
PALS ECHO

Program in American Language Studies of Rutgers University-Newark

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My Week!

Jessica Carvajal- Colombia
Richard Gomes' Basic Writing

During the week, my days are very busy. First of all, I wake up at 5:30 AM every morning and take a shower. Then, I make breakfast and go to the train station and I have to run because I have to take another train to go to college. After that I go home and eat a snack. Then, I do my homework. Next, I help my step mother make dinner, the dishes and sometimes laundry. Next, I take a shower again and watch TV with my little brothers and my father. Then, after that I go to the internet on MSN and I talk with my sister and my mother. Finally, I go downstairs and get ready for bed. As you can see, my days are very busy during the week.

My Week

Indira Vergel- Colombia
Richard Gomes' Basic Writing

During the week my days are very interesting. First of all I wake up at 5:30AM every morning. I always do cardio exercises for 30 minutes. After that I take a shower and get dressed, but before I get dressed, I never forget to put on cream on all of my body. Then, I eat breakfast and at the same time I see the news. Next I brush my teeth and immediately I take my bag, books and say bye to everyone in the family. I take the bus at 7:00AM to the university. When I finish class, I usually go back home at 4:00 p.m. Sometimes before I arrive home, I stop at the book store to look at some books. Finally, when I arrive home, I eat lunch with my family. Then I do my homework and study for the next day. When the night arrives, I listen to English music to practice and and improve my pronunciation. Before I go to bed, I wash my face and read a good book. As you can see, this is my interesting life.

Stay Healthy

Suceti Martinez-Ecuador
Richard Gomes' Basic Writing

I do several things to try and stay healthy. First, I try to eat more proteins than carbohydrates. I don't smoke, but I drink one glass of wine everyday. I don't like to do exercises in a gym, but I love to dance. Sometimes I like to swim and do yoga, too. Well, the other form to do exercises is with my fingers, I play the guitar everyday. So, I guess I lose calories, too. I try to eat healthy food, but sometimes I like to eat fast food.

I AM

JiGeun (Joey) Song, Korea
Jessica Wilson's Low Intermediate Writing

I am a special person and I have a lot of personality.
I wonder about clothes because it can say a lot about personality.
I hear people say I'm the best dresser.
I see the best clothes.
I want to have many clothes.
I am a special person and I have a lot of personality.

I imagine being a rich man.
I feel very good when I think about being rich.
I want to touch money.
I worry if I can have money after a few years.
I cry that now I don't have money.
I am a special person and I have a lot of personality.

I understand why I don't have money.
I say that's okay because I am a student.
I dream of making myself a rich man in a few years.
I try now to make money and I think to study very hard.
I hope to be very rich and have many clothes.
I am a special person and I have a lot of personality.

I AM

Jamie Castellanos, Colombia
Jessica Wilson's Low Intermediate Writing

I am a dreamer and a single man.
I wonder if the world can be better, and if it can be without war.
I heard the waves from the sea and I feel the peacefulness life can give to us.
I want to help people, but now I can't.
I am a dreamer and a single man.

I imagine people living in happiness and helping each other.
I feel poverty and now I understand the homeless.
I touch a flower and I feel the generosity and greatness of our God.
I worry because I don't like wars.
I cry for the children; it's not their fault.
I am a dreamer and a single man.

I understand that we are feeble, but we can change our hearts.
I say a prayer just for God.
I dream of peace, and I hope that we change our minds.

I try to understand others and hope that they can understand me.
I hope for a new day, because I believe in us, and I hope too in the mercy of our God.
I am a dreamer and a single man.

I AM

Ece Yesilkaya, Turkey
Jessica Wilson's Low Intermediate Writing

I am a hardworking and smart student.
I wonder if the chicken is born from the egg or the egg from the chicken.
I hear the birds' sounds.
I see the sunrise in Everest.
I want to speak English fluently.
I am a hardworking and smart student.

I imagine I can speak English.
I feel excited when I go to the university.
I touch a snake.
I worry about my future.
I cry for my love.
I am a hardworking and smart student.

I understand why I have to learn English.
I say all true things.
I dream I can sing an English song.
I try to understand fast speaking English people.
I hope they will speak slowly.
I am a hardworking and smart student.

I AM

Javier Sanchez, Colombia
Jessica Wilson's Low Intermediate Writing

I am a special person with women; I'm also friendly.
I wonder about cats because they are beautiful and smart.
I hear parrots because they talk clearly like humans.
I see the sun come up.
I want to be a priest.
I am a humble and polite person.

I imagine how the Heaven of God is.
I feel happiness when I pray.
I touch my body with great love.
I worry for people who do not pray.
I cry remembering my family.
I am a quiet and happy person.

I understand the sad people.
I say that happiness is in Jesus.
I dream to be a saint.
I try to be close to God.
I hope to be in Heaven when I die.
I am a special person with people.

I AM

Marie-Germaine Affoumou, Ivory Coast
Jessica Wilson's Low Intermediate Writing

I am African and proud.
I wonder about African independence.
I hear the bird's song.
I see the sunrise.
I want to scream "love".
I am African and proud.

I imagine paradise.
I feel we can live in peace.
I touch God.
I worry about human relationships.
I cry about starvation.
I am African and proud.

I understand our racial differences.
I say we are equal.
I dream of world unification.
I try to share much love.
I hope for more humanity.
I am African and proud.

I AM

Alexander Pinacue, Colombia
Jessica Wilson's Low Intermediate Writing

I am friend and believe in God.
I wonder about the killing of men.
I hear the song-birds.
I see the suffering of families.
I want respect for life.
I am happy and build peace.

I imagine happy families when their boys come back from war.
I feel pity for the poor boys.
I touch their hopeful hearts.
I worry and fear for their lives.

I cry for their absence.
I am praying for them.

I understand sacrifice.
I say respect life.
I dream of a world at peace.
I try hard to work for peace.
I hope that people understand the importance of peace.
I am a seminarian who prays for peace in the world.

I AM

Nelson Bayona, Colombia
Jessica Wilson's Low Intermediate Writing

I am a very lucky man because my life has a purpose.
I wonder if I improve my English, but can write and speak it anyway.
I hear the nature which is surrounding me.
I want to study hard and learn a lot.
I am interested in learning many things about American culture.

I imagine my country without violence or war.
I feel that little by little and step by step I am changing to think differently.
I touch the hearts of those who have many things and give to those who do not have anything through my daily prayer.
I worry about doing everything that I do better every day.
I cry because of injustice in some places or countries.
I am a humble servant of God.

I understand that each new age has a new problem, but also a new lesson for everyone.
I give advice to someone who needs it because it could change a bad decision.
I dream of peace for my country.
I try to understand why people continue fighting among themselves for stupid things such as borders, power or capitalism.
I hope that men recognize that they don't have to control the lives of others, but they are in equal conditions.
I am looking for the best option to be happy doing what I do.

I AM

Maria Melgarejo, Uruguay
Jessica Wilson's Low Intermediate Writing

I am very honest and fair.
I wonder why there is war in the world.
I hear the sound of the ocean and it relaxes me.
I see people who have physical disabilities and live life, enjoying it like they don't have any problem.
I want my children to have a good education and become responsible people.

I imagine a happy life for everybody.
I feel that I try every day to do my best, to be a better person in all aspects of my life.
I touch the door of God.
I worry about hunger in the world.
I cry for things that are unfair.

I understand life is wonderful.
I say you have to enjoy it.
I dream of being fluent in English.
I try very hard to improve it.
I hope I am going to get it.

I AM

Andrea Khatile, France
Jessica Wilson's Low Intermediate Writing

I am black and free.
I wonder if people feel like me.
I hear the voices of the other people speaking loudly.
I see international students that I like to see.
I am black and free.

I imagine a Utopian planet.
I feel the love resulting from it.
I touch the field of equality.
I worry about the end.
I cry for my family.
I am black and free.

I understand this program.
I try to live like an American.
I dream and now I am living with Liberty.
I hope to be a straight-A student.
I say thank you P.A.L.S.
I am black and free.

I AM

Paola Bracho, Colombia
Jessica Wilson's Low Intermediate Writing

I am a trusting person and a dreamer.
I wonder about the perfection of nature.
I hear the sound of the fall of a river.
I see the sunset at the beach.
I want to fly.
I am a trusting person and a dreamer.

I imagine the end of war in my country.
I feel the grass under my feet.
I touch the sky in my dreams.
I worry about starvation in the world.
I cry when I see abandoned children.
I am a trusting person and a dreamer.

I understand that life is ephemeral.
I say we need to enjoy it.
I dream about the sea.
I try to understand the world.
I hope to be a better person.
I am a trusting person and a dreamer.

I AM

Ana Arias, Dominican Republic
Jessica Wilson's Low Intermediate Writing

I am a friendly and organized person.
I wonder about the new president.
I hear my son singing.
I see "Welcome Home" in front of the house.
I want to go to my home in the Dominican Republic.
I am playing the piano.

I imagine my mom in the garden.
I feel tired every day.
I touch my heart.
I worry about the situation in the US.
I cry when I don't have money.
I am a student.

I understand why people need to eat.
I say that God is good.
I dream of speaking English well.
I try to study English every day.
I hope to learn English.
I am confused in grammar class.

Music Types

Koray Tenekeci, Turkey
Jessica Wilson's Low Intermediate Writing

Music types may say a lot about a person's personality, so which kind of music you like is related to your personality. First, rock music is very hard and fast. If you like rock music, you are outdoorsy and free-spirited. If you choose pop music, you like fashion and popular things in your

life. Classical music is quiet and is listened to by polite, kind, and well-spoken people. On the other hand, freedom is very important for rap fans. They always wear informal clothes and speak casually. There are many kinds of music, but I think these four are the main types: rap, classical, pop, and rock. In conclusion, music types such as these four are related to your personality.

Musical Preferences

Lili Shi, China

Jessica Wilson's Low Intermediate Writing

In my opinion, the kind of music that someone prefers does not necessarily represent one's personality. First of all, a person does not always have a single preference in music. You could be a huge fan of Beethoven and also have a large collection of heavy metal albums. For example, my roommate spends hundreds of dollars on music-related stuff. One evening, I didn't hear anything from his room because he was enjoying some classical music on his earphones. But the next day, I heard very heavy sounds from his room. Then I just crashed his door open while he was trying to blow the roof off with his speakers. Furthermore, people sometimes use music to support themselves and to fill up the loneliness. Because people sometimes feel almost intolerably lonely, they lack certain aspects of their personality. It's like we need light when it is dark. Some strong, brutal people may prefer some light music to fill the tender parts of their personalities, and some cowardly people may choose heavy metal songs to give them courage. Maybe some teachers prefer Hip-Hop music to relax. All in all, I think you can't judge a person's personality by his musical preference.

People Have Wrong Ideas

Ece Yesilkaya, Turkey

Jessica Wilson's Low Intermediate Writing

Many people have prejudice. They don't know anything about other countries, but they think and say a lot of things that aren't good. I think if someone wants to say something about another country, they have to know something about it. For example, a lot of people have wrong ideas about my country and my religion because they only see my country on television. The news sometimes doesn't say the truth. I try to understand them because sometimes I make this mistake too. Sometimes people ask me a lot of questions such as, "Do you cover your head in your country? Can you wear a bikini? How many wives does your father have?" I tell them, "You have the wrong information about my country," and I explain. Many people don't know the truth about other countries. We should politely tell other people about our countries.

Drinking and Driving: a Deadly Combo

Altino Gomes, Brazil

Tim Keane's High Intermediate Writing

Big cities, hard work and traffic jams are getting worse every day. Why not drink a beer and some snacks with co-workers and friends after a tough workday in the office?

We Brazilians who live in big cities, like São Paulo or Rio de Janeiro, call this little event "happy hour;" yes, an American phrase. At the same rate that traffic jams have gotten worse, happy hours have become more popular among people that work in offices.

The results are predictable: car collisions, injured people, death and some fights. Unfortunately, the public transportation in general isn't well developed. The subways are nice and clean, but the coverage of business and residential areas is poor when you think about the commuters' needs. Many people that drink with friends during happy hours need to drive home after the party, and you have to cross your fingers to be out of the way of drunk drivers.

Recently, the federal law against drunk drivers was changed, and the allowed percentage of alcohol per oz. of blood has been decreased a lot. Nowadays, if you drink more than a half glass of draft beer, you can be considered legally drunk, and the penalties are very severe. The authorities are very concerned about this, and the police officers are always alert with the new breath meters bought especially to enforce the law.

Some behaviors are changing. The habit where one person in a group chooses not to drink and then drives others safely home is just starting. Will this good practice last? Is it feasible all the time? Keep in mind that drinking and driving often means killing and dying.

Our Family's Eating Habits

Syungmok (Justin) Lee, Korea

Tim Keane's High Intermediate Writing

When I was an elementary student, I lived with my grandmother, my parents and my brother. It was hard eating together for breakfast and lunch because my parents went to work and my brother went to school early in the morning. We could eat together only at dinner. Occasionally, if my parents had a party, I ate dinner with my grandmother and my brother.

After my grandmother died, our lifestyle changed. We often ate out for dinner, because it was cheaper and more delicious than having dinner at home. Cheap means we didn't need to spend money for washing dishes and buying food for the house. Actually, my mother is lazy and her cooking is bad. Generally, Korean people don't like eating out. But I loved it, because I could taste many kinds of food: Japanese, Italian, etc.

In Korean tradition, eating out is not good. As in other countries, it is traditional to eat at home together. Nowadays, however, society is growing, and the families are more and more separated. The "together culture" is disappearing because people are busy with their work and becoming selfish. When I had free time, I always tried to eat dinner with my family. I wanted to talk about my life and my parents' lives. I think everybody needs to meet and talk with his family at least two days a week. If a time machine is ever invented, I want to go back to the "together culture".

Celebrating Christmas in My Neighborhood

Danny Alexis Pabon, Colombia

Tim Keane's High Intermediate Writing

Christmas is a very special celebration around the world. It is a special time for meeting with the entire family and with neighbors too, especially in Colombia.

In some countries, like the United States, the celebration on Christmas day is only for the families and relatives, but in Colombia we have two parts of the celebration. All the students have vacation in December. For that reason, many people at the beginning of this month travel to different places. Before December 7th, all the neighbors work together doing different things to fill

the streets and sidewalks with Christmas decorations; for example snowmen, angels or Christmas trees. But the most special decoration is the representation of the Nativity of Jesus. In the days leading up to Christmas, the families spend time together and eat together.

In my neighborhood, the celebration starts on Christmas Eve. All the families pray together before the Nativity and pray to the Child Jesus to get a new life and happiness. At midnight, all families go to their houses and have a special dinner and exchange gifts. Afterwards, they go out and wish the other families Merry Christmas and start a party that lasts until sunset on Christmas Day.

This is a really special time to spend with the family and the neighbors, to see beautiful decorations in the streets and on the sidewalks of the neighborhoods. It's a special time to show love toward one another and to feel the happiness that is produced by the birth of Jesus in our hearts and in our neighborhoods.

The American Election

Bagayoko Aissata, The Republic of Mali
Tim Keane's High Intermediate Writing

The United States is one of the most important countries in the world, and the 2008 election confirmed that importance because people around the world waited for the results with great interest. This focus on the American election was due to several reasons.

First of all, there is the downturn in the U.S economy. This problem doesn't affect the United States only, but the rest of the world as well. If the American economy stays the way it is now, it is going to be particularly hard for poor countries that need help. When the American economy shivers, the rest of the world's economies get sick and die.

Secondly, we have war. The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have made people around the world sad and angry about the United States. The anger is a bad thing for this country's reputation and for the U.S. population. Nobody knows why the U.S decided to start the Iraq war, but everybody knows the consequences now. The United States has lost a lot of money and people every day.

To sum up, this election was not only a revolution in the U.S because of the first African American elected, but it was also a protest by the American people tired of the bad economy and eager to stop the Iraq war.

Education Problems in Korea

Dong Jun Kim, Korea
Marisol Garcia's Low Advanced Writing

People say that almost all Asians are smart and well educated. I also agree with this statement, and believe that Koreans are intelligent, too. However, I think that almost all Korean students have no dreams even though they are not children. This is the reason why I think there are big problems in the education system in Korea.

First of all, schools such as elementary school, middle school, and high school don't teach their students how to find out what they want to do for themselves. Every subject in school is organized for entering a college, so students don't have to think about their future dreams, only their exam for entering college. They also have no time to think about what they want. For example, in my case, I never had a class whose subject was how to discover one's dream, and I was forced to study for the college entrance exam. It made us feel that those people who can't

enter a college are losers, because they failed to get into a college—that entering a college is the most important thing for students in Korea.

Secondary, companies are going to employ someone judge the candidates' academic career as the most important quality in their adoption test. For instance, applicants for the biggest ten companies in Korea are required to graduate from famous universities and get good scores on the TOEIC even if they never use English at work. I strongly believe that companies also know that applicants for their companies study only logical studies. They do not have to study something that isn't related to the entrance exam for a university, but they have to study English, Mathematics, and other things that can't help them execute business work. Students and companies think that graduating from a famous college guarantees their careers and futures. The education system creates these phenomena in Korea.

To summarize, personal happiness is accomplishing one's dream. Education should be a tool, not an object to attain one's dream. In Korea, many students think that an advanced academic career is their dream. I believe the education system, which never teaches students what a dream is and how to find it, causes these problems. To solve this problem, we can adopt curricula to find out their dreams. Also, companies have to employ various types of students, not only students who graduated from a good college.

Now, I Need Time to Reflect

Kyoung-mi Moon

Marisol Garcia's Low Advanced Writing

About two years ago, one girl, whose father was selected by TIME magazine out of twenty people who have influence in the world, committed suicide. Her estate was worth about \$250 million; she was so beautiful and popular with many people. When I heard the news, it shocked me. Now, Korea has a suicide epidemic and we can see the effects of it. For example, there is usually news about famous people committing suicide such as actors and sports stars. There are also glass walls to prevent people from committing suicide in the metro station because many people have jumped on the tracks to commit suicide when the train was coming. What makes people commit suicide through such terrible ways?

Korea is small country. After the Korean War, we were too poor (during that time we received help from African countries like Ethiopia). We had to recover our growth in only a few decades where other countries had several centuries, so we had to be smart and work hard for our country. I think that until about twenty years ago, our lives were a "hand to mouth" type of living, but people can't live on only bread. So now, I think we have emptiness in our minds and we are thirsty for understanding ourselves; we need to have warm hearts. In other words, the girl looked like she had everything, like a princess, but because she felt loneliness, she chose to commit suicide.

In my opinion, we should create a warm-hearted environment. I think that we don't know how to resolve the cause of our depression, which is failure. Our lives have been so busy that our society has not been concerned about depression or failure. For example, if somebody takes psychological therapy, many people think he/she has a serious problem. It is seen as shameful, so many people are afraid of taking psychological therapy. We should learn that we can catch a "psychological flu." So when we catch this "psychological flu," receiving psychological therapy is normal. First, we should change our minds and think about others. If we can create a more warm-hearted environment, then Korea will be a more beautiful country.

Human Rights

Nalanda Roy, India
Doctoral Candidate, Division of Global Affairs
Asadeh Nia-Schoenstein's Graduate ESL Seminar

“Human rights” refers to the basic rights and freedoms granted to every individual. Obviously, “human rights” also means sustaining human life, dignity, as well as equality before the law. The term demands respect for every individual as well. And when each of these doesn't exist in a particular situation, a case of human rights violation can be made. For example, recently, a famous American dancer was forced to perform dance steps twice in a major airport in Israel. Abdur-Rahim Jackson was an African American who was singled out by Israel's renowned airport security simply for having a Muslim name. Surprisingly at one point, one of the officers even suggested him to change his name. (CBS News, Sep 10, 2008) What does this signify? The Universal Declaration of Human Rights states, “*All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.*” Is it true in this regard? I think, this person is quite well off to enjoy his life, liberty, wealth, and happiness. But this means nothing in reality when he was treated in such an unjust as well as inhumane manner. Or if we take the example of countries like Bosnia, Somalia, Rwanda; what do we see? In these countries we find severe violation of human rights, genocide, killings etc. How can such cruel acts be justified today when we are thriving on internet technology and telecommunications? Unfortunately, what all humans still need to discover is our consciousness to be more ‘humane,’ and a specific understanding of not just having the right to live, but “let others live” as well.

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

Program in American Language Studies (PALS)
Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey
152 Conklin Hall, 175 University Avenue, Newark, NJ 07102-1814

Phone: 973-353-5013 Fax: 973-353-1438
Email: pals@andromeda.rutgers.edu Web: <http://pals.newark.rutgers.edu>
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