dance and sing. Everyone also stood up and started to dance with each other. Exhausted, Anna ended up lying down and sleeping soundly on the floor of the dining room. Mr. Smith told Charlie to carry Anna to her bedroom. Meanwhile, everybody else kept on drinking till nearly midnight. Jessica helped walk her drunken father to his bedroom while her two brothers passed out right on the sofa in the living room. Jessica slept in her old childhood bedroom. Charlie had his own bedroom near the workshop.

Dawn came and shared its warm light after a cold night. A new day came; Mr. Smith woke up early as usual. However, that day was different. He'd woken up earlier than usual because he had been waiting for his special guest, who was also his old friend. Jessica had gotten up a little later. She was not used to her old bedroom any longer and did not sleep well. She walked out to the front yard and was surprised to see her father there. It looked as if he was waiting for someone to show up. Curiously, she walked over to him and asked, "Dad, what are you doing out here? Come inside! You might get a cold." Mr. Smith turned to look at his daughter, "Oh, I'm waiting for Mr. Doyle. His flight arrives at 5:00 a.m. I'm sure he's going to come here soon. It's 6:15 am now. Who is he? Mike Doyle. He is my old friend. He is coming from England. He is on his vacation traveling around the USA." "Please come inside and wait in the warmth father!" Right after Jessica had finished her words, a yellow taxi appeared down the street. It was approaching and then stopped in front of the Smith workshop. An old man stepped out of the taxi. He was tall and wore a fine black overcoat. He looked elegant with gray hair, like Mr. Smith. "Good Morning, Mister Adam Smith," he said he with a formal British accent. "Oh my dear friend, finally, you've arrived. How was the flight?" Mr. Smith started to make conversation with his companion. Obviously, that was Mr. Mike Doyle, the man he had been expecting. Smith introduced him to his daughter. It turned out that Mr. Doyle was a famous detective from Manchester, England, who had retired already. When Mrs. Smith was still alive, Mr. and Mrs. Smith used to visit him there, and Mrs. Smith had introduced Mike to Mr. Smith. Today, Mike wanted to visit the famous Smith Pottery. Mr. Smith felt very willing to please him. Jessica asked her father, "Dad! Why you didn't tell us that we would be having a guest today?" She excused herself, then rushed to prepare coffee and breakfast for both Mr. Doyle and her father. She woke up William and Harry to move out of the living room and quickly cleaned up all the mess from the night before. While Mr.



Smith and Mr. Doyle were having breakfast, suddenly a sound of a breaking jar came from the workshop. “Wha- what was that sound?” Mr. Smith yelled. Everyone hurried up to find out what was going on. Charlie ran toward the door and waited for a few seconds. Mr. Smith screamed, “Charlie, open the door so we can see what is going on!” Charlie opened the door all the way, and he just froze. “Charlie, what happened?” Everyone was shouting and running toward him.

Jessica screamed loudly; then she fell down. “Why, baby? Why did you kill yourself?” Mr. Smith wailed. Anna had hung herself from the ceiling with a thick rope. This was a horrific scene. Drops of blood were falling from the body on the ground, and five jars were broken. Everyone stood there in disbelief and shock. Harry and Charlie ran to her body to take her down. They held her body gently and laid her down. Mike asked them to move her body on the side in order to protect the evidence. They called the police. In the meantime, Mike ordered the family to stay at the workshop; nobody could leave. Within minutes, eight policemen, along with a detective, had arrived to investigate the crime scene. “Mike Doyle, detective” “Billy Jason, detective, kindly tell me how you found the body and who all was here?”

Mike explained to him and gave him a report of the victim’s details. William said to Detective Jason that all of us were together when we heard something break. “When I went to wake Anna, she wasn’t in her bed,” William said. Detective Mike asked him why he hadn’t said that to him before, but Mr. William kept silent. Detective Jason asked Mr. Smith what the motivation to commit suicide was. Mr. Smith said that she had been depressed the day before and infuriated due to her recent divorce. William added how heavily she had been drinking and passed out early, so he had carried her back to her room. “The sound was made by the pottery that’s in pieces on the floor. She must have used it as a step when she hung herself,” Mr. Jason said. Then he asked Mr. Doyle about the footprints. Mr. Doyle said that the footprints belonged to Harry and Charlie while they were moving the body.

Mr. Jason asked a policeman if he had found any sign that anyone had climbed the beams, but the policeman hadn’t found anything. But Mike had found a gaping wound in Anna’s calf, and he noticed that there appeared to be a lot of blood all over the floor. Mr. Jason thought that her first attempt must have failed, and she fell to the floor. Therefore, when she fell, she cut her foot on the shards of the first pot; then she tried again. “But we only heard one breaking sound,” Mike said. Loud voices cut out the conversation: “It must be you, William; you were jealous of her because she was a successful person while you are not!” Jessica said. William looked so upset about what his own sister accused him of. Mike gazed at the body and said, “But why are her feet clean when she wasn’t wearing shoes? Is it possible that someone may have carried her here?” Billy said that if that’s true, then Anna was murdered! Then he asked everyone about their alibis.

Mr. Jason continued, “At any rate, we can’t proceed without investigating this workshop room a bit more.” Mike was thinking that the person who had done this did not have to be there to

commit the crime. “Ah, I found it.” Billy was surprised at what Mike had just said. “What did you find Mr. Smith?” “It’s blood, Detective.” “There was something not quite right about the blood drop.” Billy was shocked again, and he asked, “Who is the one who carried Anna’s body over the blood?” “Harry and Charlie moved the body here, and as Charlie said, that she might have still been alive at that point. Harry grabbed the arms and Charlie grabbed the legs, and they laid her there. The blood dripped there when they both carried her.” Billy said that not all of that blood was from then; it was hard to notice because it was mixed, but there was another kind of blood there. The shape of blood when it hits the floor depends on how far it has fallen, the higher it falls, the larger the diameter. If anyone had carried her arms and legs, it can be estimated that the height was around 50 cm, but some stains were clearly caused by blood that fell over one meter.

“Mike looked sharply at them and continued saying that this body had been at the top of the shelves and had had the rope placed around her neck and tied to the beam. If Anna had been left this way, when she woke up and lost her balance, it would have automatically hung her. The loud noise we heard after she was hung was from the jars placed directly under her, and if one falls from that height with a rope around their neck, death is virtually instant, so all you need next is for the legs to kick the jars, making it look as if she used the jars to climb up.”

All of them were shocked at what Mike was saying. He continued explaining that this had been done to provide an alibi, since he was in the room nearby. The wound showed that nails were sticking out, Anna probably cut herself when she lost her balance after waking up. Therefore, there was blood near the shelf because she was trying to catch the shelf to save her life. If blood there was discovered, the murderer’s trick would be uncovered. So, the one who held the body guided everyone to place her body there. The one who left the party yesterday is the one who set up the trick. “Isn’t that right Charlie?” “I didn’t do anything, I was with all of you.” Mike asked him the reason it took him a while to open the door. Charlie explained, “The door was closed, and as I put my hand on the handle I felt afraid of what I might find.” Mike pointed his finger toward him and said, “... because you were waiting to make sure Anna would be dead, her feet were clean, which explains that someone carried her here. Charlie, you did not know about the lipstick stain on your back, and that is due to holding Anna.” And he went on, “You would be able to make a big fortune if Anna died. She had limited your salary while you were the one who was doing all the work, but you couldn’t do anything because of some of her stupid rich customers.”

The policemen moved toward him to see that lipstick stain. Charlie started running toward the main door, but there was no escape for the guilty man.

# CONVERSATION CLUB





# LANGUAGE AND CULTURE CENTER PROFESSIONAL INVOLVEMENT

FALL 2016

**Joy Tesh**, Director of the Language and Culture Center, represented the LCC at the English USA: IEP Stakeholders Conference in Washington, D.C.

**Adam Chen**, Program Director of Counseling and Student Services, is currently serving as a member of the Trainer Corps of NAFSA: Association of International Educators.

**Farideh Nekoobahr** is serving as Historian of TextESOL IV.

CONFERENCE	PRESENTER(S)	TITLE
<b>MEXTESOL</b>	Vincent Tran	How to Make Presentations in ESL/EFL Classes Using Google Maps
<b>TextESOL IV</b>	Michalina Mrugula	Be a Master Proctor!

## SANDRA BUCKNER

In August, we gathered to say, “Happy Retirement” to Sandra Buckner, who joined the LCC in January of 2009. Hundreds of LCC students benefitted from the dynamic and creative teaching of this UH alumna, and her colleagues miss her daily inspiration and encouragement. Fortunately for all of us here at the LCC, Sandra should be returning soon as a substitute teacher.



# LCC Calendar

## Important Dates

**Spring Term 2017**

January 10 - 17

Online Registration Begins  
Tuition and Fee Payment

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Monday, January 16

Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday  
Campus Closed

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Tuesday, January 17

Student Check-In

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Wednesday, January 18

Testing

Late Online Registration

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Thursday, January 19

Student Activity

Late Online Registration

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Friday, January 20

First Assembly

Orientation

Last Day of Late Registration

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Monday, January 23

Classes Begin

Monday - Friday

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March 13 - 17

Spring Holidays

No Classes

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April 17 - 20

Progression Testing, Final Exams, Study Days

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Monday, April 24

Testing

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Tuesday, April 25

No Classes

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Wednesday, April 26

Final Student Activity

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Thursday, April 27

Student-Teacher Conferences (morning)

Graduation Ceremony (afternoon)

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