About NewsLINC

NewsLINC is a quarterly publication of writing submitted by LINC Home Study students. We are proud of our students and thrilled to publish their writing. The publication encourages our students to practice writing, helps to boost their self-confidence, promotes language skills development and creates a sense of community within the LINC Home Study program. We also hope our readers learn from and feel inspired by the collection of works that are showcased each issue.

About LINC Home Study

LINC Home Study is an English language program for newcomers to Canada who wish to improve their listening, speaking, reading and writing skills but have barriers to attending classroom courses.

What is the program like?

As a student in the LINC Home Study program, you can learn English from the comfort of your home. You have the choice of completing the program either online (using a computer with internet access) or offline (using a traditional textbook and CD). All study materials are based on the Canadian Language Benchmarks standards. To be successful, you have to study hard and commit your time to improving your English skills. This includes studying independently for 5 to 10 hours a week and finishing homework assignments.

Do I get any help?

To ensure you have the best possible learning experience, you receive support from our experienced and qualified staff. You work with a TESL-certified instructor who contacts you every week by phone or VOIP to review your homework, help you practice speaking and answer your questions. Your instructor develops a learning plan that is tailored to your individual needs and guides you along the path to achieving your goals. You can also contact our technical and program support staff for assistance with any questions you have about the program policies, features or functionality.

How do I register for the program?

To qualify for the program you must have your language skills assessed at a language assessment centre and be:

- of legal school leaving age within your province or territory
- a convention refugee OR a permanent resident of Canada who has not become a Canadian citizen
- unable to attend classroom-based English language training

How much does the program cost?

There is no fee to enrol in this program. LINC Home Study is funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada.

Contact Us

If you have questions or feedback about the LINC Home Study program or NewsLINC, please email us at: help@linchomestudy.ca
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Activity
One of the most common questions that kids are asked is what do you want to be when you grow up? My answer to that question was always the same: I want to be an amazing dancer like all the other members of my family. However, my dad always wanted me to be a lawyer; being a dancer was never a profession he considered appropriate for his daughter. Because it is easier to influence your parent’s decision when you are little, I was able to convince my mother of my love of dance and, with her support, I was permitted to take part in most of the school dance groups and presentations until I was 9 years old.

Although dancing was my favourite activity while I was in elementary school, once I turned 10 years old, it stopped being the number one passion in my life. I became interested in other activities and subjects at my new school. After exploring various interests during my early teen years, I found my calling to be in the sciences. The more I studied science, the more I became interested in it. I took science classes throughout high school, and after 10 years of full dedication, I finally became a scientist. However, despite my academic accomplishments, a piece was missing in my life and that was the happiness that I only felt when I danced.

Dancing when you are not that young anymore

After completing my PhD and entering the workforce I found myself having a lot more free time; therefore, I decided to focus on dancing once again. But...wait a minute! I was not 5 years old anymore and did not have the physical power or the mentality that dancers naturally have at a young age. Nonetheless, I believed that “It is never too late to learn new things”. I had not danced for almost 20 years, and although dancing was not entirely new to me, I decided that I wanted to learn the basics of dance again and enrolled in several instructional dance classes.

Even though I aspire to be a dancer, I am not that well coordinated, nor am I comfortable performing in front of a live audience. Fortunately, I have made a lot of friends with people from around the world in my dance classes. This has allowed me to learn even more styles of dance. I have enrolled in three new classes with my new friends: Irish set dance, Latin dance and Ballroom dance. Our friendships go beyond our dance classes and performances, as we also do other activities together.

All dancers have something in common: they are fun loving, regardless of age, gender, race or previous experience. Dance is a holistic activity that provides not only physical and mental benefits for human wellness, but it also is one of the most inclusive and welcoming art forms that brings people together from all walks of life to speak the language of dance - after all, its universal!
When I first came to Canada, I noticed that camping is one of the most popular activities during the summer here. Because I was frightened of having an allergic reaction to mosquito bites, I was not interested in camping even though my friends had invited me many times to go with them. However, my kids are growing up and they look forward to going camping like their friends and classmates. Therefore, I decided to go to the Bruce Peninsula for my family’s first camping trip with friends in the middle of July this year.

My family was a complete novice at camping, except my son because he has been a scout for two years, so my friend chose a private campground, Tobermory Village Campground, that they had visited last year and they thought might be suitable for us. A total of four families participated and all of us made online reservations in advance in May. From the time my kids knew we had made our reservation, they were extremely excited to have a daily countdown.

That long-awaited day finally arrived! We arrived at the campground around 2:00 p.m. After checking in, we started to set the tent up. Because we had set it up in our backyard once, we knew what order worked for us. It took us a few more minutes than the suggested set up time, but it was faster than last time. Later on, we started to cook and dinner was ready to eat soon. Every family made their special dishes, so we could have a buffet dinner filled with chicken, beef rolls, salads, steam-fried buns, beef hot pot and so much more tasty food. It was a great time while we enjoyed our dinner and chatted with each other, no matter adults or children. After that, it was time to roast marshmallows, a popular camp tradition. There isn’t anyone who doesn’t like that activity. The key is you need to place a marshmallow on the end of a roasting fork, then hold it carefully over a campfire until golden. In short, it is very easy, fun, and tastes good. At last, we went to bed after taking a hot shower. However, I couldn’t sleep well all night because that was my first time staying in a tent and I was not accustomed to the sound of the wind blowing the leaves. Even though I told myself that I should relax as much as possible to enjoy the lovely nature, unfortunately, it didn’t work.

The next morning, we set off to Bruce Peninsula National Park. In the park, we walked in the shallow beach where the water was clear and cool. We also hiked along Horse Lake Trail and Marr Lake Trail that belong to the Bruce Trail, that is Canada’s oldest and longest footpath. After finishing that, we were extremely exhausted, then went back to our campground to take a rest. Finally, it was time to have dinner! All the kids were excited because we had a BBQ dinner and the chefs were the kids themselves. The boys made a campfire without
help, so everyone could gather around the fireplace and talk. Thanks to those kids for letting us have a relaxing night to enjoy our dinner because of their help. They certainly did a great job. After getting better sleep than the previous night, we checked out at eleven the next morning.

In conclusion, my first camping experience in Canada was really amazing and unforgettable. I eventually accepted camping and had great fun. Without a television and computers, I could spend more time with my family and enjoyed such a simplified way of life, which is great for my health. Through a camping trip, my kids could learn more about how to make a plan in advance, take some responsibilities in an event and cooperate with others. My family and I look forward to our next camping trip.

**A Fish Story**

*Amir A. | Level 5 | Ana Rs Student*

Last week, I went to Port Hope with my friends to catch salmon. I started fishing about three months ago. One of my friends and I bought a small lancer/hook and started to fish, but in the beginning I only caught two small sunfish. They were about four inches in my first try and I was very happy. I continued fishing in the lake for a little longer. After a while, I heard about the ways to catch salmon. I heard that in September salmon travel from lake to rivers and that is true because we were able to catch two of them. The first and second time I tried I couldn’t catch any. I started asking everyone how to catch salmon. Another fisherman helped me a lot to learn how to settle the hook, but he told me that patience is the most important part of fishing. After that, I went fishing for three nights straight, but I didn’t catch any fish. On the fourth day, I caught one HUGE FISH! It was about twenty four pounds and one hundred and twenty centimetres long. I couldn’t believe it!

That is the story that I have shared with friends, family, and everyone else I know. I am proud of myself!
There are about 250,000 lakes in Ontario, most of them are found in the Southern part of the province. These lakes contain about one-third of the world’s fresh water. This is one of the reasons why fishing is popular in Ontario. And fishing just happens to be my favourite sport or hobby. In my country, the Dominican Republic, I started fishing when I was a very young boy when I used my bare hands to catch fish and crabs along the coast of Punta Cana.

When I came to Canada, I learned that hand gathering is not the only way to fish but there are other types of fishing. There is spearfishing, where you use a sharp stick to catch fish in rivers; angling, where you use a hook attached to a fishing line and a rod, and netting, where you cast a net or mesh from a boat. People fish for three different reasons: commercial, recreational or sport, and artisan. Commercial fishing is large-scale and is done not only for a living but to reap big profits as well. It is known as one of the most dangerous jobs in the world. Recreational fishing is done for fun where you must catch and release the fish.

Recreational fishing, also called sport fishing, can be done by almost anyone. Fishermen compete to catch specific types of fish or fish of specific weights. Artisan fishing, also known as subsistence fishing, is a small-scale commercial fishing where traditional methods are used by island or coastal fishermen for their everyday livelihood.

There are several things you must be aware of before fishing in Ontario. Different regions require licensing in order to fish safely without getting fined. The first thing you need to know is that you need to buy an Outdoors Card, and one of two license tags: Sports Fishing License Tag or Conservation Fishing License Tag. Whenever you go fishing, you must have with you both the Outdoors Card and any of the two License Tags. The Outdoors Card costs less than $10.00 for a new one or to renew an old one and is valid for 3 years. The license tags cost $28.89 for 1 year or $86.68 for a 3-year sport fishing tag. Moreover, the conservation fishing tags’ prices are $16.46 for 1 year or $49.39 for 3 years. You can buy both the card and the fishing tags at Canadian Tire or online. The second thing you should know is when and where you can fish. Ontario has different open seasons and catch limits. This is why you also must be aware of what kind, size and the amount of fish you can catch and keep. Another important thing to know is what you can use for bait and tackle. Lastly, you need to learn the different fishing zones so that you will be aware what you can and cannot do in specific locations. The province of Ontario has a set rules for fishing because the province needs to protect its natural resources, at the same time give opportunities for residents to enjoy the outdoors.
There are two best places to fish in Ontario. The first is in northwest Ontario where you can catch fish such as: trophy, muskie, walleye, lake trout, northern pike, black crappie and bass. And the second one is in northeastern Ontario which is famous for huge lake trout, monster northern pike, and record-class brook trout. The Northern parts of Ontario are abundant in fish!

I love fishing because it makes me feel relaxed and happy. It is a fun sport for all ages and very easy to do. Even my young nephews have learned to like it. I really enjoy the feeling of success and fulfillment every time I catch a fish. I get to learn the different kinds of fish, discover the beautiful lakes in Ontario and share tips and strategies with my fellow anglers. The best part of fishing is when I catch a big one, grill it, and then eat it with my family outside a log cabin by the lake. One day when my son is of age, I will teach him how to fish, so he can feel the same satisfaction and happiness that I get from my favourite sport.
Canada Through an Immigrant’s Eyes

By Myriam S. | Level 6 | Jessica W’s Student

Canada, you are the biggest girl from the new continent “The Americas”. Your first conquerors arrived from Asia; they crossed an ice tunnel. As soon as they saw you, they fell in love with you. They gave you beautiful children, And all of them have been the vigilant eyes of all your beautiful natural treasures.

Time continued,
You were already a woman
When new conquerors touched your soft skin.
Their eyes showed tremendous fascination of your richness,
Until the point that they lost their reason.

They felt tremendously jealous of your first children,
So they made them suffer without pity, without heart.
They could not contain their ambition about you;
And their devoured you without limits.
Consequently, your beauty and your health suffered.

One day, your great grandchildren looked back at you,
And they cried as a child cries beside the bed of his sick mother who is approaching death.
You saw them, and you just said,
“It is not too late; my life is in your hands, my loves”.
Some of them understood the profound nature of your words,
And they started to take care of you as fast as they could,
But your scars are still there.
Sadly, some of them are still hurting you.

Today, you are not a young woman anymore,
But you still look beautiful,
Because some of yours have learned to love you as you deserve.
The Start of Autumn

Kyungah L. | Level 3 | James T’s Student

The start of autumn.

I saw.

When I was walking around Killarney lake.

I saw.

Two days before, I smelled the autumn.

I saw.

When I was waiting for autumn, but not winter.

I saw.

When an angel was preparing autumn colors to paint the world.

I saw.

When an angel blobbed a drop of paint on a leaf by mistake.

I saw.

Early autumn tinted leaves barely hiding from green leaves.

Were déjà vu of last year’s autumn tints from angel’s mistakes.

Just like a drunken person when I sober.

Just like a shy person when I was not.

My face was getting blushed.

I saw.
Cuba is a great country with a good education and health system, beautiful beaches and cheerful and friendly people.

I was born and lived there with my family for 37 years. The university education is free in Cuba. I studied Agronomy Engineering, and I started to work as a researcher in National Research Institute of Root and Tuber Crops. My MSc and PhD tuition fee was free. I love my country, but the economy in Cuba has big problems due to external and internal situations. I don’t want to speak about that, because everything in Cuba has political angle or overtone.

My family and I – my wife and my two sons – decided to immigrate to Canada. We applied to the Quebec Emigration Program, and my wife and I started to learn French at home after returning from our jobs. We had an interview in Canadian embassy in Havana. The officer of immigration of Quebec checked our forms and titles and gave us a Quebec Selection Certificate. We were very happy, and the next step was to apply for our visa and for the permanent resident resident status in Canada. Canada opened its doors and gave us a warm welcome.

We needed to prepare to immigrate to Canada, and it was stressful and sad for our parents, brothers, sister and friends in Cuba.

We arrived in Montreal on September 22, 2012. Everything was different here, and we didn’t understand anything. But a Cuban friend, who had studied with me, offered us his help. He picked us up from the Montreal airport and drove us to Ottawa. We lived in his house our first month in Canada. He showed us services available for immigrants and guided us in every aspect of our new life. I started to work as a cleaner in a building. We needed to earn money. We rented an apartment and moved with my family there. I felt very happy in Ottawa, but one day I got an e-mail from Professor P. Saxena of the University of Guelph offering offered me a Post-Doctoral position in his Lab. I started to jump as I was very happy. We decided to move to Guelph, and arrived here on January 14, 2013. I started to work at the University of Guelph, and now I am working in Harster Greeenhouse. I have had good luck in Canada, and I am so happy here.
My name is Dema, and I have been living in Canada for almost a year and half now. My husband, my 4 kids and I moved from our home country the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan to Canada in a search of better opportunities in education for my children, work for us, and diversity and inclusion of this wonderful society. As parents, my husband and I believed that this multicultural country would be a great opportunity for our children to meet people from all around the world and explore new experiences. Before our big move, I did some research and found out that Oakville, Ontario is one of the most family oriented cities in North America. It is safe and clean. That is why we decided to live there.

10 years ago when my husband first suggested the idea of applying for immigration, I was totally against it. How can someone leave his/her home country, family, childhood memories and everything that ties your past with your present and future, and decide to go to the unknown? The thought of it scared me. Then, after I had my first 2 children, I started to look at things from a different perspective. Life now is not only about me, but also about my children. They are our most precious investment in this life and we need to find what is best for them. So Canada was the perfect choice.

I believe the choice to immigrate is the same as choosing to get married and have children. You start a new phase of life, set new goals and a new vision, yet you never forget the ties that bind you with your original family and your parents who raised you and brought you up to the great person you are. The same goes with immigrating to a new country. You move on, looking for new adventures and a new life. You carry with you the great virtues that you were raised with to your new home to make sure that you make it grow and nourish. As a computer studies graduate, I have worked in different areas. I started with programming, technical documentation, creating user manuals and office management. After I had my children, I discovered that I had a passion for children that I never thought I had, so I started teaching IT in grades 1-11.

After we arrived in Canada and got the assistance needed from the settlement workers here, I found out that I have another new passion that is helping people and taking their stress away. This is the same thing that our settlement worker did for us. So I am here now, planning to raise my baby, and during this time I hope I can prepare myself to work for a settlement agency. I think that enhancing my English is the first step for my new adventure.
Canada, My New Country

Muhammad A. | Level 7 | Atika N’s Student

Canada is a beautiful country and known around the world as a strong and free country. Canada is a constitutional monarchy, a parliamentary democracy and a federal state. The ancestors of Aboriginal people are believed to have migrated from Asia many thousands of years ago. They were well established here long before the explorers from Europe first came to North America. English and French are the country’s official languages. Canadians celebrate Canada Day on 1st July.

Canada is the second largest country on earth – 10 million square kilometers. It has ten provinces and three territories. There is no compulsory military service in Canada. However, serving in the regular Canadian Forces is a noble way to contribute to Canada. Young people can learn discipline, responsibility and skills by getting involved in the cadets.

Canadians have made various discoveries and inventions. Some of them are telephone, first electric light bulb, contribution to the invention of radio, the BlackBerry – a wireless communications company and the discovery of insulin – a hormone to treat diabetes that has saved 16 million lives worldwide. Hockey is Canada’s most popular spectator sport and considered to be the national winter sport. Canadian football is the second most popular sport.

The discovery of oil in Alberta in 1947 began Canada’s modern energy industry. In 1951, for the first time, a majority of Canadians were able to afford adequate food, shelter and clothing. Between 1945 and 1970, as Canada drew closer to the United States and other trading partners, the country enjoyed one of the strongest economies among industrialized nations.

Canada has always been a trading nation and commerce remains the engine of economic growth. Canada’s economy includes three main type of industries i.e. service industry, manufacturing industry and natural resources industry. More than 75% of working Canadians now have jobs in service industries. Canada enjoys close relations with the United States and each is other’s largest trading partner. Millions of Canadian and Americans cross border every year and in safety what is traditionally known as “the world’s longest undefended border.”
I came to Canada in November 2013 with my family. When I came here the temperature was 0 degrees C and a few days later we had snow. I face seasonal changes here in winter.

I work at D1 Automotive Ltd as an Automotive Service Technician. Normally, I work weekdays but not weekends. My boss and other workers are good and very helpful.

In Cape Broyle, Newfoundland, we have a convenience store, but it doesn’t have lot of vegetable, fruits, etc. So I go to town twice a month to buy food and other items. Sometimes I visit my Sri Lankan friends.

The Canadian government provides very good health care services. So I receive some very good benefits here. I can get any information through the Internet. It is easy to do a lot of things. So I think everything is systematic here.

The Canadian people are very honest. Therefore, it is easy to deal with them. There are lots of differences between Sri Lanka and Canada but I like to live in Canada.
School Systems in Canada and Indonesia

Alfie N. | Level 6 | Jonathan B’s Student

For me the educational system in Canada is very friendly. The children are happy and their parents are also happy. The children can spend after school time doing activities that they like. The curriculum doesn’t cause students stress. My oldest daughter is in sixth grade now and still no exams, all she got were a quiz or project. The school in Canada believes that all children are smart and have their own talent. The school in Canada starts from junior kindergarten, senior kindergarten, elementary school (starts from grade 1 until grade 6), middle school (starts from grade 7 until 9), but in some school in this grade are still elementary school), High school (starts from grade 10 until grade 12). Public school in Canada is free but for private schools we need to pay tuition. Public schools in Canada don’t teach the children about religion, but Catholic schools in Canada teach religion in school. Some people are willing to pay high tuition fees because they want their children to learn about religion and feel the education system may be better.

The educational system in Indonesia is totally different from the educational system in Canada. In Indonesia from grade 1 the students have exams and if they don’t do well in the exam they can fail and will have to start over in the same grade for the next year. This system is not fair for the student, it can make the student who fails depressed and when the students feel depressed it is not good. The curriculum is also very high difficult especially in maths. All students must be able to read and write properly in grade 1, and they must know about multiplications too. School in Indonesia starts from junior kindergarten, senior kindergarten, elementary school (starts from grade 1 until grade 6), middle school (starts from grade 7 until grade 9), high school (starts from grade 10 until grade 12). Public school in Indonesia is also free, but for private schools we must pay tuition. Private schools in Indonesia are not always religious schools, some of them are based on international school curriculum; an example is Australian International School (based on the Australian school curriculum) or Jakarta International School (based on the United States curriculum). In Indonesia the curriculum in all the schools (public or private) also teaches the religion that the student follows.

I believe every country wants the best for its citizens. But, if I compare the educational system in Canada with that of Indonesia I will say Canada is the best. I grew up and finished all my education in Indonesia and I know how depressed I felt at that time. I feel blessed that all my children can go to school in Canada.
My home town is Pakistan. I was born and raised in Pakistan and I spent 23 years of my life there. My education, childhood and everything belongs to this country. I love my home town because most of my friends, siblings, relatives, teachers etc. live there. However, on the downside, the law and order system is not good in my home town. Pollution is another big problem there, as well as high medical expenses. Poor people in my home town can’t afford the cost of health care, neither can they educate their children in good schools or even feed them proper food. Lastly, the inflation rate is getting higher and higher.

At the age of 24, I came to Canada. For the first time in my life I felt freedom in every aspect of my life. This country is really clean and organized. The best thing I found here which I like the most is that there is no discrimination. Basic health care is covered by OHIP for all Canadian citizens including permanent residents. On the other hand, taxes are so high at about 13% on each item. Nonetheless, the tax system seems fair because with this system everyone can live a balanced life; for example, in Canada, the rich are not the richest and the poor are not below the line of poverty.

For all the reasons mentioned above, I have to say that I love living in Canada, and I will always love my home town, Pakistan.
My Sojourn in Niagara Region

Iren Z. | Level 6 | Meghann W’s Student

I was first introduced by my friend to the KMCC or the Kababayan Multi-Community Centre after having lived in Canada for a year. The KMCC is a non-profit agency providing settlement services to newcomers and immigrants living in Toronto. Since then, I’ve always joined the KMCC’s activities when possible. A particular annual tradition celebrated by the Kababayan Multi-Community Centre is to travel to the Niagara region. Common activities include picking apples, visiting a winery, sightseeing, and shopping at the Fashion Outlets of Niagara Falls in the USA.

Our bus left Toronto at 8:30 in the morning and went straight to the Apple Vale Farm. We reached the farm at around 10:30 a.m. and started picking our own apples. They had a variety of red and green apples as well as pears to pick. I personally didn’t pick apples for myself and just helped my friend pick instead. Even though we do it every year, I still get excited and love the idea that we are going to the farm with friends.

After apple picking, we travelled to the Gateway Food court to have our lunch. Some people brought their own food and ate on the bus and some had their lunch at the food court. After lunch, we travelled again for 30 minutes to go to the winery farm in St. Catherines. The scenery was so breathtaking that even while we were still in the bus everyone was taking pictures of the beautifully landscaped vineyard. It was my first time visiting a winery and it amazed me to see with my own eyes the plantation of grapes that will eventually become wine. The staff showed us the cellar where the barrel of wine is stored and explained the process of making the best quality of wine, including how long they stored the wine in the barrel before they poured it into the bottle. After showing us the storage, they had us taste the wine and gave us the option to buy some. While waiting for everyone to come out of the store, me and my cousin enjoyed the vineyard scenery by taking a lot of pictures.

When we were done at the winery, our bus headed to the Fashion Outlets of Niagara Falls to shop till we drop. It was one of the activities that everyone anticipated the most. Everyone wanted to buy their favourite brand for less. We only had a limited time of one and a half hours to shop, but I think everyone enjoyed their time.

Lastly, our last stop of the trip was to sightsee the beautiful and amazing Niagara Falls. Even though I had already visited Niagara Falls a couple of times before in the past, I am still in awe as I wonder where the water comes from. I still haven’t experienced going there in the winter time. They say it is more beautiful at night when the different colored lights reflect on the falls.

Although it was just a one day trip, I personally enjoyed it. The weather was so nice that day; despite it being cold, it was still sunny. It was one way to get refreshed and have a breather from our usual routine and was an excellent time to bond with friends and family.
This is a brief introduction about the place where I’m living at this moment: Salt Spring Island.

I will talk about the Island and the people as far as I am able, given my short residence here (I just arrived 4 months ago).

The Island is located in the Gulf Islands, in the Juan de Fuca Strait between Vancouver and Victoria in British Columbia, Canada.

Warm weather, virgin nature, beautiful beaches, and colorful people make this place very unique.

The most recent census of the island reports almost 10,000 permanent residents. This number increases during the summer with lots of tourists and temporary residents.

Most of the people who moved to the island in the 60’s and 70’s were peace activists: U.S. draft dodgers refusing to serve in the Vietnam War, and hippies from the rest of Canada and all over the world.

Since that time, organic farmers, artists, artisans and different healers, have settled on the island.

Additionally, wealthy people from other Canadian provinces and the US that like a warm and a beautiful place to spend their holiday or retirement, as well as young people from Quebec and Europe working on the farms as a “woofers” add to the population during the summer months.

It’s a good place to discover yourself, thus many visitors come to get inspired by the people living here. There is a special healing energy that you can breathe in everywhere.

The cultural life is surprisingly rich for such a small community; there is a film festival in March, many concerts and events at the Artspring, a modern theatre. The cinema is located in an old Church, which is very charming.

There are very interesting and open-minded people to talk to everywhere: in the coffee shops, waiting in the post office line, or walking on a beach.

Saturday’s Market is always well attended by locals, tourists and even people from other parts of BC; you can find incredible produce there as the island has more than 110 farms, most of which are organic. Moreover, artisan cheeses, breads, beers, and specialty foods can be purchased from the local artisans. Paintings,
sculptures, woodcarvings, pottery, jewelry, bees wax candles and handmade clothing are also available for sale.

Many people come every Saturday from April to October to walk around the Island, as it is one of the best times to observe local people enjoy each other’s diversity and their joy for life.

There are daily ferries connecting Vancouver and Victoria to Salt Spring Island, and water planes from downtown Vancouver, Victoria and Seattle also.

In recent years, many families have been coming to the island, attracted by the quiet life style, the small and friendly community and one of the best secondary schools in B.C., specializing in the Arts and Nature Studies.
What I Like About Living in Canada

Bin L. | Level 6 | Lisa G.’s student

Life isn’t always easy for newcomers, especially during the initial period of immigration. They have to overcome many challenges. Some people will give up their dream of creating a new life and return home. I don’t think that anyone should be looked down upon when making this decision. Our family has lived in Canada for 6 years. I admit that I have often felt lonely and that it has taken a lot of effort to adapt to my new life here. I have had to improve my English and learn many new skills in order to work. These are just a few of the challenges I have had to deal with. However, looking back over the last six years of my life and comparing it to my life in China, I feel Canada is a more supportive and hopeful place to live. My family has decided to stay and make Canada our permanent home for the following reasons.

First of all, pollution and food safety are not serious concerns for people living in Canada. In contrast, these two issues are the most talked about problems among the citizens of all Chinese communities. Perhaps you have heard about the air quality of Beijing and the poisonous baby formula incident. Many local Canadians have asked me about pollution in China. I answer reluctantly, “That symbols boom of the factory of the world.” Fortunately, Mother Nature has given Canada lots of forest and lakes, so it’s citizens can enjoy fresh air and a beautiful blue sky. We can drink clean tap water anywhere and never have to worry about our baby’s formula. We can buy all kinds of food trustingly.

Secondly, I am impressed by how friendly and welcoming Canadians are. When I landed at the Vancouver airport, a stranger voluntary offered me a quarter, so I could call my landlord and have him pick me up. That kind gesture was just the first of many to come. My first boss gave me a free bicycle, so I could ride to work. When I moved to a new place, my new friends sent me furniture. In 2010, my family moved to a small town in the interior of southern BC. Whenever I asked for help, people around me assisted me with patience and warmth. I feel not only my neighbors and colleagues but also strangers care about newcomers.

Next, I like the social service system in Canada. I have received EI benefits three times during the 6 years I have lived in Canada. Twice for being laid off and once for parental leave. I should utter these benefits were a big support for my family. In particular, I want to emphasize how simple and efficient the benefit application procedure is. All I did was fill out a form and answer some questions on the Internet. Gradually, I have come to know that these efficient services cover many aspects of social life in Canada.
Forth, Canadians respects all kinds of workers. It is extremely difficult for new immigrants to secure employment in one’s original profession, so both my wife and I chose new careers. My wife used to be a university teacher, but now she is a nurse. I changed my job from being a sales associate to being a construction worker. If we were living in China doing these kinds of jobs, we would have low social status and income, but here we can choose to do whatever we like. No one judges success or social status by his or her job. Any person who contributes to society is respected.

Lastly, I like the fact that Canadians are treated equally and are free from government oppression. In July 2009, the worst ethnic violence occurred in my hometown in China. At this time, we couldn’t connect with our family or friends via phone or Internet for 6 months. Additionally, people in my hometown can’t freely apply for passports. This is unfair. My hometown occupies one sixth of the Chinese territory. I don’t know how many people’s lives are affected. In Canada, everyone has equal rights. I have never worried that someday the government would use certain privileges to restrict people’s right.

Last year, when I went back to my hometown and visited my family and friends, I observed that things have changed for the better. However, when comparing life in China to life in Canada, I prefer to live in Canada. Even though I still need to continue working hard and face lots of new challenges, I know I will have better future here.
Celebration
Mexican Independence Day

Every year on September 15th Mexico celebrates its Independence from Spain. It is a day of national celebration. On September 15th the people work just up to mid-day and on September 16th people don’t work because it is a statutory holiday.

The celebration starts on September 15th in the afternoon. After a mid-day of work people gather with the family and friends to have dinner and celebrate. Some persons gather in a house of a friend or family and some others in places like the “Zocalo” in Mexico City.

The people often wear colourful red, white and green clothes and big Mexican hats. Red, white and green are the colours of the Mexican flag. Some painting their face with Mexican symbols or just paint their face with red, white and green colours. Some parents buy traditional Mexican clothes for their children like the “traje de charro” for boys and the “traje de Adelita” for girls. The “traje de charro” is the suit mostly used by the Mariachis.

Schools organize a parade with all the kids wearing traditional Mexican clothes and they make a festival where dances performed by the students are shown to all the parents and the people that attend the festival.

Mexican food is prepared like Pozole, Pambazos, flautas, sopes, quesadillas, chiles en nogada, etc. Friends and families organize a Mexican party. They dance, listen to Mexican music such as the traditional Mariachi, listen to “El Grito de Independencia” and have dinner.

“El grito de Independencia” is considered to be the event in which the Mexican Independence started. To remember this event, every year on September 15th at 11:00 o’clock the President of Mexico standing on a balcony of “Palacio Nacional” (National Palace) in the Zocalo in Mexico City beneath the Mexican Flag addresses the people gathered there. He says loudly the following:


Then he rings a big bell and starts to wave the Mexican Flag. Following this moment everyone start to sing the National Anthem. After that there is a show of pyrotechnics. And then they continue the celebration having dinner, dancing, drinking Tequila and singing Mexican songs.

On September 16th there is a military parade in the Zocalo in Mexico City organized by the government that can be watched on the TV.
The biggest celebration in Iran is called “No-Rooz”. No-Rooz translated into English means “new day”. No-Rooz starts at the first day of spring. Iranian people have been celebrating No-Rooz for at least 3000 years.

Before No-Rooz, Iranian people start to clean up their homes. They try to renew everything. For example, they buy new furniture (depending on their financial ability) for their home and they buy new clothes for their family.

The major part of No-Rooz is called “Haft Seen”. Iranian people set Haft Seen table with seven items which start with the letter “S”. Iranian put Seeb (apple), Sabze (green grass), Seke (coin), Sir (garlic), Samano (a kind of meal), Senjed (a kind of fruit) and Somagh (an Iranian spice) on the Haft Seen. They also place a few living red fishes, candles, a mirror and colored eggs on the Haft Seen. The Haft Seen table is set for the entire time of No-Rooz, which is 13 days.

When we move into the New Year we have an exact time, Iranian people call it “Saal Tahvil”. After Saal Tahvil people hug and kiss each other and wish each other a happy and healthy new year. Iranians go to visit their family, relatives, and friends during No-Rooz. Older people give presents to younger (mostly cash) and they treat the guests with sweets, fruits and a combination of different nuts.

The last day of “Norooz” is the 13th day of the new year. This day is called “Sizda Bedar”. Iranians spend their time outdoors, going to parks for a picnic with their family and friends. Iranians regard the 13th day as a bad luck day. They believe that by going into nature they can avoid misfortunes. They also believe that unwed girls can wish for a husband by tying a knot between grasses and putting it in a river.
Pakistan is located in South Asia has a great culture with rich customs. In Pakistani weddings, people have lots of fun and enjoyment. Pakistani culture has beautiful customs and heart touching values. In this culture, marriages are arranged by parents and grandparents and boys and girls obey them. It is a great feast of fun wearing colourful traditional and fancy clothing. Below I have described some wedding customs which are organized by family members of the bride and groom.

Mangni: an official ceremony of engagement. The small ceremony takes place in the presence of important family members of the groom and bride. In this ceremony, they give the engagement rings to each other and get the blessings of their elders. On this occasion the bride and groom’s parents decide the date of the wedding.

Ubton: a paste of turmeric, sandalwood powder, herbs and oil. The groom’s mother brings ubton for the bride and applies on her hands and face. The groom’s sisters do the same thing and tie a red string on her wrist. On this occasion we can see the colours yellow and green everywhere and decorations with yellow flowers look beautiful. The bride wears a beautiful traditional yellow outfit with yellow and green bangles.

Rasm e mehendi: the traditional henna party for brides. This ceremony for women happens a day before wedding. They apply the mehendi on the bride’s hands and feet in beautiful floral designs. They bless the bride and celebrate this occasion with dancing and singing. Dinner is organized for the guests. Traditionally, mehendi is brought by the groom’s parents and Rasm e mehendi is also held for the groom.

Baraat and Nikkah: a procession of family members, relatives and friends of the groom to the bride’s home for the official wedding ceremony. The groom is given a warm welcome from the bride’s family and friends with flower garland and rose petals. Nikkah is an official Islamic wedding. Close relatives attend the Nikkah ceremony. The bride and groom sign on Nikkah Nama (marriage certificate). Their elders bless them for their newly happy married life. After the ceremony a lunch is organized by the bride’s family. After the lunch the sisters of the bride steal the groom’s shoes and demand a sum of money. It is a very popular custom. After this the bride departs to the groom’s house.

Walima: a grand reception hosted by the groom’s parents. Family members, relatives, friends and community members are invited to the reception and the marriage is celebrated with great fun and festivities.
Like many early Filipino practices through the centuries, many of the elder traditions are predominantly associated with Roman Catholic Church.

The parents of the groom would ask for the bride’s hand for their son and the groom would throw his spear at the step of his intended’s house to signify that they were engaged. The future son-in-law was expected to perform household tasks for the bride’s family to gain their approval; a tradition known as Pamanhikan. The groom and his parents go to the house of bride’s family to talk about the wedding plans and other details. The couple may choose to have an engagement party. The groom may be given a shower party for the bride with their friends.

After a month, we will choose our primary sponsors: 2 godmothers and 2 godfathers that we call ninong at ninang and our secondary sponsors: the bride’s maid and best man, flower girls and ring bearer. After that, here comes the most wonderful day of our wedding.

The groom and all the sponsors wear clothes called Barong Tagalog. The brides and the maid of honor and other sponsors wear long gowns similar to the bride’s white gown and for the sponsors there is a motif and all wear the same color and everybody is ready for marching and starting the wedding ceremonies. After the ceremonies, everybody goes to the bride’s house for a reception and, after the reception, the couple and the family of the bride go to the house of the groom. The family prepares some food to welcome the family of the bride. That’s what I would like to share about our traditional wedding celebration in our country.
In Rwanda we don’t celebrate Thanksgiving, but I can compare this to our Umuganura celebration, when we eat drink and give thanks to others for a good harvest and share with others our harvest.

Speaking about the Thanksgiving celebration in Canada, I visited some friends who celebrated Thanksgiving. I respected the cultural difference and I took my time to ask and know more about these differences. After listening to many examples and stories about Thanksgiving and how it is celebrated in different parts of the world and by different cultures and sometimes even at different times, I can see or say that it is really very similar to Rwanda’s Umuganura but different countries celebrate it differently and at different times.

Even in Canada the celebrations are close to Umuganura, for example in Canada they use turkey with cranberry sauce, in Rwanda we use sorghum which has many health benefits, but still the similarities are close. In Rwanda we celebrate Umuganura in August and in Canada Thanksgiving is celebrated in October because the climates are different and the harvest season is in different months but this doesn’t matter as you can see the similarities.

So, I would like to wish all Canadians a Happy Thanksgiving and Happy Umuganura to all Rwandese and the rest a happy festival to every one celebrating his own culture and faith.
Ecuadorian Festivities: Inti Raymi Celebrations

The Inti Raymi means “Sacred Festival of the Sun”. Its historical origins date back to the beginnings of the Empire of the Incas in Cusco, but it also has special relevance today in the northern Andes of Ecuador.

Since its inception, the basic foundation of this festival, the most important in the festive calendar of indigenous peoples of the Andes, is the Sun Worship. It is time to thank the sun for his light and for the harvest and celebrate the land fertility or in Kichwa language, the Pacha Mama. It was and remains a high spiritual feast, relevant to both old and new cultures. For Spanish, the Inti Raymi was translated as “Easter Solemn Sun”.

Today the Inti Raymi is celebrated especially in the provinces of northern Andes of Ecuador and consists of several days, sometimes weeks, of multicolored festivities, full of ancient symbolism from the indigenous worldview.

Major epicenters of this celebration are several populations of Imbabura and Otavalo, Peguche, Cotacachi, etc, as well as the populations of Cayambe and Zuleta, north of Quito, in the Pichincha province.

The celebrations include colorful hugely popular theatrical performances, with mythological characters like Aya Uma: the spiritual leader of the people, protector of nature, administrator of the spiritual energies of the mountains, and main character of the performances. It wears a colorful costume where each element has a special meaning, and his face and head are covered by a mask that has two sides, so that the symbolism of the front and back are observed.

Everyone is invited to join in great rituals of dance, music and a spectacular display of color in the outfits and costumes of the actors. One of the most impressive events of the ritual is the massive “take” from the main town square, where large groups of dancers organized by the communities themselves, follow a flawless script expressed in singing, shouting and special moves are mobilized.

A decision of the square is followed by a “Fight Ritual” and it all ends in a big party with dancing, music and plenty of food and drink including the “chicha” which is made from corn. Part of the climax of the festival are the “sacred gifts” and especially the firework castles that represent the strength of light, heat and power.
The music is rhythmic, with periods of high current flowing in favorable upbeat rhythms for dancing. Several indigenous instruments are used, with particular predominance of the flute. The food is also part of the ritual and crucial women of the community prepare special dishes.

Preparations are made months in advance, “priostes” or groomsmen party in each community are in charge of the arrangements and the expenses involved. Being a prioste is a great honor for the people of the area. Prior to the main celebration a “Bathing Ritual” takes place at night in one of the sacred waterfalls, rivers or lakes.

On the day of summer solstice itself, June 22, special rituals of worship are performed to the Sun in the place where, at noon, it does not cast a shadow. These places are: the city Equator, the archaeological sites and ruins of Rumicucho and Cochasquí, and other ancient ceremonial centers and observatories of the sun and the universe.

These ceremonies include elements of ancestral traditions, but have been mixed in with more mestizo parts of the festival ideas. However, they are still a matter of attraction for many visitors, both domestic and foreign.

Sources:
www.visitecuador.travel (Translated by Kleber Orbea)

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**Special Day in Colombia**

*Leidy B. | Level 7 | Jonathan B’s Student*

Did you know that Saint Valentine’s Day in Colombia is celebrated in September?

In Colombia, Saint Valentine’s Day is also called Day of Love and Friendship and is celebrated on every third Saturday in September. This day has been celebrated since 1969 in honor of Saint Valentine.

The date is not just associated with romantic love; it is also to express affection between friends and relatives.

There is a popular game called ‘Secret Friend’, where in a group of friends, we randomly assign a name to each other and they have to give an anonymous gift. During this time your ‘Secret Friend’ can send you candies or cards.
Thai Pongal (Harvest Festival)

*Ragunathan S. | Level 4 | Amalia K’s Student*

Thai Pongal is celebrated by Sri Lankans and Indians. Thai Pongal is on January 14. It is celebrated by mostly farmers. The reason why they celebrate it is because it is a way of saying thank you to the sun. In Sri Lanka and India for lots of farmers it is a very big day, but other people also celebrate it, too. For farming the sun and rain are very important. So, this day is a day that they say thanks to the sun. On that day they cook sweets rice outside the house. They have to cook sweet rice before sunrise. The next day they worship and they go to the temple as a family. On that day, almost all the temples have special poojas and pongal. On that day everybody will be wearing new clothes. In some villages they organize programs such as dance, dramas, songs etc. They also play games. Mostly in cities they don’t celebrate it, but almost everybody goes to the temple.

Thanksgiving

*Yamile L. | Level 5 | Morley M’s Student*

I want to share my thoughts about Thanksgiving with LINC Home Study students especially those who are very recent immigrants in Canada. Many countries don’t celebrate Thanksgiving. For this reason many immigrants don’t care about this important occasion in Canada. However, it’s good for immigrants learn about Canadian culture why people celebrate Thanksgiving. Thanksgiving is celebrated to thank God and be grateful for all we have. Almost all of North America celebrates Thanksgiving as a holiday at root of our country and culture. It’s a tradition that families must continue. Thanksgiving is a great time to spend with family and friends celebrating by eating turkey, vegetables and, pumpkin pie and by giving thanks to God for everything special we have in Canada including a new life of peace and love with our families and opportunities principally for our children.
Yalda Night
Razieh N. | Level 3 | Uzma N.’s student

Yalda night is a traditional Iranian celebration of longest night of the year. Yalda means the birth of winter and the triumph of the sun as the days grow longer and colder.

The night of Yalda is a good chance for Iranians to spend the longest night of the year with family members and friends. Family members get together on Yalda night (most often in the house of the eldest member) and stay awake a long time. They are served with dried fruits, nuts and winter fruits like pomegranates and watermelons. Some believe if you eat watermelon on Yalda, you won’t be hurt by the diseases and coldness of the coming winter. They also recite poems of highly respected mystic Iranian poet Hafez.

Yalda is also called shab-e-chelleh (literally meaning, the night of the forty). In Iranian culture, 3, 7 and 40 are significant recurrent numbers in case of days of celebration and mourning. In old Iranian calendar winter is divided in two parts: chelleh bozorg (the big forty) from 22nd of December to 30th of January and chelleh koochak (the little forty ) from 30th January to 10th of March. In conclusion, Yalda night is almost unanimously celebrated across the country. In all places, generally people celebrate by eating pomegranate and watermelon.

I am Canadian
Josephine G. | Level 5 | Carla M’s Student

I applied for my Canadian citizenship. I couldn’t wait to be a Canadian because I wanted to be proud as a Canadian. Also, I wanted to be useful to Canada as Canada has been helpful to me.

To get my citizenship, I had to be in the country for 3-4 years. Then, I could apply for citizenship. After I applied, I studied the citizenship book for many hours. I was nervous. In fact I was so troubled and upset, I asked my teacher to help me. She gave me websites and a tutor site to help me study. I passed! I was so happy. I phoned all my relatives in Ghana, and my mother jumped up and down. I will get a letter soon to tell me when the ceremony is. I am now a proud Canadian.
Pedestrian Safety

Ching S. | Level 6 | Laura W’s student

Safety on the streets is everyone’s responsibility because both drivers and pedestrians should be educated, especially when crossing streets.

Due to the different cultures of Canada and Asian countries, for example in Hong Kong and China, drivers do not need to yield to anyone, and cars are the first priority, whoever has a green light or not. I really appreciate the policy in Canada that drivers have to stop carefully when they come to a traffic light or a stop sign, and then let pedestrians cross the road safely. Punishments could be huge if drivers violated traffic regulations.

However, I saw many pedestrians in Canada who are crossing the road without seeing the road situation, and they are talking on their cell phones or using headphones, as they suppose drivers have full responsibility to stop for them. Therefore, accidents have happened because of only trusting drivers. In recent years, police officers have started to educate and give a kindly warning to pedestrians to strengthen their attention and increase the penalty for careless drivers.

No matter what policy is applied in different countries, pedestrians have to learn to watch, and drivers have to learn stop in some circumstances.
Accidents and Car Insurance in Ontario

Fumiko S. | Level 7 | Marilyn K’s student

What do we need to do if we got pedestrian accident in Ontario?

I would like to share my husband’s and my experience about a sudden and unexpected pedestrian accident in Sudbury.

On a rainy early afternoon, my husband and I were walking on a downtown sidewalk. When we were about to pass the gate of a church, suddenly a car hit my husband. A senior lady, who was driving the car, did not stop at the gate at all! My husband hit his head and the whole side of his body on the hood and rolled down onto the concrete. He had a concussion and could not get up. It was a good thing that there were several witnesses. One of them called 911 promptly. However, my husband had to wait for the ambulance for approximately fifteen minutes as he was lying in the raining. He was completely soaked when ambulance arrived. The driver never got out from her car even though a couple of witnesses were holding umbrellas for him.

He did not have broken bones, internal bleeding, or organ damage. But he had a minor head injury and shoulder and back injuries. He needed physiotherapy. I thought the driver’s insurance company was going to process all documents and pay my husband’s medical expenses because that accident was 100% driver’s fault. The police office gave me the driver’s information so I called the driver’s insurance company. Can you guess what I found?

In Ontario, if you have car insurance or you are covered by somebody’s car insurance, those insurance companies are the ones that pay your medical expenses even if it is a pedestrian accident and not your fault at all. I was lost for words when I heard it. My husband did not remember what happened at all because of the after effect of the concussion. So I was the one who had to fill out so many documents and write a detailed accident report to apply for the benefits. It was unfair! The driver was free from those duties while I was spending most of my time for working on those! It took a lot of time to fill out all documents and finish the report.

What I learned is that we have to report pedestrian accidents to our car insurance company within 7 days to claim pedestrian accident benefits. Taking detailed notes about the accident and daily activities and symptoms after it are very useful because the insurance company wants to know everything. We have to fill out all documents and write a detailed accident report. Once the application is processed, up to $3500 and up to $5500 will pay for the medical costs of a minor injury and medium injury respectively. If your medical expenses exceed the maximum, you need to hire a lawyer to send the additional amount of the bill to the driver. Don’t you think the drivers should do all work for us?
My “Lucky Day”

Thi N. | Level 7 | Fernand V’s student

It was an unforgettable day when I was stopped by a police officer because of my “dangerous driving”. What I had done was really nothing more than an unsightly U turn onto a quiet street late at night.

I was as frightened as a kid who had just broken a million dollar Swarovski Crystal Vase and felt very guilty. I wish I could disappear never to be seen again.

This was the first time I had ever been stopped by a police officer since my arrival in Canada. While the police officer was checking all my documents, I tried to explain what I really wanted to do: to go home to bed. He didn’t pay any attention.

Finally, he found out that I was a new driver and that I was just a street away from home.

He said, “Today is your lucky day, please relax and try to drive more smoothly from now on. Next time you will get a fine.”

I was very impressed and grateful for his lesson.

I love driving and I hope that I will never have another “lucky day” again.
General
Witches Walk
Hyo K. | Level 4 | Amalia K’s student

Coldwater village is small in size with 1100 residents. Yet this community has held annual Witches Walks with pride. The Witches Walk has become a community event for Coldwater’s local witches.

As a volunteer of the Coldwater Breakfast Club for children, I also helped place our booth down at the street and watched the Witches Walk while selling coffee and apple cider.

The Witches Walk is mainly for ladies who want to dress like witches and come out and walk downtown in Coldwater. It is a night-outing for adult women who are mothers and daughters, mother-in-laws, daughter-in-laws, aunts, nieces and their female friends who just want to get together and have fun with their finest, scariest, creepiest witch costumes. They had walked from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. While walking with other witches, they danced, giggled and laughed together on the street from sunset until nightfall.

Every witch picked up her own passport with participating stop-by places which are downtown’s business places and visited local shops to collect stamps. When they collected every stamp on the passport, they dropped it off at the collection box, located downtown for a prize. There is no admission charge, but the witches were encouraged to bring food donations to the local food bank.

Witches walked downtown. They enjoyed the freedom of becoming witches for the night. Over 500 people participated in the event.

The participants dressed in their costumes, forgot all about their daily responsibilities, and just strived to enjoy their freedom to its fullest. No one tried to identify who’s who rather they accepted each other as who they wanted to be. Next year, I will participate in their walk and become a pretty witch like some of them.
After receiving an invitation in the mail, I attended the Annual Donor Reception at the Scarborough General Hospital on October 30th, 2014. This reception was in celebration of generosity, innovation and community.

On that evening I went to the meeting reception desk and told my name to a girl. She gave me a name tag that was prepared in advance. Then she took my coat and gave me a card with a number on it, so I could pick it up after. When I entered the meeting room, all seats were fully occupied. People coming late had to stand at the back. Looking up all around, I found all participants dressed neatly in decent suits with name tags. Among them most looked from western native countries, some looked like they were from China, and a few were from south-east Asia. I found most people were elders. Maybe they used to be patients of the hospital, like me.

The event began at 6:00 p.m. First, the host, Mr. Michael Mazza, President & CEO of the Scarborough Hospital Foundation gave a “Welcome” speech. Then, the speech of Mr. Robert Biron, President & CEO, of the Scarborough Hospital, gave “Greetings & Expression of Thanks”. After that, the keynote speaker was Ms. Lynda G. Balneaves, Director, Centre for Integrative Medicine, at the Scarborough Hospital. Finally, the host introduced “Support my Scarborough Hospital Campaign: Community Loyalty Program”. Some slideshows matched the above speeches.

When the speeches were over, the refreshments were ready. Several food trays were put on a long table. There were a variety of cakes, biscuits and fruit. Two chefs were cooking some hot meat on another table. A beautiful young girl was putting wine into glass cups. There was red and white wine. The mixed fruit juice, called a “Punch”, was in a big bowl on the opposite table. Close to the table were some hospital books, magazines and other medical materials. People queued in line for their refreshments, talked with each other and read or took these displayed materials.

At 7:30 p.m. the event ended. I feel that both organizers and donors attached importance to it. I have a good impression of Canadian charity. When a strong earthquake happened in Wenchuan, China a couple of years ago, the donation to the area from Canada was the most in all the world. Now with this experience, I have a deep appreciation for Canadian charity.
People often ask me ... Why can’t custom cakes cost less?

Here is my answer:

1. Handmade Cakes - They’re not mass-produced product. To make this kind of cake, the confectioner should discuss and clarify everything with customer, from the colours to the smallest detail, including the font ending inscription on the cake. When ordering a custom cake, you can be sure that it is exclusive. Even if the cake is based on another design or cake or picture, the master will introduce something from him- or herself into the design, and discuss these developments with the customer in advance.

2. A lot of time is spent on each handmade cake. Even a cake that has the simplest design in the customer’s opinion, takes at least two days two complete, and sometimes more, considering the time spent sculpting figurines, flowers and other decorations.

3. In the cake design, the master doesn’t use ready-made ornaments bought in stores, even if the ornaments are from specialty stores, because this kind of cake decoration is depersonalized, and make the cake standard. Each petal, each figurine is made by hand, each design element is a part of the love and positive energy of the master.

4. The cake decorator makes custom cakes; he is responsible for the process from beginning to end. Cake decorators value their reputations. They use only high quality products for baking, unlike mass-produced cheap cakes, so the master does not save money on ingredients. In confectionery shops, economy is the first thing that affects the quality of the cakes.

5. The master spends a lot of money on the tools necessary to make an exclusive cake, while mass-produced cakes require only a minimum number of tools: a pastry bag and a tip.

6. To make a quality cake, the master must learn new techniques, test them and then offer them to the customers. It takes time and money.

7. Each custom cake is special. You can always buy five cakes for the price of one custom cake, but will never receive even a tenth of the pleasure received from the exclusive custom cake from a mass-produced cake.

If all of the above arguments have not convinced you, I can advise only one thing - bake a cake yourself!
This summer vacation was an unusual vacation. Although we planned our travel in details, unexpected things happened again and again.

In July, my son finally began his long-awaited travel; he would fly to Shanghai, which was the biggest city of east China, to begin his fencing training. My husband and I hoped he would get stronger and more independent through his alone travel. He was 15 years old; we didn’t order direct fly ticket from Toronto to Shanghai. We still had a little nervousness at that time. We worried he couldn’t succeed in transit, boarding aircraft and caring for himself, so we drove him to Detroit. He could fly to China from there, and our whole family could visit Detroit. Surprisingly, because of Detroit’s security issues, we couldn’t do so, like visiting auto center and art gallery. My daughter had a little disappointment. But later, as compensation, we took her to Niagara Falls after one week.

We sent my son to China and came back to Canada. Everything returned to normal. My daughter continued her swimming, piano and drawing classes. Each week we talked with my son using Skype; the teenager didn’t want his parents to bother him every day. His training life seemed good, and he enjoyed it. In August, according to the plan, when he finished his four weeks training, he would visit his grandparents for one week in Jinan, which is another city in east China.

Everything continued normally, and he took high speed rail from Shanghai to Jinan by himself; his uncle picked him up at the station and took him home. Then, bad news started coming in one by one. First, my husband’s mom was in hospital ICU with a heart attack, the hospital gave a notice of being in critical condition, and this was the third time in two years, so we were very nervous. Second, my dad was in another hospital, because he had a facial surgery due to parotid cancer, which he never told us. He was always happy, every time we called him; he always said he was very good. The doctor and whole family didn’t know what would happen, so we prayed. Each day we asked them how they felt; at the same time we applied for an expedited visa to China to see our parents.

God bless us. Everything got better. When we arrived in China, my dad had gone out from hospital, because the surgery was successful. My husband’s mom was getting better and better, and she was taken off ventilator when we left China, and then one week later, she left the hospital.

During summer vacation, my son learned a lot. He learned how to travel from one country to another, how different the hospitals are in China and Canada, and how to cook, do housework, like doing laundry and washing dishes. Now, he is getting much more responsible.
The Importance of Teachers

Wei W. | Level 6 | Fernand V.’s student

Teachers are important for three reasons.

The first advantage of teachers is that they are well-educated people who build the second generation. Teachers provide knowledge to the youngest people in school because they are disciplined by special education institutions and are well-trained. They also make their class environment more interesting, so their students are attracted to interact and absorb the valuable curriculum. In addition, teachers supervise their pupils to obtain specialized education knowledge and they measure their students to get ready for their next steps. Indeed, they also guide their scholars to expand their cognizance by searching information on the Web or by doing some projects with a group.

Second, teachers reduce crime in society. Teachers monitor their students’ symptoms and they enforce some rules to the students in the beginning of a period. In school, teachers guide students to know about human natural abilities or inborn instincts, like sympathy, love and care or negative qualities like selfishness. There are always some conflicts between students in school. Teachers can guide them by telling them about human inborn weak points and they can help them control by using formal manners. Teachers can be a spiritual guide and can motivate their students to keep away from bad practices.

The third advantage of teachers is that they can improve society to develop rapidly. Scientists, doctors and police officers graduate from school with their teachers. They contribute their abilities to society in the future. Students are not only helped to achieve their goals but they are also shown how to manage their time with teachers’ guidance. Teachers are always available for suggestions which could lead students to get the right directions and students will never regret their choice.

In conclusion, teachers are important for educating people, reducing crime and developing society.
I was born and raised and lived for 28 years in Mexico City. This city is known for its earthquakes. It is located on the tectonic plates called San Andres and Mesoamerican. The main plate which causes the majority of earthquakes is called the San Andres. In Mexico City almost every day there are earthquakes but fortunately the majority are of low magnitude, so people don’t feel the movements. But some times some of them have high magnitude.

One of the most dangerous earthquakes that left thousands of dead people and the most remembered of the last few years happened on September 19th, 1985. It started at 7:19 a.m. and its magnitude was of 8.1. The city was practically destroyed. That is why it is very important to be prepared and know what to do in case of an earthquake.

Though at this moment there isn’t any technology in existence to predict when an earthquake will happen, the best that we can cope is to be informed and prepared.

**Before an earthquake:**
1. At your house or your place of work you have to determine the objects that can be of danger during an earthquake.
2. Practice earthquake drills to know where you have to be during an earthquake for example beside a desk or a table.
3. Store canned food and water for at least 5 days.
4. Have an emergency kit that contains a portable radio, a battery flash light, first aid kit, a can opener, a copy of your personal and important documents and a whistle.

**During an earthquake:**
1. Keep calm.
2. Find a safe place. Make the triangle of life*.
3. Keep away from windows, glasses, mirrors, lamps, walls, doors.
4. If you are in the street keep away from the hydro cables.
5. If you are in your car, stop it and put yourself beside it trying to make the triangle of the life*. Try no to stop the car close to trees, hydro cables, and bridges.

**After an earthquake.**
1. If you got trapped don’t start a fire, try to not move and use your whistle.
2. Check if you were hurt.

*Triangle of life. It is a concept based on the empty space that is left beside a hard piece of furniture like a sofa, table or a desk. If parts of the building fall, there is a big possibility that in the triangle of life you can survive.*
After an Ice Storm

Chia-Ni L. | Level 6 | Ian Z’s student

Last year, I experienced a severe ice storm. After having a chat with local people, I realized that it was the most serious ice storm in forty years. The experts say the climate change is happening. I believe it’s true. Extreme weather changes have been happening everywhere on earth. It puts in danger not only our lives but also the animals, the plants and the whole ecosystem. We must take an action to deal with it. This is not only the responsibility of a few people or experts. It’s the responsibility of all people. From my point of view, there are some things we can do. First, we should reduce the use of plastic stuff because it does not degrade naturally and it will become a burden for the earth. Secondly, we should not eat much meat, because the more meat we consume, the more forests are chopped down to provide food for the cattle. Thirdly, we must reduce the number of vehicles and the amount of electricity we use. For example, we can walk upstairs instead of taking an elevator. We can turn off the lights as we don’t need it. We can use a fan instead of an air conditioner. There are lots of things we can do for our beautiful earth. We need to let it cool down or in ten decades the climate on the earth will be the same as on Mars.
I hope that my story will serve as an inspiration to other students.

My auntie and my first cousin got cancer at 41, so I made sure to go for regular mammograms. Sure enough, when I was 40, the doctors discovered a lump in my breast. I told the doctors that they could take my breasts if they needed to, but in the end, they only needed to remove the lumps. Still, I needed surgery, chemotherapy, and radiation. Inevitably, I lost my hair, and that was the worst part. When I looked at myself in the mirror, I felt depressed, but then I had to face mortality and be positive about healing.

Now I am 50, healthy, and happy to be alive. If you go for regular mammograms, doctors can detect cancer early and so you will have a very good chance of recovering. Evidence shows that a healthy lifestyle is a powerful force in a positive breast cancer recovery.

My Best friend
Silvia N. | Level 3 | Joseph N’s Student

I want to talk a little about my unconditional friend Maya my dog.

She was the best family pet anyone could have, she used to get up with me at 4 a.m. and accompany me until I departed. I used to play with my kids and my dog Maya in the park. I never had complaints about it until the day we decided to say goodbye for the sake of her, so she would not suffer because she had become paralytic all of a sudden. Everyone at home feels sad because she was an unconditional friend. We miss her very much.

I learned from her what gratitude is.
Pope Tawadros II Visits Mississauga

Botros W. | Level 7 | Morley M’s student

Pope Tawadros II, leader of the Coptic Orthodox Church, visited Mississauga as part of his September 2-14 first cross-Canada tour. Pope Tawadros is scheduled to visit most Coptic churches across Canada from Newfoundland to Vancouver. In Newfoundland, he presided over the opening of a new church to serve Coptic Orthodox Christians active in this area. The Newfoundland visit was particularly significant as it took place on the eve of the Coptic New Year. It has been fifty years since St. Mark Coptic Orthodox Church, the first Coptic Orthodox Church in North America, opened in Toronto.

My best moment of Pope Tawadros’ visit was the opportunity of getting up close as he shook hands with the 3000 people attending the celebration at the Eglinton Avenue Canadian Coptic Center. At the end of his Mississauga visit, Pope Tawadros commented on how beautiful and developed Mississauga looks and how happy the warmth of people made him feel.
Heritage
I came from Israel, actually it is not my homeland, but I lived there more than eleven years.

Israel is a country in Western Asia placed at the southeastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea.

It shares land borders with Lebanon to the North, Syria in the northeast, Jordan in the east and Egypt to the South.

Israel is a very small country; however it has various landscapes such as mountains, flatland, deserts, rivers, lakes and seas. Climate of Israel depends on the locality. In the mountain, it is warm and fresh, in the desert, it is hot and dry and in the centre of country, it is hot and wet. I lived in the centre of country, close to the sea, so after hard work day we went to the beach to feel a breeze. Different fruit and vegetable grow in Israel, so climate allows farmers to harvest some of them twice a year.

Israel has many historical places, Jerusalem the most famous place, also the capital city it is a city of three religions. Thousands of pilgrims visit churches, mosques and other holy places across the country every year.

I miss Israel very much because I have a lot of friends there and many good memories. I recommend to visit that country. There are lots of attractions for children and adults.
I hear that you are going to visit Morocco for the first time. Welcome to this multicultural and exotic country. Get ready for adventure. I would suggest that you visit the amazing city of Marrakesh. It has fabulous gardens, colorful buildings, and crowded squares selling fabrics, paintings and rugs. Enjoy a day in the Moroccan Desert, including riding on a camel, and having dinner under the stars among the biggest sand dunes. Most cities offer wonderful architecture.

If you have never experienced the call to prayer in a Muslim country, you will be completely blown away. Five times a day, a call for prayer will ring out loud over the cities. You will find a mixture of cultures, including Berber, Arab and as well as, with some European traits.

You are probably little panicky now but it’s quite normal since it is your first visit. But you don’t need to worry that much. I hope the following tips will help you. Obviously, and following Moroccans hospitality, my family and I will put you up during your whole stay in our country. According to tradition for greetings, some Moroccan people shake hands, some others exchange kisses and the rest hug. Related to eating or table manners, nearly 70% of Moroccan people eat from the same plate and only using the right hand which expresses family union and understanding. As far as clothes are concerned, you may wear anything you want, but respectfully. I feel your visit to Morocco will be a great experience. Until then, I count on you to tell me about your trip. Enjoy!
Food and Cultural Identity

Ira V. | Level 4 | Amalia K’s Student

As a food lover and who also likes to cook, I find food as a unique identity for every culture and its people. Living here in Canada, particularly within the Toronto area, it is so diverse. Canada is considered as one of the most diverse cities in the world and, for me, it’s the best place to test and try my pallet.

In the Philippines, my country, foods are recognized differently in every region. A country in the tropics, consisting of 7,100 islands, it is fun to travel and taste all the local foods. Basically, the staple food is rice but some region is corn, a little bit of noodles brought by the Chinese way back in our history. The Spanish culture and cuisine have been a part of our life, besides Christianity which they bestowed upon us since 1521 and for almost 400 years they have ruled the archipelago. Indian and Japanese was also a part of our culture. And the American’s which had brought not only education as part of their conquest have set up all the system that my country is enduring.

Coming from this background and now living in a diverse city, I do find myself in a sea full of a variety of fish to catch and taste. As for my observation, I’ve learned food is based on what is a staple in the area. Like here in Canada, potato has been part of its cuisine. In fact, poutine have been accepted as one the national icons of the country. India has the roti and naan, others have the pitta, the noodles, the pasta, rice, yogurt, the tacos of Mexican and Latin America. Spices and herbs are an integral part of distinguishing food from each country, notably Indian, the Middle East and Thailand food. For the Greeks and the Italian, they have their olives.

Religion and faith have a part in the diets of their followers and some them become vegan or what I called non meat lovers. Topography or geophysical location is also part of what food people are eating. If you are located by the sea basically squids, crabs, fish and all that you can harvest in the ocean will be your main courses. In the desert and arctic land, it’s a challenge if you don’t know the terrain and where to find your food.

How you eat and table manners distinguish each culture. Most of the European and the Western society I may say, use the spoon, fork, knives and all utensils in order to dine. Chinese, Japanese and the Orientals use chopstick. Some are very comfortable using their bare hands.

In some parts of the world, eating with the local people with their traditional food, lets them give you their warm hospitality. Meaning, you become one of them. And sometimes they give you the secret of the food. I know of one in my country we eat what we called “ Balut”; it’s a 2 day old chicken egg embryo that never hatched, it is boiled and served only with salt or vinegar for taste. Try it if you can? I saw some of the food critics and writers, chefs and cooks tried this, some of them did pass, but others could not take it.

Food is really an identity for every individual person and their culture. It’s a unique identification of each of us, what food we eat, how we eat, how it is prepared. And as I said if you’re an adventurer be ready to taste them all!
“Kaju” is the Hindi word for cashew nuts. Kaju Barfi or Kaju Katli is one of the most sought-after desserts from India. It is also one of the popular sweets that families and friends give as gifts during Diwali in the northern part of the country.

**Ingredients:**
Cashew nuts powder (or finely-ground cashew nuts) -500 gms.
Sugar -250 gms.
Saffron - a pinch (a few strands)
Silver warq or edible silver foil leaves – 6 to 8 leaves (optional)
Water -200 ml.
Ghee (clarified butter) - 1 to 2 tbsps.
A little milk
Parchment paper

**Procedure:**
1. On low flame, dissolve the sugar in 200 ml. water in a non-stick pan until you bring it to a boil. Add saffron and cook until syrup is of three-thread consistency. *
   *This happens when three threads are formed (and do not break) when your forefinger and your thumb are pulled apart gently.
2. Add the cashew nut powder then the melted ghee. Keep stirring in low flame to break the lumps and to achieve the right consistency (about 7-9 minutes).
3. Warm the saffron in a small vessel, add a little milk and rub until the saffron dissolves.
4. When the mixture starts to thicken and begins to form a very soft dough, add the saffron mixture. Once it forms a whole lump, remove from the pan.
5. Place it on a floured work surface or a cookie sheet. Dough may be very hot but it should be just warm enough to handle while kneading it.
6. Flatten the dough and roll with a rolling pin to make it even (1/2 cm. thickness). Fine cracks in the dough is normal. To lessen the cracks, you can roll the dough between two sheets of parchment paper.
   Note: If you find the dough is too dry, add some ghee and if it is too soft, add milk powder.
7. Remove the sheets of parchment paper and spread the silver warq over it. Cut into any desired shape (approximately 1-inch a side). Usually, barfi is cut into diamond or square shapes.
   Note: If you cannot get the silver warq, skip it. You can still cut the pieces without the foil.
8. Carefully remove the barfi pieces from the bottom using a butter knife or knife spatula, taking care that they don’t break.
9. Serve immediately or store in an air-tight jar.
“Varuval,” which means “to fry,” is a popular method of preparation for various meat, poultry or seafood dishes in the southern part of India.

**Ingredients:**
- Prawns -12-16 (medium-sized), shelled and deveined
- Salt to taste
- Red chili powder – 1-2 tbsps. (add more if you want it spicier)
- Cumin powder - 1 tbsp.
- Turmeric powder - 1/2 tbsp.
- Ginger paste -1 tbsp.
- Garlic paste -1 tbsp.
- Tamarind pulp - 1 tbsp.
- Lemon juice – 2-3 tbsps. (or freshly squeezed lemon)
- Rice flour -2 tbsps.
- Oil - 4 tbsps.
- Iceberg lettuce – 1 big leaf or 2 medium-sized leaves

**Procedure:**
1. Make sure the prawns are clean, deveined and shelled. Set aside.
2. Mix all the ingredients in a bowl, using only 2 tbsps. oil and squeezing half of the lemon. Add the prawns. Marinate them in the mixture and put in the refrigerator for an hour.
3. Heat the remaining 2 tbsps. oil in a pan. (If you wish, you can use coconut oil. It is tastier and more flavourful).
4. Fry the prawns one by one, being careful that they don’t stick to one another. Cook for a minute or two on medium-high heat. Turn over the prawns and fry for another two minutes. Make sure not to overcook the prawns.
5. Turn off heat then sprinkle with lemon juice again (squeeze the remaining lemon).
6. Spread a big leaf (or 2 medium-sized) leaves of iceberg lettuce on a platter and place cooked prawns on top.
7. Serve hot with basmati rice and enjoy delicious Prawns Varuval!
Tahchin-Persian Food Recipe

Pariya S. | Level 7 | Jonathan B’s Student

My recipe is about making a super delicious Iranian food that is called Tahchin. This dish is prepared with basmati or long grain rice that is marinated with some ingredients like yogurt, saffron and egg yolk. It will be served with the cooked cubed chicken breasts that are placed between the layers of the marinated rice during the cooking time.

Ingredients:
1 large onion
2 lbs cubed boneless skinless chicken breast
1 lbs plain yogurt
1 teaspoon saffron, ground and dissolved in hot water
2 egg yolks
1 1/2 lbs long grain rice (Basmati rice)
Turmeric, salt and pepper according to taste.

Directions:
1. Chop the onion into small pieces and fry it in oil until it turns slightly golden then add turmeric and cubed chicken breast pieces.
2. Fry it until color of chicken changes.
3. Add 1/2 glass of water and leave it to cook.
4. While the chicken is cooking, beat the yogurt till it is smooth and creamy
5. Add watery saffron, salt, pepper and egg yolks to it and mix them well.
6. The next stage is-washing the rice and bring it to boil in hot water till rice is soft, then drain it completely.
7. Next add yogurt and it’s ingredients to the rice
8. Stir them till all the rice and yogurt mix properly.
9. Prepare a pan and pour oil in it
10. Next add a thin layer of the marinated rice in to the pan
11. Flatten it with back of a spoon.
12. On top of this layer add cooked chicken cubes followed by remaining layer of marinated rice and flatten it
13. Add some more oil on top of the rice and put the pan’s lid on top
14. Then, let it to cook for about 2 hours on medium low heat. The delicious crispy layer of the rice at the bottom is called tahdig in Farsi and it is the most delicious part of this dish.
15. After cooking is done, remove the pan from the heat, take off the lid off and let it cool for a few minutes.
16. After that place an inverted large dish (larger than the pan) over the pan and turn it over. The contents should fall on the dish in one piece with the tahdig on the top.

Hope you try this recipe and enjoy it.
Rice with Goat Meat

*Wazira O. | Level 3 | Joseph N’s Student*

Delicious Somali rice with goat meat.

**Ingredients:**
- 2 pounds of goat meat
- 1 onion
- 5 garlic
- 3 cinnamon sticks
- 8 cloves
- 8 cardamom
- 1/2 cup vegetable oil
- 3 tsp cumin powder
- 3 tomatoes
- 6 cups basmati rice
- 12 cups water (boiling)

**Directions:**
First, wash the rice until the water runs clear. This may take 3 or 4 times of washing and draining. After washing well, cover the rice with sufficient water and let it soak for 2 hours. In the mean time, wash the goat meat.

Second, on medium heat, saute the onions in the oil. Third, add the garlic, cinnamon sticks, cardamom, cloves, cumin, tomatoes and goat meat. Then cover and cook on medium heat for 15 minutes.

Next, add 12 cups of boiling water to the pot. The proportion is 2 cups of water for each cup of rice. Cover and cook for 1 1/2 hours until the meat becomes fork tender. Finally, drain the rice and add to the pot. Stir well. Then cover and cook on low heat for 10 minutes to finish cooking the rice.

After 10 minutes your rice is ready.
Papa a la Huancaina | Huancaina Style Potatoes

Rosa R. | Level 4 | Robyn L’s Student

This recipe is an important part of the Peruvian culinary culture. The history of the Huancaina style potatoes started a long time ago when Peru was building a railroad between Lima, the capital of Peru, and Huancayo, the capital of the Junin Region in the center highlands of Peru. The people worked very hard to make one of the most beautiful engineering works. They had to wait for their wives to arrive with food. When their wives came, they found a surprise of a delicious cream made with yellow chili, cheese and milk which was served with potatoes. They called the dish “Papa a la Hancaina”. In English, it is Potatoes Huancaina Style. At that time, it was made in a manual wood blender named a Batan. The Batan is still being used in some famous restaurants. Huancaina is the adjective name that is given to women born in Huancayo city.

Ingredients:
- 1 cup of milk
- 4 fresh yellow chili peppers (this will make it spicy. Use yellow sweet bell peppers if you don’t want it to be spicy)
- 1/2 onion chopped
- 1 3/4 cup (400g) fresh cheese (feta)
- 2 hard boiled eggs sliced
- 4 Spanish olives pitted
- 2.2 lb (1kg) yellow potatoes boiled (replace it with white potatoes if not available)
- 10 salted soda crackers
- Lettuce chopped
- Salt & Pepper to taste
- 1/2 cup of vegetable oil

Preparation:
Wash the lettuce and let dry. Put aside on a plate. Boil the potatoes and eggs. Peel the potatoes and slice in circles. Place on top of the lettuce. Slice the eggs and set aside. Remove the seeds and veins from the chili peppers. Peel the onion. Wash them well with water. Cut into pieces.
In a frying pan, add the oil. Sautee the peppers and onion until tender. Put this mixture in a blender or food processor. Add the cheese, crackers and milk. Blend until creamy. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

To serve:
Pour the creamy mixture over the sliced potatoes and lettuce. Put an olive and sliced egg over the cream to decorate. Potatoes Huancaina style can be served as an appetizer or as a side dish.
Traditional Ukrainian Potatoes and Sauerkraut Pirogues

Oksana P. / Level 6 / Lisa G’s Student

My name is Oksana. I’m from Western Ukraine. I would like to present to you my family’s pirogues recipe. The people in my country joke that “every woman makes different pirogues” I agree with that.

**Ingredients:**

400 gm. potatoes, peeled  
300 gm. bottled sauerkraut  
1 medium onion  
1 carrot  
½ tsp. salt  
1/4 tsp black pepper  
1 egg  
1/2 tsp salt  
600 gm. flour, plus more if needed  
270-300 gm. water

**To make the filling:**

1. To begin with, peel and boil the potatoes.
2. Then, drain and mash them.
3. Next, drain the sauerkraut until it is almost dry, and then chop it into small pieces on a wooden board.
4. Afterwards, chop the onion into small cubes and put into a preheated pan with olive oil; fry until golden brown.
5. Following this, add the shredded carrot to the onions and fry for 15 more minutes.
6. When this is done, add the sauerkraut to the onion and carrot mixture, and fry for another 15 minutes.
7. Lastly, mix everything together with room temperature mashed potatoes.

**Preparation for dough:**

1. To begin with, place flour in a deep bowl.
2. Then, add salt and egg to flour.
3. Next, add warm (not hot) water and stir, making sure that the dough becomes soft.
4. Afterwards, knead the dough on a floured countertop, and roll into a 3 mm thick log.
5. Once this is done, use a glass to cut out circles from the dough. The circles should be 7-8 cm in diameter.
6. Following this, place the individual circles of dough into your hand (one at time) and fill them with a teaspoon of the potato mixture; pull the dough over the filling and pinch it together at the edge.
7. Then, press the edges firmly, so the pirogues stay sealed in the boiling water.
8. After this, boil water with salt and place pirogues carefully into the boiling water and stir them, making sure they don’t stick on the bottom of saucepan.
9. Finally, boil the pirogues 8-10 minutes; then rinse them with cold water.
10. Serve pirogues with sour cream, onion sauce or mushroom sauce on the side. Some people like to top them with butter or bacon fat first.

ENJOY!!!!!!

Pirogues are the most famous dish in Ukraine. Traditionally, Ukrainians eat them every Sunday at grandmas house, when all of the family members sit together around the dinner table. My young twins help in the kitchen now when I am preparing traditional Ukrainian pirogues.
Brazilian Style Black Beans

Sonia S. | Level 6 | Rima B’s Student

Brazil is a continental country and known worldwide for its incomparable biodiversity, music, happy population and very tasty food. The Brazilian food history starts with the arrival of the Portuguese Royal Family in 1530, when Napoleon invaded Europe. Although the natives were the earth’s owners, there was a mix between them, Portuguese, and Africans that gave the Brazilian food the typical flavour.

The culture of the time prevented sharing of food among different groups. By using leftovers of pork meat, the slaves created the most popular Brazilian traditional dish “feijoada”, which is composed of black beans, and all kinds of pork meat, served with rice, cassava flour called “farofa”, and braised collard greens. Believe it or not, most of Brazilian families have beans and rice every day. If they’re not cooking a fresh batch of beans, they will be re-heating yesterday’s from a container in the fridge.

Here is a simple step-by-step recipe for how to make your daily black beans.

Ingredients:
1 pound of dried black beans
1 clove of garlic
¼ of onion
2 tablespoon of olive oil
1 bay leaf
2 or 3 slices of bacon
1 medium size bowl, strainer, pressure cooker, spoon

Instructions:
1. Clean and rinse the beans before you start. Beans are always covered with dust and can have a little pebbles or tiny stones mixed in.
2. In a medium bowl soak the beans covering with just enough water for 2 or 3 hours.
3. After this time drain the water in a strainer.
4. Place the beans into the pressure cooker on the stove.
5. Add the aromatics: bay leaf, bacon and 8 cups of water.
6. Close the lid, and turn the flame up to high.
7. Keep the eye on the pot and when reaches high pressure (starting noise), reduce the flame to medium.
8. Leave cooking for 30 minutes. Turn off the heat (follow your instruction manual to determine how you will know when the pot is ready to be opened).

9. Remove the lid. The beans should be tender and with thick broth, otherwise add 2 cups of water and cook for 15 minutes more.

**Seasoning the Beans:**

10. Chop onion and crush garlic to suit your taste. Place in a pan with 2 tablespoon of olive oil over medium heat. Let it golden.

11. Add salt to taste and the seasoning into previously cooked beans. It’s ready!

12. You can serve with rice accompanied with chicken or meat, and salad.

I encourage you to try cooking black beans and serving it to your family and friends at the next get together. I am sure you’ll get hooked on it!

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**Meat and Potatoes Baked in a Pumpkin**

*Inna P. | Level 6 | Joseph N's Student*

Serves: 4 people

**Ingredients:**

- Small pumpkins
- Potatoes
- Fresh meat (doesn’t matter what kind of meat)
- Onions
- A little batter

1. Cut the top of the pumpkins and clean out the core.
2. Peel potatoes and cut into small pieces.
3. Cut meat into small pieces.
4. Peel onions and chop finely.
5. Mix potatoes, meat and onions, and add salt and black pepper. Put this mix into pumpkins and put pumpkin top on the top. Put in a hot oven (380F) for 1 hour and 30 minutes.
Seasonal
Winter is One of My Favourite Seasons

Vadym L. | Level 6 | Milanka V’s Student

Not many people can say they like winter and just few people would call winter their favourite season. I am one of them. First of all, my wife and I adore skiing and my daughters are crazy about snowboarding and there is no doubt that winter is the best season for it. So winter vacation is an event of the year for us. Usually we start preparing and planning long before our vacation starts. We choose a ski resort and book a hotel. We examine our outfits and equipment. And we count days while we anxiously wait for our vacation. I remember very well when we went skiing for the first time. Our first experience was in Poland fourteen years ago. We were aware that skiing and snowboarding is pretty hazardous and traumatic activity. That is why we had to take lessons first. Now we feel confident on skis and snowboard. We have hardly ever missed one winter and have visited almost all significant European ski resorts since then. Now we live in the country with excellent skiing facilities where skiing is one of the most popular winter activities. So we cannot miss an opportunity to go skiing. We spent our last vacation in Banff. It was amazing. And this winter we are looking forward to visiting Banff again.

However, winter is tough and dangerous season. Especially it is down here in Saskatchewan where I live. The temperature drops sometimes below minus forty degrees Celsius with strong winds. The weather and road conditions get dangerous and you have to be aware and prepared for it. But anyway I like winter not only because of skiing. Winter is the time when I can spend long evenings with my family and there is no rush at all. It is the time when not only the nature, but the time freezes too. Winter is also the time of the my daughter’s birthday in December, miraculous Christmas and New Year holidays, big annual sales, our traditional winter vacation and my birthday in February. It is the time when the nature is absolutely wonderful to watch when the first real snow really excites you in the morning, and you can catch a moment of absolute stillness while the air gets thick and unbelievably fresh.

I am definitely of the opinion that winter is the most incredible season and I wish everybody could share my true affection for winter.
I am from Jakarta, Indonesia. Indonesia is a tropical country with two seasons; wet (rain) and dry. For 29 years, I only saw the world with rainy and sunny weather. When I moved to Sudbury, Canada four years ago, I remember that it was the fall season. I was stunned at that time. I never thought that the world could be very beautiful with colorful leaves. The leaves were changing colours from green to red, yellow or sometimes orange and pink right before my eyes. I feel blessed moving to Canada, a country that has four distinct seasons, like summer, fall, winter and spring. And fall became my favorite season.

Autumn also known as fall in North America and in Canada starts in September around the 21st of September until the 21st of December. Fall is also the transitional period when the weather changes from summer to winter. The temperature in Sudbury during the fall season is around 15 degrees Centigrade and can go as low as -10 degrees Centigrade. Sometimes, we can see snow falling down in the fall season. It was very beautiful to see the snow falling down when the leaves are still on the trees.

According to my observations, there are 3 steps for the leaves in the fall season. The first step, the outer leaf changes colours from green to bright colours like yellow or red or even orange. Second step, after few days the inner leaf changes colours with the same colours as the outer leaf. Last step, (3rd step), the leaves fall down from the tree. When the leaves fall from the tree, the yard and streets are full off colorful leaves. And at the end of the fall season all the trees are without leaves and that’s the sign of winter; that winter will be coming soon.
Climate Differences Between Colombia and Canada

Gloria A. | Level 5 | Diane R’s Student

Colombia has a diversity of climates. Colombia is characterized for having beaches, tropical rainforests, savannas, steppes, desert, and mountain climate. We have hot areas, temperate areas, cold areas and even frozen areas. We can go from a cold city to a warm city in only half an hour. In Canada, it is very different because Canada has four distinct seasons, but winter is the worst for me especially at night. Sometimes it is extremely cold with blinding blizzards and ice storms. It is difficult to walk and wait for the bus. I don’t have a car and I work the second shift.
Settlement
I can spend lots of time in the kitchen because I really love to cook. The kitchen becomes my favorite place after my bedroom. The kitchen is a very important place for me since I am married and have my own house. When I was looking for a house the first time I first found out the condition of the kitchen. If the kitchen was good I liked that house. Then, the first time I tried to cook I was worried that my husband would not enjoy my food but then I was wrong because he really enjoyed my cooking and ate all of the food. Cooking is my passion. I had a housemaid to take care of the house so I spent lots of time in the kitchen.

When we moved to Canada my husband got a job offer from the company where he is currently working. Since we moved to Canada everything has changed. I must be independent because I have no family and I have no housemaid in Canada. I should take good care of everything by myself. I must be able to share and manage my time and energy to do all the household chores. I started to think what I should do to still enjoy my hobby, which is cooking and still be a good mom and wife. Finally, I found out that I have to try and find simple recipes to prepare delicious and wholesome meals without making a big mess and dirtying too many dishes or else I will have to do a lot of cleaning too.

In Indonesia, our staple food is rice with a lot of side dishes. To make a lot of side dishes it takes up a lot of time and then I will be not able to do the other things. So, in order to save time I cook every side dish in large portions at one time and when it is done I store it in different containers of plastic and put it in the freezer. So, I cook enough for about five meals. Then, at the time of lunch or dinner I just need to thaw what I’ve frozen and make it warm on a stove or microwave. I’ve been four years in Canada and this works for me. I can still be a good mom and wife and a good cook and I can still enjoy my time watching a movie or shopping in the mall or completing my homework.
My First Experience Voting in Canada

Hsiu H. | Level 7 | Leslie H’s Student

This September, I became a Canadian citizen. Following that, I now have the right and a responsibility to vote in federal, provincial and local elections. Because my active participation will make the community a better place, I was very excited about exercising my right to vote in the 2014 Municipal Election.

One week before voting, I still hadn’t received any Voter Information Notice. Therefore, I went to my town’s website and checked the related voting information to understand what next steps I should take.

First, I confirmed I was a qualified voter so that I could vote in the Municipal election. Next, I visited another webpage that is also provided by the town and entered my name and home address, and then I clearly understood I was not on the Voters’ List. I used the online Voter Registration service and submitted my registration form to request being added to the Voters’ List. After a short while, I received an email notice from the town to inform me I could vote on election day. In addition, you can register to vote at your polling place that day, just before you vote.

I did some homework to study the political opinions of candidates and their background experience so that I would have some choices in my mind before voting. I brought the form and my Driver’s Licence as identification to the poll closest to my house in my ward on election day. After examining the form and my ID, the poll official gave me a ballot and then another official guided me to go behind the screen to mark my ballot. This year the voters needed to elect Mayor, Town Councillor, Town & Regional Councillor of the Town, and School Board Trustee. All I had to do was mark an “X” or fill in the box next to the name of the candidate of my choice by using a pen provided by the poll. When I finished, I had to wait for the official to process my ballot in an electronic machine until the vote could be counted. Unfortunately, the machine inspected my ballot and displayed an over-voting message. Consequently, the official let me redo it. I felt so lucky that my embarrassment soon disappeared because the other voter behind me also had the same problem of over-voting. That night, I learned the election results from the website of the town.

Voting is the cornerstone of democracy. I am proud that I exercised my democratic right to vote. Not only could I understand more how the community will be governed in the future, but I also felt myself becoming a part of Canada.
I think as newcomers, we have lots of common issues, or let us say obstacles which we face together in our new daily lives.

Today, I would like to have an easy chit chat and speak about a subject which some new immigrants may face, but that’s not obvious or can be difficult to speak about publicly; it’s more personal and a kind of an embarrassing subject to discuss. This hitch is called losing confidence!

So has anyone felt as soon as his/her feet stepped into this country, they started to lose his/her strength when the immigrant officers raised their voices in a remarkably angry fashion to make you understand their questions like you are some kind of primitive who can’t understand normal communications between human beings.

Well, I don’t like to circulate that all immigrant officers are the same. Some of them are very nice, and I was lucky to have a nice lady check my papers and felt extremely sorry for the family next to me when I saw a confused gentleman sweating and searching his papers while the immigrant officer flashed him with the questions one after the others in a sharp, loud tone which would make any human being feel confounded and stressed.

Then real life started and you have to deal with all kinds of people and face some rude kinds. Some of them give you this cold look, some just simply ignore you, and some spook you with this funny, slow way which includes lots of wide mouths opening while you are looking at them and don’t know what to say, and you almost want to laugh.

With all that, you lose more of your strength and you have these questions remain in your head. How should I react? Do I really look like a primitive person? Is that what they see? Or am I just different? And if I’m so different, is it in a bad or good way? And if it’s in a good way, then why do they underestimate me?

Oh, lots to think about, so now I’m wondering if anyone has felt the same, or am I the only complicated, hypersensitive person who finds it difficult to acclimate?
My First Year in Canada

Esperance A. | Level 4 | Milanka V’s Student

The day I got visa to come to Canada was a great joy for me. I wanted to join my husband and live with him. I came to live in Canada, the country of my dreams. I had so many plans and projects in my head that I thought they would be realized once I arrived. I arrived safely soon, and was welcomed by my husband and his friends. Life became beautiful. After some time I started to experience disappointment. I arrived, I became pregnant, my husband would go to work and I was alone all day at home. I could not go anywhere because the place was all new to me. I live in Regina and at that time I did not speak English, which added to the list of problems. Four months after my arrival, I had my first baby. It was a great joy. I thought it was the end of my solitude. The delivery was difficult and the child spent one month in intensive care. It was such a painful time for me; I went home leaving her alone at the hospital. I visited her every day alone and I could not express myself well. One day I experienced emotional crisis because it was too hard for me. I had many questions and I didn’t know how to ask. That day we found a nurse who spoke French. I was somewhat relieved, but not too much because I saw her only once a week. After a month, my daughter left the hospital. When she was 5 months old, I started to learn English with Regina Open Door Society program during the day. As I also know French, I got a job and I signed up for the online LINC course.

This is an opportunity for me to thank LINC Home Study program that allows me to continue my work and learn English at the same time. Although it remains difficult to improve English, I can say that I have seen progress since I started learning with this program.

I thank my teacher especially since she does everything to help me and I am so proud of everything she does for me.

I can also say that life has changed over the time. I speak better English, so I can go anywhere in the city without feeling scared. And now I know that Canada is the country of my dreams.
Since our airplane landed at Fredericton airport, I have had a hard time trying to understand the new culture. At the first moment, everything seemed unfamiliar.

There was nobody waiting to welcome us at the airport. There were so many cabs outside. We drove to Howard Johnson Hotel. There weren’t so many bright lights in the city and it seemed strange!

There were terrible days for my sons at their schools on the first days: no friends and no familiar language. They felt very lonely and confused. For seven months in Canada, my husband and I were waiting for language classes to start. I didn’t want to leave the house at all. Mostly I watched TV or cooked for my family or when no one was home, I cried. I also slept a lot. We didn’t have a family member or friend to talk with. We didn’t know who our neighbors were. I especially missed my mother and my sister.

When I started my English classes, I found that it was different too. In Iran, when the teacher asked a question you had to raise your hand to answer. Here, when the teacher asked a question, I raised my hand to answer and everyone in the class laughed. I felt very embarrassed and I felt my face got red. Here people call the teacher by her first name, even if the teacher is old! It isn’t polite in my country.

Now, I am beginning to understand life here better. I know that the students in my class were laughing because they had made the same mistakes when they came. Very soon my sons made friends and could speak English fluently and now they don’t feel so lonely. We even met another family from Iran and connect with them. Maybe life in Canada will be better for us, I hope.
Before I moved here in Canada, I expected lots of beautiful things to see and experience. Some of those things were to experience the four seasons, to travel alone, to explore lots of places, to meet Canadians, to name a few.

I came here on June 3, 2013 with excitement and sadness. I felt excitement, because at last my husband and I would be able to start our lives together, and sadness, because it was hard for me to be separated from my family. In spite of that, I was just thinking positively, to enjoy living here with my husband. He let me adjust and take a month of rest before finding a job. For a month, we explored some of the tourist spots of Saskatoon, tried some restaurants and enjoyed the summer. After that, I started to apply for jobs online.

Luckily, the day after I applied for a job, one of the Walmart Human Resource managers called me. I assumed that they were going to tell me the interview date and time but as the conversation went by, I noticed that she was doing the phone interview already. I didn’t know the answers for some of her questions as I had no experience related to retail industry. So, I put the loudspeaker on so my husband could also hear what she was asking me and tried to help me thru whispering the answers. The funny thing was the interviewer heard my husband and told me to answer it by myself or else she would stop the interview. After that, she asked me to come in to the store for another interview. I went there and knew that they were going to hire only 2 persons out of 7 applicants. I don’t know how I passed the one-on-one interview with 6 managers as I have difficulty communicating with other people. At the end of the day, they told me that I should come back for an orientation.

The weather and the time here surprised me the most. I experienced snow for the first time in my life but I never expected that I would live in a place that gets down to -40 degrees Celsius or even colder. I considered that a life living in a freezer. However, I love summer and fall because during these times, the sun rises as early as 4 a.m. and sets as late as 9:30 p.m. In my home country, the sunrise and sunset are at almost the same times every day because we are so close to the equator.

My husband really helped me a lot with adjusting to life here. Maybe if he was not here with me, I would rather go back to my country and never come back again. I have learned new things and appreciated more about what I have than what I don’t have. I know that he knows I’m still not comfortable living here for some reasons, but he always stays by my side to support and encourage me.
Never Get Defeated by Clichés

Amidou N. | Level 7 | Jessica W.’s Student

The vast majority (~80%) of French speaking immigrants settle in Montreal (Quebec), and most of them remain unemployed for an average of several months to more than a year. These alarming statistics raise the question of why these people don’t dare moving to other cities or provinces.

In my opinion, most of those new immigrants are worried about some clichés. They might have heard that they should speak English perfectly to get a job in other provinces. Indeed, they will have to go through an interview process in English. However, this language barrier is not insurmountable. Learning English should be seen as a unique opportunity to broaden their skills set. Interestingly, everybody is able to learn a new language. On top of that, fortunately there are lots of valuable resources to make English learning a fun and pleasant activity. In short, learning English should not repel people but should be considered as a leg up, not as a barrier.

Another cliché is that “life is boring and there are no jobs in small cities.” Before moving from Montreal to Saskatoon (Saskatchewan), many people told me things like “Saskatoon is definitely not a place you want to live; there is nothing to see there; it’s all flat”. It was really hard to get around it without hearing such discouraging comments on Saskatoon. Nonetheless, I made the decision to relocate to Saskatoon. Because it was all about getting a good job, I was willing to move across the whole country. In this consumerist world, my rationale is quite simple. No matter where I live, if I get a good job it lays the possibility in my hands to give gorgeous holidays to my family, visit any wonderful place we would like. By the way, I’ve been living in Saskatoon for two years, and I am not bored at all; I still have so many things to see in the surrounding areas. I strongly believe that everybody can make his life exciting if he decides to, regardless of the size of the city he lives in.

In summary, because immigration usually comes with some sacrifices, it’s worth moving towards jobs instead of waiting for jobs to come to us in a particular city. Lots of sayings are just clichés! As new immigrants having big hopes, our commitment should be to join Canada’s workforce and get actively involved in our community. Let’s give ourselves a chance to keep moving forward, transcending those wrong commonplace beliefs.
Dear friends,

I would like to share with you my thoughts and experience pertaining to becoming a LINC Home study student. I strongly believe that this would be a right decision for everybody who wants to improve his or her English. However, I would like to explain to you the benefits and downsides of e-learning in general and LINC Home Study program in particular.

E-learning allows more flexibility to people who are burdened with family and jobs. Therefore, it would be especially suitable for the people of middle age. It also allows to study from remote areas without being bound to live in the vicinity of educational institute. The LINC Home study program is a form of e-learning education and specifically designed for people who are too busy to attend classes in person, thus allowing them to study from home. In addition to that, this specific program has a lot of a very useful material for improving vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation. I especially liked the vast reservoir of idioms and useful expressions. Learning and using it has helped me to enrich my language significantly.

However, as any other form of distant education it requires a lot of self-discipline. In addition, the majority of those who choose this program can’t easily approach their teacher and request additional clarification and explanations.

As you can see, to enroll to this program would be a good choice to make, but it also require a certain level of self discipline and commitment. I have been studying in this program slightly less than a year and so far have been entirely content by achieved results.

I wish you a good luck in this new enterprise.
Every country has its own challenges, trials, and tips related to finding work. To find employment in the any part of the world, people have to fulfill the requirements. When a person moves from his hometown to another country, he has to face many challenges, for example: food, culture, language, weather, and new employment skills. It will take some time for him for to adjust to the new place.

No one is perfect. You can learn at any stage of life. Age never matters. I am a pharmacist from back home and I am looking to choose the same profession here in Canada. I have some new challenges here. To adapt my profession I have to go through some steps which are somehow difficult but not impossible. I am preparing myself for the pharmacy exams, and after that I will go for an internship and some volunteer work. The setup of a pharmacy is different in Canada than in my home town so I have to learn these new skills. Volunteering gives you experience to work at a new place and you can feel comfortable before you get a job.

For any skilled worker category, your learning, your understanding, and your experience play a important role. In the skilled worker category, learning is the basic point because things are different, although, no doubt the basics are the same. You have to adapt to new current guidelines according to the system in which you have entered. If you want to become the part of a particular system, you have to work hard. Working hard is the key to success to survive in a new place.
Living in Canada was our dream.

We are manufacturers of rose oil and rose water in Turkey. We are living in Isparta which is famous for a special kind of rose and is called “The rose valley of Turkey”. This kind of rose is known as “oily rose” and blooms one month a year. Every well-known perfume has to have rose oil inside. If perfume has a lot of rose oil, the perfume lasts longer than the others and has a higher quality. Rose water and rose oil are also very beneficial for your skin. You can clean your face with rose water and you can spray rose water under your natural cream which gives you freshness and relief.

We have a rose garden. We pick the roses and we produce rose water and rose oil with a distillation system. We use traditional methods. We distill roses in a copper alembic and we don’t use any chemicals or solvents. We manufacture natural skin care products which includes rose oil and rose water.

My wife and I work together. We have had our company in Turkey since 1992. We are both engineers. All products’ formulas belong to us. Our products are like our children. We visited Canada in 2001 and we loved it. We visited many times and decided to live here. We applied to the Canadian Federal Government as an entrepreneur in 2008. They accepted us in 2010. We were very happy that they accepted us in a shorter time than the other applicants and they said to us that they liked our project about our Rose products.

We have an online sale site in Turkey. Our general consumers are doctors, chemists and pharmacists because they can understand the ingredients and our all-natural creams do not contain synthetic chemicals. Also, rose oil and rose water are well-known as natural throughout the Turkish society.

When we came to Canada, we obtained our permanent resident card. Living in Canada was better than visiting as a tourist. We established our company. We imported our products. We have joined festivals and have met many people who know about rose water and are aware what natural rose water is and they always like our skin care products.

From the very beginning, we joined the Oakville Chamber of Commerce. They are very kind and helpful. We have been attending the events that they have arranged. Almost every event was very beneficial for us. We have been networking and met a lot of people who have different job. We have learned about people, about jobs. We are watching and talking with them to know about Canadian people and business life in Canada. It has all been a very rewarding experience for my wife and for myself.
Nowadays, distance learning is taking off in leaps and bounds. It becomes more and more popular and many people think that it’s easier to take online classes than being physically present in the classroom. E-learning is very accessible through Internet and just by surfing on the web we see many advertisements pop up on the screen. However, people need to be careful before they enroll in any online course because there are advantages and disadvantages.

**Advantages:**
One of the benefits of taking distance education is the flexibility that online courses offer for working individuals. With access to a computer and a wireless connection, students can participate in classes and complete their homework almost anywhere in the world without worrying about schedules. They can easily manage their own time, travel and work schedules.

Students can save money on gas or bus passes for transportation. This becomes economical. Online courses are generally cheaper than in class courses and living on campus.

**Disadvantages:**
By taking distance classes, students may lack social interaction because they are not present in a classroom with teachers and classmates who they can talk to and exchange ideas. Students are always alone spending hours in front of machines (computers) to study. That can be boring and may cause a serious lack of motivation.

Another disadvantage is also the real possibility of becoming overwhelmed by using technology for e–learning. It can be very difficult to pursue online courses for someone who is not familiar using technology. I think, there are fewer choices too and certain degrees such as nursing, dentistry, hairstyling etc... cannot be completed online. In addition, certain employers may not recognize diplomas obtained through online classes.

To conclude, in spite of all these disadvantages, online classes do have quite a few advantages too. That’s why before paying for any distance classes, people should take those in to consideration.
To Study or Work

Leidy B. | Level 7 | Jonathan B’s Student

The period after high school is certainly an important transition period in our lives, when we are faced with many decisions. It is the time to take decisions about the future. Some people are encouraged to travel to keep learning through cultural exchange meanwhile others decide to get experience through work.

Both options are enriching, and they will provide a person with guidance on the new path. Travel will help you to know about other cultures, make friends and extend your social circle as well as make connections; also you can get new ideas and share your own opinions.

However, the second option is also a valuable resource to continue learning different skills from experienced co-workers and start building your social network and consolidate your abilities. Likewise, you can acquire recognition and references for the future.

Just keep in mind that this is the first step in your career path but you will always need to be a step in front so don’t give up your dreams and don’t get stuck in any of these transitional periods.
Advantages and Disadvantages of Working from Home

Cynthia H. | Level 7 | Jonathan B’s Student

Some people have always worked in offices and think that working from home is like winning the Lotto Lottery prize but not everything that shines is gold. Working from home has its advantages and disadvantages.

Some advantages can be saving money and time commuting to work. Other people take public transportation or drive. People that have children can take care of them easily if they work from home. In case the kids get sick, people who work from home don’t have to worry about who is going to take care of them or ask for a day off at work. Another advantage is that people don’t get distracted with conversations at work from their co-workers.

Of course there is a bad side to everything, the disadvantages. Here there are some disadvantages of working from home.

• People that have problems managing their time and establishing limits between the hours of work a day and the time for home activities can have many problems if they opt to work from home.
• People that work from home don’t have an established or fixed schedule, so it can be they possibly work more hours than they need to do affecting directly the time destined for other activities like going to the gym, spending time with friends or reducing the time with the family.
• Sometimes working from home is not always appreciated.
• People can lose the direct contact and communication with their co-workers. All the communication is done by e-mails or by phone.

Some recommendations or tips to succeed when you opt to work from home are the following:

• Working from home doesn’t mean that you have to be all day inside your house. If you are feeling stressed or mad for being too many hours inside your house, you always can go outside for a coffee or for a walk.
• You can try to keep contact with your co-workers by making calls to them instead of just sending them emails.
• Spend time with and give your family enough time. Try to not become an absent father or mother even though you are at home. Make an effort to stop working always at a scheduled time every day.

Don’t be afraid to take the opportunity to work from home, just be sure that you manage your time in order to maintain the balance between your professional life and your life with your family.
Preparing for a Job Interview

Amanda P. | Level 5 | Laura W’s Student

Job interviews are very important for a job seeker. They determine whether you can get a job in a company. There are some skills required in a job interview, and if you grasp them, you will have a better result.

At first, you should prepare a good resume. You will describe yourself briefly in your resume. You should focus first on your strengths, then your characteristics, and lastly experience. Many employers are interested in what you can bring to the company when they decide to choose you. If you have an advantage that others don’t have, then you will win in this stiff competition.

After this, you should get ready for some common questions in a job interview. You can see some answers on websites and you had better add something about your work experiences and personality. Then your answers will be more persuasive.

Thirdly, you should have a positive attitude when you get a job interview. No matter the results, you ought to try your best to show your ability and self-confidence. You should draw lessons from failures and correct yourself quickly.

Lastly, you can use some gestures and a charming smile when you are in a job interview. These will make you seem easy-going and impressive. I hope the advice above is helpful for your next job interview.
The Road is Long in Life

Anatoliy S. | Level 6 | Uzma N.’s student

Each person has a purpose in life. One is born for some important work to do. Another one to write a beautiful word. The third lies as a comma or semicolon or small shaped as individual letters in the whole chapter ... but we all write our common human book. I would like to contribute to the writing of this book and tell a little about the life of truck drivers in Canada.

Truckdriving - is not just a profession. This is in a sense a calling and in the truest sense - a way of life. Challenging, interesting, dangerous but at the same time, not without a share of romance and work. Every profession has its own characteristics. The profession of a truck driver, despite the seeming fun and romantic character, is associated with many trials. Because this profession requires long distance travelling, it can be hard to find a driver who is willing to spend a significant part of his life on the road which naturally limits family time. These disadvantages are partly offset by a good salary and benefits. Staying away for a long time from their families often warms the truck driver’s soul reassuring him that he is doing this for his family’s security. For instance, ensuring that they have a place to live, food to eat and a good education for the children. Those who can not find a middle ground in this situation, reap the bitter fruits of frustration, family imbalance, etc.

Long trips, sometimes extending from one week to two weeks, lead not only to physical but also to mental fatigue. Usually, long trips are always conjugate with the inconvenience, untimely eating, inability to fully relax and maintain hygiene. A truck driver is forced to adapt to different working conditions. Hard working conditions give rise to a number of occupational diseases - diseases of the gastrointestinal tract, cardiovascular system, and of course, the musculoskeletal system. A truck driver constantly needs to be prepared for sudden changes of weather conditions; it is no secret that having left one early sunny morning after a few hours you can get to the snow or dust storm. Crossing the continent from north to south and from east to west drivers are constantly faced with different tricks of weather.

Of particular importance in this profession is good work ethics and personal qualities. Being alone with huge motor vehicle and the road, the driver must be true master of his craft. The necessary skills to carry out the required repairs in case of breakage, skills to navigate the transport network of the country. The driver is liable for the goods transported, because he carries large volumes, then the cost is very high.

The life of the driver on a trip is ordinary routine performance of their job duties and is somewhat similar to other professions, but differs in that all of this is done away from home. Being too far away from home you can not come into at the evening after work, play with the children and drink a glass of wine or a cup of

Photo Credit: Anatoliy S.
coffee with your wife by the fireplace after dinner. While on a trip you always have somewhere to go, still do not know where you will spend the night tonight and where you will have lunch tomorrow. Typical daily chart represents a boring routine and is repeated every day: wake up in the morning, get to a washroom and have light breakfast. Before going out make sure to perform a pre trip inspection of the truck. In this whole process already thinking about where to refuel the truck, take a shower and would be nice to determine where to spend the next night. Loading, unloading and communication with clients stand out in the daily grind.

Constant eating in roadside cafe is not always convenient and becomes quite expensive, so many drivers have refrigerators in their trucks, taking food supplies to the road as well as your favorite dishes prepared by caring hands of a loving wife. It’s so good to feel the smell and taste of home when heated in the microwave your favorite dish being thousands of miles away from home.

Most drivers who are going through a period of formation in the profession quickly learn how to deal with work and family life balance. Some drivers become really addicted to the feeling of movement, changing day and night while driving, constant changes in terrain and landscape outside the window. Forced from home such drivers begin to yearn for the road, they dream about it at night. They look forward to seeing the road.

In spite of the negativities of this profession, it still attracts more and more young people to make their choice in favor of an endless belt of roads, the fresh wind in the face through the open window and to feel freedom. I am one of those who truly fell in love with the work of the driver and haven’t regretted my decision ever.
Here is some vocabulary from this month’s newsletter. Do you know what the words mean?

**Aspire (pg.7)**
to desire and work towards achieving something important

**Novice (pg.8)**
someone who has no experience in a skill, subject, or activity

**Angling (pg.10)**
the sport of catching fish with a fishing rod

**Reap (pg.10)**
to get something, especially something good, as a result of what you have done

**Abundant (pg.11)**
available in large quantities so that there is more than enough

**Agronomy (pg.16)**
the study of the growing of crops

**Winery (pg.23)**
a place where wine is made and stored

**Awe (pg.23)**
a feeling of great respect and liking for someone or something

**Census (pg.24)**
an official process of counting a country’s population and finding out about the people

**Hippie (pg.24)**
someone, especially in the 1960s, who opposed violence peacefully and often wore unusual clothes, had long hair, and took drugs for pleasure

**Artisan (pg.24)**
someone who does skilled work, making things with their hands

**Recurrent (pg.37)**
happening or appearing several times

**Fencing (pg.46)**
the sport of fighting with a long thin sword

**Cope (pg.48)**
to succeed in dealing with a difficult problem or situation

**Bestow (pg.55)**
to give someone something of great value or importance

**Archipelago (pg.55)**
a group of small islands

**Vegan (pg.55)**
someone who does not eat any animal products at all, such as meat, fish, eggs, cheese, or milk

**Savannah (pg.68)**
a large flat area of grassy land

**Cornerstone (pg.71)**
something that is extremely important because everything else depends on it

**Insurmountable (pg.76)**
a difficulty or problem is too large or difficult to deal with

**Internship (pg.79)**
a job that lasts for a short time, that someone, especially a student, does in order to gain experience
NEWSLINC Glossary Crossword: Winter 2014

Complete the crossword below
**Across**
1. someone who does skilled work, making things with their hands  
7. a job that lasts for a short time, that someone, especially a student, does in order to gain experience  
8. happening or appearing several times  
9. to give someone something of great value or importance  
11. a difficulty or problem is too large or difficult to deal with  
14. to desire and work towards achieving something important  
17. someone who has no experience in a skill, subject, or activity  
18. available in large quantities so that there is more than enough  
19. to succeed in dealing with a difficult problem or situation  

**Down**
2. a large flat area of grassy land  
3. something that is extremely important because everything else depends on it  
4. the sport of catching fish with a fishing rod  
5. to get something, especially something good, as a result of what you have done  
6. a group of small islands  
10. someone, especially in the 1960s, who opposed violence peacefully and often wore unusual clothes, had long hair, and took drugs for pleasure  
12. the study of the growing of crops  
13. a feeling of great respect and liking for someone or something  
15. a place where wine is made and stored  
16. the sport of fighting with a long thin sword
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Note:
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- If submitting your biography, do not include information about your birthday or age.
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