
PALS ECHO

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Free Time!

Maria C. Mercado, Colombia
Richard Gomes' Basic Writing

When I have free time, I usually do many things. I like to listen to music and I also enjoy reading different kinds of books. Another thing I enjoy is to travel, especially to my country. I like to watch TV and also to go to the park with my son. I enjoy going to the movies, but I don't have much money to go all the time. As you can see, I have many different activities to do in my free time.

My Friend

Ingrid Davila, Ecuador
Richard Gomes' Basic Writing

I have a good friend, Maria. She is a good classmate to me. She is very responsible and very honest. We have a great time together in class and out of class. Maria is talkative, but she is also fun to be with and she is a very good listener. I can talk to her about everything and she is a very kind person. She is a teacher and she always helps everybody because teaching is her passion. She smoked for a long time and she had a stroke. Now she understands that she needs to stop smoking because if she doesn't stop smoking, this problem will happen again. To sum up, Maria is a very nice person and I'm really glad to have a friend like her.

Stay Healthy!

Jefferson Saldana, Colombia
Richard Gomes' Basic Writing

I do several things to try to stay healthy. I do not smoke cigarettes, use drugs, drink alcohol or a lot of coffee. I also don't sunbathe a lot. I always eat the right food because my mother takes care of me and she always cooks healthy food for my family. She does not put a lot of salt in my food and she doesn't use a lot of oil. I never eat junk food. I also do exercises in the university's gym. In conclusion, I always try to follow all of these steps because I want to be healthy.

Abortion

Marco Celis, Colombia

Bonnie Harley's High Intermediate Writing

An abortion is defined as “the killing of the fetus in whatever way or at whatever time from the moment of conception”. This topic has become the subject of a lot of discussions everywhere. I want to talk about why abortion is not good. There are many reasons against it, but the three most important ones are: social, moral and psychological.

First of all, every human life is a unique and an irreplaceable element in the world. Therefore, the right to life for everyone (before, during and after being born) must be recognized and respected by civil society and political authority. The right to life does not depend on anybody; it is just a natural right. An abortion destroys a social life.

Secondly, from the moment of conception, a fetus is considered a person. The embryo must be defended in its integrity and healed as far as possible like other human lives. Therefore, according to Roman Catholic moral teaching any formal cooperation against human life, before birth, is a grave offense called “penalty of excommunication latae sententiae”.

Finally, there are many psychological effects from abortion. Many women are traumatized by their abortion experience. Some try to commit suicide and others try to avoid any reminders of the abortion. Many women feel shame, anger and guilt. Often, they tolerate abusive relationships or use alcohol, drugs or even physically abuse themselves. Many who appear to have a normal life spend hours in private crying because they feel such despair and abandonment. Some want to replace the baby so they adopt a baby or try to get pregnant again. Others feel they are not worthy to become mothers since they chose to kill their own children.

Abortion does not end with the killing of the baby. It is not a solution to a difficult situation. In fact, abortion creates new and lasting problems. Human life must be respected, defended and protected absolutely from the moment of conception. From the first moment of its existence, a human being must be recognized as having the right of a person. Therefore, nobody should ever have the right to abort because it is an attack on the rights of others, especially the right to life.

Summer in America is the Best Season of the Year

Xiomara Pizzo, Colombia

Bonnie Harley's High Intermediate

America has four seasons, but the best is summer. People tend to do different outdoor activities and enjoy the fascinating natural resources and good weather. In my opinion, the following reasons can illustrate why this time is the best.

As if by magic, as soon as the weather has hot temperature, automatically a lot of green leaves appear in the trees, flowers in the gardens and insects appear in the air. The sun and nature give us happiness to our lives. It is a contrast to winter. That is the amazing change in nature.

Simultaneously, people change their style of dressing. Now they can wear those clothes that had been hanging in the closet for a long time - no more jackets or sweaters. The sandals, T-shirts, blouses, short pants and Capri pants are the best choices at this time. Each one dresses for their lifestyle, but it is also a special time to dress casually and comfortably.

Summer has a lot of opportunities for everyone to enjoy; for example, American families tend to have picnics in the yards and parks. Also they tend to go to the beaches for swimming or

sunbathing. Other people prefer to walk around the park perhaps to eat a big ice cream regardless of gaining weight. In conclusion, the most important point for human beings is not to lose the capacity to be amazed by the beauty of nature and to enjoy everything that it provides them.

Music in Life

Rozan Hammoud, Venezuela

Bonnie Harley's High Intermediate Writing

Music is an art of sounds form which mixes the elements of rhythm, melody, harmony and color. The development of music came from the observation of natural sounds such as birdsongs and other elements that animals use to communicate. It is found in every known culture, past and present, varying wildly between times and places. Music is an important tool in human's life for the following three reasons.

The first reason is entertainment, music provide elements which produce relaxation for human beings. It is used as a romantic way to show love, and for fun because it is used in parties and dancing.

Another reason is expression since a lot of people use music to express their ideas and emotions such as love, happiness, sadness, etc. They use the lines of songs to show their points of view about a specific topic no matter what the language is. Sometimes they use instruments to reflect their feelings through the melody.

The last reason is medicinal. Nowadays many people use music to remedy sickness; for example, pregnant women use music to stimulate their babies. Another example is in children. Classical music is a good choice to improve their way to study and it is recommended by doctors to develop their abilities.

Music has existed for many million years. It has been improving through time and it is used by human beings to communicate and express themselves. These days music is a very important instrument around the world.

How the Global Warming is Affecting Peru

Lily Rosa Morales, Peru

Bonnie Harley's High Intermediate Writing

In Peru, the climate has changed dramatically and global warming is a part of this change. Global warming does not benefit humans. It is affecting all in my country. The farms are losing their harvest. The prices of the products in the supermarkets are increasing each day. Another problem caused by Global warming is skin cancer. It is increasing in the places where poor people live. These problems have affected Peru for a long time. What does the government do about it? What is the future for the Peruvian people?

First, the farms are losing their harvest because the ice that melted in the high mountains is turning into water and filling up the rivers. When this happens, the water runs out of its river bed in abundance and destroys all. The people who live in these areas need to run away to protect their lives. A lot of people die every year because of floods. In addition, the farms cannot collect the same amount of fruit and vegetables, and they also lose their harvest, animals and lands. Also, in some cases, other people who live in the country are losing everything that they have.

A second effect of global warming is that products in the stores become very expensive each day because the farmers are losing their crops. The products become scarce. The owners of

the supermarkets are making profits on rising prices. As a consequence, the people are making sacrifices because they need to pay more for the products, but the salary is the same and the government does not want to raise it.

Another trouble caused by the global warming is a serious skin condition-skin cancer. It is especially severe in poor areas. Poor people work outside for long hours. They receive more sunlight. Also, they do not have money to protect their skin and to prevent the skin cancer. In addition, they cannot pay for their treatment. The government needs to create special programs to warn the residents to be careful with the time of sun exposure. The majority of the people in Peru are not educated, which is the reason that people who live in the country do not understand the serious consequences of global warming that influence the world and their lives.

Finally, I am very worried for the future of my country. It is urgent that the government creates programs to educate the people about of the consequences of global warming. Furthermore, the government needs to help the farmers when they lose everything. It needs to give new land and money to support all these people because when it does not help, the farmers will abandon farms for better life in cities that are less dangerous. In addition, the government needs to work with the United Nations with other countries to create programs to educate people about global warming and to reduce the contamination in the countries. In conclusion, we need to work together to save our world.

War

Beatriz Alsina, Colombia

Bonnie Harley's High Intermediate Writing

When a situation cannot be resolved because of the lack of understanding, usually people resort to violence. When two countries cannot resolve their problems by diplomatic ways, sadly a war emerges. Powerful countries show their power and wealth through threats, bringing violence without thinking of the consequences to the civilian population. A war not only brings immediate bad results but it also affects people for a long time.

First of all, technological developments, arms production, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction like nuclear, biological or chemical weapons are methods of violence. It not only affects you physically but also mentally. Destruction and violence spread panic among all who have to suffer terrible and cruel consequences.

It is very sad to see wasted lives, orphans, widows, mutilated people, and starvation. A war which involves destruction increases cruelty, prisoner abuse, torture, diseases, unprotected children, and women crying out for peace and a safe place to live. Innocent people pay the price with their lives for bad political interests between countries. A war affects society at all levels and it is the worst situation that nations can face.

In long term results, we could see massive displacement of citizens, girls sold into prostitution, men with no jobs, poverty, delayed future or not a good future at all. Besides, we could see a strong psychological impact not only on civilians but also on soldiers. In addition, the bad environmental results could be fatal for life.

Therefore, a war is not a natural disaster. Rather, it is a tragedy caused by men. It is a disgrace for the human race because we have intelligence and it should be used for our benefits. Wealth and power should be used to construct a better world but not to destroy it. Without war, we wouldn't have such terrible consequences for humanity on our planet. Peace is wonderful and better for everybody.

Nutrition

M. Lorena Tubio, Spain

Bonnie Harley's High Intermediate Writing

Nutrition is a big problem these days. We are killing ourselves little by little. We have to do something to stop the bad habit of eating fast food. There are some problems like illnesses, overweight, and education.

First, a bad diet can cause some of the worst illnesses in your body. Fat and sugar from fast food accumulate in the arteries, liver, and heart. For example, cholesterol can hurt you if you don't eat healthy food. You had better combine fast food with vegetables, fish and fruit because this can help you lower high cholesterol. Drinking soda with your food adds too much sugar to our body. As a result, you can get 1 pound of sugar in one day and develop diabetes. Additionally, cholesterol and diabetes cause other serious illnesses like respiratory problems, stroke, etc...

Second, being overweight is another serious problem. If you eat fast food you add more calories than your body needs. An overweight person is 50% more likely to die sooner than a healthy person. Just in the U.S. there are 400,000 deaths a year of overweight people.

Meanwhile, it is important to teach our children in schools or in our homes how to eat healthy. For example, schools should give children a good diet and encourage them not to eat fast food. Another good way would be to make children's shows about food. In fact, it can help a lot.

In conclusion, I think that the solution is in our hands. We can change our food habit and start to care about our bodies.

Be Healthy

Maria Zambrano, Ecuador

Bonnie Harley's High Intermediate Writing

Eating good food has been the biggest concern for everybody, especially for those who are overweight. In fact, there are some suggestions that people should try to be in good health such as eating healthy food, doing exercises and taking a little vacation.

We all should try our best to eat healthy food. Everybody likes to eat everything they like. However, we don't know what to eat or what we should eat. Most people like to eat fast food because it tastes good, but most people don't know that junk food doesn't contain nutrients. Eating vegetables or fruit helps our body to become healthy and strong. They contain antioxidants that help you to clean your digestive system. Carrots contain Vitamin A which is very helpful for vision. Eating green vegetables helps to burn calories. In the same way, fruits are also another choice to keep our body healthy and full of vitamins.

Doing exercises is another way to be healthy. Exercises not only keep you in good shape, but they also help you to get rid of stress. Most people don't like to do exercises because they are tired or very busy to do them. Nevertheless, taking a walk for at least twenty minutes daily will help you to stretch your muscles especially your legs and your feet, which will prevent cramps and varicose veins.

Another reason to be healthy is by taking some vacation. Most of the time, people need to be away from the routine. Once in a while, people should travel to different places, meet new people from diverse cultures and also learn innovative things. Remember, you don't have to go far away. You can go to a place where you think you can relax and keep yourself out of stress.

In conclusion, I would like to say that eating as it should be, doing exercises, and of course taking some time off will help to keep you healthy not only physically but also emotionally.

Education

Gloria Mesa, Peru

Bonnie Harley's High Intermediate Writing

All teenagers must be a good example for their family and community. Living in this world, many people have a lot of opportunities to have a better job, but they cannot reach these opportunities because of the lack of education. Many institutions such as hospitals and schools are seeking professionals who can work in their fields. Some teenagers have dropped out of school because they have not thought about their future. Now they are complaining because they cannot find a better job. They have three steps to follow: 1) plan for money, 2) choose a major, and 3) overcome some obstacles.

First, if teenagers want to continue their education, they must work very hard and save some money; for example, I decided to return to school because I want to have a better job. I was saving some money, and I stopped going to my country and wasting money without any reason. I used to spend my money to buy expensive things such as clothes and jewelry, etc. I realize education costs money, but if I want to have a better job, I have to pay the price for a better future.

Second, teenagers have to choose their own major. They have to love what they have chosen because it is the only way that they can move forward and be successful in their goal.

Third, teenagers have to defeat any obstacles such as any temptation that might provoke them to stop studying - like going out to a movie, listening to loud music or traveling or working many hours. All of these temptations keep them away from their goals. So, when they come to class they get so tired that they have low grades. For instance, my sister was attending Kean University. She had such an excellent grade point average that my family was very happy and proud of her. I admired her, and I was planning to follow her example, but she met a friend who convinced her to work at a restaurant with a good salary. She worked at the restaurant for two months, but my mother was concerned that she was not studying. Her grades were very low. Also, she didn't do her homework, so my sister dropped all of her classes because she wanted to make money. I told her that she could work all the hours and earn a lot of money, but education is most important for every one. She didn't listen to me. Now after three years, she is able to go back to college because she recognizes that she wants to have a better future with a good salary and benefits.

Finally, every teenager has to be positive and realistic for their future. Also, they have to save and sacrifice for the high tuition, choose a major and defeat any obstacle if they want to have a better future.

Health

Mengmeng Zhang , China

Bonnie Harley's High Intermediate Writing

Health is very important for everybody. But keeping your body healthy is not really easy. You have to pay attention to it and take good care of yourself.

First, you have to make sure you eat healthy food everyday and eat on time. Sometimes you are very busy working, and then you skip your right meal time. Maybe you do not feel

anything wrong now, but sooner or later it will hurt your stomach and affect your health. Eating on time is not enough. Eating healthy food is also very important for you. Some people like to eat junk food because it is fast and easy, especially children. Be careful, it will make you fat and you will be far away from healthy. You need to keep a balanced nutrition. Vegetables and fruits are good for you and they have enough vitamins and fibers that you need every day.

Next, correct work and rest time is also very important. Today we live in a busy society. Some people work very hard. They always work overtime and have no time to take a rest. Then their bodies keep working and never relax. It is very dangerous. Maybe you don't feel any problem when you are young, so you just ignore it. However, when you are getting older, a lot of health problems will come to you. You just pay attention to it now before it is too late. Be sure that you have enough sleeping time and relax.

In addition, doing exercises can make your body stronger. Maybe you think exercises are not necessary; however, they are really very essential. Sometimes, after you come back from work, you feel very tired and you do not even want to move your arms and legs. Even so, exercises can help you not only get rid of fatigue, but they also clear up your stress. You do not need to spend a long time everyday in the gym or some exercise classes. Just 15 minutes fast walking or running is good enough for you. You will feel fresh all day and get more energy.

Accordingly, everybody wants to be healthy. You cannot just ignore it. You have to pay attention to all of the above: healthy food, reasonable work, rest time, and exercises. Take good care of yourself to be healthy.

Good Nutrition Improve Your Life

Daniela Bortoncello, Brazil

Bonnie Harley's High Intermediate Writing

Can you improve your life if you eat properly? There are foods that are rich in fat and not in nutrients. These days, people usually are very busy because they work a lot. So they eat bad food because they don't have time to cook. There are three good methods for you to change your food habits and improve your life.

The first method starts with breakfast. People who have a morning meal take more vitamins and minerals, and less fat and cholesterol. Those who eat cereal every day report feeling better physically and mentally than those who rarely eat cereal in the morning.

The second method is to add fish and Omega-3. Omega-3 is a not a saturated kind of fat acid. Some kinds of fish are rich in Omega-3 (for example, sardines, tuna and salmon). This in your body can help your immune system.

The third method to change your food habit is that you need to stay away from snacks and fast-food because these foods don't have all vitamins that your body needs. Fruit and vegetables in your diet improve your health because these kinds of foods are low in calories and are high in nutrients.

Finally, dependent on your age, you need a balanced nutrition that is essential to good health. Eating a variety of foods helps adequately ensure levels of vitamins and minerals in your body. Following that, you'll improve the quality of your life.

Healthy Food

Isaias Espinoza, Peru

Bonnie Harley's High Intermediate Writing

A person should eat healthy food, because it is important to have good health. We must eat meat (without grease), fish, and chicken (without grease). These can be boiled. Also, we should eat vegetables: carrots, lettuce, tomatoes, cucumbers, etc. These can be eaten in salads. In addition, we can eat fruits; orange, banana, apple, peach, melon water, etc.

Our daily dinner should be without grease. We can use a little amount of vegetable oil. If we eat healthy food, we will not have problems with our health; grease in the liver, high cholesterol, diabetes, high or less pressure, etc.. We feel good, and we can live healthy.

We should look for information about healthy food in books and magazines. Also, we can visit web sites about it. In addition, we could go to conferences, and we should ask the doctor about it.

Everybody should eat healthy food, avoid grease, and eat fruits. If we eat natural food, without preservatives and grease, and if we care for our health, we have less risk of illness and we can enjoy good health.

Italy

Domenico Tataranno, Italy

Bonnie Harley's High Intermediate Writing

During the last few years, thanks to a lot of educational campaigns, fitness has become quite an important activity in people's lives. Fitness means "to keep your behavior healthy," not only by "doing daily physical exercise," but also by healthy eating. Scientifically, it is demonstrated that whoever keeps himself fit, also, has a greatly reduced risk of developing every kind of disease, especially cardiovascular ones. So, to live longer and in a better way, everybody should keep himself fit. What does the word "fitness" mean? How can we keep ourselves fit? Fitness is a general word that includes a lot of healthy activities such as running and swimming. Then also other sports (soccer, volleyball, basketball and so on) can be included in it. Nevertheless, we have to remember that competitive sports are very far from being fitness activities. The main feature of a fitness activity is the regularity and the perseverance of the physical exercise. That has to be soft and gradual, not too hard as it is in all competitive sports.

Running is the most common fitness activity all around the world. Only twenty or thirty minutes of slow running everyday is an exceptional aerobic exercise to improve capillary circulation, also known as micro-circulation. If you do this kind of exercise regularly your aerobic resistance will be improved after just a few days of slow activity. So, running slowly or walking quickly every day for 20 minutes is a very good exercise to start keeping yourself fit, even if you have never done any physical activity. After about a month of a daily slow running, it would be good to start swimming.

Swimming is the most complete fitness activity. Every muscle of your body is trained when you swim. The main problems of this kind of sport are principally two: 1) to swim, you have to learn the right techniques of swimming before you start. 2) Even if you swim very slowly, it is a very tiring activity for your body, so you have to train yourself a little bit before starting to swim.

In spite of these two little limitations, swimming is the best and safest sport you can do, in order to improve your resistance, your muscles, and, to put it simply: your health. After a month

of regular swimming, even if you do it just two or three times a week, your physical strength will be improved very much. With this physical conditioning, then, you can start to play with abandon regularly swimming, and slow running, and your favorite sport once a week. Playing soccer, volleyball, basketball or anything you want once a week will improve your physical status. But moreover, your psychological status will improve.

That is, you have to suffer, to sacrifice yourself for the first two months (following the rule “no pain no gain”). Do this preparation to be ready to play the sport you really like and enjoy it better than you did before, with your brand new physical form. If you are able to follow these healthy rules you will be also able to obtain a physical result that can be kept all life long. -“More years for your life AND more ‘life for your years’”

Living in this Country is not Easy

Jie-Ying Wang, China

Elizabeth Lilley’s Low Advanced Writing

Many people come to the U.S. from different countries. They want to build new lives here, but some of them find it is not as easy to live in this country as it used to be in their homelands.

First of all, they have to learn a new language. That’s a big challenge for people just like me. I’m learning English in school. I memorize words, learn how to write, and follow the CDs to practice my speaking, but I still feel it is hard to use them in my life now. For example, last week, the shower pipe was broken. I called the landlord to tell him the situation, but I couldn’t describe which part of the pipe was broken and how damaged it was. The landlord totally didn’t understand what was wrong with the pipe until he came to my apartment.

Secondly, food is very different. American people like hamburgers and raw vegetables. In my country, people like rice or steamed bun. We don’t eat hamburgers very often, and vegetables must be ripe when we eat them.

Furthermore, it’s not easy to find a good job in here if you don’t have the educational background of the USA. A friend of my mom has been living in Ohio for two years. She was an oral surgeon when she was in China. She had many experiences in her career, but since she got here she hasn’t been able to find a job in a hospital.

Everybody has a dream about their new lives in the U.S. Everybody works hard for their goals. Even though the process is not easy, step-by-step when you blend into this country, maybe these things won’t be problems anymore.

Living in this Country is Not Easy

Fatemeh Rahnama, Iran

Elizabeth Lilley’s Low Advanced Writing

There are many immigrants in the United States that come here for some reasons. But, they probably have many problems living in the United States because they have to start everything from the beginning.

Meanwhile, some immigrants, like me, have problems with the English language. For example, I have had a lot of problems with contacting American people since I have come. I try to speak English fluently and study hard, but I can’t adjust with the new situation. Furthermore, I had a good job in Iran and I was pleased with my life: exactly the opposite of living in the United

States.

Moreover, American people are disconnected. For example, Iranian people have a good connection with their neighbors and they help each other. Living here, I don't have good communication with my neighbors. Also, most American people drive and have their own cars because distances are very far from each other. Therefore, transportation is not very useful here. On the other hand, most Iranian people use transportation. In addition, our cultures are different from each other. For example, there are many customary celebrations in Iran that I miss here. Also, living in the United States is more expensive than some other countries, so you have to work hard during the week. Therefore, you don't have enough time to spend with your family.

Even though living in the United States is not easy, there are many immigrants that have the ambition to live in the United States.

My Life

Ronal Valencia, Colombia

Elizabeth Lilley's Low Advanced Writing

My father influenced me because he is a successful man, not only in his job, but also in his married life. He has been married for 33 years. This is a great lesson for me. One can live with and love only one person for a long time.

I feel really proud about my parents. They are masters for me and my brothers. So far, for my brothers and me our parents are still important. Obviously I have some other people that affect my life, but still my parents occupy one important place in my heart.

Therefore, I would like to fulfill myself in the future, to see all my projects complete, and to begin new ones. Also, to be happy, surrounded by people that I love with so much success in all I do. I want to be a good person and to be a good leader in the church.

My Life

Joelma da Silva, Brazil

Elizabeth Lilley, Low Advanced Writing

My father influenced my life. Today I'm a good person because my father gave me a good education; he taught me the good and the bad things and gave me a chance to choose which I wanted. First of all, he taught me how important it is to have honesty and dignity in life. After that, he talked to me about drugs and told me to study and work hard for my future.

At the present time, it's my husband who is important in my life. He has a good heart and he has a good sense of humor. Every day I learn a little from him and he supports me for everything and enables me to continue to study. The best thing that I like about him is his sense of humor.

I would like to be successful in my career here in the future. I took my father's advice and I studied a lot. Now I'm a doctor. I want to help poor people. My father and my husband taught me these things. They have the same ideas. In conclusion, I want to see myself completely happy and useful in my life.

Smoking Must be Prohibited in Public Places

Neiser Cardenes, Colombia

Elizabeth Lilley, Low Advanced Writing

Smoking has become fashionable at this time. Many people smoke because they feel good and it is a cool fashion. It is necessary to know that cigarettes are one of the biggest businesses around the world. Many companies want people to smoke and spend thousands and millions of dollars from promotion and publicity.

Not everybody smokes. Most people hate smoking because people know about the damage that cigarettes cause in peoples' health. Even so, there are a lot of smokers. I think that we cannot persuade them about smoking, but they need to be aware of where and when they smoke. I think that a person who smokes cigarettes in public places can have more dangerous effects on nonsmokers' health than smokers' health.

There are a lot of illnesses related to smoking. For example, in my own experience I must say that I suffered from asthma for 20 years and in that time my mother and father used to smoke at home. The smoke caused that illness in me.

For that reason, finally, I think that smokers must think very seriously about their health and the government must look for strategies to take smoke away from public places and nonsmokers.

The Person Who Influenced me the Most

Sun, Lung-Chieh, Taiwan

Elizabeth Lilley's Low Advanced Writing

In my past life, I was not a very good student when I was at school, but there was one thing that I will always remember and respect. I remember that my junior high school teacher who was an English teacher treated me quite strictly to help me know English. She is a gentle and patient person; she always helps me with patience and never gets angry. Furthermore, she is a considerate person and likes to take care of people. For example, once she saw my unhappy face and cared to ask me "What happened?" The reason I felt unhappy was that I could not understand the class at all. After, she said, "Don't be disappointed; I will help you." to be honest, I felt apologetic when I took her time.

Moreover, she is a very devout Christian. If you do not do well on a quiz, she always said, "Don't worry! You have to thank God it did not happen on a really important test." I was affected by what she said and felt better. She also told me about Jesus and great events; thanks to her, I even read the Bible in my free time.

My parents have the most influence on my life right now. They have raised me to be a good person. They taught me manners, to be a good student, to be a good child, to be honest, to be respectful, and many more things. Since I was born, they have never physically punished me, although they sometimes lecture me. I know both of them are good to me. I am glad my parents teach me these lessons; they are a necessity in my life.

In conclusion, the people who have influenced us have probably insisted on high standards in their personal qualities of their lives; for example, enthusiasm, patience, kindness, and also knowledge, skills, diligence, action, and intelligence. Therefore, I just want to be a normal person with a rich soul.

Memoir

Marcia P. Cabrera, Ecuador
Elizabeth Lilley's Low Advanced Writing

My mother is the person who has been influencing me all my life. She is an excellent person in all aspects. She educated me with love. She taught me to recognize the good and the bad in my life; to know that after we fall, we always have the opportunity to stand up and to continue with our lives. She taught me how I can be a patient and perseverant person. Everyday, I spoke with my mother and she told me that with love everything is possible.

My husband, Diego, is the person who influences my life now. He is a positive, happy, and perseverant person. He is my complement because when I feel bad or sad he always helps me to overcome my problems. I like it a lot when he makes me laugh with his actions. It is very important to say that he is an excellent father. He has a lot of patience with us. He is my best friend.

Everyday I work to be a better person. This is because in the future, I would like to be the best woman, mother, wife, daughter, sister, and friend. For me it is very important to be honest with myself and with everyone. Another quality that is important for me is optimism because we can always learn from the good and the bad. It is important to think that we can do everything we want in this life. When I feel bad, sad, and discouraged, I always think about my successful moments when I am very happy. I feel better and my attitude changes completely. It helps me to be better everyday and I can help my family, my friends, and whoever needs me.

My Favorite Music

Juan Camilo Restrepo, Colombia
Marisol Garcia's Low Advanced Writing

I like listening to different kinds of music, but one of my favorite kinds of music is vallenato. I am going to tell you something about vallenato.

First of all, vallenato is the most popular folk music in Colombia. It originally comes from Colombia's Caribbean Coast. It originated in a special Caribbean city whose name is Valledupar.

Secondly, the traditional instruments used to play this kind of music are: the *caja vallenata*, *guacharaca*, and *accordion*. The *caja vallenata* is a small drum held between the knees and played with both hands. The *guacharaca* is a wooden, ribbed stick similar to a sugar cane, accompanied by a fork that when rubbed together emits a scraping sound. The final and most important instrument, the *accordion*, is a three-row buttoned instrument which comes from Germany. If you have these three instruments, and you know how to play them very well, you might be able to organize a "vallenata party."

Third, there are two special kinds of vallenato music: "vallenato parrandero" and "vallenato romantico." The "vallenato parrandero" is very fun and lively, and has a fast rhythm. It is the most popular in Colombia, especially at parties. The "romantic vallenato" has very sentimental lyrics. It has a slow rhythm and people who are in love enjoy listening and dancing to this type of vallenato.

Fourth, if you are interested in listening to vallenato, I can recommend a few artists: Los Inquietos, Diomedes Diaz, Los Hermanos Zuleta, Ivan Villazon, Jorge Onate, Alfredo Gutierrez, Binomio de Oro de America, Carlos Vives, and Jorge Celedon. These are the most important

representative groups of vallenato in Colombia and if you want to have a very nice party and spend some time with the person you love, you can look for some of them.

As you can see, vallenato is a very special kind of music from Colombia. If you are worried, sad, in love, or you simply want to dance, I recommend that you listen to vallenato because it is the ideal music for every moment of your life.

Fernando de Noronha Island in Pernambuco, Brazil

Leni Teixeira, Brazil

Marisol Garcia's Low Advanced Writing

Fernando de Noronha Island, the archipelago, consists of twenty small islands with crystal-clear water and rich marine life. It is located 200 miles off of the northeastern coast of Brazil. It is a piece of paradise on Earth, surrounded by breathtaking beaches. It is one of the few locations in Brazil where the sun sets into the sea. Altogether, there are sixteen beaches, all aphrodisiacs, which span 10 km long and 1.5 km wide. They are "inhabited by rich fauna and flora, several species of fish, coral, turtles, and dolphins that can be seen by all visitors." (www.noronha.com.br)

Beautiful beaches and excellent scuba diving dominate most of the activities on the island. From December to March, when the sea is rougher, surfing draws visitors to the island. The sun shines year round and it has an average temperature of 79 degrees. Fernando de Noronha has been described by those who have been lucky enough to visit as "a place like you've never seen before."

Tourism is the major source of jobs and income Fernando de Noronha. Most of the population is involved in lodging, restaurants, or commerce targeted to tourists. "Because the entire island is protected by the environmental legislation, there are several restrictions to the usage of the limited natural resources, and this is a factor to prevent other business sectors from growing. It is the only place in Brazil where the number of visitors is limited to about 500 per day, and must pay, on top of all ordinary expenses, an environment preservation tax; in an attempt to discourage long staying, all proceeds from this tax are used towards the ecological preservation of the island." (www.noronha.com.br) For example, all waste is sent by boat for processing on the main land.

Fernando de Noronha is now a model environmental protection area; it is also one of Brazil's most hidden treasures. All beaches have fine grained sand and crystalline warm water. The island is the peak of a mountain, part of a volcanic chain which erupted a few million years ago. There is a sweet perfume in the island where the sun and the earth meet in a warm embrace. The endless sea shimmers like diamonds under the sky. This is Noronha; a breathtaking island.

Skiing in Korea

Youngil Han, Korea

Marisol Garcia's Low Advanced Writing

If you would like to enjoy skiing in Korea, why don't you visit the High 1 Resort? Even though there are many places to enjoy skiing in Korea, there are several reasons why I recommend this place. There are not only great ski slopes but also many kinds of amusements so that you can really taste skiing and experience various other sports activities in one place.

The High 1 Resort is in Kang-Won-Do is on the east side of Korea. Because the east coast of Korea has very deep and rugged mountain ranges, its slopes are very different—from beginners courses to a giant slalom that was authorized by the FIS. The High 1 Resort also provides slopes for the disabled. The designer of this resort said, "If the disabled are comfortable using the

facilities, it isn't necessary for healthy people to comment." It holds the entire infrastructure for the disabled World Cup as well as slopes for the World Cup. Facilities for safety and equipment for swift treatment make users happier and safer.

In the High 1 Resort, you can enjoy various leisure sports. It provides a hiking course, mountain bike courses, snow sled courses, a swimming pool, golf courses, summer ski slopes, mountain coasters, and gliders. It also provides such various extreme rides as racing trucks, crazy rafting, and helicopter jumping using high-technology. Lastly, there is an alien adventure, a seabed exploration, a 4D movie theater and various amusement rides.

To enjoy them all, you might stay there for more than one month. The total expense for skiing starts from \$2,000.00 for two days. You can visit this website for more information: www.high1.co.kr.

In conclusion, there is a saying that goes: one stone, many rabbits. This place is very good for the whole family, couples, and friends. All of them can enjoy whatever they want to do in one place. Imagine yourself relaxing in a hot spa after enjoying heavy and fun activities! Imagine your whole family's happy faces! I want to highly recommend to you that if you have a chance to visit Korea, you should go to the High1 Resort.

Visiting Poland

Monika Gorska, Poland

Marisol Garcia's Low Advanced Writing

Poland is a very beautiful country where you can do many things. It's impossible to be bored throughout the year. I will tell you what you can do in Poland so that you can have a lot fun.

The best thing to do during the wintertime in Poland is to go skiing along almost the entire southern border. There are suitable mountain ranges. There is enough snow to last all winter. In the rest of the Czech border, you will find the Karkonosze National Park. Right in the middle of the park is Beskid and three ski resorts that are especially popular: Szczyrk, Wisla, and Ustrom. Further to the East, on the border of Slovakia, are the high Tatra Mountains in Zakopane. This is the winter capital of Poland and it is a very lovely little town. You can have a lot of fun in the center; many skiers go there to take advantage of the ski lifts in Wierch and Kasprowy. These are places where you can spend your vacation peacefully. The price for a vacation in Zakopane is not too high; the cost is \$500 for three days in a very nice hotel.

Poland is also a great vacation place for anyone interested in fishing. Some of the best fishing in Poland is in Lubuskie in the west of Poland. Many ponds and lakes there contain large carp and giant catfish. You can get to these places by renting a boat. The fishing tours available offer a total time of 4 – 6 hours for two days and the price is \$300. If you love fishing, you must go there.

Poland is a great place for birds and bird watching. Here are just a couple of the best places for bird watching in the west of Poland: Nolecka Forest and Świnoujście. These are places where you can see many kinds of birds. The price for a one-week vacation is \$400; this includes a hotel, visit to a museum, tickets, and many attractions for you.

Poland is a really interesting country and it's not expensive. I want to invite everyone to go see Poland; it's worth it.

My Favorite Super Hero

Christina Eggimann, Switzerland
Tim Keane's High Advanced Writing

It was about eight years ago when I first heard of a new book for children called *Harry Potter*. At that time, I worked for an attorney who is quite well known in Switzerland and who was reading the first book in the series. He considered himself addicted to the story of this young wizard and highly recommended it to me. At first, I was surprised that someone like him was spending his time reading children's literature. Then I was impressed. After awhile, I decided to give it a try, went to the library (where no copy was available) and then to the bookstore, where I finally was able to buy it.

It was Friday evening. When I got home, I started to read and could hardly stop to eat a bite. But I was not disappointed and had to agree that the story of Harry and his friends at Hogwarts was just brilliant. I first refused my family's assessment that I was a new victim of "Potter-Mania," but it was a fact: Harry Potter had become my favorite super hero.

I believe that even though Harry is an orphan whose remaining relatives don't treat him nicely, he still gets the possibility to become special and important, touches people.

Harry is popular among most of the students at his school. Many pupils want to be his friend. He is loyal, has a good sense of what is right or wrong, always believes in positive things and is convinced that bad things can be overcome. The young wizard is good-looking and successful at sports, so the girls fall for him. He is bright, smart, clever and respectful towards teachers; that's why they are happy to have him in class.

In the course of reading all the additional volumes, I completely dived into the "wizarding" world of Harry Potter, suffered, cried or was happy and excited. In my opinion, a character can only be a hero if, in your imagination, you can be and feel like him.

The PALS Echo is devoted to presenting the writings of our intensive English language students.

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