To Our Readers,

Welcome to the third issue of Accents! We are pleased to offer a colorful magazine chock-full of exceptional writing, art and poetry from every level of ESL student. We are thrilled that Accents! is now being read and used in classrooms around the world. The beauty of an on-line medium is that we can create a borderless, global writing community, with authentic writers, readers and a student-centered audience. Accents! makes a fantastic supplemental text for teachers and students of writing, reading, grammar and speaking classes.

Accents! showcases exemplary student writing and art. It reflects the dynamic lives, vivid imaginations and clear voices of ESL student writers and artists. The magazine celebrates the diverse cultures, languages, ethnic backgrounds, opinions and rich life experience of its contributors. Accents! aim is to encourage and support ESL students who, in both demonstrative and quiet ways, contribute to our world’s diversity and intellectual life.

In an effort to acknowledge top writers, submissions for each issue are juried by a committee of full-time faculty. Awards are given in the following categories:

- Best Narrative (Novice, Intermediate, Advanced)
- Best Non-Narrative (one award)
- Best Fiction (one award)
- Best Reaction (one award)
- Best Poem (one award)
- Best Art Composition (one award)

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Award winners are designated in RED.
One little tiny hand appeared and then was covered with a warm shawl. It was held by another hand. The wind flew all over and the boat shook by the movement of the sea. They stood there quietly facing an unknown destination.

Her name was Sara Peterson. She met her husband Charles Peterson in November 1790. They got married two years later and then they lived in Boston, Massachusetts. Her husband was an engineer. He worked for small company. Sara was a teacher. She taught in an elementary school. Mr. Peterson made money and the couple lived a good life together, until 1795 when Sara got very sick.

Her husband took her to the hospital and she had surgery a few days later. Her husband was terrified when the doctor told him her wife couldn’t have babies. Sara’s husband was very upset. He felt like he was going to die, because they always talked about having a baby, especially a baby boy.

Six months later, Sara’s neighbor was pregnant. When Sara heard the news, she was very sad. She spent most of her time everyday, standing by her window. She looked at the woman when she went out. She wanted to be like her. Sara always complained to her husband about her sadness. She told him, “I want my life back. I can’t live like this”. Sara’s husband spoke to her and he gave her assurance. One day he told her, “Don’t worry sweetheart! We are going to have our child.”

One year later Sara’s husband had a terrific plan. He was planning to kidnap the neighbor’s baby. It was in December 1796 when Sara’s husband went to the neighbor’s house and he kidnapped the baby. He and his wife left Massachusetts. They took a boat. Sara covered the baby with her shawl and held her tiny hand. Sara’s hand was warm but inside their hearts were full of fear and sadness.

Mr. Charles Peterson was very suspicious of everyone who talked to him and Sara was sad. They weren’t happy. People in the boat seemed like they enjoyed the trip but Mr. and Mrs. Peterson kept silent.

(Continued on next page)
He held The newspaper that reported about the child and they put a warrant against the couple. Sara and her husband were scared to death, unhappy, and thinking about going to prison.

They were happy when they were in Massachusetts. They had their own house and they enjoyed their life but now they lived with frustration. Sara wanted a baby and she got him, but the baby was somebody else's baby. She was in big trouble. She didn't know what to do exactly. They worried about what would happen next.

**Three Men and the Tree**

*An adapted folktale*

**BY WARDAH ABUHADBA — PALESTINE — NOVICE**

There were three men traveling together by horses to another country to find a job. One of them was a chiseler, the other was a tailor and the third was an imam, who kept praying to God.

When they were riding the horses from the morning to the night, it got dark. The men decided to stop and sleep. They managed to take turns guarding.

At first, the chiseler stayed awake and the others slept. He saw a tree without leaves and didn’t know what to do so he carved the tree into a woman. When his time guarding was finished, he went to sleep and the tailor took his turn guarding. The tailor saw the tree that had been carved into the woman and he sewed a dress and put it on her.

Finally, it was the imam’s turn to keep watch. The imam saw the tree and was amazed. So he prayed to God to turn the tree into a woman. The tree turned into a woman. The men were happy but they argued about who would marry her. So, who deserved to marry the woman?

**Guess who?**
Once upon a time, many countries ago in Krakow city lived the most horrible fire-belching dragon. He lived in a cave at the foot of Wawel Hill below Wawel Castle. Everybody called him the Dragon of Wawel.

The dragon frightened people in the city. He also devoured their grazing sheep and cows in nearby meadows. Nobody could prevent his horrible deed.

King Krak, the King of Krakow worried about a tragic situation in his city. He searched for a solution to this problem. The king promised that whoever could kill the beast will get his daughter as wife and will be a king after his death.

The bravest knights and other volunteers from the entire country tried to kill the cruel creature but it was impossible. When they could draw near the dragon they were damaged by the flame of the beast. Burned armor and swords littered area around the cave.

In Krakow, there lived a poor young boy named Skuba. He worked as a shoe-maker. Skuba was very smart so he had a perfect idea how to kill the beast. He prepared a special meal for the dragon. He prepared a special menu for the dragon. Skuba stuffed a dead ram with tar and sulfur. After that he put down his specially prepared ram near the entrance of the cave.

When the dragon woke up he was very hungry. He needed to eat something for breakfast. He came out of the cave and he saw a fat ram nearby. He ate the treacherous gift greedily.

After a few minutes, the dragon’s throat burned from the tar and sulfur. That’s why he ran to the Wisla River for help. The dragon drank up so much water from the river that he burst with a great bang.

From this moment, Krakow was free from the dragon’s terror. Skuba received the King’s daughter as wife in reward for his bravery. They lived happily ever after.
Two cats were very good friends. They lived together in the backyard of an old house. Everyday they ate and played together. One day they were hungry so they went to find food. They saw one piece of bread in the backyard and they fought each other for it. There was a monkey that sat in the tree near the backyard. He was also hungry and he saw everything. He thought about getting the bread as well but instead he said to the cats,

"I have an idea. I have a scale. I will distribute the bread in equal portions."

The cats agreed with the monkey. So, he broke the bread into two parts, one small and the other big and then he put the bread on a scale. The cats saw that the bread was not equal so he cut off the extra bread and ate it himself.

Now, the other side was heavier so he cut a piece from that side and ate it himself. He continued to balance the two pieces of bread by cutting and eating until all the bread was gone. With a full stomach, the monkey said to the cats, "There's no more bread, so I am going to leave the backyard and go back to my tree."

The cats looked at each other because they had no more food to eat. They realized that when two fight, the third has the advantage.
A Gentle Man  
● An adapted folktale ●

BY JALAL ABU JAMIL — PALESTINE
NOVICE

A long time ago was a very gentle man. He was handsome and he was a knight. He always traveled from country to country to help people. He helped poor people and he cared for children very well. He liked to give money to the poor and help others with shelter and other needs.

One day he heard about a country where there was a bad king with bad knights. They transacted with their citizens very cruelly. They always hit women and children. That’s why the man prepared to travel to that country, but when he was on his way, he had a strident accident.

He lost his memory and couldn’t remember anything. Somebody found him lying on the ground. The stranger took the gentle man home. He cared for him very well and gave him medicine. When the man woke up, he tried to remember what happened to him, but he couldn’t remember anything.

After one year, the gentle man was walking in the city center and he saw many people working very hard under the burning sun. He saw many women carrying children and many babies crying. At that moment, the gentle man remembered everything and went quickly to free the aggrieved people.
Her name was Laura. It was a beautiful afternoon in the summer, when Laura appeared. She was about 10 years old. She was tall and thin, with blonde hair. She had a black dress on, and she had a round face.

The screaming girl lived in a small cabin in the forest. She lived with her mother. One day her mother had to go out to the town in search of a job, because they had no money with which to buy food or clothes. Her mother had left her home alone. Every time Laura heard a wolf’s howl she screamed. Another afternoon her mother had left her home alone. She saw her mother was nowhere in sight. She went out looking for her. Standing next to the river, she saw the sun set and she felt afraid and began to cry strongly. Two men were walking across the bridge, were observing how the girl was screaming desperately. They walked closer and saw she was skinny, pale and hungry. The men thought she was a ghost that had died a long time ago. The men then ran away from her without knowing what happened. The screaming girl started to cry harder when the darkness approached. The screaming continued waiting for her mother while the sun was setting.

Laura was waiting for a better future but each day all the things were more difficult for her. The days passed and she waited for a miracle. Laura thought that somebody could help her. Sad and hungry, Laura saw the beautiful sun set and darkness dressed her body.

In conclusion, this lesson teaches us that parents should never leave their children alone at home. Being alone at home creates trauma in children, and many adults help themselves to the solemnity of children.
Silent Death

An interpretation of Roy Lichtenstein’s painting, “In the Car”

By Narendra Rana — India — Novice

It was a very cool, dark, windy night. Somewhere there was a sound like an owl hoot and the highway was quiet. John was driving at high speed with his wife Adriana. They got married last year. Adriana was fair and beautiful. She wore a new dress and John looked handsome and smart but his blue eyes looked dangerous. John knew very well that Adriana was betraying me. But Adriana didn’t know that John was going to kill her. This night was her last night with him.

John was a very rich man. He was investing money in the modeling field. During that time he was looking for new models. One day he was sitting in a coffee bar when suddenly he saw one girl with long hair. She was very beautiful and he decided to take her as a model after he finished his coffee. He went to ask her, “Would you like to work with me?” She was looking for a rich man so she decided to work with him.

Adriana hid that she really loved Abraham. After one year, John realized that he liked Adriana so he decided to marry her and he proposed. She accepted his proposal. During one year of marriage everything was fine but one day John passed by the park and he saw Adriana with another man. He stopped his car and watched them. They were laughing and hugging each other. John got angry so he came back home and decided to find out about Adriana’s past. After two days, he found out that before marriage Adriana loved Abraham but she went with John because her and Abraham wanted to be rich. That’s why she married John. Now, John knew everything. He hated her so much and he had a bad temper so he decided to kill her and make it look like an accident. During that time, John’s best friend Kevin invited them to his marriage anniversary at his farm house. It was far from the city. It was there that John had a chance to kill her.

That morning John was showing Adrianna that he was very happy with her. He took her shopping and bought her a new dress for the party. He told her to wear that dress tonight. It was already 5’ o’clock. They got ready to leave and on the way, Adriana started to think about Abraham because she loved him. Suddenly, John stopped his car and asked her, “Would you like to drink something?” She said, “Yes”. He went to the restaurant to get some soda and he added drugs to the soda. After drinking that soda, Adrianna went to sleep. Then John took his car near the valley. It was such a quiet area. He opened the car door, carried her and threw her into the valley. Before anybody saw him, he left. After he reached the party, Kevin asked for his wife. He wanted to rescue himself so he told him she went out the door shouting. Finally, John got his revenge. Never hide anything from your life partner otherwise your life is going to be spoiled.
Many, many years ago, there was a woman named Isadora and she knew some evil secrets. She was married to a quiet, simple man. He worked on his farm and they both lived peacefully. Every day she set the table with very fancy and delicious foods, even though they were very poor. Their kitchen was always full of food. Day by day her husband worried and started to get suspicious about the abundance of food. When he asked her where all the food came from she said that a friend gave it to her or she sometimes said she bought it.

One night the husband felt something moving and he sensed that his wife was getting out of bed. In the dark room he heard her saying a prayer he never heard before. He saw her turning three times to the right and three times to the left and she became a coyote. The husband was stricken with terror and started praying to some saint, and asked for salvation.

The following day as usually the Isadora did, there were lots and lots of food on the table and in the oven was the most exquisite food. Isadora didn’t go out every day, but her husband was on the alert by now. Then one night as the other nights, she got out of her bed and started her mystical prayer and left the house again as a coyote. Her husband followed her and in the distance he saw a coyote running to the neighbor’s backyards and henhouses and into their kitchens, gathering provisions for the next couple of days. Now, convinced his wife was a witch, the husband went to a priest and told him everything about his wife and what he saw. The priest gave him a rope and some holy water and instructed him to give her three lashes and sprinkle some holy water at the moment she turned into a human again. The priest said that she would never become a coyote again.

Her husband followed the instructions very carefully, but Isadora returned as a coyote and right when she was trying to turn into a human again, the husband lashed her and sprinkled her with holy water, but it was a moment too soon. Her head and half of her body were turned into a woman again but the rest of her body was still a coyote and could not be changed.

Isadora was unable to live as a human and had to abandon her husband and little boy. She went into the woods where she still roams.
Dear Boss:

The enemy was five feet away from me in the market of Beijing. He still looks the same with black and light gray hair, thin build and the same dark black eyes that we encountered fifteen years ago. His right arm still functions well. It is hard to imagine how somebody could still use his arm after being stabbed three times in the same place.

When I saw him, my brain became an inferno like a volcano. I stayed as calm as possible. The hate I have for him will linger inside my skin as long as he lives. I hate him boss. I want to dispose of him for you and for the safety of our camp, but I won’t do it just now. Things look very unsafe from my position. I will wait for the right time. Like you said boss, “Patience is essential.” Remember boss, to me it is nothing because I have taken so many lives with the edge of my blade and Karma would just be one more fallen casualty.

I love what I do boss. You knew that from the day you took me in. “No Pain, No Gain,” in this rough-neck business because I’ve learned to love pain. My flesh, my soul may be destroyed but with this body I will carry on this mission as long as possible. This body wasn’t built to cry; it was built to survive. I’m a warrior even if my collar bone crushes in battle. I will never stumble, even if I cry with every bit of strength in my small body, this is the life I chose ...

I hear footsteps in the dark woods. Can it be? He couldn’t have seen me. Can it be?!!!! It can’t be!!!! If it is, then only he who created me will decide my ...
Who Wants to Live Forever?

By Alper Habip — advanced

A funeral. An old lady died a few days ago, at age 83. All her family members, friends, classmates, neighbors attended the funeral. Behind the group, there is a man standing, in his late 30’s, a handsome man. He wanted to be at his lover’s funeral, but not in the front. Nobody knows who he is, probably they did not notice he was there. This ceremony is the 23rd one he’s buried in the last 700 years. Yes, he has been alive for 7 centuries; he is immortal.

Every time he loses a friend, he promises himself not to love anymore. He couldn’t ever keep his promise. Because the awful reality that he is going to loose her, he hesitates to love someone. He thinks that love is for mortals. Because they die, only love can make them immortal. The reality that he cannot die forces him to refuse anyone to love him or love someone. He knows that, which he experienced for centuries, to loose someone will hurt. It is better not to love. He is lonely. His loneliness is the biggest pain he has ever had.

An unbearable heaviness of being alive for such a long time made him bored. He hopes one day he is going to see some wrinkles on his face, which means he is starting getting older, and his suffering will end by his death. Drowning, poisoning, bullets, suffocation can be fatal for humans, but not for him. Time has no effect on his body. In the past, it was easy for him to keep his secret identity. In today’s world he has to assume an identity that he can use for about 20 years. Then he has to find another one. Change of location is another rule he has to follow. During his life, he has been in East Asia, Europe, Africa and America. Because of his memories, he is a walking library. He learned many languages, witnessed too many historic events. He can speak dialects which disappeared long time ago. If he reveals his identity, linguists, historians, scientists will want to work with him and may work on him. Even though he wants to help them, his inner voice tells him just the opposite.

Some of us think that heaven and hell are both on earth. If we have good life we think that we found heaven. If we suffer it may mean hell on earth. For the people who have happy life, being immortal is the biggest prize. The beauties we can feel around us make us believe, if we have a chance why not to be immortal. Several times, he thought that this is not a reward, this is a curse. He is sentenced to be alive forever. I am sure, most of us think that life is beautiful and the idea of immortality is the best thing ever. But I am not one of them. Let’s ask this question. Who wants to live forever? Well, I don’t.
If I Could Live My Life Again I Would ...

BY DEINAVA OSMAN ABÓ – ADVANCED

Sometimes I ask myself about very important points in my life, what I want to change, to improve or to give up. Therefore the question, “if I could live my life over again”, pops-up like there is a connection between those two thoughts. Here are some of the things I would like to change if I could live my life again.

First, if I had to live my life over again, I’d dare to make more mistakes. I’d spend more time with my friends and I’d spend more time enjoying what I have and less time thinking about lost things. I’d spend less time criticizing myself and more time improving my skills. Also, I’d do everything as I wanted, not as somebody told me how. I’d improve myself, to have more chances to improve myself, to have more chances to change my wrongs and make my life more successful. I’d care about my friends, parents and myself more than ever. If I could spend more time fully involved in the present moment and less time remembering and anticipating, I’d smile more and cry less. I’d express my feelings more frankly without hesitation.

If I would have done all of this I would probably have different problems. That’s ok though, because I’m getting tired of the one’s I’ve got.

Permanence

BY ZERAHLYNN BALLANCA – ADVANCED

Nothing in this world is permanent. Everything evolves and dies. Something you have today, you may not have tomorrow. Youth, for instance, is something that you will gradually lose. You don’t stay young forever. And, as years pass, a person’s life would have to end. This is true not only for human beings but also for material things especially for wealth. Wealth makes a person powerful; however it doesn’t last forever. Because wealth is a necessity, there is often a misconception that it is the most important thing in the world. This isn’t true since there are a lot more important things like love and happiness.
Effects of Moving to the U.S.A.

BY ALINA KLOSOWSKA — POLAND — ADVANCED

Everyone is affected by certain events that greatly change our lives. Moving to a new place, especially to a new country, brings courage from everyone. Adjusting to new life isn’t easy. The decision to immigrate to the U.S. was the most difficult decision I have ever made. When we won the visa lottery, we thought that everything would be like a wonderful dream. We were wrong. We quickly realized that starting to live here affected our lives.

The first effect of moving to the U.S. was homesickness. What I remember most is my strange feelings. I felt homesick and lonely. Being separated from my family and living without their support were difficult for me. I felt a kind of disorientation of finding myself in this country. Everything, such as the language, and neighborhood, seemed different and new to me. Not having any difficulties in my country and enjoying my life there, I couldn’t gather my thoughts. I felt like a person without an identity. It was like bungee jumping without a cord. I felt like I was drowning. I felt miserable and wished to go back to my country.

The second effect of moving to the U.S. was my health problems. My negative feelings and stress increased my susceptibility to illness. My bad mood damaged my body. I remember I spent a lot of time in bed because of the flu, fever, and sore throats. The headaches and sleeplessness were the consequences of feeling homesick. Losing a lot of weight was another effect. Can you imagine going from a size 7 to a size 1 after only a few months? I had to buy a lot of new clothes which got on my husband’s nerves and caused more stress.

When I moved to the U.S., I faced not only negative effects, but also positive ones. The last important effect is learning English. I know that English is the world language. If you know English, you can communicate with everybody around the world. I am glad and proud that I push myself to go to college to learn English. Because of knowing English, I can visit other countries. I have more opportunities to for living and for jobs. Speaking English also helps me have non-Polish speaking friends and meet interesting people with different viewpoints. Above all, it is the key to enjoying life in the U.S.

(Continued on next page)
No other decision has impacted my life as has this one. The effects of deciding to move to the U.S. are clear for me now. Feeling homesick and having health problems are the most common effects I faced. After these critical moments, I started to adapt to this new situation and realize the positive aspects. Even though it is difficult for me to speak in a foreign language, I live with the belief that English can help me in many ways.
Students fail for many reasons. There are several common reasons that apply to most students, including a lack of motivation, low-quality early education and personal problems.

An important reason that many students fail is because they didn't have a good education when they started to study. Sometimes in their country they don't have good schools because their government doesn't make education a priority. It happens in many countries. The students go to schools, but they don't learn anything or very little because when they move to the better schools or to another country, they cannot continue their studies. Study is the process and there're many steps, and each step is essential. Students cannot excel if they don't have a solid preparatory program. When they don't have a good foundation it will be very difficult for them to pass.

Another reason that students fail is because they are unmotivated and don't care. It could be because they don't like to study, they don't know how is important it is to study, or they have other things to do that are more enjoyable, for example, TV, sports, cell phone, computer, internet, games, etc. Because of these distractions, they miss class or arrive late or leave early. They don't do their homework and they pay no attention in class, and consequently they cannot do pass their tests.

I feel the most important reason that students fail is because they have personal problems. These problems can be a learning disability, family commitments or, the demands of work. Many students have difficulty studying because they have some kind of disability that does not permit them to learn. Another is because they have family commitments such as children or someone who is sick or old in their house that they need to take care of. Because of this they don't have time to sleep well, they cannot do their homework and they don't have time to study at home.

So, if students are not motivated and don't care, if they do not get a good education in their first years or if they have many personal problems, these impediments will contribute to students failing.
Do we realize how science-fiction movies and novels can affect our life? Or another question is “how much of science-fiction movies and novels can be true?” These days, science-fiction movies and novels can be models for scientific research. The fact is that science-fiction movies and novels positively affect our life in many ways.

The first positive effect of science-fiction movies and novels is in medical science. My first example is superheroes like Superman or Spiderman. These kinds of comic and movie subjects are heroes whose genetic formation changes by some events. After these comics and movies, scientists try to play with DNA to create stronger humans and find unknown criminal events. Scientists are mostly successful with their research. Another example is the movie *Jurassic Park*. That movie’s subject is dinosaurs which are smart like humans. After that movie, medical scientists developed stem cell research. With that, they added human DNA to animals and research reasons for the some illnesses. Finally they created a mouse which has human brain’s cell. That mouse solves many labyrinth problems as like human. After those results, scientists believe they can eliminate Parkinson’s disease very soon. My last example is *Count Dracula*. This movie’s subject is immortal people and their crimes. The point in that movie is “how can a scientist create a strong human?” and “how can scientist find the secret of death?” That is why they still alter human DNA to find answer to those questions. Now they can extend human life about 10 more years and try to figure out how they can increase life time to at least 100 years for everybody.

The second and important positive effect of science-fiction movies and novels is technology. *Star Wars* is a good example of that. Filmmakers made *Star Wars* in the early 1980’s. Before that, scientists made rockets to study the moon. But since that movie, they have made more space flight development than before. Also after that movie, some powerful countries, such as the USA and Russia, spent billion dollars to develop new worlds in space and try to find other life forms on other planets. Now they take a lesson from *Star Wars* to figure out molecular transportation (moving with radiation). Another model movie technology is *Around the World in 80 Days*.
That movie explains one of the richest Englishman’s transportation adventures around the world. In that movie they used a hot-air balloon for transportation. After that movie, scientists tried to make new airplanes faster than old airplanes. They continue to develop air transportation today. Now we have airplanes which have two floors with pools, theatres, malls etc. Also we have some airplanes which go faster than voice. This means we can go around the world in one day. Also, that movie is a model for war equipment. They developed a smart bomb which is under control of airplanes. Most of the powerful countries have ghost airplanes that can not be caught by radar. The last model novel for technology is Pinocchio. It is a very old novel and it explains how one of the puppets behaves like a human. First, scientists developed some robots that can talk and answer the basic questions. Later they used robots as laborers in the industry for making cars, cell phones and other electronics. With that invention, many factories produce many products in a very short time with fewer expenses than before. Finally, Japanese scientists created a robot which can show reactions like a human. We may see police robots in the streets or teacher robots in the schools in the future.

In conclusion, we can not deny the significance of science-fiction movies and novels in our lives. It is important because of health and technology. I think our lives are going to develop in a parallel way with science-fiction movies and novels. That is why, I think, numbers of science-fiction movies and novels gauge our lives’ continuing development.
My Funny Brother-in-Law Bobby

BY ELIZABETH ALAEDDIN – POLAND – NOVICE

Bobby is average height, well built and solid like a rock. He has big blue eyes like a sky in the summer time. Bobby wears glasses; often he makes jokes that he has four eyes so he can see like an eagle. He also has a mustache, which gives him a very manly look, and of course the main part of his body, the belly, makes him look like a teddy bear. I can’t forget his hair; it looks like a cheap paintbrush, brown thick in texture and straight. And of course his smile will make you feel like a warm cup of coco on a cold winter day.

His personality is like water in the lake, calm, collective with no ripples on a beautiful summer morning. Maybe that explains his passion for all water activities especially fishing. He is a lot like Bob Hope who can make you laugh anytime, anywhere and about anything. He rarely gets mad, but if he does, watch out he is like a storm on the ocean that comes from nowhere and moves quickly and is sunny again. He can’t stay mad for a long. He is also a very good listener; he is sensitive, kind and compassionate.

Our relationship is like peanut butter and jelly. We understand each other with no words. He knows how to make you laugh to tears, or fix you or make you calm and comfortable. Just like eating peanut butter and jelly sandwich with a warm glass of milk, you never have quite enough and you never get bored from it, and you always came back for more.

Eyes

BY ELENA KASAPOVA – NOVICE

My family's eye colors always remind me of the beautiful things in life. My brother's blue eyes remind me of the deep ocean waters. When I look into his big blue eyes, I feel like I'm snorkeling in the ocean. The first thing I see in the morning when I look in the mirror is my green eyes which remind me of the peaceful grasslands in Europe. My father's brown eyes make me think of the smell of a steaming hot cup of coffee that I smell every morning. When I look into my mother's dark eyes I see the sleeping night sky and think of those nights as a child when I had a nightmare and she would lay next to me and comfort me until I fell asleep again.
My Daughter

BY MAYADA ARSLANBECK — PALESTINE— NOVICE

Nafen is my youngest daughter. She is ten years old. She is in elementary school. She is a beautiful girl. She has small red lips like a cherry and when she smiles her teeth look like pearls. She has a small nose and light brown eyes. I like her short, silky brown hair. When she runs, her hair looks like a waterfall on her small shoulders.

Nafen is always smiling. She is a butterfly that appeals to the flowers. She is a good student and a social girl. She likes her friends and her friends like her. She is very friendly, lovely, and sweet. When she goes to bed she likes me to go with her to tell her a beautiful story. She likes to sleep with her toy.

Nafen is my lovely daughter. She is beautiful, smart, and intelligent. I love her because she is my spirit and I am optimistic when I see her always happy.

Describing a Girl Role Model

BY REYNA FERMIN — DOMINICAN REPUBLIC— NOVICE

Flor Fermin is my only daughter. She is eight years old. She was born in the United States. She is short and has long brown hair. She has a round face. Flor is a bright like the sun. She looks just like a little butterfly. Her heart is bigger than the world. Flor’s singing is like that of a bird’s chirping. Her ideas are like a collection of books. She is like a poetic manuscript. She is the light that illuminates the earth. She is a medicine waiting for an illness to appear. Flor is the little garden waiting for the rain to come. She is a nest where the birds lay their eggs. She is the flower that brightens up the garden. She is the perfume that gives flowers their smell. Flor is bright, helpful, wonderful, energetic, friendly, young, lovely, thankful, studious, intelligent, pretty, obedient, and cooperative. In conclusion, my daughter possesses all the qualities of a good girl. I hope that she will be an example for younger girls.
My Classmate

by Kerllin Yong — Novice

Elisa Palacio is one of my classmates. I met Elisa in my speaking class. She is from Colombia, which is a very nice country near my country Peru. She is married and has two kids. Interviewing Elisa Palacio was very interesting because she told me about her life in Colombia and her goals in this country.

In Colombia, Elisa worked with poor people in a social program. Elisa taught them how to get some extra money by recycling some materials such as cartons, plastics, cans, and more. Elisa also taught them how to keep a clean environment. Elisa was a volunteer with a group of nutritionists and psychologists and helped people to improve their lives by preparing nutritional meals and motivating them to exercise.

The most interesting part about Elisa is her goals. Elisa wants to improve her English in order to become a social worker. Elisa wants to help people, especially women who suffer domestic violence and immigrants who come to this country with hopes to get a better life for them and their families. As you can see Elisa Palacio is a very interesting and kind person. Elisa is the best and kindest person I have ever met in my life.

My New Friend

by Wardah AbuHadba — Palestine — Novice

I met and interviewed Elizabeth Aladdin in my ESL writing class this semester. She is thirty-six years old. She came to the United States of America from Poland with her family sixteen years ago.

Now she has been married for eleven years to a Palestinian man, whose name is Jalal. She has two children, a boy Issa and a girl Sarah. She loves her family a lot. She tries to be a good mom by helping her kids with anything they want. It’s hard for her because she lives with a family that doesn’t have the same culture. Elizabeth likes to travel to Palestine, my country where I used to live. She loves Palestine because she told me it’s so beautiful. She traveled to Jordan but she didn’t like it like Palestine. When she has free time, she likes to read, watch T.V, listen to music and cook Arabic food. She dreams to be a nurse. Sometimes I think about being a nurse because it helps patients to feel better. I hope she stays happy with her family and reaches what she likes in the future and I hope we will be good friends.
She Hopes for Peace

by Elizabeth Alaeddin – Poland – Novice

Wardah Abuhadba is my classmate in ESL writing class this semester. She came to the USA from Palestine almost one year ago with her husband Ahmad. The rest of her family still lives in Palestine. She hopes to become a nurse one-day and work in the hospital.

In her free time, Wardah likes to watch television, listen to music and cook different dishes. When I asked about her childhood she became sad. She told me that her country, for a while, was at war with Israel. Since she remembers you could hear sounds of guns and people getting hurt. They often kill children. This is happening every day in Palestine. That is very real. People are scared to leave their houses and fear paralyzes them. You have trouble sleeping and often have bad dreams but you have to go on. Often she was wondering what kind of future she would have?

She and her husband decided to came to the USA for a better future, to live in peace and quiet, to have freedom and to fulfill their dreams. She has five brothers and two sisters and her parents are in Palestine. She worries about them a lot, about their future and their safety and misses them terribly. She hopes to visit them this summer. She would also like to have children same time in the future and she is happy she will have the opportunity to raise them in the USA.

Wardah is a very intelligent, strong-minded young woman full of hopes and dreams for the future, but in the meantime, she has her feet strongly on the ground. She knows what she wants and she goes for it. Despite her difficult childhood and war in her country, she can smile and she is very optimistic.
HAIKU

By Isabel Torres — Dominican Republic — Intermediate

Ray of light
melted the snow
in my heart.

Red leaves
old memories
blown away.

Quiet youth
reborn foliage
winter ended.

Child to man
the sweetest journey
fake smile.

Delicate petal
laying over the snow
little baby.

Falling star
cold breeze
I want more!

Mirage of light
up in the sky
shine!

Black butterfly
flying eternally
good-bye.

Outer Space shine
echo of the distance
a lie.
Kids
by Matieda Dipikaben — India
Novice

Kids are...
god's best gift,  
kings of nature,  
growing flowers in the garden.

A bouquet of flowers,  
colorful butterflies,  
a galaxy of stars,  
innocent of status.

A fountain of falling,  
flying & singing birds.  
Lighting of lamp  
cold, fresh air.

Rising of sun,  
youthful future.  
Dream of rainbows.
Alone
by Bianna Cruz – Advanced

My waiting is long
is cold and so long.
I'm waiting right here,
for you.

For you to come.
For you to rescue me.
For you to save me
but you are gone.

Forever gone,
forever dust,
forever air slipping through my hands.

I'm waiting for you,
for you to come,
for you to rescue me,
for you to save me.

Cold hours,
long minutes,
painful seconds will go.

Waiting for you.
Alone.
Love
by Geraldine Zamora — Peru — Advanced

Love is a feeling
not as simple
as it looks.

Not everybody can understand
and describe it.

Only people who have been involved
know the true meaning of it.

It is not just a simple
word as other people say.

Love has different kinds
of expressions that can
change our lives radically.

But if you don’t try,
You will never know.
I was arranging to go Canada for my friend’s funeral while he was alive. My friend Siva, and I were best friends from our childhood. He got married and sponsored his fiancé last year. After one week, his wife came to Canada and he and his wife went to temple. He had chest pain at the temple but he ignored that pain. When he returned home, he felt something wrong with his body. So, he and he went to the hospital by bus. How could he come by bus when he should have called an ambulance because he had a serious heart attack?

Immediately, doctors examined his body. He informed his wife about his situation. The doctors did several operations unsuccessfully and he fell into a coma. The modern technology kept him alive in the hospital bed. He was almost a dead person. I was worried when I heard this bad news. I had another friend of mine to find out more information about Siva. That friend told me that we could not have hope about Siva, and he was alive because of the machines only.

This incident happened six months after his wedding. Siva’s young wife was praying the God to cure her new husband all the time near the hospital bed. Siva’s father had a car accident and died on the spot two years before and Siva’s mother lived in Sri Lanka. Only his new wife and his aunt’s family were taking care of him at the hospital. Everyone who knew Siva was talking about his bad situation and expecting that he was going to die very soon. After doctors had waited for two weeks, they convinced Siva’s wife and his aunt’s family that there was no hope for Siva to recover. The physicians asked them to give permission to remove the technical support that kept him alive.

Siva’s aunt was a strong lady and had very sound knowledge of English. She refused to give doctors the permission to remove the life support. She asked the doctors to wait until his mother come to Canada. Without the family permission doctors could not remove the life support. Siva’s motionless body was swelled and his appearance was totally different. Anyone who looked at his motionless body could not identify that was Siva. Huge complicated machines around Siva’s bed kept working. Most of his visitors were scared to go near his bed and some were making plans about how to take his body to his native country.

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After six months, I went to Canada with my family. I visited the hospital to see my friend. I couldn’t find him in the intensive care unit. So I went to the information counter and asked about my friend. They checked for my friend’s name, “Siva”, on the computer and told me that he had left the hospital a few days ago. I was worried and cried when I heard the news from the information center. I wanted to know what had happened to my friend. Immediately, I called my friend’s house from the hospital but no one answered. I called Siva’s aunt’s house to find out the situation. I was surprised to hear Siva’s voice over the phone. I couldn’t believe Siva was answering the telephone when I called. I visited Siva immediately from the hospital to find out the miracle.

When Siva was in the hospital, Siva’s wife’s uncle who was a famous cardiologist in California came to Canada to study about Siva’s condition. His uncle told the doctors that Siva’s kidneys and other important body parts were working well and there was a good possibility to recover. He asked the doctors to do their best to get him well. Because of the famous doctor’s influence, all the doctors in the hospital paid full attention to Siva and brought him back to this world. Now Siva lives with his wife in Canada. He thanked God to send the right person at the right time to save his life.

What would have happened if the relatives of Siva had accepted the doctors’ earlier explanation and given permission to remove life support from Siva? Is this a miracle or mistake by doctors? Doctors should understand the value of a life of a person. No one knows everything about how the body works. They should try their best to help victims.
When I was a child, probably 7 years old I remember my mother’s saying, “You can never choose your motherland and your mommy”. In that moment I did not really understand her, but I keep this in my mind. I didn’t realize that one day my whole life would change; moreover, that I would have the chance to choose between two beautiful countries in the world. O, my God! Can you believe how difficult it was? It still is and I think it will be forever. It’s like two different people are living inside you, and your mood, your life’s purpose and goals really depend on these two selves -- your heart and soul. One of them is so happy to be here in the United States, and discover a new language, new culture and traditions. However, the “other Inna” is deeply missing the Ukraine -- parents, sister, friends and her lovely job. Sometimes this Inna can have huge, nostalgic, and beautiful memories from her childhood.

It was on August 4, 1978. My family and I traveled to one of the best mountains in the Ukraine called Karpat. The idea of this trip presented itself when my mother’s classmate who lives in Karpat, called and invited our family to visit her house. It was on the eve of my 10-th Birthday party. My mother, father, sister and I started our travel on August 3. We drove through four regions of the Ukraine. It was really cool; so a lot of wonderful moments remain in my memory.

First of all, after we had driven for seven hours, we saw a beautiful woodland. All members of my family would lie down in the fresh-smelling grass and look up at the natural world above us. My heart sang when I saw a lot of plants around me and many beautiful flowers growing nearby. Besides, we could see lots of trees. They were so big and amazing! For me, they looked like the ancient knights that stood their own territory to protect us. It was especially enjoyable when the wind blew, and it blew often in that place. My sister told me, “I feel like we are in a fairy tale.”

In the morning of the next day, we saw the huge, beautiful river, Dnister. I will remember forever the might and serenity of this river. Now, when I close my eyes, I can see the strong flow of the water. The most interesting part was the change that took place in the color of the water from dark blue, to sky blue, to teal. The water was so clear that I could see everything at the bottom, for instance, the fish, the seaweed, and the rocks which created a little interesting underwater world. I loved the scene in front of me. Another pleasure was the sounds that we could hear there.

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I could hear the singing of birds and moving of animals through the dry leaves. All of these noises sounded to me like nature’s orchestra in the middle of the peaceful forest. Also, we heard wonderful music, which was played by amateur musicians in the evening. The songs, which they sang, were about love for my motherland and for people who lived there. In that moment, my child soul was filled with pride and happiness. Later, I got a lot of presents and good wishes, too. I wished that this magical day would never end.

In the end, as an adult, I still enjoy visiting quiet, beautiful places like Karpat. When I recollect my wonderful birthday of my childhood, I feel excitement and love. Likewise, these memories fill my heart with light sadness and nostalgia for my childhood, which will never be returned. Also, I understand how much I love and miss my native country Ukraine, my lovely MOTHERLAND! I have my big dream to see this beautiful, amazing woodland again with my daughter, when we travel to the Ukraine. I hope my dream comes true one day in the very near future.

My First Airplane Ride

BY MELISSA DORIS A. CRUZ – PHILIPPINES—ADVANCED

Every kid has dreamed of flying like a super hero. I’ve always wanted to feel like that. In reality, I never thought that I could fly like a super hero. Until, I experienced flying through my first airplane.

The day when we left for the U.S.A., my heart was filled with mixed emotions. I felt really sad for what and whom I’d be leaving behind. I also felt really excited about the new things that were waiting for me. What really made my heart jump was my first airplane ride. It sounds naïve but that was how I felt; I was over- excited. At the airport, we lined up in an endless line just to check in our baggage. Finally, the long wait was over and we boarded the gigantic aircraft. We looked for our seats and, fortunately, found them really fast unlike those who were starting to panic because they couldn’t find their seats. I thought I’d escaped from the hustle of riding an airplane. But when I was trying to fasten my seat belt, I couldn’t. Luckily, I saw a yellow card in front of my seat, a manual. From there I learned how to fasten my first- ever airplane seat belt. We kept on waiting and waiting, and then all of a sudden, I heard the engine running. Our plane was about to leave. I may have been sitting relaxed at that time but my heart was shouting with joy.

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I was looking below as our airplane got higher and higher until all I could see were clouds. Our twelve-hour ride had just begun.

On the airplane, I saw how everything goes. I saw how they serve food, how they take good care of the passengers and even how the stewardesses smile when the airplane shakes. Every single thing on that ride was amazing. But the thing that really caught my attention was the room or should I say box, the bathroom. I didn’t feel comfortable using it because there was only little space for me to move. The toilet bowl had no water so I was wondering how it worked. I flushed it. Then, zoom — the tissue paper that I put in it was incredibly gone. I said, “Hey, this bathroom is not that bad; it has amazing things in it.” Then, I went back to my seat and fell asleep.

The next thing I knew was that we were about to land. “Please fasten your seat belt.” The pilot announced. Twelve hours ago I heard the same thing as we were about to take off and now we were landing. I was sorry my first airplane ride was over.

Now, I know how it feels to be up there. It was really amazing. I have experienced a lot of things that other people haven’t. I feel so lucky to have experienced all these things. Since my first airplane ride, I’ve ridden on two other airplanes. But the other two were not as good as the first. It was just a twelve-hour ride but I will cherish all of these memories for the rest of my life.
Ana was born in Haiti, in a little town name Nazon. Her father and mother were old. She came from a family of eight children. She was the last one of the eight and Ana thought she didn’t enjoy her parent's the way she wanted to enjoy them. Ana thought she didn’t get as much love as she wanted to get from them. She didn’t talk to them the way she wanted to talk to them. She didn’t talk to them about boys that she met. Ultimately, she thought the first seven children took all her parent’s love and their youth. The fun was already gone. She said, “Don’t get me wrong. I love my parent's to death and they love me so much. I was a spoiled little girl.” Her father wanted her to go to a big school but she couldn’t do it because he wasn’t working. He was too old to work. He tried to push her to elementary school. Then when she finished elementary school he couldn’t put her in high school. Then her father had to send her to her aunt, so she could pay for her school but her aunt wasn’t too far from her parents’ house. She could come to visit anytime she wanted. Ana was homesick when she arrived to her aunt’s home even though she wasn’t far from her parent’s house. She was very welcome at her aunt’s home. She had her cousins with her. After a few months her aunt’s granddaughter had a goddaughter's mother who died. She had to take her. Now she had a person in the house the same age as her. She could talk to her about almost everything. After a few months everything changed for Ana and the girl. Ana’s aunt started to give them a lot of attitude in the house. She didn’t talk to them, didn’t give them food when they do something wrong. One of Ana aunt granddaughter the oldest one always stood up for them. When her aunt did something bad to her, she always reported that to her parent. They couldn’t say anything because they wanted her to finish school. While she was in her aunt house she met a boy that she loved more than the boy loved her. Sometime her aunt said something bad to her in front of the boy to embarrass her, and it got worse when her cousin who always stood up for her left Haiti. Something happened between Ana and the boy and he left her. To make matters worse her father got sick, and she got bad grades in school. The sickness of her dad affected her. Her father and her mother were the reason for her to get through her life. Then her mother got sick too, and her dad died while her mother was sick.

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Two years after her father’s death, her mother died. Ana became distraught and she was getting bad grades in school. She was always deep in thought. When her aunt saw she was doing badly in school she said, "She's not going to pay school for her. At her mother’s funeral for the first time, she met her oldest brother who lived in America. She didn’t know that brother, she was born behind him. Some people told him how she was living at her aunt’s house, and he said he's going to pay the school for her. When her brother got back to America he filled out some paper and adopted her sister and brought her to America. When she got to America she had everything except for friends. She is still missing something.

Embarrassing Experience

By Raysa Vidal — Dominican Republic— Novice

Three years ago, I had the most embarrassing experience when Mike, my boyfriend, invited my family out to dinner for the first time. Prior to this, they had never met, so this meeting was extremely important. I was so nervous because it was going to be the first time my family was going to meet Mike.

We decided to go to a nice seafood restaurant out on City Island. It was early May, so the weather was beautiful. We took our seats and ordered coffee and appetizers such as clams, oysters, and fried shrimp. The portions were huge. The atmosphere was pleasant and the conversation was going well. I began to relax because it seemed that my family liked Mike and vice versa.

All of a sudden something happened that I simply could not believe. While we were waiting to order dessert, my mother took out her false teeth and started cleaning them. She did this in front of Mike while trying to have a conversation with him. Shocked, I looked at my sister. She looked puzzled. We both looked at our mother. I was so embarrassed that I wanted the earth to open up and swallow me. What a scene.

I was ashamed and couldn't look at Mike's face. All I could say to him was that we were so sorry. He said, it was OK because his family get-togethers were even worse. In his family, people got drunk, cursed and threw mashed potatoes and wine glasses at each other. I was relieved. After dinner, we said our good-byes and Mike went home.

On my way home, my family and I talked about how nice Mike was and how ashamed we felt when we saw mom taking her teeth out like that. She said, "So what. I had a piece of meat stuck in my teeth, and I couldn't wait to go to the bathroom and take it out."

I was so glad that the night was over. When I got back to my apartment, before going to sleep, I thought that Mike would not want anything to do with us. Fortunately, I was wrong. He called me the next day, and things were great from that point on.
Why I Immigrated to the United States: Commitment

BY MARIA DO LIVRAMENTO OLIVEIRA — BRAZIL— NOVICE

The word commitment expresses why I decided to leave my country and immigrate to the United States.

The first reason I immigrated to the United States is because I belong to an international Congregation with communities in Brazil, Germany, USA, Taiwan, Philippines and Namibia. Because of this, it’s possible for every member to move to another country when it is necessary. I knew this when I entered the convent, but I was not worried I wouldn’t like to leave Brazil except for a short time to study English.

The main reason I moved to this country is because in September 2004 I was elected as a member of the general council. The general house is in West Paterson and as member of the general council, I have to live and work here for six years.

The commitment to my Congregation is the most important reason that I agreed to move to this country. I love my sisters and during the past fifteen years, I have received much from them. Now I would like to give back to them what I am able to do. It is the time to repay what I have received. When the election finished, I was a little sad because I had plans for myself in Brazil regarding my professional life. I was starting to work as a lawyer and I had to leave my profession. Although the decision to say, “YES” was very difficult for me, I believe that the congregation plans are more important than my personal desires. So when I was elected I couldn’t turn down the offer if my sisters believe that I can do something for the congregation.

Although I didn’t want to leave my country to live in the United States, after four months I feel OK. I hope I made the correct decision when I accepted to move here and work for my Congregation for the next six years.
The Worst Decision

BY MARIA T. SANTOS — NOVICE

When my husband and I got married, we went on our honeymoon to the mountains to a hotel of Jarabacoa in the Dominican Republic. We were enjoying this beautiful place, full of peace and the extreme vegetation. On the second day we were there. We woke up early and decided to drive to the top of the mountain in our old car. This was the worst decision that we have made in our lives.

Everything was right until our car started to give us problems. I felt very scared because when I looked down, the trees looked like little toys and you could see the high and dangerous heights. The weather was very cold and we didn’t have the appropriate clothes. In this moment, I felt it was the last day of our lives. I regretted that we were there. We decided to return back down, but the worst part was ahead. The way was very tight with steep falls on both sides.

The car had overheated and we needed water. There were no houses around us but when we thought we were lost, a light of hope came to us. We found a small house and a nice man who gave us the water we needed for our car. He helped us find our way back to the hotel with much work.

This was the worst decision we ever made. We were about to lose our lives because we had not taken the correct precautions. Always be careful when traveling to an unknown place.
The first day when I went to Palestine I was so happy to see my grandfather and grandmother, until I saw the soldiers treating us badly. When we went home at night, I felt so tired so I went to my bedroom to sleep. At night, I woke up to a loud sound of bombs from armies. I felt so scared and wanted to cry.

I was nine years old when this happened. It was a new experience for me because I never was in this situation so I felt terrified. When I woke up, the room was glowing and it looked like firecrackers with a scary loud noise. My bed was shaking from the dynamite. It looked like an earthquake. I felt the house shaking too. I didn’t know what to do until my grandfather came and asked, “Wardah, are you awake?” I answered, “Yes, I’m so scared. I don’t know what to do.” He told me, “Come with me. You can sleep with us.”

When he took me I felt quiet because I knew they were nervous about me. When we were going to the room, I heard the soldier’s marching and walking around the block. I felt like they were inside the house. When I went inside their room, my grandmother told me, “Sleep with us on our bed.”

I lay between my grandma and grandpa and after a moment, everything was okay. The soldiers went out the village. After that I fell asleep. When I woke up in the morning the sun was shining in the room and I felt peace. I wish life would be full of peace without wars.
An Unforgettable Day

by Mayada arslanbeck — Palestine — novice

What do you feel when you hear a mother lost her son? Thirty years ago, I traveled with my husband to another country, because his job was there. At that time I had two children, a daughter and a son. My son was younger. He was about three years old. The country was strange for me; I didn’t know the rode and the markets very well, because I was a new resident in the country. One day, I went shopping to buy a gift for my friend. I saw some new fashion clothes for women hanging in front of the store. This made me stop to see it. After a moment I realized my son wasn’t next to me. Suddenly everything was black in my eyes, and I heard my heart beating fast. I couldn’t move. I felt my legs shaking. I was un- clear and my breath was fast.

While I was thinking what can I do? I saw my son coming to me, smiling and happy. He was at the toy store next to the store, which I was standing by. After he chose his toy, he got back to show me.

When I saw him I was running from my eyes. I was happy because he got back to me without being hurt. I didn’t leave him again. I punished him. I went back home without any gift.

I will never forget this accident and when I remember it I feel fear again. I couldn’t imagine what I would do if any body stole him or I lost him in the crowd market. After that time, I learned to be careful and never leave his hand, not even for one second. I taught him not to leave my hand and not to go to any place without my permission.
A Decisive Day

BY GRAZYNA FARAS — POLAND — ADVANCED

I will never forget the day when the doctor told me that my one-year-old son was going to need surgery. It was the hardest time in my life. My son is a cute boy and the youngest person in our family, so everyone loves him very much. He is our puppy. One day during a check-up visit, our pediatrician told us that his head was bigger than it was supposed to be and she was suspicious about his mental development. She gave us a referral to a neurosurgeon just for consultation. I didn’t take it seriously because Chris was the third of my children and I knew that he was doing very well at his age. I didn’t even think that something could be wrong with him. However, we made an appointment with the neurosurgeon simply to prove to our pediatrician that her suspicion was incorrect. That day, the MRI of Chris’s head was done and the neurosurgeon could see everything. When we entered her office, I felt comfortable and peaceful. She explained the pictures one by one. Suddenly she told us that our son has Hydrocephalus which meant water on his brain. I was shocked and cried loudly. I couldn’t believe her diagnosis. She explained that a surgery was inevitable and it had to be done immediately.

You can’t imagine what I felt at that time. That was the worst time in my life. The doctor tried to comfort me, but it didn’t work. It was unbelievable for me. I decided to get a second opinion from another doctor. I knew it was going to take some time to reach his office because he was a very good specialist who had many patients. I decided to wait a few weeks for that visit. I couldn’t depend upon one doctor’s opinion in such an important matter regarding my beloved son. A few long weeks passed and we were in the neurosurgeon’s waiting room. That was the longest time in my life: a day of hope for me and my child. Finally, we stood in front of him. He examined the MRI pictures thoroughly, looked at our son and after a while I noticed a small smile on his face. He told us that our son’s development was normal and there was nothing to worry about. I wanted to cry again but this time it would be the crying of happiness. From that hard experience, I learned that I can never depend upon one doctor’s opinion. They make mistakes very often and each serious diagnosis has to be confirmed by at least one more doctor. My son is three years old now. He is very smart and intelligent for his age. Our whole family loves him very much and our friends are astonished by his cleverness.

“I wanted to cry but this time it would be the crying of happiness.”
My Little Sister in the U.S.A.

BY BRENDA BACA — ADVANCED

It has been five years and a half since the last time I saw my little sister. There I was waiting for her at the cold JFK airport. So many people, but I cared about only one. Oh my God! How big she got, so tall and so pretty. No, she wasn’t six anymore, she was going to be twelve in less than a week. She was a little lady. I don’t know why I expected a little girl, like the one I used to play with few years ago. Of course I knew that she was going to turn twelve soon, but the reality hit me when I saw her. My cousin Betty came with her. They both were in vacation and going to stay for a week. My cousin Betty was 31 years old, married and a lawyer. This was their first trip to the U.S.

I felt Alexis cold, nothing like I was imaging. That last time we saw each other was really very emotional, her reaction was little disappointing but then I thought maybe she just needed to rest.

My mom installed her in the guest room, but she didn’t spend even one night there. That day Alexis and Betty unpacked and rested, we all had dinner (my mom, my sister Sandra, Betty, Alexis and me) and talked about all the changes that occurred in these last years. They told us about the last gossips from Lima, and how our family had change in these years.

I took the week off. We made plans to visit as much as possible in 7 days. Our tour started in NY the next day. We took those two floors buses in the city. We got off at Battery Park, walked a little, took pictures, and headed to the Statue of Liberty Island, and then we got to Ellis Island, just next to it. We got on the tour bus again and got off by the little harbor behind Wall St. We had lunch in the restaurant next to the river, with a nice view of Manhattan and Brooklyn bridges. Every place we went we took pictures and shot videos. We bought some souvenirs at the little mall in there and went on the tour bus again. We got off again, at the Empire State Building. Went all the way up until the terrace, but not before riding the virtual rollercoaster they have in the building that shows you the best places to visit in New York.

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By the end of that day we were exhausted, and ended up in grandma’s house (in NY). We slept (three of us) in the big sofa bed my grandma has in her living room. It was a hot summer night, and we barely slept.

We had the AC on the whole night and the noise of that old machine didn’t let us rest. After breakfast, we went to the Central Park to take the end of the tour we bought the day before. We saw some old buildings, the universities and Harlem, this time we didn’t get off the bus, even though there were many important buildings, we weren’t interested on them. When we got to the Central Park again, we were starving. We had hot dogs and soda. We went for some shopping the rest of the afternoon and of course more pictures. We came back to my grandma’s house and stayed there one more night, because we were planning to visit the Bronx Zoo next morning, and coming back to NJ would make the trip even longer.

Well, next day we woke up early packed juices and sandwiches, and went to the zoo. It was the first time I went there too. We saw all kinds of animals in the safari train, it was really fun going to the zoo, it reminded me of the zoo visits I did in my hometown when little. We spent there almost all afternoon and then decided to come back to NJ. We rested that day and planned going to the mall next day.

Alexis was very different from the day she just arrived. She wasn’t cold anymore. She was with me all the time. She slept with me all the others days left in her vacation. I took her to meet my best friends, my workplace, and favorite shopping spots. I bought her some clothes for her birthday and got her choose her cake. She connected us online to talk to my older sister Patty, and my little niece Valeria. She sent them some pictures and told them she was having fun. She checked her email and some sites at the internet for couple of hours. Then she sat with me and watched TV, she told me about her favorite TV shows, movies, and channels.

That night at midnight we all wished her a happy birthday, we went back to sleep and give her the presents in the morning. A cousin that we don’t have the chance to see often, came to visit and stayed till late. The last couple of days they stayed we went shopping. Betty bought many things for her house and husband, and Alexis bought gifts for my dad, my older sister, my niece, and her best friends. I was so proud of her, even though the money she had was to spend it in her, she was generous and bought things for everyone in her list, and with the money left, she bought some things for her.

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The last day she stayed, she started to make her album; in every page of it she wrote what happened in each photo and decorated it with nice drawings, really very artistic. We helped her to pack everything and thanked Betty for coming and bringing Alexis, otherwise we didn’t have anybody that could come with her. She was happy with her vacation, as same as Alexis she made her album and edited the video we shoot in those days. Three of us (Betty, Alexis and I) has a beautiful tan and unforgettable moments in the summer of 2003.

We drove them to the airport (JFK) and took them to the gate until they called them to board the plane. We were all calm, but at the last minute, I saw Alexis really sad and serious. Everyone hug and kiss her goodbye. I was the last one, I whisper in her ear that anytime she’ll want to come she just have to say so. She starts crying, saying that she was going to miss us all. I hugged her again and told her that everything its ok and that will see each other in Christmas; but with the condition of being good at school. She smiled and stops crying. It seemed that she understood that it wouldn’t pass another five years to see each other; it was easier now. She went to take her flight with Betty, this time smiling back at us. I miss her. 🌸
One of the characteristics of Robert Frost, as far as I know, is to depict an extremely sensitive vision of the simple nature that surrounds us, and transform it into a delightful and beautiful description. Then he compares what he is describing with situations in our real life. The final effect of these combinations is astonishing and amazing. That’s poetry!

In ‘Birches’, he compares the movement made in those big trees, either by the weather or by a child, relating them with daily aspects of our lifestyle. But he really guides us to what I think is the message of this poem: The uncertain fate of the human being, with its ups and downs, which means that sometimes you can be on the top of your life, but then you could fall down. What he suggests to do in this case is not to be afraid and start over. You can ALWAYS do that.
When I see birches bend to left and right across the lines of straighter darker trees, I like to think some boy’s been swinging them. but swinging doesn’t bend them down to stay. Ice-storms do that. Often you must have seen them loaded with ice a sunny winter morning after a rain. They click upon themselves as the breeze rises, and turn many-colored as the stir cracks and crazes their enamel. Soon the sun’s warmth makes them shed crystal shells shattering and avalanching on the snow-crust such heaps of broken glass to sweep away you’d think the inner dome of heaven had fallen. They are dragged to the withered bracken by the load, and they seem not to break; though once they are bowed so low for long, they never right themselves: You may see their trunks arching in the woods years afterwards, trailing their leaves on the ground, like girls on hands and knees that throw their hair before them over their heads to dry in the sun. But I was going to say when Truth broke in with all her matter-of-fact about the ice-storm, I should prefer to have some boy bend them as he went out and in to fetch the cows-- Some boy too far from town to learn baseball, whose only play was what he found himself, summer or winter, and could play alone. One by one he subdued his father’s trees by riding them down over and over again until he took the stiffness out of them, and not one but hung limp, not one was left for him to conquer.

He learned all there was to learn about not launching out too soon and so not carrying the tree away clear to the ground. He always kept his poise to the top branches, climbing carefully with the same pains you use to fill a cup up to the brim, and even above the brim Then he flung outward, feet first, with a swish, kicking his way down through the air to the ground. So was I once myself a swinger of birches. And so I dream of going back to be. It’s when I’m weary of considerations, and life is too much like a pathless wood where your face burns and tickles with the cobwebs broken across it, and one eye is wiping from a twig’s having lashed across it open. I’d like to get away from earth awhile and then come back to it and begin over. May no fate willfully misunderstand me and half grant what I wish and snatch me away not to return. Earth’s the right place for love; I don’t know where it’s likely to go better. I’d like to go by climbing a birch tree and climb black branches up a snow-white trunk toward heaven, till the tree could bear no more, but dipped its top and set me down again. That would be good both going and coming back. One could do worse than be a swinger of birches.
I think that Robert Frost uses the metaphor of nature and gold to describe certain aspects that apply to the real life. For me this poem has two meanings: one to describe the change of nature, and the other to describe a human behavior, and innocence. The nature changes by the past of every season, and the colors never are the same, and a baby begins to grow and change. Parents may think that their child will have the same innocence forever, and before parents realize that the gold, the innocence in their babies is changing into a person that they wouldn’t like their babies are teenagers. Sometimes this teenager gives the parents grief. “So Eden sank to grief”. The teenage years are difficult and Eden may not appear to be everything they thought raising a child would be. However most of the parents accept the grief and continue loving the gold that they see in their babies.

Nothing Gold Can Stay

(A reaction to Robert Frost’s poem, “Nothing Gold Can Stay”)

BY KATHY VARELA — ADVANCED

Nothing Gold Can Stay

By Robert Frost

Nature’s first green is gold,

Her hardest hue to hold.

Her early leaf’s a flower;

But only for an hour.

Then leaf subsides to leaf.

So Eden sank to grief,

So dawn goes down to day.

Nothing gold can stay.
Using Drugs to Get Better Grades

BY JAVIER E. GODOY — PERU — ADVANCED

Reaction based on the article, “A Drug Kids Take in Search of Better Grades,”

Have you ever had a difficult time studying?

If your answer is yes, you are like the common of students who are in High School or College. There is nothing to be sorry. In fact what is important is the way you face this difficulty and take advantage of the study time as much as possible. Many students prefer to choose the wrong way taking pills to improve their capacity of concentration instead of practicing by reading and writing a lot. I am still ashamed the way I opted for using pills to help me in the exams time during my last year in High School, but thanks to the support of my family and some excellent specialists I could overcome this situation.

Everything started when I had to decide between going to a party and studying for an exam on Monday. It is an easy decision to make depending on how far you want to go in your life, but it turns in a really difficult one when the girl you like very much is going to be there. I do not find necessary to say which decision I obviously made. After that, I found myself short of time, and then I began to drink coffee to keep me awake and recover the lost time. Then, some friends told me they had heard about some drugs which were used to control the weight and that also served to keep one concentrated in study for hours.

At first, my reaction seemed to be definitive. ‘Drugs lead nowhere’ I said to myself and if those were drugs so those were also included in the expression, but then, I thought, if people used them to lose weight, what is understandable, why I could not use them to improve my capacity of concentration, what is understandable, too. After all, coffee was losing its effectiveness since I needed more doses each time I used it to keep me awake. Then, I started using pills, but as much as I took them as much as I needed them. I found myself in a really desperate situation when I ran out of money and looked forward to take a pill.
The break point happened when my mother caught me stealing money from her purse. I could see the tears falling down her cheeks, then she asked me what was going on, and I explained to her all what had happened and how I was feeling since I could not give up those pills. All my family became concerned about me and I was taken to a psychologist, then to a therapist.

I was treated with therapies because of my lack of self-esteem and my lack of self-confidence, they said. They also said a person who tends to use drugs to gain time instead of planning his time might consider himself incapable to do that: therefore he would suffer of lack of self-esteem and self-confidence. Even though I felt bad of realizing I suffered of lack of self-esteem and self-confidence, I was glad to know I had a family which was concerned about me and which I would count with.

To summarize, some students have difficulties when they study. The problem makes bigger when these guys use drugs to improve their capacity of concentration, but what they might do not know is that there is nothing to be sorry because commonly almost everybody has problems studying. I think, until students are taught about time management and techniques of study and being greatly encouraged to study in that way and believe in themselves, these cases of drug dependency will still remain.

God and Politics Don’t Mix

BY YURI BRENNAN – JAPAN – ADVANCED

Some people strongly believe that the U.S. should have a president who believes in god. In my opinion, the most important thing for the president of the U.S. is that he should have a sound body and mind, and make fair judgments, no matter what his personal belief.

For those who strongly believe in god, god sets basic guidelines for them. I think this is a great thing if people are equitable and non-extreme, because they are able to make a fair judgment. On the other hand, people who are easily swayed by someone else’s opinion, often have a tendency to go to the extreme. For them, it is a dangerous to have religion because they can’t make a fair judgment. For example, world history teaches us that there were theologians who became dictators. What they did to their nations was unforgivable. They treated their people not as human beings but as bugs, and even cruelly killed their citizens. It is a tragedy when the leader of a nation leads in a wrong way. What I ask of the leader of a country most is that the leader has a sound body, strong mind, and possess fairness.

In the end, even though some people believe that the U.S. should have a president who believes in god, I don’t agree with this opinion. In my opinion, whoever becomes the president should possess equality and great leadership skills.
The article, “The Faith of Our Fathers” by Jay Tolson published in US News and World Report (June 28—July 5, 2004) states that waves of immigrants found America’s civil religion too conspicuously Protestant for their own comfort, and as institutions like schools began to receive public funding, many wondered what prayers or even Bible reading was doing in the classroom. And it adds that many Americans find that religious convictions are best kept under civil wraps. Fifty percent say they are uncomfortable when politicians discuss how religious they are.

Frontiers of life we live now and religion are so conflicted. Which rules come first? Existing in this life or thinking about the other life? If we live in a society, there are some things we should do. One can be a religious person but religion is a private thing, it should be between the person and God. People can go to mosque or church to pray; those are places to pray. But people shouldn’t pray in school. School is a place to learn and study. I have a question for those people who want to pray in school. Do they agree that church or mosque? Putting the religious things in public areas is to make a mixture. If people want to pray, there are lots of religious places around to pray in. If people want to study, there are lots of schools around to study in. For instance, people sleep in their bedroom and eat in their kitchen, and eat in their bedroom? So, it’s people should study in the religious things in public areas is to pray, there are lots of religious want to study, there are lots of stance, people sleep in their Can they sleep in their kitchen like this. are uncomfortable when politicians discuss how religious they are”. If people believe religious people, let them elect a Pope as a president, he should have a religion or they can be an atheist as a human, but in their heart. It is a human right. The only thing is they should not state it in public. Their job is managing the country. There are a lot of things they have to do. Of course they can work on religion as a part of their job, but not on a specific religion. For example, if some people’s religious rights are abused, they should solve this problem. That’s all. A president, who is a Muslim for example, discusses how religious he is, what the others who are Jewish or Christian do feel as a citizen of that country? He represents the country, but countries have people from different religions. If the most important critic is religion, and there is no Jewish candidate, who should Jewish people elect? By the way, people elect some one as a president by looking at his promises about society and his idea about economic and social improvement because president should work for those things. People don’t care if he will go to the hell or heaven. They just care about what he will do for them and their country.

Religion and life should be separate. We live in a society; we have some things we must do. A president or a country has something to do for all citizens; he can’t divide people according to the religion because every one pays tax for the country.
Princess
- Original Pencil and Paper Sketch
by Ragini Rana
India
Animé
● Original Pencil and Paper Sketch ●
BY KIM CARMELA ALO
PHILIPPINES

“ART GALLERY”
Kim Carmela Alo
EUR-107-02
Shri Radha-Krishna

Original Pencil and Paper Sketch

by Ragini Rana

India
ACTIVITY SET 1
“The Loss of a Child” by Ginette Luma — P. 6

Before you read, look at Ford Maddox Brown’s painting, “The Last of England” and discuss:

• Who are the people in the painting?
• Where are they going? What clues in the painting help you make your conclusion?
• What are the characters feeling? Give reasons for your interpretations.
• Does this painting remind you of anything in your own life? If so, what?

Now read “The Loss of a Child”.

What do you think?

• Do you like the author’s interpretation of the painting? Why? Why not?
• Is the introduction effective? Why? Why not?
• Is the sequence of events clear? How does the author introduce a new event or time?
• Did you like the conclusion? Why? Why not?
• How would you change the story? Where would you add detail?

Write Now!

• Rewrite “The Loss of a Child”. Add descriptive detail, change the characters, give the story a new ending.
• Study the painting, “The Last of England” and write your own story about what you see.
• Try writing different kinds of stories based on the same painting: mystery story, love story, adventure story.
ACTIVITY SET 2
“Who Wants to Live Forever” by Alper Habip —P. 15

Before you read, discuss:
• Would you want to live forever? Why? Why not?
• If you could live forever, what would you want to do? Learn? Become?
• What things don’t you have time for in your life? Why don’t you have time?
• How is “time” different in the United States and in your native country? Many people think that time moves quickly in the U.S.A. Do you agree? Disagree? Explain your answer.

Now Read
• How does the author feel about living forever?
• What disadvantages of living forever does the author present? Do you agree with these disadvantages?
• Are there any advantages to living forever? Explain.

Write Now!
Write an essay discussing the advantages or disadvantages of living forever.

ACTIVITY SET 3
“My Funny Bother-In-Law Bobby” by Elizabeth Alaeddin —P. 22

Before you read, discuss:
• If you were an animal, which one would you be? Why?
• If you were a color, which one would you be? Why?
• If you were a season, which one would you be? Why?
• What is a simile? What is a metaphor? What is an adjective?

Now Read
• Does the author paint a clear picture of Bobby?
• What is your favorite descriptive detail in the composition? Why?

Write Now!
Write a descriptive composition about a friend or family member. Use at least one simile and one metaphor.
Submission Guidelines

Requirements ...

● All writers must be ESL students enrolled in a 2-year community college.
● All submissions MUST be original work.
● All submissions must be submitted electronically with an information sheet & intellectual property waiver. (Click here for electronic form)
● Writers may submit a maximum of one piece of work in each genre: Fiction, Non-Fiction, Narrative, Reaction, Poetry, Art, Photography.
● All work MUST be submitted as MS Word files. Art and Photography submissions must be submitted as JPEG files.
● Submissions MUST be typed, double-spaced in a 12 pt. font and shouldn’t exceed 2000 words.

Contact Information ...

Please send all submissions to:
Jennifer Summerhays
Passaic County Community College, ESL Department
jsummerhays@pccc.edu

NEXT DEADLINE FOR WINTER ISSUE — NOVEMBER 11, 2005