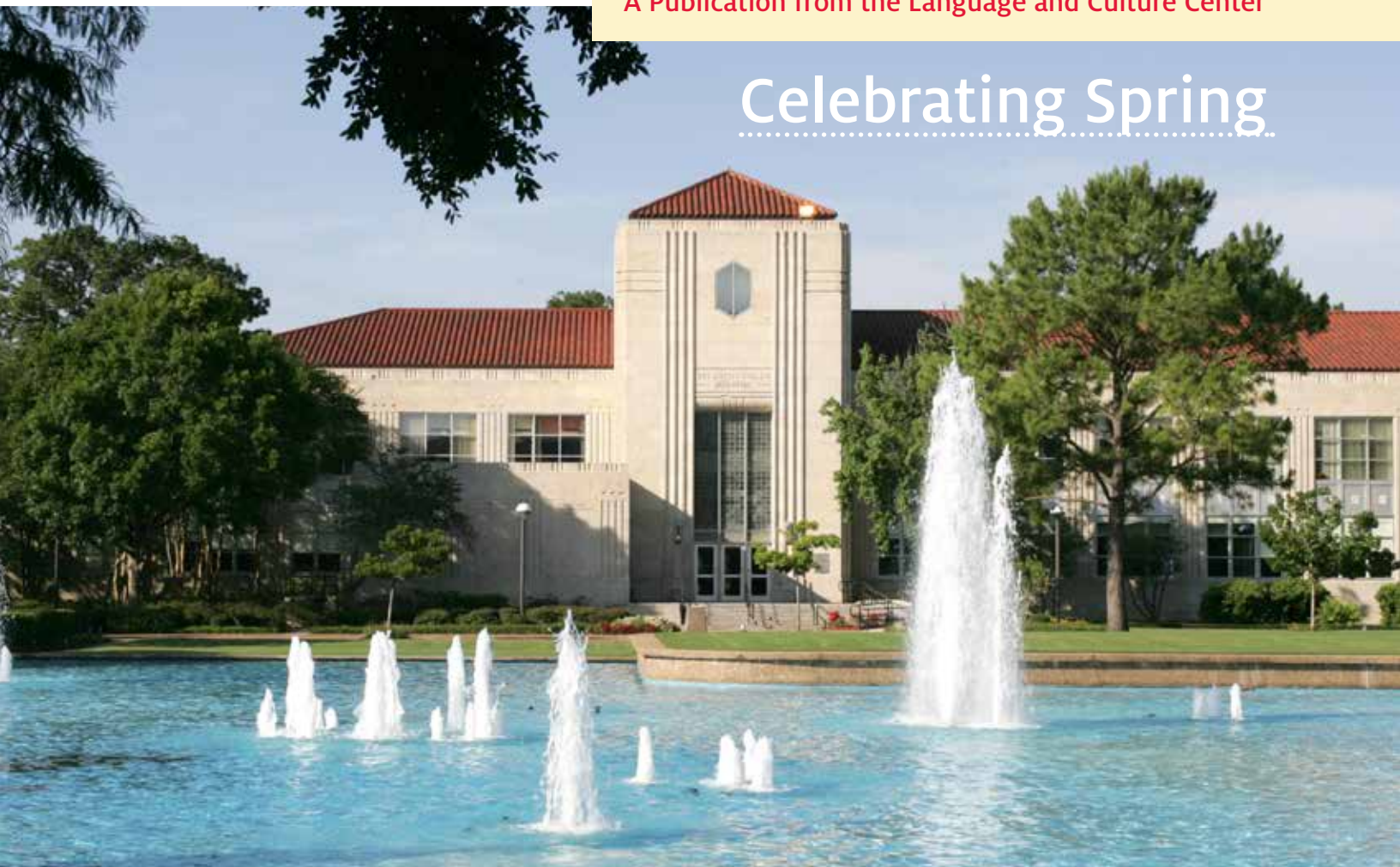


UNIVERSITY of HOUSTON

# VOICES

A Publication from the Language and Culture Center

Celebrating Spring



HOUSTON

SPRING 2017

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VOICES – *Spring 2017*

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# From the **Director's** Desk

by Joy Tesh – Director

Congratulations as you complete the Spring 2017 term of study in the Language and Culture Center at the University of Houston! You have spent your time in an accredited and respected Intensive English Program with an excellent history and tradition of service to students. You have studied 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.

In this edition of Voices, I wish to pay tribute to the life and work of Dr. Joyce Merrill Valdes, founder and first director of the LCC and Professor Emeritus of the Department of English at the University of Houston. Sadly, we learned early this year that Dr. Valdes passed away more than a year ago. Many of us knew and loved her, and we now remember her with deep gratitude.

Greg Urquhart, currently teaching in level five, was among the first teachers brought into the LCC by Joyce Valdes as she was recruiting and hiring for the new intensive English program. He has some great stories about Dr. Valdes and the early years, and he has given me permission to share some of his memories of her with you.



*In December of 1976, I applied for a teaching job at the LCC via a cover letter and a resume, which I sent to Dr. Valdes by snail mail. She phoned me, and we talked on the phone for about an hour--- about my four years of teaching overseas, my teaching philosophy, my being unemployed, and my desire to join the LCC family. At the end of the conversation, I said, "So when do you want me to come to Houston for an interview?" She answered, "You just had your interview. Do you want the job?" I have been a member of the LCC family ever since. That is how Dr. Joyce Valdes saw the LCC, not just as a program teaching language and culture, but as a family. Over the years, after Dr. Valdes retired, whenever we would see each other, she would say, "Well, it seems I didn't make a mistake hiring you," and we would smile. I have always tried to live up to her belief in me, hiring a man she had never met, based on a conversation and some pieces of paper. And by the way, when my car broke down two months after coming to the LCC, there I was, with no credit history and a couple of hundred dollars in the bank, and Dr. Valdes co-signed for a loan so I could buy a car. She was a helper, a giver. I feel privileged to be a part of the LCC family, a family which she had the vision to establish forty-one years ago. Rest in peace, Joyce.*

As most students already know, the LCC has given the Joyce Merrill Valdes Scholarship to a deserving student at every graduation ceremony since Dr. Valdes' retirement from the University of Houston. The scholarship covers the cost of tuition, fees, and medical insurance for one term of study in the Intensive English Program of the LCC. As we continue to give the scholarship in her name, we celebrate her love of language and culture, and we remember her immeasurable contribution to the field of international education.

This spring, we have been delighted to have 230 students from 37 countries in our program and on our campus. As the spring term of 2017 closes, we wish you a safe and productive academic break. Spring classes will end at the close of graduation ceremonies on April 27, 2017. The LCC office will be open throughout the break. Online registration for the summer term will begin on May 9, 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 university or college 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 and making a difference all over the world.

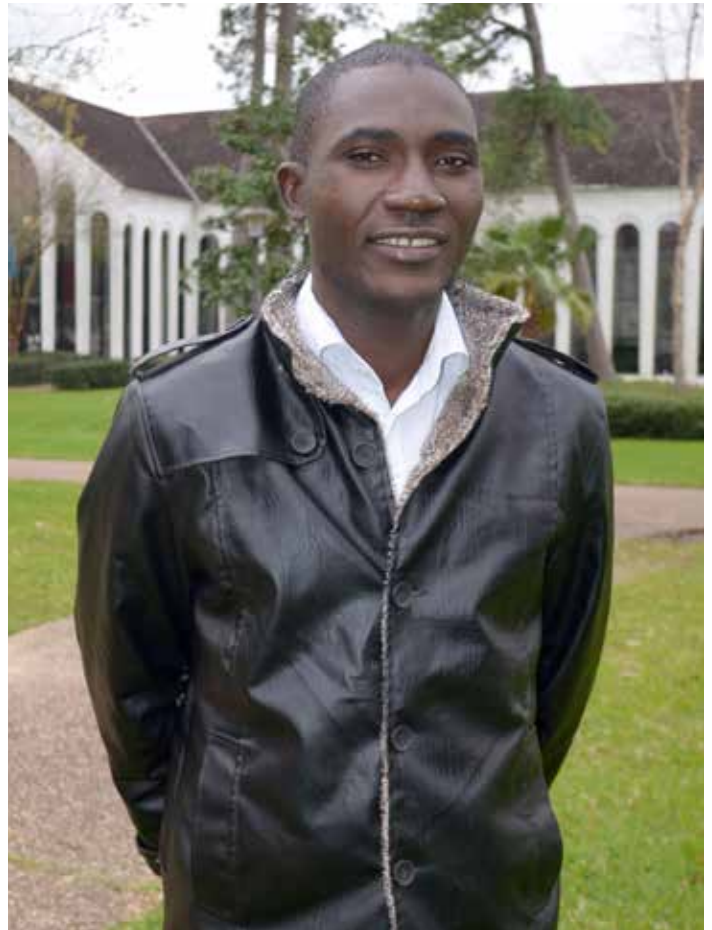
Thank you for joining your fellow international students in bringing intelligence, energy, and joy to our classes and to our campus this spring. We look forward to seeing many of you again for the Summer 2017 term in the Language and Culture Center.

# ROLAND KLAHITAR,



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 Valdes, founder and first director of the LCC. A second scholarship honors Joseph Davidson, who served as director of the LCC for 22 years before retiring in 2006. A third scholarship honors Brad Powell, who worked for 12 years in many capacities at the LCC, ultimately serving 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 fall graduation ceremony on Thursday, December 15, 2016, the LCC awarded the Valdes scholarship to Taipeng Su, the Davidson scholarship to Roland Klahitar, and the Powell scholarship to Tien Ngoc Do.



## ROLAND KLAHITAR WAS AWARDED THE DAVIDSON SCHOLARSHIP.

Roland Klahitar was awarded the Davidson scholarship. Mr. Klahitar is from Chad. This is his second term at the LCC and he is studying in level two. Upon completing his studies in the intensive English program, he plans to start his degree in computer science. Mr. Klahitar shared that the scholarship gave him “no excuse to fail because it gave him a lot of good passion.” He was able to pay close attention to his studies and it made him feel “very happy.”

# TAIPENG SU, AND TIEN NGOC DO RECEIVE LCC SCHOLARSHIPS



## TAIPENG SU WAS AWARDED THE VALDES SCHOLARSHIP.

Taipeng Su was awarded the Valdes scholarship. Mr. Su is from China and is studying in level five. This is his third term at the LCC. After graduating from the LCC, he plans to study computer science at the University of Houston. He told me that it is “a glory and a responsibility” to receive the LCC scholarship, and that he really appreciates this award. Mr. Su said that the scholarship really inspired him to keep going and to work hard in the future. He is very appreciative of his LCC teachers!



## TIEN NGOC DO WAS AWARDED THE POWELL SCHOLARSHIP.

Tien Ngoc Do was awarded the Powell scholarship. Mr. Do is from Vietnam and is currently studying in level three having been at the LCC for two terms. When he finishes his study of English, he plans to pursue a degree in Hotel and Restaurant Management at the University of Houston. Mr. Do told us that the LCC scholarship encouraged him to study hard. He thinks that the LCC is a “wonderful environment to improve English very fast,” and he would like to express his thanks to everyone who is working at the LCC and to his friends.

We congratulate Taipeng Su, Roland Klahitar, and Tien Ngoc Do 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 spring 2017 graduation ceremony.

# Counseling and Student Services



Adam Chen – Program Director of Counseling and Student Services

In Spring 2017, the Counseling Team was very excited to present different programs and activities to LCC students.

We welcomed new students and visited the Menil Collection and Memorial City Mall. We enjoyed great food, music and dancing with you at the Culture Festival. We were excited to visit the Texas Rodeo and Livestock Show Festival with you, and barbecue with you in Huntsville State Park.

In addition to advising LCC students daily on various topics, the Counseling Team coordinated five different workshops:

- Admissions Workshop, informing students about how to apply to the University of Houston
- Healthcare Workshop, informing students about how to seek healthcare and use health insurance
- Career Services Workshop, informing students about how to look for jobs and volunteer opportunities on campus
- F-1 Workshop, advising students about how to maintain F-1 status
- Relationship and Consent Workshop, helping students understand the importance of consent and identify key resources on campus
- Student Organization Workshop, helping students discover a student organization on campus and get involved
- Stress Management Workshop, helping students learn how to manage stress through self-care strategies
- Diversity Workshop, exploring different cultural identities

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



Sam Long – SEVIS Compliance Coordinator

This has been a very interesting year for immigration news. Despite the recent headlines in the news, international students are always welcomed and appreciated at the LCC.

I hope you had a wonderful experience at the LCC this spring. Before you can celebrate the end of the term, I need to remind you of a few very important topics.

The LCC summer term will start on May 16. If you are an F-1 student, you are required to enroll in the summer unless you are no longer continuing in the LCC.

You are required to report your summer plans to your teachers on graduation day, April 27. Your teachers will share this information with the LCC Counseling Team. If you are unsure about your summer plans, please speak to the LCC Counseling Team immediately!

If you are an F-1 student and you do not report your summer plans to us, your F-1 student record will be terminated in SEVIS. This is a serious problem that will jeopardize your F-1 status.

Please talk to me if you have any questions or concerns.

# STUDENT CHECK-IN



## WELCOME TO THE LCC

# LCC STUDENT COUNCIL



## LCC Student Council Zixin (Eleanor) Yang

5C--China

Being a part of the Language and Culture Center's student representative council is one of the most important things that has happened in my life, and I'm very proud to have been a student representative for several semesters. Here, I have learned many things from my teachers and partners. For example, it has improved my speaking skills because I need to talk about students' suggestions to the teachers, and I also have a responsibility to let my classmates know about all the events and activities that are taking place at the LCC. In the meantime, the LCC student council also has exercised my cooperation, leadership, and teamwork abilities. The student council is the best way to help my classmates and friends and it can give them a sense of home. I've learned a lot of things at the LCC: therefore, I'm very thankful for being here. The Language and Culture Center is not only a place that you can learn English; we also learn a lot about different countries' cultures and make friends with them. When we come to a strange country, we can appreciate a place that makes us comfortable like our own homes.





# TEACHER SPOTLIGHT: VELVA FALLIN

by Dr. Jodi Nelms



*“Affirming words are the soil in which lives can flourish and meet their maximum potential.” (Velva Fallin, March 2017)*

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 Velva Fallin. Velva has been a part of our LCC family since 2006, and she is an extraordinary colleague. I recently had the chance to sit down and talk with Velva, and I would like to share a bit of our conversation with you here.

Velva received her master’s degree in 1997, though she says her “real” education began when she was a child. Her mother’s parents were from Okinawa, Japan and she grew up listening to her mother speak Japanese at home. She was raised in a military family, and because of this, she lived in Germany for three years. After returning to the United States, her family settled in San Antonio. It was in San Antonio where Velva began hearing Spanish every day, eventually studying it in college. Later, she lived in China where she taught English, and picked up some of the language. Velva does not claim to be fluent in any of these languages; however, she says she feels very comfortable around the “music” of languages because of the exposure she has had to multiple languages throughout her life.

Prior to teaching at the LCC, Velva taught elementary children whose first languages were not English. This sparked her initial interest in teaching ESL. Later, in 2005 when she moved to Houston to be near family, she discovered the LCC. Our program was similar to the one in which she had taught, together with our colleague Jenifer Edens, in Arlington, Texas. She had an epically brief interview with Dr. Joe Davidson, the LCC director at the time. He brilliantly hired her on the spot and she has been teaching with us ever since that time.

Velva has focused her teaching on the beginning and intermediate levels at the Language and Culture Center. She points out that it is quite challenging to break down language to the basics and at the same time build an academic foundation. We are fortunate that she has such passion for teaching and for all of her students.

Velva shared with me that her favorite day of the term is graduation day when she has the opportunity to see students taking pictures with the new friends that they have made from

other countries. This gives her a sense of satisfaction that she has had a small part in helping her students to not only reach their language goals but also to have a powerfully enriching experience connecting with others from around the world.

One of our LCC teachers, Anna Hood, told me that Velva was the first teacher she ever taught with here. Anna mentioned that Velva was the one who explained all of the LCC activities and policies to her, and that she was a wonderful coach as she shared her own experiences teaching English to beginning learners. One of the many things that Anna admires about Velva is her analytical approach to teaching, stating that, “when Velva isn’t in the classroom, she is thinking about individual students, their needs, and what she can do to help them overcome their individual challenges.” Anna goes on to say that Ms. Fallin’s “assignments are always thoughtful and directly related to curriculum objectives. She is truly a reflective teacher and constantly examines her activities, methodologies, and her own attitude.”

Jenifer Edens has known Velva longer than any of us. What she admires most about “Ms. Fallin” (as Jenifer reports her students call her) is that although she is a veteran instructor, she is constantly doing research to find even more effective teaching methods. Over the years, several of her co-op teachers have benefited from her valuable experience as she mentored them during their first term at the LCC. She has also shared her knowledge with staff members through presentations about giving meaningful assignments, promoting social responsibility, and reaching students who are struggling academically. Jenifer also shared that Ms. Fallin’s students appreciate her “carefully planned lessons, clear explanations, and genuine interest in their cultures. Her reading students have especially enjoyed the way she guides them through Charles Dickens’s *A Christmas Carol*.”

Velva’s current co-teacher in Level 3, Dale Craven, quickly offered that she is “conscientious, caring, creative, and culturally sensitive.” Dale has shared an office with Velva for the past few years now, and he told me that he has had multiple opportunities to see Velva display these characteristics both inside and outside of the classroom. Mr. Craven added that “Velva is probably one of the most conscientious people that he knows. Velva is a person you can always count on.”

As Jenifer Edens says, “Ms. Fallin is an incredibly helpful colleague who is enthusiastic about teaching international students. She is an inspiration and a pleasure to work with.” I think everyone here at the LCC agrees with Jenifer. I know I do.

We celebrate the outstanding work of all LCC teachers, and this term we acknowledge Ms. Fallin’s dedication to her students, her colleagues, and to the future of the LCC. We thank you, Velva Fallin, for your important and highly valued contribution to our teaching program, and for sharing your gifts with all of us at the Language and Culture Center.

# CLASS

Pictures



1 A and 1 B



2 A



2 B



3 A



3 B

# CLASS Pictures



3 C and 3D



4 A



4 B



# CLASS Pictures



5 A and 5 B



5 C and 5 D



6 A



6 B



6 C

# A Trip to the Zoo

## The Strong Lion

**Philemon Collins Ngnepi**

*1B – Cameroon*

My favorite animal is the lion. It's the king in the zoo or jungle. It's very fast when it runs and it's very strong. It eats only meat, and it is very dangerous for people. It's very strong and it likes to hunt prey. It's a true predator. It has brown mane. This was my favorite animal at the zoo.

## The Huge Elephant

**Montaser Abukharshiq**

*1B – Palestine*

My favorite animal is the elephant. It is a mammal. Its color is gray. It lives across Africa, the southern Sahara, and Southeast Asia. They are found in the Savannah, swamps, deserts, and forestry. They like to stay near the water and eat grass. They eat 200 pounds in one day. The specialty of the elephant is their nose. One of the problems for the elephants is that they are killed because of their ivory. The zoo sometimes gives them a shower.

## The Fox is Smart

**Moacyr Brandao Neto**

*1B – Brazil*

My favorite animal in the zoo is the fox. It is very beautiful, and protects its family. The fox is a mammal. It has two colors: orange and white. It is small and cute. The fox has 37 different species all around the world. The fox is very smart. A wild fox can live up to 10 years, but the majority survives for only 2 or 3 years due to hunting. This is a big problem for it species.

## The Elephant

**Man Nguyen**

*1B – Vietnam*

My favorite animal is the elephant. You can see it at the zoo. The elephant eats 200 pounds of food each day. The elephants eat roots, fruit, and bark. They eat a lot of these things. They can help farmers to work on the farm. The elephant is the biggest on the land and lives in Africa and Asia. How much does the elephant weigh? How tall is the elephant? African elephants are from 3 to 4 meters (or 10-13ft) and weight 4,000-7,000 kh. Asian elephants are from 2 to 3.5 meters (or 7-11 ft) and weight 3,000-5,000 kg. For both of them, males are larger than females.

## The Beautiful Elephant

**M'Baffoue Outou**

*1A – Côte d'Ivoire*

My favorite animal is the elephant. The average life expectancy of the elephant in the wild is 45 years, but only if they are protected from poaching and habitat loss. The elephant is a herbivore and eats 200 pounds of leaf every day. The elephant uses ivory tusks to defend itself. There are two kinds of elephant: the Africa elephant and the Asian elephant.

## Tall Giraffe

**Hassan Al Khabbaz**

*1B – Saudi Arabia*

I like giraffes. They eat tree leaves. The giraffe has a long neck. The giraffe is yellow and brown. It is very tall and it lives in the forest.

## My Favorite Animal

**Jinpeng Jiang**

*1A – China*

My favorite animal is the panda. It has a pair of dark circles on the eyes and it is black and white. It eats bamboo and lives in China. It is the first animal in China, so it is a national treasure. It is very friendly, but it is very lazy. They are not many. Pandas can be seen in Sichuan, China. If people shoot the Panda, they will be killed, so no one can hurt the panda. Pandas have professional people who take care of them.

## My Favorite Animal

**Eisa Almalwi**

*1A – Saudi Arabia*

My favorite animal is the horse. The horse is strong and very fast. It is a beautiful animal. It has a long and neat tail. It is fluent in dance. It is often white, black, and brown. It is an animal that understands man so much.

## My Favorite Animal is the Ladybug

**Nariman Adi**

*1A – Palestine*

A ladybug is friendly and it is small. It is beautiful and flies. The colors are attractive. The colors are red, black, and sometime white. They live in trees. They eat other insects that eat good plants. It likes plants.

## Chilean Flamingo

**Claudia Pamela Villarroel Flores**

*1A – Chile*

The Chilean Flamingo has long legs and beautiful pink and white feathers. It is wonderful! It lives in salty or sweet water, shallow water areas, in rivers, and in lakes of South America. Chilean flamingos feed upon aquatic invertebrates, diatoms, and algae. The more they eat, the more pink their feathers turn.

## Camels Cross the Desert

**Abdullah Aldukhail**

*1A – Saudi Arabia*

My favorite animal is the camel. Camels can collect water in their hump. They can walk 70 kilometers continuously. I love camels because they are intelligent and affectionate. My uncle gave me a camel named Hnan.





## Costco in Houston

**Xin Liu**

*2B – China*

Costco is the best supermarket in Houston. I like supermarkets, so I visit Costco with my family on the weekends. My family likes to go to Costco because it is a very big supermarket with a lot of things and low prices on food, drinks, and ice cream. They have a lot of fruit, such as apples, grapes and mangoes. We all like it. At Costco, all the people we meet seem very polite and they are willing to help others. When we visited Costco, I forgot my bag in the restaurant. I talked to the service center. After several days, they finally found the bag and mailed it to another supermarket. I thought it would be impossible to find the bag. If we lost it in another supermarket, I believe I would never have seen my bag again. I also feel Costco is a very clean supermarket. If a customer makes a mess, the staff will clean it up, so the floor is always clean. For all these reasons, I think Costco is the best supermarket in Houston.

## My Favorite Place in Houston

**Roland Klahitar**

*2B – Chad*

My bedroom is my favorite place in Houston. The only thing that I love to do so much is study because I hate ignorance. Like many things that we do in our life, studying needs good conditions to be better. For me, these conditions depend on this place and things that I can find around this place. I came from Sahelian country (drier and hotter) six months ago and I am not familiar with the cold weather of Houston. Normally the places where students can study at the University of Houston are the Student Center and the library, but these places are too cold because of the air conditioning inside them. Therefore, I can not use them all the time. But while in my bedroom, I can choose the temperature I want for myself. I can keep my bedroom warm (the temperature that I like), so I will have better concentration. In my bedroom, I can have many things that I need to my study around me. These things are coffee, my bed for a short rest, and my bathroom for a good shower. When I study in my bedroom, I do not waste time riding the bus to go to another place. It seems bizarre when someone said that his or her favorite place is his or her bedroom, but I think the most important thing in this is what this person feels when he or she is in this place.

## My Room in Houston

**Le Trung Tin Nguyen**

*2B – Vietnam*

I live in a townhouse in Bellaire, Houston. I stay with my cousin and two brothers. I usually eat and talk about everything with my cousin. She is like an older sister. My home is near Chinatown, so it's very fun and bustling with people. I can go everywhere in Chinatown by walking or bicycling. I just cross one crossroad. Around my home, there are a lot of Asian people, including, Vietnamese people and Chinese people. Every evening, I can smell Asian foods from Asian houses. It's a good smell. In addition, my

townhome is next to an Asian market where I can buy and cook my favorite foods from Vietnam. On the weekend, around my complex, there are a lot of parties, and in every restaurant and coffeehouse, the parking is usually full. I feel better because it is like my country here. I feel comfortable. This is my home in Houston.

## My Time in Houston

**Hieu Dang**

*4A – Vietnam*

When I was in America, I had a great time in Houston. I used to learn with many students from many countries in the world. Therefore, I know more about many cultures. Life in Houston was very peaceful, especially at night, so I could study without disturbance. When I lived in Houston, I became more independent. My first month in Houston was very hard for me, I used to ride bus to bus to everywhere, the food was so weird and maybe I lost weight. However, when I made two friends at school, they helped me a lot and I will not forget them. Because of them, my life in America became more interesting. We had a great time together. Life in another country would not be easy without friends. That was all my time in America.

## My Time in Houston

**Maria Casanas**

*4A – USA Citizen*

Decades from now, if I have grandchildren, I will talk to them about all the good experiences I have had during this phase of my life here in the United States. I have learned and experienced new things, I have known new places, tried new foods and I have invested in my future by seeking new goals and challenges. All these experiences I have had while being here have made me grow and mature as a person. I would not change this time of my life because it has made me what I am now. Getting used to and adapting to a new country is not easy, but it is worth it. For these kinds of experiences, it is a good idea to have a positive mind and be open to new possibilities.

## The Galleria Mall

**Suhail Saeed Alderei**

*2B – United Arab Emirates*

The Galleria Mall is a famous place in Houston where you can have fun with your parents and friends. It has good areas to visit as well. A lot of people come to the Galleria to buy clothes, to meet their friends and to go ice skating. Also, they have famous electronic shops like the Apple store and Microsoft. In the Galleria, there are famous shops to buy clothes like Zara, Polo, and American Eagle. There are many fast food restaurants like McDonald and Shake Shack. In the Galleria, there are a lot of things to do. I hope everyone goes there.

## The Galleria

**Meshary Aldukhail**

*2B – Saudi Arabia*

The Galleria is a big mall in Houston on Westheimer Road, I visit every week, and it is my favorite place in Houston because it has a lot of different stores. For example, clothes stores, shoes shops, and the Apple store. I feel happy in The Galleria because it has all kinds of places and games for children. I don't like some things in the Galleria, such as the overcrowded parking where I have to search for 30 minutes to find no place to park my car. However, there is more good than bad, like Shake Shack Burger. I think it has the best burgers in Houston. I met an old friend from KSA in the mall. What a surprise! In the mall, I try to talk to Americans to practice my English speaking skills. I advise my classmates to visit the Galleria because there is so much to do there.



## Surprises in the United States

**Shiyu Liu**

*4A – China*

What surprised me in the United States was the road infrastructure. I used Google Maps to see where the roads extended in all directions. Each has a connection of large and small towns and states. In urban areas, I feel that before the completion of the construction of the city, the urban road was perfected. I came to know that these roads were built in the 70's and 80's of the last century, and now it seems that the design was forward-looking. Although the road is a bit old, the roads are very stable. Surprisingly, the construction of rail transportation in the United States is not enough. It may depend on the fact that Americans prefer the freedom of driving autos. In general, the American highway net is like a perfect and modern piece of artwork.

## Weekend In Houston

**Abdullah Alenezi**

*2B – Kuwait*

A lot of people do not know where they can go on the weekend in Houston, but there are many places to visit in Houston. I go shopping with my friends in the Galleria mall on Fridays. After we finish shopping, we are very hungry, and we go to the 'Shake Shack' restaurant. We catch some fish and grill it. Some times there are matches at the NRG Stadium, and we go there. When I am alone, I go to the zoo. There are many different animals to see, and you can feed them. In the evening, I go to the gym to do some exercise. I advise my friends to come Houston to see those places.



## The University of Houston

**Nguyen Cao**

*2B – Vietnam*

The University of Houston is my favorite place in Houston for many reasons. First, I have met and made more good friends who are friendly, honest and humorous. We play and study together. It is fun and interesting. I'm happy and excited. The second is that I have good teachers. They teach me new material. My listening and reading skills have become better and more complete because of them. The last reason is that I can learn more and more. I really want to learn new things which are useful. I want to continue to study in this school which is the biggest most beautiful I know. There are many reasons which make me like the University of Houston.

## The University of Houston

**Le Trung Tin Nguyen**

*2B – Vietnam*

The University of Houston is one of the best universities in Texas. It has a lot of international students, and everybody needs high grades to apply to this school. The University of Houston is near downtown Houston and next to Texas Southern University. An important color for all the University of Houston teams and merchandise is red and the mascot of school is named Shasta. You can come to the University of Houston easily because the campus has many buses and trains. This school is very large and has everything, including food, gym, stadium, classes, and the entertainment places. I couldn't imagine it was so amazing before I came to the campus. The first time I came to campus last year, I felt surprised, and I couldn't believe it. One bad point is I usually wear a jacket in class because inside the classrooms are very cold. Although the University of Houston has a lot of people and is very large, it is very clean. In conclusion, the University of Houston is a great school because it is good environment to learn.

## The Most Impressive Activity at The LCC

**Nuttaya Tepudom**

*5B – Thailand*

I always want to do fun things with my classmate and my teachers by either eating delicious food, watching a movie, having a BBQ party or volunteering, but there is no matching time for us. Finally, this great opportunity came. On March 23, we went to the Crazy Cat Escape Room where we played a game by solving a mystery. They offered three escape rooms such as The Western Saloon Robbery, The Deadly Dining Room and The Scene of the Crime. We had to choose one of the three rooms to play. I and some classmates had already decided before we came there that we are going to play "The Scene of the Crime" room because this room was very attractive to us. The scene of the crime is a story about a lady who was murdered by someone and her body has been found in the apartment. The police believed that we were the murderers because we were arguing with Jillian before she died. Therefore, we had only one hour to find three things to prove that we were innocent; the killer, the weapon and the key to escape the room. At first, I couldn't imagine how

the game was going to be. After we found the first clue, there was nothing that could stop us from finding the rest of the clues. We worked together as a team so that we solved the puzzle step by step. We had only one more clue to find: a key to escape from the room, so we lost in the end. However, we were so happy to work together. The Crazy Cat Escape Room is one of the best experiences I have ever had at the LCC. I realized how important it is to communicate, how to work in a team and how to solve a complicated puzzle. The activity gave me a different way to practice English. This is why I chose the LCC to encourage my English skills. Thank you, Jana.

## The Library

**Thi Cam Nguyen Cao**

*2B – Vietnam*

To me, the library is a big. It has a comfortable space for studying. I often go there after finishing my class to do research, learn, and do my homework. This is a perfect place to study anything.

## Benefits Workshop

**Zainab Alkhalifah**

*5B – Saudi Arabia*

During our first week of studying in the LCC, we had the first workshop. In that workshop, the management center of the LCC talked with us about our benefits on campus. Each student on campus has a special ID card which allows the student be able to go everywhere on campus. Also, they told us about the Cougar-net ID. It's so important because we can log in our access UH with it. Finally, the management center told us that each student pays for medical insurance through the LCC, and if any student already has insurance, he can complete a waiver so he doesn't have to pay for it.

## A Memory in Language and The Culture Center

**Thi Wuyh Mai Co**

*2A – Vietnam*

I study in Level 2 at the Language and Culture Center. I have many memories with my class, but the memory that I will never forget is the day my class celebrated a birthday for our teacher, Alida. On February 2, my class organized a birthday for Alida. After the end of Barbara's class, she said that we would secretly celebrate Alida's birthday. My class was excited. We looked forward to lesson finishing. Alida was very surprised, then my class sang happy birthday in different languages such as, English, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Spanish. Barbara made the cream cake. It was beautiful and the cupcakes were cute. They were very delicious. That day was very fun. It was a memory I will never forget.

## Crazy Cat Escape Room

**Vien Nguyen**

*5A – Vietnam*

In the middle of the semester, level fives students at the LCC joined a game called the Crazy Cat Escape Room. This is such a great teamwork building game. The volunteerism and collective spirit



were immediately shown at the planning. Indeed, some classmates were willing to help drive their classmates to the game room when our teacher discussed the method of transportation that we would use to go there. Moreover, many students raised their hand to volunteer when the teacher divided them into smaller groups at the game room as they were very anxious to play and discover the hidden surprising events that were waiting ahead. On the other hand, the co-operative spirit was demonstrated remarkably during the game. The team was locked in a room in which a scenario and a plot had been created. All the team members had to play the role of detective in uncovering the secrets from the clues that were buried in many types of furniture and victim's personal records in 60 minutes. Honestly, this game required a collective spirit because each individual worked together with a connection that cannot be separated. This kind of teamwork was helpful to critical thinking and logical assumption of the events to point out the weapon and murderer in a limited time. Although we could not perfectly finish the game, we really enjoyed it and were pleased with the final result. Definitely, each of the members will still remember this experience as such a wonderful memory.

## Crazy Cat Escape Room

**Trung Le**

*5B – Vietnam*

Have you ever imagined being a sleuth after reading an extraordinary detective book? Or have you ever want to be a protagonist after watching a mystery movie? In Crazy Cat Escape Rooms, you will have a chance to simulate one of those interesting scenarios: being a detective to find a key to escape from a locked room. First, you will be put in a locked dining room, and your main objective is to find the key to escape from that room. The number of players is limited to maintain the operation of this game. Second, you will have to use your analytical mind and conscious awareness to collect the hidden hints, solve the clues and find the final key to open the door. There are three super-clues (hints from the guides) which you can use to help if you cannot find out any key points. This game requires both of your individual and teamwork skills, and you will need to concentrate to solve the clues since there are

only 60 minutes in total time. In short, there is a lot of joyfulness and interesting things that you can experience from this amazing game, and your time as well as your money is absolutely worth spending.

## Crazy Cat- an Incredible Experience

**Dinh Hoai Tien Le**

*5B – Vietnam*

As people who are passionate about mystery, all the members of my class spent a wonderful time together at Crazy Cat – Escape Room. We had a great chance to experience the same thing as the story in “After the Funeral” – one of the most successful mystery novels of Agatha Christie that we had read in class during the first half of this term. That was the first time that I tried something exciting like being locked in a room for 60 minutes and having to find all possible clues in order to get out of there. The most valuable thing that I see about that experience is it helped me and my classmates become much closer. It required us to work in a group, to communicate with everyone, to keep a strong connection with others, and to support each other individually. First of all, the staff separated us into two small groups and put us in two different rooms, one of which can be connected to the other behind a locked door. All we needed to do was discover everything in those rooms to get all the clues, show these clues to others who were in the other room, discuss them, and find the key to unlock the door between us in order to be able to investigate the real mission that we received from the staff before we entered. That was amazing since we could become imaginary inspectors for an hour and do everything we wanted in order to figure out the final key. One of the most important things is that we not only enjoyed our time trying something new, but we also had an opportunity to improve our analytical skills, social skills as well as practice working in a team. In the end, we did not make it, and we all “died” at the last clue. However, we did have a memorable time with others. I learned a lot of things thanks to that awesome experience. Even though we lost the game, I was happy because I personally think the most meaningful thing that you can receive from challenging yourself with something that you have never tried before is not your last result but your own progress. What I have learned since the day we went there is that you do not have to be the best. Rather, the most important thing is how much you enjoy the things you do and how much you can do to improve yourself during the journey to become a better person.

## Crazy Cat

**Cecilia Obami**

*5A Congo (Brazzaville)*

I have always admired detectives and inspectors by watching crime and police series. I never thought that I would experience it, and that it would be so difficult. I mean, don't get me wrong. I watch those series and learn a lot from them, but there is a big difference between watching something and doing the thing. Being part of this experience helped me to understand many things that I often ignore. When I got to the Crazy Cat, I was not anxious about it, but as soon

as I entered the room, I became anxious. The goal of the game was to find and solve clues that would help us to find the mysterious will of uncle Chad. To do that, we had to work as a team, think as a team, and solve every clue as a team. In short, this experience was the best thing that had happened so far this semester. By best, I mean fun, relaxing, creative, and intelligent at the same time. I have learned a lot from this experience, and if I have to do it again, I will not do it only for the fun part, but also because this game creates communication that humanity is losing nowadays with the cell phone and the internet.

## Programs in The LCC

**Yueh-O Lee**

*3D – Taiwan*

I like the LCC because it is a very diverse school. For example, the students here are from Korea, China, Congo, Turkey, Vietnam and more than 30 other countries. I can learn English and American culture, make different friends, and open my eyes to the world. We have many activities in school, such as the Culture Festival, the conversation club and the various workshops. These activities allow students to practice English and socialize with others. Also, they have extremely good English learning programs for academic study in college. I like all the programs, but the most interesting program is the speaking and listening class. We do many activities in this class, but the most interesting one is when we are doing group discussions. Besides, we also have group and individual presentations, which train us on how to become stronger speakers and writers, and this is very useful for us when we go to college.

## My Experience in the LCC

**Van Huynh**

*4B – Vietnam*

Living in the United States has been the first time I've been away from my home and family, and it's the first time I've had to take care of myself. Even though I was nervous when I was new in the LCC, studying here has been one of the best experiences of my life. I enjoyed learning English and meeting my incredible international friends who are kind and helpful. They have taught me about their cultures and their languages. I also appreciate my talented teachers who motivate me. I will remember all my experiences and all the people I've met at the LCC. I am thankful for having an opportunity to be part of the program.

## The LCC

**Thao Pham**

*3C – Vietnam*

The United States is a country that has multiple cultures including American, Mexican, Vietnamese, Chinese, Korean and so on. Here, people are friendly and are always willing to help others. Besides, America is a developed country, so when you come here, you will have a chance to study and learn many new things and get a lot of new experiences. I've taken English classes at the LCC, which belongs to the University of Houston. At the LCC, I've had a great time with my classmates and teachers. The school also provides

me with many chances to learn English and to experience different cultures around the world, and that helps me broaden my horizon. Last but not least, during the semester, the school organizes many field trips for student. This, too, is a good way to help me learn a lot more about American culture.

## Changes

**Zainab Aldubaisi**

*3A – Saudi Arabia*

Three months ago, I came to Houston, Texas, to learn English. I was excited to live in a new city which is different from Saudi Arabia. Also, I was prepared for a lot of changes from living in Saudi Arabia because my sister has lived in the United States for five years and she told me what would happen when I first came. I brought some foods from my country that I can't find in the United States. Anyway, after living in Houston for a while, I found that I had changed a lot in several ways. The most important change is I'm more responsible. Before I came to United States, my father was sending my documents by himself to the school and paid for our house bills because I didn't know how to do these things. After I came to Houston, my father taught me how to send my documents to the LCC if they want them. He talked to me on Tango and told me that I have to know what documents they want such as I-20, my passport or others. Also, he taught me how to pay my bills and send them to the companies. In addition, my father always tells me that I'm doing well, he is proud of me and that's what makes me stronger. Furthermore, I'm more confident now. For example, I couldn't talk with people when I first came to the United States because I couldn't understand them; they were very fast when they talked to me. When I listened to speakers on the Internet and watched English movies, I learned a lot. Also, I read some books which gave me a lot of vocabulary. So, now I can understand people and have exciting conversations with them when I go to the shopping mall, restaurants, and when I ride the bus. This was a good change in my language. Another important change that I have learned is how to clean and cook. I couldn't do these when I was in Saudi Arabia because I was living with my parents and my mother and father did all of that. Also, I just did very simple work like clean my room and my little sister's room. After I came to the United States, my sisters taught me how to clean the bathroom with several cleaners such as Clorox and others. They also showed me how to clean the floor with water and some cleaners. In addition, my mom sent me some videos while she cooked to show me how to cook by myself. Also, my brother taught me to cook some simple dishes by standing beside me while I was cooking and telling me what I had to do next. Now, I feel proud of myself because I can cook and clean well. My family also doesn't worry about how I'm doing. My life in America is better now because I learned the culture here and I like the people. The time in this beautiful country is giving me a lot of help for my future and I'm so happy that I'm learning more and more about life while I'm living in Houston without my parents. I hope that I'll receive more benefits in the future from living in the United States.

## Changes in the United States

**Xuefei Guan**

3A – China

Last September, I flew to the United States and became an international student of the LCC in the University of Houston. I found there were a lot of differences between the two countries, and I had to learn how to live in the United States. Although it was hard, I received a lot of good advice from my teachers and friends. Also, I tried to change my life in some ways. After I lived in Houston for six months, it was easier than the beginning. Therefore, I am very happy for my changes in several important ways. The most important change is I learned how to study more effectively. I had learned English since middle school in China. However, I felt it was so hard to learn. I could only remember some words and a little grammar. I was not able to listen and speak English anywhere. When I read an English article, I always translated every word from English to Chinese. I could not read it if I did not have an English-Chinese dictionary. In addition, I translated the Chinese sentences word by word when I wrote a passage. However, I have changed a lot since I studied at the LCC. I changed my habits of studying English. I learned to understand English by its meaning, and I do not translate every word to Chinese. I learned to scan the whole article and not care if there were some words that I did not understand. In short, I have gained a little positive change, and I can read faster. In addition, I learned how to drive in the United States. When I arrived in Houston, I found there were many differences with Chinese cities. The business areas are often far away from the communities. If you want to buy something such as a cup or a toothbrush, you have to drive one mile or farther. You are like a man without legs if you do not have a car in the United States. My friend who lives in Houston gave me a lot of help after I started to learn how to drive. It took about one month to get my driver's license. Now, I drive to school every day. On the weekend, I am able to go shopping or go to some interesting place with friends together. All in all, driving in Houston gives me more freedom. Finally, I learned how to cook. Although there is a lot of delicious food in Houston, I might not eat it every day. It is too far from my apartment to go to the restaurants in Chinatown. I had to learn how to cook from my friends. Sometimes, I download many favorite recipes. In the beginning, I wasted a lot of food because I cooked poorly. Sometimes, it was too salty or greasy. Also, the temperature of the pot was too high and the food burnt. Eventually, I learned to cook a few simple dishes after I practiced for three months, so I can treat my friends now. Sometimes, I invite them to my apartment for dinner on the weekend. I cook some dishes such as steamed eggs, double cooked pork slices, spicy eggs, and so on. I feel very happy when we enjoy these dishes together. Cooking is one of the most important life skills, so I am very glad to learn it. Currently, I have learned how to study English more effectively, drive in the United States, and cook some food. I have changed a few other ways in addition to the three most important ones. All my changes help me to live easily in the United States. I am very thankful for the people who gave me advice and help. I look forward to changing some other ways and become more sociable in the future.

## Abroad

**Jeongseop Kim**

3C – Korea

When I lived in Korea, I didn't study English because I felt it was too hard. After a few years, I found, by chance, information about studying in the United States. After a few years, my uncle recommended I study abroad, but at that time I was not interested in studying abroad. However, a new world and culture stimulated my curiosity, which made me read someone's writing about his studying abroad experience. Their story about what they experienced was enough. Therefore, I also wanted to experience the world by studying abroad and I wanted to get in touch with a different culture. I thought about these sorts of things and I felt I needed English because I needed a change. I had a new goal in life: to experience the broader world and cultures whether I go abroad before or after graduation. Now, I am learning English at the LCC. I have made the correct decision. I have made global friendships and I have experienced a lot of cultures at the LCC.



## Tainan, Taiwan

**Chia-Hua Wu**

*4A – Taiwan*

If you want to visit southern Taiwan, you can visit my hometown of Tainan. I have planned three days trip for your reference. On the first day, you can go to the Anping district. There are historical sites such as Anping Castle, and there you can eat famous foods on Anping Street, such as, shrimp rolls, oyster omelets, and oyster fritters. In addition, you will find something from your childhood. At night, you have to go to the night market, where there are many of Taiwan's famous foods. On the second day, you can go to the Peimen district. There is a crystal church and snacks from our childhood. Then, you can go to Cigu Salt Mountain. You can climb the mountains and learn about history. Next, you can go to the Chimei Museum. There are a lot of works of art, and you can add literary flavor there. Finally, you can go to another night market. If you didn't eat something on first day, the next day you can't miss it. On the last day, you can go to Sio House to find your own birthday salt there. Then you can go to the Confucian temple. It is said that walking around the temple will make you smart. Finally, the last place you should visit is the Chikan Towers. There is a lot of history, and there are many foods nearby. Enjoy the trip!

## A Tour of Saigon, Vietnam

**Nhi Tran**

*4B – Vietnam*

As travelers, we know the best suggestions often come from locals, so I will tell you what is amazing about my hometown, which places to visit, and what food you need to try. Our tour is going to be exciting. I'm from Saigon, also known as Ho Chi Minh City. On the first day, we'll visit Independence Palace, located in the heart of downtown. It was designed by a famous architect and was the home and workplace of the president of South Vietnam during the Vietnam War. Nearby, we'll also visit Duc Ba Church, which is an unusual building. On the second day, we'll go to Ben Thanh Market. It's a great place to purchase souvenirs, such as t-shirts, bags, and other local products. At night, it is an amazing location where we can try all kinds of Vietnamese street food right outside the market. Pho, a soup with rice noodles and beef, and Vietnamese coffee are popular foods in my country that you must try. After that, we'll visit Nguyen Hue Walking Street. It has a fountain with colorful lights in the middle, and it is an ideal place to take photos. There are also many restaurants and coffee shops with nice views along the street. On the last day, we'll visit Bitexco Financial Tower, which is the tallest building in Vietnam. It includes offices, shopping centers, and entertainment spaces. On the Saigon Skydeck on the 49th floor, we can get a fantastic view of the city at night. If you like the nightlife, we can go to Pho Tay, which means "Street of Foreigners." It has hotels, restaurants, and pubs where we can spend time. I hope you enjoy our three-day tour.

## The Dark Sides in Vietnam

**Trien Le**

*4D – Vietnam*

Inside all countries in the world, there are two faces of local life. It's the same with my country. Many dark sides exist in my country, and if I have the opportunity to fix some, I would like to change the corruption in the government systems, the crime rate, and the old traffic system. First, Vietnam was under control of the old socialist government system for many decades, and it didn't have any huge changes from the beginning to now. That means it's not enough for evolution. It's a bad situation which silences the power of the people's voice, and they can't have the freedom to do what they want to do. In Vietnam, corruption in the government is very popular; it can happen at any time and any where. For example, when you want to apply for a project, you have to send your money to the government that can give you the permission. So, if I eliminate the corruption in government system, it can make the life of Vietnamese better. Second, Vietnam is one of many developing countries in the South-East Asia which has low standards of living. In many provinces along Vietnam and some areas, people just can earn about \$30 per month! That is not enough for them to support their families. In addition, Vietnam has many bad businesses like smuggling drugs. This drags many people to the black side where they become criminals who lose their future and their families. With a huge number of criminals, Vietnam has a higher crime



rate than other countries in Asia. If I can decrease the crime rate, it can make society become better and safer. And finally, the old traffic system which existed since the 50's hasn't been upgraded and changed. It makes transportation poor. The infrastructure is still being used even after a long time. Beside that, the law and traffic police are very weak. In addition, people's awareness is very low. They don't care about the law, which can make them safe when they are in traffic. They just go the way they feel which is hard for police to control the traffic. In the conclusion, although my country has many beautiful and spectacular things, many dark sides of life still exist. If I have the chance to change my country, the corruption in the government system, the crime rate, and the old traffic system are three things I want to change first. If I change them, will it make my country better?

## The Tet Holiday in Vietnam

**Anh Trinh**

*3D - Vietnam*

Of all the special holidays in my country, I like Tet the most. Tet is a traditional holiday in Vietnam. It often begins in late January and ends in early February and is the time when the Vietnamese celebrate the end of the old year and the beginning of the new year. Tet has become a special occasion for reunions for Vietnamese families. During the Tet holiday, all family members try to come back to their home and get together to prepare for Tet such as buying new clothes and cleaning their house. A branch of apricot blossoms or a kumquat tree is a necessary decoration for the house during this holiday because it is believed to bring the fresh air of Spring into the house. Besides the apricot blossoms or the kumquat tree, we also display a tray full of fruits and vases of flowers on the ancestral altar. The special foods we eat during Tet are sweets, coconut jam, fruit candy, melon seeds, stewed pork with egg, and sticky rice cakes. Tet meals are usually bigger and more delicious than our daily ones. On the Tet holiday, people have many interesting activities. Young people take part in traditional games such as tug-of-war, rice cooking, cock fighting, and lion dancing. Many people visit relatives to wish them a happy New Year. Some family members will give lucky money to children while women like going to pagodas to pray for good things for their family in the new year.

## Leander Tower in Turkey

**Adem Gunes**

*3C - Turkey*

There are many mystical stories in Turkey's history. One of them is the legend of the Girl's Tower. The story of the Girl's Tower is a tragic love story. 2,500 years ago a young boy, who is a Hero, fell in love with a girl named Leander. But there was a problem. Leander's father did not want Hero to talk with Leander. Even if Leander's father did not want it, Leander wanted to talk with Hero. Leander's dad was very angry that Leander wanted to talk with Hero. After that, Leander's father wanted to keep her where no one could find her. He locked her in a lot of places. He eventually found a place.

It was an island in the Sea of Marmara. Leander's father took her there and hid her in a tower. She never saw Hero again. Sadly, she lived there until her death. This tragic mystical story is about to Leander Tower in Turkey.



# WORKSHOPS

LCC workshops keep students up-to-date on immigration policies, University of Houston career services, University of Houston admissions procedures, and campus services open to students.



## Admission Workshop

Mohammed Bashar

5A - Iraq

There was an admission workshop on Thursday, February 23, that explained how to register at the University of Houston. There were two speakers about this workshop. The presentation included guidance about how to apply and what the requirements are in order to facilitate the registration. One of the speakers gave information about graduate programs, and the other gave information about undergraduate programs. They explained everything that the students need which will help them to think about their future and what they need to do before starting to enroll at the university. Also, they used an award idea to make the students to pay more attention to the workshop. At the end of each aspect of the presentation, they asked a question to make sure that the students focused on the presentation. Therefore, this kind of presentation is helpful for the students to get more information about registration at the University of Houston.



## Dreaming of Improvements

**Shuangmei Liu**

*4C – China*

Every country has different situations and cultural traditions. If I were able to change something in my country, there are three things I would want to do: build roads between villages, enhance education, and reduce pollution. Most cities have good transportation in China, but in some villages, there still aren't roads that allow people to visit. More importantly, farmers cannot use a car to send their crops outside; therefore, they can't sell rice or vegetables. Some children have to walk more than one or two hours to get to school. It can be a hardship if they have to stop studying because their family doesn't have time to find a ride for them. Therefore, if I built some roads or established transportation, that would be a convenience for local people. One of the most important services in a country is education. Some countries do it very well. In addition, in my country, although most areas have improved education at the university level, some still have inferior conditions in school facilities. The schools don't have enough money to build them. Some of them can't even find a teacher who wants to go to a village. If the government could help the economic situation of these farms or teachers, it would be better, so the children can go further in their education. The other thing that we have to consider is pollution. Recently, the government paid attention to the bad environment because the climate situation and health problems are serious. China is a big country; they differentiate more than fifty regions, and each city has different factories that make a lot of pollution without permission. Hence, if I could change something, first I would reduce the terrible effects or close the factories. It will have a better natural environment in the future. Many countries still have terrible problems like limited transportation, lack of education, and too much pollution. I believe that the government or people have to do something; then we can live in a pleasant, healthy world.

## Venezuela and the United States

**Mariangel Oberto Reyes**

*4D – Venezuela*

Each university is unique and it can expand one's knowledge and prepare students to perform in different areas, such as medicine, education, business, and more. These are aspects that make them unique. Universities in Venezuela and the United States are different in the way they evaluate, the uniforms they wear, and the team sports they have. Every country has different models of education and methods of teaching. In Venezuela, most students have three months to pass the courses, and the tests are in the last week of each month. However, in the United States students have three months, but they have both midterms and final exams. This way is helpful to students who didn't study for the midterms because they have another opportunity to improve their score. As everyone knows, clothing is essential to creating a good impression. For that reason, it is important to mention that in Venezuela most professors and people who work in the university have to have clothes that represent the company or institution they work for. In addition, students have

uniforms, but only for physical education. On the other hand, in the United States, this rule does not apply for anybody because students, professors, and people who work on campus don't have to wear any kind of special identification like uniforms. Venezuelans think that it is important to dress the right way because it creates an identity, which is a huge value for the company, and helps to distinguish it. Because students are the basic component of a school, they need to be motivated to have a good lifestyle and create memories during their student life. In order for students to have good lifestyles, universities create team sports in which students are able to spend their leisure time and make friends. Although Venezuela and the United States are different countries with different models of education, they have similarities in team sports. In Venezuela, students can join in the sports they like such as baseball, soccer and more. In the United States, students have the same opportunity as in Venezuela, but they need to have good grades to stay on the team. This is a good aspect in both countries because it gives the opportunity to students to develop their abilities in several sports and also be recognized by many people. Even though universities are unique in every part of the world, they have the same goals and prepare good professionals with enough knowledge to work in many areas in the job market. The differences in Venezuela and the United States in the way they evaluate, the attire they may wear, and the team sports they offer make unique universities. It is important to remember that in both university systems, students can expand their knowledge and create good experiences in their lives.

## Two Universities

**Chau Doan**

*4C – Vietnam*

Every country has educational systems to educate people who want to help the country develop. In Vietnam, there are two universities for students who want to study when they finish high school. There are both differences and similarities between the University of Economics and University of Technology in Vietnam. Firstly, there are similarities between these two universities. They are two famous universities in Ho Chi Minh City. Both are national and public universities. Unlike other universities, they also have cooperative programs with lots of international universities all over the world. This program is divided into three groups: education exchange, study, and research. Similarly, they provide undergraduate, graduate, and post-graduate education. They are suitable for many kinds of students and employees who want to get more education. Besides that, they are public universities, so the tuition fees are cheaper than a private university. Now about the differences. There are several differences that make them unique from each other. The University of Economics was established in 1976. It's one of the fifteen key national universities in Vietnam and also the member of the best 1,000 business schools in the world. This school educates the student who wants to become a businessman or businesswoman in the future. Their majors are in economics like finance, business administration, accounting, human resources, and banking. On the other hand, the University of Technology was established

in 1957. This school has a campus for students who come from another city or country. It's very convenient. Just from the name of this university, everybody actually knows what majors they offer. Some examples are computers, electronics and telecommunication, chemistry, and civil engineering. A student who graduates from this school will become an engineer. Finally, most people know about these differences and similarities, which make them famous and unique. Trying to study hard in math, physics, and chemistry will help students get a ticket to attend either of these schools. Because the grades required to pass is very high, focusing on studying will bring success.

## Two Cities

### Hao Chen

*4C – China*

There are a lot of cities around the world. Guangzhou is one of the biggest cities in China, and it is my home town; and Houston is one of the biggest cities in the United States, and it is where I am living and studying now. Although Guangzhou and Houston belong to different countries, these two cities not only have differences, but these two cities also have several similarities. First of all, one of the most significant similarities is that Houston and Guangzhou are both large cities. Houston is the fourth biggest city in the United States, and also Guangzhou is the fourth biggest city in China. Therefore, these two cities both have large populations; actually, maybe Guangzhou is overpopulated now. Although Houston doesn't have as large a population as Guangzhou, Houston still has a large population in the United States. In addition, the other similarity is that Guangzhou and Houston both have great universities, which means the education in these two cities is great, too. A lot of students went to college in Guangzhou, and also a lot of students come to Houston for college. Thus, these two cities both have wonderful educational systems and great colleges. Nevertheless, these two cities also have differences. For example, even though these two cities both have a large population, the population in Houston is dispersed, which means people in Houston are living in different areas, and each area doesn't have many people. However, people in Guangzhou are living in the same area. Hence, when it is evening in Houston, there is silence outside, but in Guangzhou, even at midnight, there are still a lot of people outside. These two cities are both large cities, but these two cities have several differences. However, these two cities are both beautiful.

## Two Attractive Cities

### Hsing-Chieh Cheng

*4D – Taiwan*

There are many cities all over the world. Every city is unique and attractive. If you have a chance, you should visit them all. Houston and San Francisco are both big cities. They are also beautiful and unique. They have one similarity in location, but they have two important differences in climate and transportation. First of all, Houston is in the middle of the United States, but San Francisco is in the West. However, they are both near the sea. Houston lies near

the Gulf of Mexico, and San Francisco lies near the Pacific Ocean. Therefore, the two cities both have big harbors and many boats. The marine industry is developed. Houston's climate is humid and semitropical in summer, but in the winter it is comfortable and rarely freezes. The average annual temperature is about 72 degrees Fahrenheit. On the other hand, San Francisco's climate is dry. Because the Pacific Ocean keeps the temperature steady, it's generally moderate. Most people call San Francisco the "air conditioned city." The average annual temperature is about 65 degrees Fahrenheit, which is comfortable for most people. Finally, transportation is an important difference. In Houston, cars are the most popular transportation. Even though Houston has a Metro and bus system, most people have a car. Why don't they take the bus or Metro? The reason may be safety. On public transportation, usually someone robs another, or a person may be drunk. Therefore, because there are so many cars in Houston, there are traffic problems after class and work. However, in San Francisco, public transportation is popular. For example, BART, cable car, and buses are safe and convenient, but expensive. In the end, the two cities have some similarities, but they are mostly different. If you have a chance, you should visit them. Because they also have beautiful scenery and delicious food, you will love them.

## Tokyo and Kyoto

### Huy Nguyen

*4D – Vietnam*

Traveling is one of the most exciting experiences in people's lives, and they can find many destinations in the world to satisfy their desires. Tokyo and Kyoto are considered two popular destinations. Although both Tokyo and Kyoto are located in Japan, some differences as well as similarities exist. First, the atmospheres are different. Because of urbanization, Tokyo is crowded and polluted. The leaders in Tokyo will not solve these problems in a short time. In addition, individuals have to improve their degree if they decide to live in Tokyo. Otherwise, Kyoto is better for all those who feel inspired by tradition. Haiku and Hanami are two of the most meaningful cultural aspects of Japan, and one can enjoy them in Kyoto. People will not feel disappointed to live in Tokyo, which is already a mega city of the future. The government has restored and developed Tokyo since it was damaged in World War II. Now, Tokyo has become central to the economic systems in the world. For the Japanese, it is a strong impetus to strive for improvement. On the other hand, Kyoto has more to show about ancient culture and traditions. In Kyoto, one will not see amazing skyscrapers. There are many famous temples in Kyoto such as Kinkaku, Ginkaku, Ryoanji, and Kiyomizu. The story "Gold and Silver Brothers" is known widely among citizens. Locals also organize a celebration called "Gold and Silver Brothers" every year. Ultimately, as you might expect from the cities of the most urbanized country in the world, both Tokyo and Kyoto are costly places. People must work hard to pay their bills and taxes. Buying a house in these cities is the most important goal, but that is impossible for a blue collar worker. In conclusion, it is

difficult to say which city is more beautiful and suitable for those looking for the old Japanese culture. However, both cities can be awe-inspiring.

## The United States and Jordan

**Ahmed Raddad**

*4D – Jordan*

Culture and values are the biggest differences between the United States and Jordan. The American culture is a mixture of different cultures. Jordan, on the other hand, has its own culture and values. This essay will introduce the cultural and value differences between these two countries. Many Americans believe that they can really control their future. They try to be independent once they become mature. However, Jordanians focus on the family, so their opinions and decisions have to be shown to the parents. They even sometimes change their goals if they do not suit the needs of their family members. However, Americans always like to plan things ahead and think they can control and dominate nature and the world around them. Americans are more goal-oriented because they are ready to do anything to get a job or reach goals. The second factor relating to the culture is the resources. The American government tries to assist its citizen. For example, it supports the educational system, transportation, and work opportunities. In contrast, the Jordanian government complains about limited resources. In addition, many of the public officials have organized corruption, so that immediately affects the society. The American life style motivates people to do better in their work, but not in relationships. Most Americans have relationships before they marry. They believe that it will help them to decide whether this partner will be right or not. In contrast, Jordanians don't have any relationship before they get married. This may cause many divorces cases. Change is a good value and indicative of improvement and growth. Americans think change is very positive. They like movement and change in their lifestyle. Jordanian culture, on the other hand, looks upon change as negative. They like stability.

## The United States and China

**Kaining Wang**

*4D – China*

What is the best way to help students improve themselves? Different cultures may have different answers. There are many differences between the United States and China such as the aims of learning, the methods of teaching, the behavior in class, and the publication of grades. In China, the aim of the teachers is make students grasp knowledge. Students need to remember things for the exams. The teachers in the United States encourage students to improve their innovation ability, and sometimes the exams don't have a single answer. In addition, the students in China have to study average courses. They can't choose the course they like, so their study is always passive. The difference in the United States is that students can select the courses they are interested in. This makes the students learn actively. Furthermore, there is a big difference in class behavior. The students in China always listen quietly, without

talking. They just listen and remember what the teachers said, even if they have questions or something they don't understand. They don't ask, but the teachers in the United States often discuss the questions in a group. Everyone shares their ideas with each other. They can also solve problems in groups. It is more free in the United States. Teachers and students can communicate with each other like friends. One difference is that the student's grade in a Chinese school is not a secret. Any one can check the whole class results, but in the United States, the grade is private. This shows respect for students. The homework is also an important topic. In China, students have a lot of homework to help them remember the knowledge. In the United States, the students can choose to attend different kinds of activities to get more social experience. In the end, there are many differences between China's education system and America's education system. It's hard to say which education is better. They both have strong points and weak points.

## Saudi Arabia and the United States

**Saleh Alqarawi**

*4D – Saudi Arabia*

Living in two different countries gives me sufficient knowledge to compare them correctly. Saudi Arabia and the United States have a lot of differences in three aspects, which are the education system, government policies, and transportation infrastructure; however, there are some similarities too. In regards to differences, the education system is most different. In Saudi Arabia, men and women cannot study together. Also, the number of universities is limited, but higher education is free for Saudis, and the government sometimes gives a salary to students who study in higher education. On the other hand, in the United States, the government and companies sometimes invest in research which students do, so researchers can pay for the required equipment or materials which usually cost a lot of money. As a result, students have a chance to do varied experiments and to improve their knowledge. In addition, the United States has many students from foreign countries, so that helps Americans to know about cultures around the world. Second, the government policies in Saudi Arabia are not the same as in the United States. Saudi Arabia's government provides free medical treatment for its citizens. However, the American government forces its citizens to pay taxes and for their medical care. On the other hand, the people have a right to vote for their president and can share their thoughts freely. Finally, transportation is slightly different between them. Saudi Arabia has a serious issue with car accidents. However, the States does not have this issue since the traffic policies are strict. Clearly there are many disparities between these countries. However, there are some similarities. First, the higher education curriculum is almost the same. Next, those countries have a strong influence on the world's policies and economies. Also, both have a good relationship with each other. Finally, they have good railways, which help to transport goods easily, and both have good highways. In conclusion, studying in the United States gives me a chance to know it better and compare it with my country. The education system, government policies, and transportation systems are the most significant things that I noticed after living in these different countries.

## One World, Two Countries

**Xinzhu Wang**

*4C – China*

Each country I have lived in was special. America and China, while they have similarities in many fields, have obvious differences in terms of business, transportation, and food. One similarity of business between them is online shopping. In America, Amazon is known for product quality and timeliness. If you are on Amazon Prime, you will be given priority of delivery, generally in two days. Likewise, Tao Bao is the biggest online shopping platform in China. People purchase whatever they want from home. Conversely, America's business monopoly is more extreme than in China. You can't find individual management except at Pet Smart, Best Buy, and so on, but small size stores are normal in China. Another similarity in America and China is transportation. Both of them have mass-transit. It's convenient for office workers to get through crowded traffic. However, Americans complain they can't go anywhere without cars due to the hot weather and the highways! For the Chinese, cars aren't necessary because neither terrible weather nor long distances are problems. People go shopping on foot. Finally, food is a complex topic for both Americans and Chinese. On the one hand, not only America but also China has organic food. On the other hand, the prices of brands are worlds apart. People who are vegetarian would rather live in China because fruit and vegetable prices are much cheaper than in America. One can't choose which country is better because everyone knows both of them are special in business, transportation or food. Therefore, we all know without a doubt that they are unique.

## My Life Abroad

**Chia-Tien Wu**

*4C – Taiwan*

In 2015, I came to the United States to start my new life. I had decided to come to Houston when I graduated from university. I wanted to improve my international exposure and learn more English skills. I was not just going to study English; I would visit other states. This was my first time to visit Boston and my cousin. He took us to visit a glass factory. There was a teacher who could teach us how to do our own special glass. After that, he bought some fresh fish and beer for dinner, and we celebrated Christmas at home. This was my first trip before I would begin my student life. I wanted to learn more English skills, but my English was not getting better. Then I chose to study at the University of Houston Language and Culture Center. When the classes began, I felt very nervous because I couldn't understand everything. In my country, our teachers had paid attention to the grammar, so speaking and writing were very difficult for me. However, now I probably understand everything. We had a week of spring holiday, so we could plan a trip. This was my first spring break. My friends and I decided to go to Orlando. I was very excited because we went to Disney World and Universal Studios for five days. After this trip, my sister and I went to see our grandmother. When I finished the second semester, we went to San Francisco. My grandmother lives there, so we went to find her. If

my cousin had time, she always took us to window shop or to eat local foods. When I finished this trip, we planned the next one. Last year, my friends and I went to New York for two weeks. We were lucky because our lodging was free. However, we needed to take care of two cats. We went to Time Square to celebrate New Year's Eve with everybody. I felt it was fun, but the weather was cold. I think of myself as a happy person because my parents support me with money and let me have different experiences. If I have another vacation, I will travel to other states. This is an uncommon opportunity, and I already have some precious memories.

## Life in the United States

**Liyin Zhang**

*3A – China*

When I was staying in China, I never used to cook, drive and so on. I could buy food from restaurants, and if I wanted to go some places, I could go by bus. But four months ago, I came to the United States. It was a big change in my life and I changed some of my habits. In different countries and different environments, we can not have the same life. I have had three important changes in my life since I came to the United States. The most important change is that I learned to drive in the United States. When I came to the United States, I couldn't drive a car by myself. I thought the school would be near my house and there would be convenient transportation. However, when I came here, that was not true. In fact, the school was far away from my house and there weren't any buses. If I wanted to go to school, I had to go by car. So, I often bothered my aunt to give me a ride to school. It was not convenient. Finally, I asked my aunt how I could learn to drive a car and get a driver's license. She took me to the test and accompanied me to practice driving every Sunday afternoon. Now, I have a driver's license and I can drive a car by myself, and I don't need to bother my aunt. In addition, I never used to cook in China, but now I can cook some delicious foods. When came to the United States, I didn't find a Chinese restaurant near my house. I couldn't cook Chinese food and I didn't want to eat American food for every meal every day. Therefore, I found some Chinese restaurants in Chinatown, but they were far away from my house. I needed to drive one hour to go there. Then, I asked my aunt to teach me how to cook. She taught me how to choose the food and how to cook. Fortunately, cooking Chinese food is very easy and Chinese food is very delicious. Now, if I want to eat Chinese food, I can cook it in my home and save time to do other things. The last change is that I can take care of myself now. Before I came to the United States, my parents always took care of everything. If I had some problems, they would help me solve them. Then, I came to the United States. They were very worried about me and called me every day. However, I found some ways to take care of myself. For instance, I used Google to search how to clean the house in the shortest time. Before searching, I needed to spend one hour to clean the house, but now I just take 20 minutes to clean. Also, I asked my friend how to have a healthy diet, and I learned how to make some plans. For example, I do exercise every day, go to sleep early and so on. Now, my parents know that I can take care of myself and they do

not worry about me. Changing an environment means the new life is beginning and some habits may change. I learned many new skills. In the future, I think I will learn more things and I will be better.

## Jamaica vs Barbados

**Irene Abeso Angue**

*4D – Equatorial Guinea*

White sands, turquoise beaches, green palm trees, and bright sun. Which island are we describing, Jamaica or Barbados? What are the similarities between these two islands? Looking at the history, geography, and culture, one can know more about these beautiful islands. Both islands share multiple characteristics in regard to their history. When Jamaica was discovered by Christopher Columbus in 1494, its lands were already inhabited by Arawak Taino, a group of natives who came from South America. In addition, an English background has helped Jamaica to achieve a great economic position among its Caribbean neighbors. Jamaica's capital and most populated city is Kingston; its currency is the Jamaican dollar. On the other hand, Barbados was first settled by the British in the 1600s. This country, like Jamaica, also has African roots; slaves were moved from Africa to Barbados to labor in its fields. Like Jamaica, Barbados also has its own currency, the Bajan dollar, and it is the most developed economy of all the northern Caribbean countries. Could geographic factors explain more about both islands? Like Jamaica, Barbados is located in the Caribbean Sea. This sea provides its islands with good weather and a diversity of flora and fauna, which are characteristics that usually attract people from all around the world, and make both islands, Jamaica and Barbados, special when it comes to tourist attractions. Both economies are mainly based on tourism; furthermore, they are at the top in the ranking of most popular places to visit. How about cultural factors? Are these two treasures of the Caribbean Sea alike? In general, Jamaica and Barbados share some cultural factors. Jamaica is very famous for its Reggae music, jerk chicken and Bob Marley. When it comes to sports, cricket is the most popular. On the other hand, Barbados, like Jamaica, is also known for its Reggae music, but, unlike Jamaica, its most popular dishes are cou-cou and fried flying fish. Its most famous musician is Rihanna. Furthermore, unlike Jamaica, in Barbados, horse racing is very popular. In conclusion, Jamaica and Barbados may share a lot of history in their background and are also neighbors, but what makes each country special are the little things one can discover with a visit to each country and interacting with its people.

## France and the United States

**Sarah Moya Machado**

*4C – France*

Even though most of the time comparisons between France and the United States are focused on their differences, both of them are very popular for all tourists around the world. In fact, France and the United States are different and unique in some aspects like food or educational systems, but they also have some similarities related to political topics. In contrast to the United States, in France, one of the most important things is food. Overall, people in France spend a lot

of time eating for several reasons - most importantly, to share with others and enjoy life. Nevertheless, Americans spend less time eating, but share with others and enjoy life in different ways. For example, in the United States, people share with others in volunteer associations and in religious places very often. Both customs of sharing with others are different, but in the end have the same results. Unlike France, where the education is public even at the university and for all students, including from other countries, students in the United States have to pay more if they are international. Furthermore, in France, the education in the digital-era is not really developed; on the contrary, in the United States, this type of education is really developed. Altogether, both of them have different but good and unique aspects. Even though there are some major differences between France and the United States, there are clear similarities in their political environment. Today, for example, in both countries, government must manage the relationship between immigrants and the economy. This big challenge is crucial to continue to improve their countries and to keep their amazing diversity. Immigrants are the key to success in both countries. Actually, France and the United States have to overcome the same challenges to continue to grow their economies and to continue to keep their amazing diversity. Beyond their considerable differences related to their food or their education systems, both governments should find solutions to deal with their immigration issues to save their political systems and their economies. Maybe it is time to rediscover that many solutions for our countries---even for personal life--are in diversity and tolerance, not just in France or the United States, but in all countries.

## Changes

**Tien Do**

*3A – Vietnam*

While I was a junior at Banking University of Ho Chi Minh in Vietnam, I passed the interview to study in America. Because I had never been to the United States before, I had to ask my friends who had lived in the United States for a while to help me prepare for a lot of challenges living in America. Finally, I just brought some clothing and a few books I liked. However, after living in America for ten months, I have learned a lot of things through some amazing experiences. The most important thing is I learned how to solve personal problems. After I arrived in the United States, I had a lot of problems because this was the first time I came to America. For example, I had to live alone, and I did not have a car to go around or go to school or other places. At the moment, I first thought that I could give up, or another way was I had to learn how to solve personal problems by myself. In fact, I was very nervous, but I decided to do everything. I socialized with my house hosts and my friends who studied English at the LCC with me. I had many great relationships when I did that, and I really did not feel alone too much again. Besides that, I also learned to go to school by bus. Today, I can face every challenge by myself. Secondly, I learned how to speak to native English speakers. In fact, I could not speak or understand English with the foreign people before I arrived in the United States. Fortunately, I was allowed to go to America to study English where



my English skills improved very quickly, especially speaking. In America, I luckily made friends with some Americans, so I could speak English with them every day. Moreover, they taught me how to speak English with native speakers and to use slang and idioms. They helped me practice English and improve it a lot. Although I have just lived in the United States for ten months, I can socialize with the local people easily. Finally, I am more confident right now. Before I came to America, I just stayed at home, so it was quite hard for me to have good conversations with other people, especially the foreign people because I did not know any English. In addition, I was also not confident to solve my problems because my family helped me with almost everything when I lived in Vietnam. But when I came to the United States, I had to do everything by myself. For example, I had an accident when I drove my car on the freeway, and usually I would be afraid unless I had my parents with me if it happened in Vietnam, but now, I can talk with others to solve this problem. Actually, I was very glad when I could solve this problem. In fact, I have solved many problems while living in the United States. After a long time, I feel confident, and I believe my family will not worry about me anymore. The period of time I lived in America, a diverse country, was useful because of the practical experience I received. I am very amazed because I am more and more mature since I lived in the best country in the world and have had a lot of foreign friends who are extremely important to help me understand many cultures of the world, so I can develop my business in the future.

## Changes Filipa Costa

3A – Angola

I am an international student from Angola and I've been in Houston for about three months. Before I came, I thought I would be able to do all the things that I used to do in Angola and I thought I was prepared for the differences. Actually, after three months here, I realized that I had changed in several important ways. The most important change is that I am more sociable. In fact, I used to be very shy because I didn't know how to speak English as clearly as I do today. I also didn't know too much about other cultures, so I preferred to be alone rather than talk with other people and shock them because of the differences between us or our cultures. For example, in China, a boy cannot kiss a girl on her cheek, but in Angola, it is a usual practice. We usually greet people with this gesture. Fortunately, today I'm not too shy and I can have a good and agreeable conversation with people around me. In addition, I learned how to solve personal problems. For example, when I was in my home country, I called my parents to help me with all my problems. If I was sick, they took care of me, and if I could not solve a problem, no matter which type of problem it could be, they were there to help me. They are still here to help but it is not like it used to be because of the distance. So, since I've been in Houston, I have to take care of myself and find solutions to solve most of my own problems here such as controlling the time to pay my bills, make my eye appointments, and so on. Finally, I learned how to manage my money. When I was in Angola, maybe because I knew that my

parents were close to me, I used to waste more money on things that I didn't really need. For example, I used to buy a lot of clothes and shoes, and also I used to go out more often with friends to the movies, parks, parties and, consequently, waste more money. Nowadays, I prefer to allocate my money because I know what my purpose is here in Houston. My first priority is to study. Honestly, I'm learning so much from this new experience. I'm learning that we have to have to control our choices as our parents do because I think most of us want to become good parents one day. In short, my time in Houston has been a great opportunity for me to grow as a person. I'm developing my skills and I'm also overcoming my fears. Today, I'm thankful that I decided to come here because I'm learning many things that I've never thought about, from interacting with different cultures to respecting other people's choices.

## The American Lifestyle

**Nuttaya Tepudom**

5B – Thailand

Living in the United States has given me a new vision of American life. It made me believe in "different country, different lifestyle". There are two main aspects that surprised me: parenting style and level of responsibility. First of all, the American parenting style is entirely different from Thai style. Most American parents believe in their child's abilities from the time they are infants. For example, American parents let kids feed themselves. Even though children are messy, this is the best way to teach them how to take care of themselves. On the other hand, Thai parents always feed their children even when they are old enough to feed themselves. This is why most American children grow up fast and are able to make a decision whenever they are facing a problem. The second area of difference is in responsibility, American adolescents are raised in free circumstances. When it is legal for them to live alone, most of them will move out and look for a job. This so impressive because this makes them gain responsibility when they are young. Some teens not only have a part-time job but also concentrate in class. That is tough for me - working and studying at the same time! In conclusion, the American lifestyle surprised me in many ways but especially in parenting style and adolescent responsibility. Most Americans are trained to be confident to do things on their own at an early age. Therefore, there is no doubt why Americans are often leaders in many positions in terms of career, economy and the politics of the world.

## American Life

**Trung Le**

5B – Vietnam

Living in the United States is one of the biggest dreams of many people around the world. Each year, the American government accepts approximately 70,000 immigrants, and this makes the United States the most diverse country in the world with abundant cultures and lifestyles. Personally, there are two aspects of American life that surprised me a lot: the way people enjoy their life and the food diversity in the United States. First of all, American people

are experts in the way they enjoy their lives. In fact, many American people prefer to work less than 40 hours a week, and the rest of the time, they usually spend shopping and traveling. There are a lot of shopping malls and online stores that make it easier than ever to shop. Besides that, American people also spend their vacations around the world, from the humid rain forests in South America to the ancient temples in Asia. They believe that the easiest way to relax and learn a new culture is spending time traveling all over the world. That makes their lives more meaningful and memorable. Next, the diversity of food in the United States also surprised me a lot. In the large cities, we can find any food from around the world. Due to the variety of cultures and nationalities, American residents have a vast choice of food for their daily desire. Fresh vegetables, high quality meat and seafood can be imported from many sources that are enough to supply the whole nation. Moreover, fast food is another bright feature of the United States. There are so many fast food stores and soft drink branches from place to place, and this contributes to the diversity of the American food industry. Many American people believe that time is money, so they don't usually spend too much time on cooking. That's why fast food has become the most favored alternative. In conclusion, the food diversity of America and how American people enjoy their lives make me feel optimistic about my choice of studying in the United States. There are many ways to evaluate the basic life of a country, but these outstanding features of food and leisure have made America the favorite country in the world.

## American Encounter Mohammed Bashar

5A – Iraq

Each country in the world has their own way of life which is different from another. When I came to America, I found some of these aspects surprised me. So, there are several aspects that I want to write about such as transportation, shopping, and organization. First of all, transportation is one of these aspects that is positive; I can get around easily. For example, buses are so easy to ride, and they have schedules to catch them at any bus station. Also, the metro is another type of transportation that can help some people to be on time at each station. So, transportation is easy to reach your destination quickly. The second aspect that surprised about American life is organization. Organization is useful and makes everything go smoothly. For instance, when I went to get a driver's license, the organization is amazing and everyone has his turn and finishes at exact time that is scheduled for him. Another organization that I noticed was school. At school, the organization is very amazing. The third aspect that I think is amazing is shopping. Shopping is easy and comfortable at every place. For example, shopping can be done online, and it is easy to find everything. In conclusion, there are a few aspects that surprised me about American life; transportation, organization, and shopping.

## American Encounter

### Zainab Alkhalifah

5B – Saudi Arabia

Moving from one country to another one will show people lots of different habits and manners. In the United States, there are many different cultures. However, even though there are hundreds of cultures, people still have the same lifestyle because they live together. In fact, there are two things that surprised me about American life: they are busy and they have a free lifestyle. First of all, in America, people are always busy. They schedule their time for everything. For example, they have a specific time to shop, which is on the weekend. Also, they don't spend much time during the week hanging out with their friends because they are busy. Therefore, they see their friends on the weekend. Always being busy and thinking of time really surprised me about this culture. Finally, American people usually have a free lifestyle. They can comfortably talk about their opinions. In fact, they can elect their presidents. Also, in the United States, parents let their children live alone. For example, when the son is 18 years old or more, they have the option to live alone or with the family. This free lifestyle isn't available in each culture, which is an amazing thing. To sum up, American people are usually busy and have the freedom to express themselves. That's what surprises people when they see American culture. Having a great lifestyle like the American people do is a really great thing.

## Relationship in Honduras

### Karen Esmeralda Sanchez Zelaya

4A – USA Resident

In Honduras, a relationship starts as a friendship with co-workers or classmates. They know each other for a while, and then if they fall in love, they will start dating formally. The guy will ask the parents of the girl if he can date their daughter. He will talk with her parents to show respect to them. The average time they date is about two years and then if everything is going well, they will decide to get married. The parents of the groom will formally talk with the parents of the bride to ask if their son can marry their daughter and the parents of the groom and bride. The parents will then pay for the expenses equally.

## Amazing Countries

### Zahrah Albahrani

4C – Saudi Arabia

There are many countries that everyone wants to visit. Each country has unique features and beautiful places. For example, half-moon beach in Saudi Arabia and the Himalaya mountains in India are natural places people want to visit. However, Japan and India both have unique features and beautiful places, but they also have big differences in geography, weather, and history. The most important difference between Japan and India is geography. India is located in South Asia, unlike Japan, which is located in East Asia. Moreover, India is divided into many states, while Japan is divided into regions. Because of these differences, factors such as government and

tourism are affected. Overall, geography is a significant difference between Japan and India. Another factor that makes Japan and India different from each other is the weather. Because of geography, India and Japan have different weather. India has two common climates: tropical dry and tropical wet with rain. In contrast, Japan has cold weather with snow and it regularly varies from the north to the south. Because of this unique climate, factors such as activity and industry are affected. In India, people are less active than in Japan. Japan is developed country and more economical and more industrialized. Moreover, they produce many kinds of electronic devices, tools, and cars. However, India produces many kinds of products such as fruits, rice, spices, and cotton because agriculture is more active in India than in Japan. The differences between weather in both countries affects people's activities, industry, and production. Last but not least, history is a significant difference between Japan and India. Indian had been under British foreign rule for many years, while Japan has never been under foreign rule. Because of that, the Indian people have more than one language unlike Japanese people who have one language and which is their primary language. Now, the government system in India is Unitary Republic of India. Unlike Japan, which is federal parliamentary. Furthermore, the currency in India is called the Rupee, while in Japan it is the Yen. The historical differences between these two countries affected things such as languages, governments, and money. In conclusion, what makes these countries amazing are three differences: geography, weather, and the history of the country. These interesting differences make India and Japan amazing countries to visit.

## Vietnam and the USA

### Long Thai

4C – Vietnam

Vietnam and the United States are two unique countries. Both of them are great places to live or visit. Although they have many similarities, they also have a variety of differences, especially in regard to family, the economy, and transportation. First, Vietnamese families and American families have many differences. In Vietnam, there are about three generations who live in a house together like grandfather, grandmother, the parents, and children. They take care of each other. The children are always protected. In the past, the parents or someone else in the family could hit kids, but not now. If anyone hits the children, they can be sued and the people can go to the jail. That was a new rule which the Vietnamese government decided to make several years ago. Also, children are required to go to school. If any family doesn't have enough money or good conditions, their children are required to finish secondary school. However, the government has many ways to help the kids. In each family, the grandfather and grandmother always take care of the kids, and the kids can be better people in the future. If each family has two children, they will have a room in which they can study, sleep, and play games together. In America, on the other hand, each child often has a separate room. They only have two generations in each house - the parents and some children. The kids are always protected too. They are required to finish high school. They don't have to pay a

fee to study until after high school. If any family doesn't have money to take care of the children, the American government will help and the children must go to school. If they don't, it is illegal. Second, the American economy is different from Vietnam. The United States is a developed country, but Vietnam is a developing country. Both of them need a lot of investors to help their business. Vietnam needs to develop an infrastructure because students who already have their master's degree don't have a job, and they have to work outside their area of study in a job that they may not like. However, it is easier when you live in the United States. They always have many plans to help investors to bring down their taxes. Now, the American government advises people to return to their country to build factories. It helps their country. Therefore, United States citizens can have a good salary, which is harder to do in Vietnam. Third, transportation is another difference between the two countries. The people in Vietnam often use bicycles or motorbikes to go to school or work. Some people take public transport like a bus. A study said that if you ask one hundred random people about their vehicles, you will get answers of 50% motor bike, 30% bicycle, 15% bus, and 5% car. However, it is different in America; people own many cars in each family. If you aren't eighteen, you can take a public bus which comes to your home and picks you up when your family doesn't have the ability to take you. However, the air in the United States is very fresh because they have a lot of trees along the roads and the neighborhood. In Vietnam, the air is polluted, especially where there is a lot of traffic. In conclusion, lives in Vietnam and America are different in terms of family, the economy, and transportation. However, both of them are great places to live and work.

## Surprises in the United States

### Jingxian Qi

4B – China

When I arrived in Houston, I was surprised that most buildings were not tall except downtown. Moreover, because people can pay by credit card or debit card anywhere. They do not need to bring cash with them. However, Houston is so vast that going out is neither convenient nor safe. Before I arrived here, I imagined that I would have a wonderful weekend, but sometimes I feel bored. Furthermore, the environment at the University of Houston is pretty good, and I have been enjoying it since I came here.

## American Life

### Phuong Nguyen

5B – Vietnam

I was born and grew up in Vietnam, so I was taught the traditional lifestyle of Vietnam. It's really different from American life. What surprised me when I came and lived in the United States is how much they respect women and how they teach their children. First, I was really surprised about the way people respect women. For example, in Vietnam, most women have to do housework and take care of the children. Their opinions aren't important in their family when husbands and wives need to decide the big things in their life. But in America, women can do anything they want and

give their husband advice. Furthermore, husband and wife share the housework and take care of their children together. Next, I was so surprised about the way parents teach their children. American children can give their ideas to their parents, and they can argue with their parents about what they think and do in their lives. The parents give them advice or teach them some knowledge, but they can't beat them. In Vietnam, children must do everything their parents say. Parents don't listen and respect their children's ideas. If the children don't do exactly what they teach, the parents will punish them. In conclusion, I was surprised about American life in the ways they respect women and teach their children. I hope the Vietnamese can learn and change for the good like Americans in the future.

## Cultural Shock

**Maria Garcia Delgado**

*5A - Spain*

My heart stopped beating when I discovered some aspects of American life. Before I came to the United States, I had created my own stereotypes about Americans and how they lived their lives. However two aspects really surprised me: vacations and diet. Initially, I thought Americans had more free days and holidays than the Spanish. Nevertheless, while Spanish people celebrate every single event, which is excessive, Americans take free days only for the most relevant events. Consequently, if you're a foreign person, especially from Spain, and you live in the United States, this will probably surprise you. Another critical fact that surprises me is the variety of their nutrition. Most people believe Americans just eat fast food. However, we can observe that the American diet is generally full of nutrients. To illustrate, an American breakfast is one of the most complete meals all over the world because it contains milk, which strengthens our bones; orange juice, full of nutrients and vitamins; and bacon with eggs, which provides us energy for the whole day. Thus, even though I experienced culture shock the first weeks, I realized these differences from my culture could help me to learn more about this culture and its traditions, beginning with holidays and diet.

## Inevitability of Time

**Rafael Araujo Dos Santos**

*6C - Brazil*

Everyday when I wake up  
I remember that you exist  
Mocking me, Teasing me  
Tic Tock  
I try controlling you  
Failing miserably.  
In moments of pain  
I ask you to go fast  
Sinking in the ocean  
All suffering that I have  
Somewhere I will never touch  
In the graveyard of my story  
Please, bring back to me  
Diamonds that you took from me,  
Shining smiles, golden glory  
Reaching rich relics  
is no longer possible  
I can't dive so deep  
Now, at the end, you just vanished  
In a blink of eyes, everything is gone  
Energy, youth, memories,  
Tic Tock  
How could you defeat me so cruelly?





## LANGUAGE AND CULTURE CENTER PROFESSIONAL INVOLVEMENT SPRING 2017

CONFERENCE	PRESENTER(S)	TITLE
2017 International TESOL	Jenifer Edens and Sandra Buckner (retired)	Better Pronunciation: Just a Phone Call Away with Google Voice
2017 International TESOL	Cory Stewart	Vocethread, Youtube, and Instagram: The New Era of Online Student Profiles

# LIFE EXPERIENCES

## A Significant Life Event

**Mingyang Yu**

*4D – China*

I had never been to another country to study until last year. It was my first time to go abroad for getting an education. Before I arrived in Houston, I had never taken an airplane alone. I was nervous because it was my first time to be alone with lots of baggage. I had to transport it from San Francisco to Houston, but I didn't know where I should go, so I tried to ask an officer for help at the airport. I asked him if he could speak Chinese. I was sorry that I had never spoken English before I came to the United States. Then he asked another officer who could speak Chinese to give me help. Then I went to the right place and got on the correct plane to Houston. At last, I successfully arrived in Houston and met my cousin. Then we drove to his home. I lived in his home a few days, but now I live on campus. I really prefer living at the college; I can speak more English in school and make more friends who aren't from my country or city. In the beginning, I was excited, and I found that many people were friendly, and could give me more help, such as my roommate. She helps me learn about the University of Houston campus. In my first semester of study in the LCC, my roommate also taught me more about English grammar. Now, when I have a problem about my English, I always ask her. At the beginning of that term, I also met my teachers and classmates, but I was surprised that more than half the people could speak Chinese, including my teachers. During that semester, I learned many things about English, and I made some friends who came from different counties. However, I was worried about whether I could go to Level 4 at the end of that term. Luckily, on my final exam, my score showed that I could go to Level 4, but the outcome was really uncertain because my score was just on the borderline of Level 4. After that semester, we had a vacation about one month, so I decided to travel to Los Angeles with my cousin's family for around four days. We went to many places, such as Hollywood and Disneyland. It was very fun, so I really love my life in Houston!

## Help From My Best Friend

**Phat Do**

*4C – Vietnam*

We are human; therefore, we always have problems. I experienced this when someone else has helped me solve problems. I totally knew nothing about English a year ago, and my friend, Duy, taught me English. When I was in grade 12, I couldn't understand what the English teacher said about verb tense, word form, or clauses; they meant nothing to me. I could do math, chemistry, physics, and even literature, but it was a nightmare when I studied English. On an extremely bad day I got an "F" on an English exam. It had been four times in a month that I received "F". Then, Duy, my classmate, asked me if I wanted to learn English with him. That was the beginning of becoming an incredible me, a new me. After studying with him for a week, I noticed that English wasn't as hard as I thought. At that time, I gradually learned how to put the correct form of a word or correct tense of a verb into a paragraph. I strongly appreciated

Duy's kindness. He was so patient to teach me from the beginning. Sometimes I was too lazy to do his homework. He didn't yell at me, but he asked if I wanted to go to my dream university. After that, I was aware that I had to try over 200% to receive the best score. We had been studying hard for three months; therefore, the obvious result didn't disappoint us. My English score gradually increased. From an F, I went to a B after 2 months. And finally, my grade was A on my final exam; this resulted from what I studied every single day. However, I recognized Duy as the main person that patiently encouraged me day by day. I gave Duy special thanks after that class. Then Duy and I became a tireless pair of workers in class. He was the person, the main factor, the best friend that I have ever had in my entire life. We have known each other for four years, and I hope that our relationship will last eternally.

## Joining a Soccer Team

**Karl Kabore**

*4D – Burkina Faso*

It was one of the most wonderful times in my life. When I was 15, I was a great soccer fan, and I decided to join the most popular soccer team in my city. It was a great challenge, for I had to go through many steps. First, to have a chance to join the team, I started an intensive training with some friends. We ran from 4:00 AM to 6:00 AM every day for two weeks. After that, we did some exercises to improve our muscular mass and other skills like dribbles. Then I thought I was ready. The soccer team had a recruitment session, and I participated. I passed the technical exam easily. At the end, the coach organized a match to be sure of each player's value. Beyond what I had done, I had to show my effectiveness on a soccer field. I did my best and it worked. I was so proud to be recruited. Joining this great team was magic. I felt more important and self-confident. I couldn't believe that I was finally a soccer player - not a professional, but on my way to become one. Everything was fine except for a little thing. To integrate myself into the group, I had to overcome my shyness. The team members have the custom of giving a challenge to new players. Despite my shyness, I had to go through it. It was weird at first, but later I appreciated it. After that, I felt comfortable with my teammates. We developed a real brotherhood. I could predict that it would be a memorable period of my life.

## Changes

**Wen-Hui Yang**

*3B – Taiwan*

I decided to study English in March 2016. It was an important decision. I wanted to leave my job and I wanted to change my life, so I prepared to study English in America. Before I came to the United States, I thought I would face some changes. In fact, since the beginning of the term, I have changed in several important ways. The most important change is I learned how to speak to native English speakers. When I came to America, I met my roommate for the first time. I didn't know how to talk with her because I didn't understand what she said. In fact, I was scared to talk with native English speakers, and I just spoke simple English. Fortunately, my

roommate was friendly, and she spoke English slowly, so I could understand her. When I tried to speak English with her, if my grammar was wrong, she would correct to me immediately. I learned more English from her. Now, I can easily speak to native English speakers. Furthermore, I learned how to take care of myself. Before I came to America, I lived with my family in Taiwan. My mother prepared breakfast for us every day, and she did all of the housework, so I seldom cooked food and did the housework. But because I live alone in Houston, no one cooked for me, so I had to learn how to cook a meal. I asked my mother on Facetime how to cook a delicious meal. Sometimes I went to my friend's house, I cooked with them and we exchanged some cooking ideas. It was very interesting for me. Today, I can cook a delicious meal and I have enough nutrition to keep a healthy body. Finally, I am more confident to face any challenge. When I came to America, I was afraid of making mistakes. Everything was new for me, and my English was not good, so I had to practice my English. I attended some activities on campus such as free coffee club, sport activities, and I made new friends. When I talked with new friends, I learned how to speak English confidently. Also, when I went to a restaurant to order a meal, I tried to talk with the waiter. Sometimes, when I went to church for free lunch, there were many international students and we could practice our speaking. Now, I am not afraid of challenges. Maybe my English is not good, but I am confident to speak English with everyone. In conclusion, I have made a lot of changes since coming to America. I feel confident when I face a new challenge. I am enthusiastic when I make new friends. In the future I believe I will be a mature woman.

## Changes

**Abdullah Mohammed**

*3A – Iraq*

Two years ago, I started my new life in Houston as a student. I was worried and nervous because I did not know anyone here, so everything was unknown to me. When I arrived, I was shocked by the different traditions, but I tried to learn everything about American culture, such as how to talk with people in polite ways, what the limits with friends and many other things are. Now, I have changed in many important ways, and I also have acclimated with the American culture. Since coming to America, I have become very serious in my life and have never wasted my time on useless things. For example, I started studying very hard, and I became a very good student. I study about two to three hours daily. I also became a very hard worker. I work every day even the weekend and I study while I work. It is very hard, but I never give up. Furthermore, I started to manage my expenses by allocating my salary in the right way, so I never waste money. I also try to reduce my monthly expenses. Now I am very optimistic about my future, and I also so grateful that I have a very organized life. In addition, I became responsible for myself and responsible regarding my life requirements, such as money, food and clothes. I was depending on my parents for 19 years, but I can't anymore because I have to be responsible and depend on myself. Now, my family is very far from me, so I am doing everything by myself, such as cooking, laundry, and cleaning. Also, I have started

working to provide for my daily needs. Although life is difficult, I have to be patient and depend on myself. Actually, when I became responsible for myself, I started to feel how difficult it is to get money and how difficult it is to support myself, so I felt the value of what my parents have done for me. Finally, after all the experience that I got from life in the United States, I became more confident. When I was in my country, I was not confident enough because my parents did everything for me, so I did not have the chance to be confident. Since I came to the United States, I started to trust myself and my choices. For example, six months ago, I decided to buy a car, so I chose the one that I liked, and I was very confident in my choice. Furthermore, I chose my major by myself. I was sure that I made the right choice because I met an advisor and we talked about it. I also decided to move and live by myself without a roommate. After a very difficult life here, I have gotten very valuable benefits. After all the experiences that I have had, I am very happy because I made a wise choice to come to the United States, and I also learned a lot of important things to help me stay here. For example, I learned a new culture and new language. Today, I am so grateful for what I have learned, and I did all these things for a good life and great future.

## Changes

**Xuan Nghia Le**

*3B – Vietnam*

On January 10, 2017, I began studying English in Houston, Texas. Because I had never been here, I was prepared for a lot of changes from living in Vietnam. I brought a lot of Vietnamese food I couldn't find in the United States, and I brought some special books I liked. However, after living in the United States, I realized that I had changed in several important ways. The most important three ways I changed were I learned how to speak to native English speakers, how to study English more effectively and how to manage my time better. The most important change is I learned how to speak to native English speakers. When I first came to America, I didn't have many American friends, so I usually went to some places in Houston when I had free time. Fortunately, I met some new friends who were Americans and we became best friends. Every weekend we usually went to a coffee shop and my friends taught me how to improve my speaking skill with native English speakers. So I talked with my friends every weekend and spoke with many people. Now I can speak fluently and I can speak better. In addition, I learned how to study English more effectively. After three months here, I felt my English listening, speaking, writing and reading skills were better. For example, I always focused on listening to my teacher when I studied in school. After I went home, I usually watched movies and listened to music. Therefore, I could listen to English more clearly and understand so easily. Besides, I improved my speaking skill because I often talked with my friends who helped me practice English every day. Now I can speak English more effectively. Finally, I learned how to manage my time better. Before I arrived in Houston, I didn't know how to manage time. It was really difficult for me. However, I could manage my time more effectively when I stayed in the United States. For example, I usually made plans for the next day

# LIFE EXPERIENCES

such as waking up, doing my homework, cooking for the morning, watching movies, and so on. When I knew activities for the next day, I always followed my schedule. If it was not suitable, I would change my schedule. I must keep a really detailed schedule and follow it. So it felt really comfortable and I studied English more effectively. In conclusion, I have made a lot of changes in my life since coming to the United States. I feel more mature and confident because I have overcome many difficulties in the United States. In the future, I believe I will be successful with my goals in life. I hope my life is better and more comfortable when I follow my passion.

## Trouble on the road

**Lolita Laktionova**

*3D – Russia*

I came to the United States two months ago and ever since, I have come to love this country more and more. One of the reasons for my love is that people in America are very kind and helpful. They will help you if you are in trouble. I was once caught in this situation and was surprised at how caring the Americans could be. This situation happened to me during spring break. We took a trip to Padre Island, which is famous for its beaches. One day, we decided to visit some of these beaches. We set out in the car and went to sandy beaches on the southern part of the island. Everyone was in a good mood, knowing that we were going to have fun. However, this was not meant to come true. After we had spent the bulk of the journey on the beach, we decided to leave when suddenly our car got stuck in the sand right next to the road! At first, we tried pushing the car back onto the road, but we were not successful. Then, we tried digging under the wheels, hoping that we would be able to pull out the car. We did a great job, but it was all in vain. The curb was too high, and our car sunk deeper into the sand. We were in despair. At that moment, a car stopped and some people got out. They came towards us and said that they had boards that could help us. Together, we put the boards under the wheels. We had to dig again, but this time everything turned out all right. The car was finally back on the road! Everyone was tired and dirty but happy. We thanked our saviors and said goodbye to them. Many days have passed since that time, but I can still remember the faces of those people and what they did to help us when we were in trouble.

## A Baby for Final Exams

**Haya Al Khammash**

*4C – Saudi Arabia*

It is difficult to ignore people who are ambitious. One unusual day, I went to my job in Taif University. It was one of the final exam days at school. I was in my office when I heard a noise in the corridor of the building. As any one would, I could not resist my curiosity. I left my office at that moment and went to see what happened. I saw two teachers who prevented a student from entering the classroom. The student was crying and carrying a baby while the teachers closed a door. It was a strange situation. Why had she brought a baby to school? It was unusual behavior. I asked the student about her story and why she brought her infant with her. She told me that he was her baby.

She lived alone in this city, and her husband had traveled away. I understood that she did not find any one with whom she could leave her baby. Also, she did not want to miss her final exam. Without thinking, I decided to help this student. I did not have anything in my schedule at that time. Therefore, I took the baby and let her enter the classroom. Then, I went to my office with that baby. He was cute and quiet, but also tired. So, he slept quickly in my arms. His young mother finished her test, and came to take her angel. She thanked me and left. For her, the story ended, but for me it was not yet finished. By the end of the semester, I asked her teachers about her results. They told me that she was an excellent student and that she had graduated. I was so proud of her. In general, I believe that people who follow their passion make everyone respect them.

## American Encounter

**Nguyen Tran**

*5A – Vietnam*

When people enter a different country, it means they may experience shock from encountering another culture. The lifestyle of elderly people in the United States is one aspect that really surprises me. My aunt is a typical example for this surprising lifestyle because of her independence and satisfaction in life. When it comes to independence, elderly people in my country tend to be really dependent. In fact, they have to live with their sons or their daughters, who take care of them. This sometimes creates a gap between members in their family, especially between the mother-in-law and the daughter-in-law. Even worse, this tension affects their emotions as well as everyone's mood in everyday life. Therefore, they get angry with anyone easily, including with their wife/ husband. Their marital relationships are always in a dangerous situation. In contrast, the elderly people in the United States are very active and independent. For example, my aunt can take care of herself or even decide to live in an assisted living facility when she feels she can't protect or feed herself alone. She can also earn money, drive, and enjoy her life by herself. In simple terms, relying on or being controlled by someone or something else can impact an older person's health. To avoid depression or dissatisfaction in life, older people should try to live independently as much as they can and not put themselves in a bad situation. In regard to the high standard of satisfaction, older people in the United States see the world with a very optimistic eye. They believe that the more experience people have, the more people equip themselves to explore the world. In fact, my aunt in this stage still has her businesses and is successful. She has even started to learn new hobbies, including drawing, painting, and dancing to better enjoy her later years. In my country, older people stick to the traditional notion that retirement is just a time to relax. They don't want to do anything, and this is the time for the younger generation to take their responsibility – to care for the older generation. This passive way of thinking leads older people to lose their goals in life, which used to make them feel satisfied and happy when they accomplished something. Part of this could be explained by the fact that many people in Vietnam can't even drive vehicles, so they just stay at home and don't know what to do to kill time until



the next day. They feel life is very boring and just blame others about their life instead of doing something. I hope that older people in Vietnam will adopt the more independent lifestyle of older people in the United States. In conclusion, every choice in life has an important impact on the future. What we do today will affect what quality of life we have later. Choosing the appropriate lifestyle can lead to avoiding dependence and dissatisfaction. My aunt is an excellent example for me to follow.

## A Useful Skill

**Jia He**

*4D – China*

An increasing number of individuals believe that if you have a special skill in one field, you will be successful. Undeniably, I have to say I hold a supportive attitude toward this view that a useful skill is important for people's whole life. First, it should be emphasized when young that developing one special skill is essential because others may not have it. For myself, I have an experience that can support this. During university in China, my major was mechanical engineering because I was interested in drawing and designing. When I was a child, I was good at drawing, and I spent four years studying in primary school. In 2015, I participated in a design competition when I was a junior at university. This was also my first time to study how to use drawing software - Solid Works. Every day I practiced and grasped what the teacher taught in class. Step by step, I could help other students to solve their problems. One day, a foreign student, who was from Pakistan and also participated in this competition, had a problem, and he did not know how to draw the machine part. Then I explained and taught him step by step. Gradually, he understood. After that, we often went to the library and discussed how to improve drawing skills. In the end, we got an excellent final score. Since then, I have never stopped practicing. Last year, I attended the University of Detroit Mercy. There was a Chinese student whose major was electrical engineering. One day, he got a project and need to designed a device with a gear drive. But he did not know how to design it and how to print it on the 3D-printer. Then I took my computer and analyzed the data in the lab every night. Ultimately, I got permission from his professor. That was a big encouragement, so I am studying constantly. Actually, as people say: "If you are professional in your hobby, then you will be the number one in other things, too."

## A Great Night Went Bad

**Elizabeth Gurrola Cantu**

*4C – Mexico*

Weekend nights with my friends in Monterrey were awesome until one day. We used to hang out a lot. We attended concerts, went to movies, and had dinner, but the one thing we enjoyed the most was going to dance. We would have some drinks downtown at night and stay until we were exhausted, so one of us had to be the designated driver. That was a duty that I had to assume that day. Early in the day, I was so excited. "Finally I'm going to go to that concert," I thought. I got ready quickly so I could pick up my friend Roberto on

the way. Finally, we arrived at Arena Monterrey, where the concert was scheduled, and we realized it was going to be a huge show. In fact, it was! At the end of the concert, Keri, a friend of ours, called and wanted us to join her and some other friends at a downtown club, so we decided to go there. At that time, it was nearly evening, so I was a little worried because of the time, but I wanted to dance, so I forgot about the time and left. Every time we went to any club, I would decide to be the designated driver because all my friends like to drink, but not me. I don't like it very much. It's just that if I drink too much, I will be sleepy the rest of the night, so I would prefer not to do it. Although I didn't drink that day, I had a really good time dancing with my friends until almost 2 am. I didn't notice how late it was. By that time, I had told my friends that I had to go, so if they wanted me to take them to their homes, we should leave. I had already taken Jose to his house but not Keri, Roberto, and Randy. We were on our way to their homes, which are close to each other, but I started to feel tired, so I sped up a little more. At that time, I had an old '98 Mustang. You could guess the speed I reached. We were talking about the day and laughing, so I didn't realize the feeder road had steel devices like balls, and the road was wet. At the time I turned right to move to the feeder road, I passed over those devices and I was scared. I didn't know what was happening, so I just pushed the brakes, but the car started to slide until we crashed against a concrete fence and between two posts that were holding a billboard. The worst thing was that the fence was close to a gas station. A little bit more and it could have been a terrible ending. I was so afraid. What did I do? I just wanted to go home; after some seconds, I was more worried about my friends. Fortunately, everyone was okay. None of us had an injury - just a few bruises - but the whole left side and the front of my car were damaged. We were really blessed that nothing bad happened to us, and I hope something like that doesn't happen again. Since that night, I have never sped any place. I just take my time to be safe.

## A Change

**Pongsakon Pankudrua**

*3A – Thailand*

Three months ago, I came to the United States to study English at the LCC in Houston, Texas. I brought a lot of food from Thailand because I was worried about eating in the United States. I didn't know how to order American food or cook by myself. However, after living in the United States for a while, I learned to cook a lot of dishes and I learned to live in Houston. The most important change is I learned how to cook food by myself. When I stayed in Thailand I didn't cook any food because food in Thailand is easy to buy and very cheap, so most Thai people don't like to cook. They just walk out and buy it. In fact, people are lazy to cook by themselves. When they cook food, they have to have more time to prepare it. However, if you buy food, you just pay for it and eat it. On the first day in the United States I went to buy food in a restaurant close my house. I paid more than \$10 for one meal. I felt depressed about that. Fortunately, I have a friend who is good at cooking and he helped me to save money by cooking by myself. He taught me how to buy

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groceries, how to cook Thai food and how to save food for the next meal. Now I can cook buy myself and save money. Furthermore, I learned how to manage money. When I came to America, I had a limited budget for living in Houston, so I had to manage my money for one year which includes everything. First, I had to plan how much I can spend for one day and what costs I can reduce. I tried to control it in the first week but I didn't know how to manage it until I wrote down everything that I paid for on a list and rechecked it every week. Then I knew which items were unnecessary and which items I could reduce. Now I write down everything on my list and I know where money goes or leaks out. It's helpful and easy to control money. Another thing that I can do is I can save money and plan for vacation in the United States with a low budget. I don't have any financial problems since I started writing and rechecking my payments every week. Finally, I learned how to use public transportation. Before I came to United States, I heard that in the central and western region, people used personal cars, and there was no subway or train. I was worried about it. I didn't know how to go to school or the supermarket. When I arrived Houston, my friend picked me up at the airport and I asked him about the transportation. He gave me good information about where I can buy a bus ticket, where I can take a bus and what important things to avoid when I am on the bus in the night time. Now I have learned a lot of things and can travel alone or go where I want. It's been a great time in the United States and I have learned several things since I came here. Experience made me grow. I can do many things by myself. Today I'm happy to learn new things, and I continue to practice cooking and managing money. It helps me to enjoy life without problems. Maybe I can use my cooking skills to make money in the future.

## The Benefits of Technology

**Sultan Suhail Humaid Alderei**

*4B – United Arab Emirates*

In our modern world, life has become more sophisticated and better than before. Today, I would like to share something that has surprised me very much here in the United States. Uber is a really convenient transportation system, especially for neophytes in a foreign country. When I decided to study abroad, I got very excited; however, when I arrived in the US, I did not know how to use the transportation methods. I had a difficult time because I used to drive by myself in my own country. Then, one of my friends told me about the Uber app, which can help me with my issues. What surprised me the most was the low cost. In addition, I can really tell the difference between Yellow Cab and Uber. Uber seems safer than Yellow Cab as well. Also, Uber drivers are super trustworthy, their cars are meticulously clean, and the payment process occurs online which is very convenient. Finally, it is amazing to see the benefits of modern technology.

## Spring Break

**Yan Zeng**

*2B – China*

I had a crazy and happy trip during spring break in Austin. Austin is the capital of Texas. First, Austin is known internationally as the live music capital of the world, and the music is very different and special. I thought it would be very big, beautiful and more people came to listen. My idea was wrong. This musical venue doesn't have a simple stage and audience. But you can eat free food and drink wine. If you drink soda and water, you need to pay money. Second, I went shopping in San Marcos. One day, I went shopping there three times. I bought more clothes and cosmetics. It was very crazy time in my life. Finally, my friends and I visited the State Capital. It's a big and magnificent building. You can study the culture and history of Texas. Although this trip was very short, I felt nice. This is a happy memory in my life, and my first spring break.

## Spring Break

**Suhail Saeed Alderei**

*2B – United Arab Emirates*

Our exciting Spring break was one of the greatest times for me and my twin brother. I was excited to meet my cousin in South Carolina. The first day, a lot of snow fell, and the weather was cold. There was a Starbucks underground at the hotel we were staying that was a beautiful shape. We also went to Columbia Mall. It was small mall, but it was interesting to visit that mall. In that state, we went to the capital building and took many pictures. Finally, it was beautiful trip with my twin brother and I hope to do that again and again.

## Travel to Alaska

**Wen-Hui Yang**

*3B – Taiwan*

I traveled to Alaska during spring break. This was a great experience for me. Before we arrived at the Alaskan airport, we needed to transfer in Seattle. We had to wait about 10 hours to take a plane, so we visited Seattle. We went to the local market, and we ate local food such as seafood and chowder. The food was very delicious. Then, we took a light rail to the University of Washington, and we walked around the campus. It was a very beautiful campus with the view. When we arrived in Alaska, it was snowing. The weather was very cold, but I saw the snow and I felt excited because I had never seen snow before. The next day, we went to Chena Hot Springs, but there were many people in the hot spring, so we decided to change our plan. We visited dog sledding, and we saw many dogs that were very cute, and then we experienced the dog sledding. It was so exciting when the dogs ran fast. The dog sledding owner talked a lot about Alaska and helped us realize Alaska is an incredible place. After dinner, we went to the ski slope to watch the aurora. We waited about one hour until the aurora appeared. When we saw the aurora, we were very excited and we took many pictures. The aurora with green colors was very beautiful. I recommend everyone to plan a trip to Alaska. It is extraordinary to be so near the sky. If you have a chance, you should travel to Alaska.

## Changes

**Demba Diallo**

*3B – Burkina Faso*

For three months, I've studied English in the University of Houston. While living in my country, Burkina Faso, I was aware of many changes that could occur during my stay in the United States. However, since the beginning of this term, I have realized that I have changed in several important ways. The main change is my great ability to solve personal problems. When I was in Burkina Faso, I used to be supported by my parents for all kinds of problems. I could always count on their help. But now, as I live alone and am so far from them, I've to solve my personal problems by myself. For instance, my car broke down so I had to call a car mechanic by myself to fix it. Also, I've recently had to go to the LCC office to correct a mistake on my I-20 form. Actually, I'm more aware of what I should do in case of a problem. In addition, I've changed by the way I manage my money. Before coming to the United States, I always asked for money from my parents so I could spend it as I pleased without any problem. But this situation has been changing since I've begun to live in the United States. In fact, now my parents send me money every three months and I have to manage it well so I don't lack money. For example, I have to control my purchases by knowing what I need, or don't need to buy. Also, I've got to make a list of my expenses so that I can save my money better. Anyway, I think it's a good thing for me to know how to manage my money well because it will help me in my life. Finally, another way I've changed is that I'm more confident. In fact, I wasn't very confident about my capabilities or even my future goals; but after I came to the United States, I changed the way I thought. I used to always be supported by a relative when I was in my country and that's why I didn't rely on myself. However, as I live alone in the United States, I've had to learn how to take care of myself, and now I'm more confident about my abilities. For example I've learnt how to cook my favorite dishes. Also, I've learned how to manage my time; I'm able to schedule the time of my daily activities. Furthermore, being in the United States taught me that there are opportunities for success for everyone, and I've started to become more confident about my long-term goals. Actually, I'm about to realize some projects for my country based on the development of solar energy; and I'm really proud of myself. In short, I've changed in many ways since the beginning of the term. Even though these changes have been hard for me to adapt to, I feel thankful because they'll help me in my current life. In the future, I believe I'll be a responsible person.

## Big Dream, Small Girl

**Tram Ton**

*4C – Vietnam*

Big ambitions need good preparation. Studying abroad was always one of my life's dreams. However, having a dream and making the dream come true are absolutely different things. It was a rainy day. I went home with all the information which I got from the study abroad exhibitions. Then one big question appeared in my mind: "How could I convince my parents to allow me to pursue

my dream?" The word "Powerpoint" came to me. Immediately, I opened my computer and put all of my plans with detailed issues; for example, the graduate program (Master of Accountancy), the school, the financial plan (how much I had to borrow from parents and how soon I could repay it) and the study-abroad advantages and drawbacks. Then, I practiced my presentation day after day. One week later, I did the presentation of my study-abroad plan in front of my family. I wanted to show them that I was mature and ready for my dream with a clear plan and well-prepared. There was silence of about 30 seconds; nobody said a word. Besides that, there was a little twist in the pit of my stomach; it felt as though I would fail, and they wouldn't support me as in previous times. Suddenly, my dad turned to my mom and said, "Well, we should lend her money. So, what's the interest rate? Same as bank interest rate?" My whole family could not help laughing at his jokes. "I will support the tuition fee, but first of all, you must take care of your study profile and get a study-abroad visa. You know, it is not easy," said my dad. I just smiled and said, "Your daughter can do it." Finally, it was time for an interview with the United States Consulate in my country of Viet Nam. On that day, there were many people like me waiting for interviews. I vividly remember the conversation of a group sitting in front of me that it was really hard to get a visa during these days when there was the new president in the United States. "Is this true?" I asked myself. I was very anxious about what I should do if I could not get a visa. My family, especially my father, would be very upset. Therefore, I decided not to pay more attention to this thought, just focus on my study plan and my recent job. I thought I did not answer the questions well about why I studied accountancy, but I had worked in the sales department. Finally, the man at the consulate gave me a red paper and said congratulations to me on getting it. I turned to thank him, and I could not stop the tears from forming in my eyes. A lot of things were in my mind, and I had braced myself for the challenges. I had to be ready for new things. As someone once said, "If you try, nothing is impossible."



# CULTURE FEST



# The Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo

## The Rodeo

**Omar Andres Quintero Espinal**

*2A – Venezuela*

I like the rodeo because I love the horses and cowgirls. I have visited Houston many times and gone to the rodeo. I think the rodeo is very important for Houston because many cowboys and cowgirls are there, so Houston is a “cow” city. During my visits to Houston, I like the rodeo the most. The part with the bull riding is spectacular and the show is unique. The rodeo grounds are very big, and the stadium is enormous and modern. I like the rodeo. In the future, I want to visit Houston to go to the rodeo again.

## Rodeo

**Monirah Al Dossary**

*3C – Saudi Arabia*

The Houston rodeo is considered one of the most famous and biggest events in Texas. It has entertainment and amazing live shows. It has been held at the NRG stadium in Texas since 2002, however, the first live show was in April 1932. That show that was more than 80 years ago reflects Texas culture and traditions. I first heard about the Houston live rodeo, or HLSR from my neighbor, who described it as the greatest event in Texas. Also, it is joyful for both young and old, so I could not wait to go. The next morning, I happily woke up my son and my husband to attend our new experience. When we reached NRG stadium, there were many people, and you could see the looks of excitement and happiness on their faces. The ticket was \$30 each. First, we watched horse racing and riding skills tests for men and women, the idea is to remain on the horse for the longest time. After that, bull riding started, which was so powerful and scary at the same time. The next race was for kids, who were trying to ride sheep. My son liked the sheep race so much, he even asked me to buy him his own sheep so he could ride and practice to join the fun in the coming years. After that, we got some snacks. We also got nice Texas hats from hat shops there. Finally, Demi Lovato had an outstanding performance with her many talents, and her lovely voice. After the day ended, me, my husband and our son were so fascinated by the experience. The only exceptions were that the food was expensive, and the restrooms were so crowded. My advice for all of you if you have not attended the HLSR you have to do it at least once in your life time. It was the most memorable experience for me in Texas.



## Where do I See Myself in 5 Years?

**Alice Tougouma**

*6A – Burkina Faso*

In the next five years, academically, I see myself having my degree in nursing. Professionally, I want to work as a pediatrician in a reputable hospital here in the United States in order to get job experience. After about one year of work, I'll be going back to my country. When I return, I plan to open my own clinic. Moreover, once I become financially secure, I'll open an orphanage. Being around children has always been one of my interests. I want to help them because children are innocent and need to be protected.

## What Will I Do in 5 Years?

**Tong Wei**

*6B – China*

In five years, I will probably be teaching reading classes in primary school. Initially, being a teacher was not my ideal occupation, but as I grew up, my mind was changed by the deep obsession of teaching. When I taught children two years ago, I found cute students and an amusing class atmosphere; these were the motivating factors behind choosing teaching as my future career. Also, teaching is of great value to my work satisfaction. Whenever I see students making huge progress in my class, a strong sense of achievement fills my heart. I deem that I will eventually head for success with my passion for teaching.

## The Foreseeable Future

**Jih-Hao Yeh**

*6C – Taiwan*

Sometimes, people think about what they will be in the future such as a father who has two sons or an astronaut who has been traveling in space. Of course, I think about this as well. In the coming five years, I will achieve my dreams. First of all, I will finish my master's degree in electrical engineering. Being an engineer has been my dream since I was a kid and started playing with robots. Secondly, I will get a job in NASA as a robotics engineer. Working for NASA, I believe, is a goal for many people who are interested in engineering and space. Finally, I will build a family. People always want to build a family when they have a stable income. Also, a family can give people not only safety but also loyalty. Overall, after working hard, I believe that I will fulfill these goals in five years.

## My Life Will Be Wonderful

**Toan Luoc Vong**

*6B – Vietnam*

Absolutely, my English will be perfect by that time, but I will still keep learning it for the rest of my life. I will be living in Saigon, the biggest city in Vietnam, where all my friends are, and spending a large amount of time hanging out with them. I will probably visit my parents twice a week because they will be just a hundred miles away from me. I will be a film maker and love my job completely even if I face many difficulties. I will be single and enjoying the

freedom of living alone. Because of that, I will have a lot of time for myself to learn things like Kung fu and yoga. My life will be wonderful and awesome, and I'll love it.

## My Future Self In A Half Decade

**Wafun Jorge Ho Kong**

*6B – Dominican Republic*

Completely established in Houston, I picture myself working in any technology related job in the next five years. Additionally, I visualize living with my wife and child under a cozy and safe roof. Moreover, I can see all of us visiting museums, parks, restaurants, and many fun family places in the city, spending quality time together. Certainly, the future shifts constantly; however, I feel optimistic, and I am carefully planning each step I have to take so I can make this vision a reality. In short, I see myself and my family living together in Houston, earning my living at a technological company or institute, and visiting many places in the area in the next five years.

## In 5 Years

**Wenxiao Xin**

*6B – China*

In modern society, people accumulate job experience by having different types of jobs. They want to have different experiences in their life. However, I think I will become an excellent piano teacher in 5 years. I like to teach and be around children. In my mind, teaching is a divine job. If you want to become the best teacher, you need to learn more than others. This is the reason that I want to become a teacher in 5 years.

## How I See Myself in 5 Years

**Kim Nguyen**

*6B – Vietnam*

I have always imagined myself becoming a CFO in the next five years. Hence, I expect to get a master's degree in accounting from the University of Houston by the year 2019. Then, there will be two options for me. The first option will be to go back to my country and seek a job as a CFO. The second option will be to study for another degree in logistic and supply chain management. I want to acquire this degree because it isn't widespread in Vietnam, and it is estimated that the job demand will be high. I will save money while I am working, as my friends and I plan to open our own financial services company. I hope I can achieve my goal by 2022. Additionally, in my personal life, I hope to meet someone and get married when I am thirty. That's how I see myself in the future.

## Where Will I Be in 5 Years?

**Trang Vu**

*6B – Vietnam*

It is obviously tough to see what our future will be, but I can decide what I will do and stick firmly to my plans. Five years is relatively far from the present. I know if I plan my future today, I will have more time to proceed and adjust. In the first three years, I will attempt a

master's degree of education. To be honest, I will make an effort to graduate with flying colors. After that, I will go back to Vietnam and work for the university where I obtained my bachelor's degree. I will implement all my practical know-how, excellent teaching methods, and good experiences in my country's educational system. I see myself as a dedicated educator. Besides my academic purpose, I think of other potential plans in the next two years as well. I want to be a good wife who shares domestic work with her husband and educates her kids every night. I will be quite busy for the next five years! Life is going on and my future is always ahead. In fact, it is exciting to dream about it. I will certainly be more responsible, more mature, more ambitious, and more successful. Now, I have already planned my five-year future and plan to follow it.

## How Do You See Yourself After 5 Years?

**Truc Nguyen**

6A – Vietnam

After five years, I realize that I will have many differences and will become more mature in my thoughts than before. When I was nineteen years old, I was studying in the undergraduate program in chemistry in my country, Vietnam. I did not think much about my future. I just planned to graduate from university and get a job to support myself. However, I got a big chance in 2015 to move to the United States so that I could continue my studies. My daily life has changed a lot ever since. I am always busy and I try to manage my valuable time more effectively than in the past. Besides, I am living in Houston without my parents, so I consider carefully before making important decisions and solving any problems by myself. Sometimes, I feel alone and tired because of stress. I want to give up and go back to my hometown, where I have my family's love. At those times, I think about the reason why I came to Houston: my big dream that I can receive a graduate degree from the University of Houston. Therefore, I will keep going and I hope I will achieve my goal in the near future.

## Where Do I See Myself in 5 Years?

**Roqyah Mohammad**

6A – Kuwait

There are so many major options to choose and that confuse me, so I can't see myself in five years in the future. Therefore, next year as a freshman, I will be there with an undeclared major. I hope after first years of studying basics classes, I will be able to know which major is the best for me.



## Culture Shock

**Rahaf Alostad**

4B Kuwait

I have some advice for you if you experience culture shock. At first, the experience of culture shock is not easy, but then everything will change. Don't give up because it is a normal feeling and you may be home sick. You may feel like you want to go home and you want your family and friends, but that is all normal. It is good to challenge yourself. For instance, meeting new friends from different countries, explore the new country, go to the cinema, go shopping, exercise regularly, go outside and run around, or create a routine. Work on thinking positively because being homesick is negative thinking and there are so many things you can do. Finally, try to be strong and patient.

## Culture Shock: Advice

**Joanne (Hui-Hsin) Kuan**

4B Taiwan

After you move to a new country, you may experience several emotions. You might be anxious about the unfamiliar environment. Fortunately, this is not too difficult to overcome. Try to find a coffee shop or another spot you like in the new city so you will feel like you're part of the new place. Second, if you are not sure about something, just ask for help; don't be afraid of making mistakes! Last, open your mind to make new friends. This is the best way to become involved in society. It takes everyone a different amount of time to overcome what they are suffering, but try to be patient.

## How Our Future Should Be

**Aydogdy Aliyev**

4C Turkmenistan

When you have a conversation with somebody, the second thing that they ask after "What is your name?" is "Where are you from?" You answer their questions and expect them to know about your country. However, your expectations do not always come true. There are a couple of things that this author would change in his country, Turkmenistan. Turkmenistan is located in Middle Asia, bordering Iran, Uzbekistan, and Afghanistan. There are five million people in a territory twice as large as France, and it has the 4th largest gas reserves in the world. The beautiful capital city, Ashgabat has buildings made of white marble. It does not have as many tourists as it should because of the closed policy of the government. Some people still think that they are still in the USSR with a very old-world vision. I wish that my country could make an open policy so lots of tourist can visit our country. Turkmenistan's greatest income is from gas, so it will be better to improve our other prospects for more income and to grow quickly. To be in a good relationship with other countries will be one of the important things that I would change in my country. Technology, the main power in the 21st century, is the other thing that would be great to see in my country. Everyone who is studying, working or traveling abroad represents his or her own country, so you need to represent your homeland and country in a good way and be a good person. If you want to change your country for be better, first start with yourself.

# LCC Calendar

Important Dates

Summer Term 2017

May 9 - 16

Online Registration

Tuesday, May 16

Student Check-in

Tuition and Fee Payment

Wednesday, May 17

Testing

Late Online Registration

Thursday, May 18

Student Activity

Late Online Registration

Friday, May 19

First Assembly/Orientation

Last Day of Late Registration

Monday, May 22

Classes Begin

Monday, May 29

Memorial Day Holiday- NO CLASSES

June 15 - 22

Summer II Online Registration

Thursday, June 22

Summer II Student Check-In/Tuition and Fee Payment

Monday, June 26

Summer II First Assembly/Orientation

Tuesday, July 4

Independence Day Holiday- NO CLASSES

July 31 - August 4

Final Exams

Monday, August 7

Testing

Tuesday, August 8

No Classes

Wednesday, August 9

Final Student Activity

Thursday, August 10

Student-Teacher Conferences (morning)

Graduation Ceremony (afternoon)

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