

You Need to Know the Language

Writings by Adult Students Learning English



Collected by Students and Tutors of
Literacy DuPage

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About Literacy DuPage

Literacy DuPage (LDP) provides customized English language tutoring to adults with low-level literacy skills who have difficulty accessing classroom instruction due to transportation obstacles, work schedules, or lack of childcare. Our goal is to help adult learners function independently in their roles as worker, community resident, and family member.

Our trained, volunteer tutors provide learner-centered English language instruction in one-on-one or small group settings at mutually convenient times and locations for both tutors and students. Tutors guide learners toward the achievement of personal goals by using real-life materials – such as newspapers, maps, or job applications – appropriate to everyday situations. We serve about 450 adult DuPage County residents a year with over 20,000 volunteer hours provided by 300 tutors.

Literacy DuPage (formerly Literacy Volunteers of DuPage) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization founded in 1972 and accredited by ProLiteracy America.

Our Mission

Literacy DuPage provides accessible and customized tutoring in reading, writing, speaking, and understanding English to help adults function independently.

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Introduction

Literacy DuPage tutors work with English language learners scattered throughout DuPage County. Because our students and tutors generally work one-on-one, they seldom experience the sense of community that can arise from working toward a common goal with a common vision.

This collection of writing is a way to create that sense of community for both our students and tutors. The students can read each other's stories and empathize with their common goals, needs, challenges, and successes. Our tutors can gain a greater understanding of the struggles and progress of other students as well as having a resource they can read and discuss with their own students.

As an organization, Literacy DuPage sees all of the ways that our mission creates communities: the community of tutors working towards the common goal of helping our neighbors read, write, speak, and understand English better, as well as the community of English language learners from all over the world striving to function independently in their roles as worker, community resident, and family member.

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My Journey

My Journey

My name is Victor. I was born in Mexico in the state of Guerrero. I have two sisters and one brother. I was 18 years old when I made the decision to come to this country.

I had so many dreams, but I never imagined what a journey it would be. When my journey started, I had no job and didn't know how to speak English very well. It was hard, very hard.

I soon realized that I had to do something if I wanted to be successful. I made a decision to do everything that I could in order to succeed. I decided to find a job in the day time so I could go to night school and take ESL classes. Now I have my own house and company. I work for myself and I work for Wyndemere part time.

You need to know the language of this country to be successful in life. Remember, everything is hard, very hard. You need to be focused on your goals.

Victor Herrera
Country of Origin: Mexico

All About Me

My name is Gabriela. My family is in Mexico. Mexico is beautiful. It is big. I have two brothers, seven sisters, a mother, father, and cousins. I came from the state of Oaxaca but now I live in West Chicago. I came to the U.S. in 2007.

Gabriela Santiago
Country of Origin: Mexico

A New Life

My name is Evelia. I was born in Mexico. I spent 20 years there, but I dreamed of a better life. I came to Chicago, Illinois to make that dream come true. My father and my mother still live in Mexico. We talk on the phone. When I came, I was homesick, nervous, and a little excited. I had no job and no friends.

Life in the U.S. was hard for me. I lived with my aunt. I missed my family.

There was one problem—I needed to learn English. English is a difficult language and many times I was too tired to study. Now I am married. I have a daughter. I try my best to learn. I had one teacher, Jo Fowler, who is very kind to me. She showed me many things. My dream is to get a job, to understand everything, and to talk better. Then my daughter will be happy with my English, but she has never said, “You talk weird.” If I can have one good conversation and not feel nervous, I will be happy with myself.



Evelia Barajas
Country of Origin: Mexico

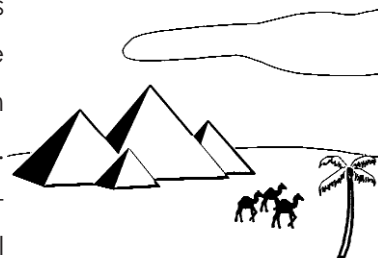
My Wish

My name is Arsela Habib. I'm from Egypt. My mom and dad live in Egypt. I would like to bring them from Egypt to the U.S.A.

Arsela Habib
Country of Origin: Egypt

A Lucky Man

I am Harry Salib. I was born in Egypt but I am a lucky man because I was given the chance to come to the U.S.A. through the lottery. In Egypt we have the Nile River, pyramids, and sphinxes. Old Egypt is a civilization from ancient times between the Red and Mediterranean Seas and the Sinai. Before I came here, I heard that the U.S.A. was a beautiful and free country. When I was young and after I was married and had two children, I decided to apply for the lottery to come to the U.S.A. As I said earlier, I am a lucky man because coming here is a dream for anyone. Before I came here I loved Egypt with all my heart because it is a beautiful country, as is the U.S.A., except for the traffic and crowding. Except for that, everything else is good. After I came here, everything became real, not a dream. Everything here is organized and clean, especially the traffic and streets. I am also very happy for my children because they have a new life and a new country. There is a new future for me and my family. Now I hope our entire family can improve ourselves.



Harry Salib

Country of Origin: Egypt

My American Friend

I have only one American friend. Her name is Amy. We have been friends for ten years. I met her in Japan. She graduated from an American university. Then she came to Japan to teach English to junior high school students. She was an assistant English teacher in my hometown. My younger brother introduced her to me.

She came to Japan from the United States by herself and felt very lonely at first. We had a party for her birthday. She was very glad. We introduced her to our parents, held a party, and barbecued. My parents liked her so much that she came to our house once or twice a week.

We had a great relationship. She and I talked about Japan and America many times. She didn't like Japanese conservative attitudes. She didn't like Japanese men because they think a man is better than a woman. She lived in Japan for two years and then went back to the United States. She had a great job in New York. Several years later she met a Japanese man in the State of Michigan and got married.

Perveen Syed

Country of Origin: Pakistan

My Home

We lived for 13 years in a basement apartment at 3116 West Douglas Blvd. It was a busy, brick street. There was no stop light or stop sign on the street. Because we lived in an apartment, we couldn't add anything. The landlord would paint it for us.

We had an old-fashioned ice box. The ice would go on the top and the refrigerator was on the bottom. We had to go to a place to buy the ice. We had to take a blanket and cover it up, tie it with a rope, and carry it on a red wagon. It was a brick of ice. It was a long way back to the house. We would do this even in the winter; we didn't have a choice.

Beverly Vetter

Country of Origin: U.S.A.



My Family

My Family

I like my family and I miss them. I have two brothers and three sisters. My mom is a housekeeper and my dad is retired. One of my sisters works for an oil company and one is a teacher. My third sister is a student, and she lives at home. I have two younger brothers. One brother is married, and the other brother is still living at home. He isn't married yet. I am ten years older than him.

I have a good family. They are very kind, and I miss them so much. Every day they call me, and I talk with them. I'm going to my country, Iran, and visit them this summer.

Nahid Goodarzi
Country of Origin: Iran

My Family

I am Oliva. I am married to Heribesto. I live in Westmont, Illinois. I have three children. Their names are Pascual, Tony, and Yadira.

Pascual is nine years old. Tony is five years old, and Yadira is five months old. Pascual likes to play outside during summer vacation from school. Tony likes school. He takes the bus. I go on the bus two days a month. I am a monitor. Tony likes for me to be the monitor. My husband likes to play soccer. He plays in the summer in the park.



I have a teacher and her name is Nancy. I talk English with her. I think I'm doing well. Nancy and I practice English one day a week. Nancy drives her car to my house. Tony likes to listen to our English.

I like to cook. I like to make enchiladas, tacos, chicken, steak, and soup. My family thinks that I'm a good cook. Heribesto cooks Mexican eggs on Saturday and Sunday. Mexican eggs are eggs, tomatoes, onions, chile peppers, and salt. He fixes tostillas and juice.

Oliva Garduno

Country of Origin: Mexico

My Husband

My husband's name is Reza. He is a little short but he is strong. He is a good man and kind. He works in a company called N. Y. Kline. He does good work there, and his manager likes him because he does everything carefully. He is a temporary worker for this company.

Reza likes me, and on weekdays he and I go out to shop and to a restaurant for food. He is very kind, and the people like him. He has lots of friends. He is a simple man and very clean. Everyday he takes a shower and twice a week he shaves. He likes movies so much that when he comes home he watches TV until late. Reza also likes Iranian food.

Mahbobeh Goodarzi

Country of Origin: Iran

Namesake

I was named after my great grandmother. Her name was Bella, and they named me Bayla, which is my Hebrew name. The English name is Beverly. I never met my great grandmother. I saw pictures of her. She was a pretty lady. My children were named after relatives. Charles was named after my father Charles. Al was named after my uncle Abe. Sari was named after my Bubbe, Sarah.

Beverly Vetter

Country of Origin: U.S.A.

Sadness

Yesterday was February 14, a day of love. And I remember my sister. My sister lives in Mexico. She has three kids. Last December her son died. His name was Eleazor. Now my sister is very sad. I said to my sister, "I am sorry and I am sad too." I love my sister.

Anonymous

Country of Origin: Mexico

Parents' Day

Last week was Wednesday, February 20. The teacher asked her students to raise their hands if they would like to help read the Mass on Parents' Day. Angie raised her hand. She would like to read a little story.

She likes to read and wants to improve.



My husband and I were very happy at Parents' Day. Angie really concentrated on her part. She read in front of the whole school and was not nervous. The teacher thanked Angie for working hard to learn her part of the Mass. This made Angie very, very happy. My husband was proud of Angie's intelligence at school. I thanked Angie for doing "super" homework.

Sandra Ovalle

Country of Origin: Mexico



My Life Today

About My Life

My name is Sue Guan. My family has three people. I have a son; his name is Anson Liu. He is a student. My husband is Guo Ling Liu; he is a worker. We live in Westmont. I work for a Chinese daily newspaper in customer service. I watch TV news in the morning every day. I like to watch Channel 7 and Dancing with the Stars. I like studying English and I like exercising in the morning. I have a good day.

Sue Guan

Country of Origin: China

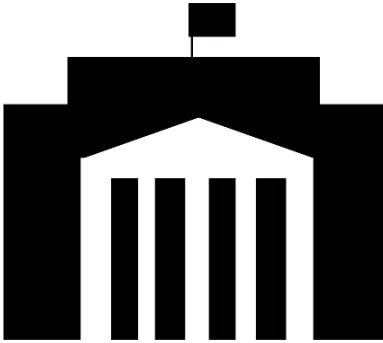
My Routine

I get up in the morning at 5:30 a.m. and make breakfast for my husband. Next, I take a shower. Then I wake up my daughters and have breakfast. I drive my children to school. Then I give my baby a bath. Next I watch cartoons in English. Then I make lunch for my children. When it is time, I pick up my daughter from school. After her homework, I read a book to the children. At 2:40 p.m. I pick up my other daughter. Then I make dinner and we eat dinner at 6:00 p.m.

Monica

Country of Origin: Mexico

A Need



My name is Reyna, and I have been in the United States for 10 years. For the first five years I worked, but now I am married and I have two girls. I need to speak English because my daughter needs help with her homework. I also need to speak English with the doctor, in the store, in the bank, with my neighbor, and in the post office. Here everybody speaks English, and I need to speak English too. My husband speaks English but he's at work every day and can't help me. My daughter speaks English and she helps me.

Reyna Gomez

Country of Origin: Mexico

Many Languages

I am from Slovakia. At school in Slovakia we learned Russian besides Slovakian. I also learned to speak Czech. Seven years ago I moved to America with my family. I worked as a construction worker. At work I learned to speak Polish. Now I work with more American clients. It is easier for me to understand English because I speak it more often.

I am thankful for the opportunity to study English with Literacy Volunteers. I am not shy anymore and every day I learn more and more. Reading newspapers, watching TV, and talking with people is helping me make progress in my English.

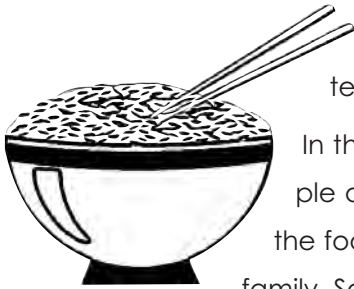
Tomas Kastan

Country of Origin: Slovakia

Home Away from Home

I'm a Chinese living in the United States. Let me compare the two countries.

I like Chinese food. It's delicious! There are 56 ethnic groups in China. Each group has formed its own traditions and customs. There are also different holidays in China. I like that. In China I have a lot of friends and a big family. I miss them. Most people travel by bike in the city. It's very convenient and it saves energy. But cities in China are very crowded and noisy. Many people like to smoke and leave litter. Pollution is also a big problem in China. In school teachers are very strict.



In the U.S. you can enjoy fresh air and quiet and clean environments. The people are law-abiding. Service is better than China. I enjoy the freedom here. But the food is boring for me. The language is hard for me. And, it's far away from my family. So sometimes I feel homesick.

Lan Sun

Country of Origin: China

About Me

I came to the U.S.A. to join my wife and stepdaughter. We live together in Glendale Heights. I have two sons: one is 18+ and the other is 16+. The eighteen-year old is studying for his bachelor's degree and my other son is in high school. Both of them are in India with their mother. I speak Telugu, which is the mother tongue. My stepdaughter, who is 27 years old and came here at the age of 4 months, speaks Telugu fluently. So practicing speaking English with the family is somewhat of a difficulty.

Nageswara Rae Linga

Country of Origin: India

Shopping

Today is Tuesday. I took money from my son. I like shopping at malls. I took bus number 834 to go to the mall. I needed new clothes for myself. I had \$200 in cash, and I had a credit card for Macy's. I needed a suit, a blouse, and shoes. With my credit card I bought a suit that is blue for \$200. The tax was \$10 and the total after taxes was \$210. Then I went to another shop. I bought shoes. They are black and the blouse is white. I paid \$50 cash for the two things. I took the bus and came home. I am happy today and the weather is beautiful.

Fawkiá Estafanous
Country of Origin: Egypt

A Great Artist

My name is Ruben Vega and I have something interesting to say. A long time ago when I was a teenager, I visited my cousin in Toluca, Mexico. He was reading a book. The book was about Diego Rivera, and I read the book too. Diego Rivera was an artist, and he did many murals in Mexico and the U.S.A. One mural is in Detroit.

I'm an artist too. I did two murals. One is in the Gary School in West Chicago. Diego Rivera was a great artist. I try to follow Diego Rivera.



Ruben Vega
Country of Origin: Mexico

I Like America

I like America. Why? In America everything is methodical—the people, streets, parks, and stores. The different cultures are interesting. For example, in America celebrating Thanksgiving is my favorite. Why? In the Woodridge community there are good Samaritans who gave my family and other families a free dinner. At Christmas they also gave gifts to my daughter—one toy, boots, and a jacket.

So thanks to people with good hearts and thanks for helping. God bless America. I won't forget my country but I LOVE THE U.S.A.

Leívy Rodríguez
Country of Origin: Mexico

English Lessons

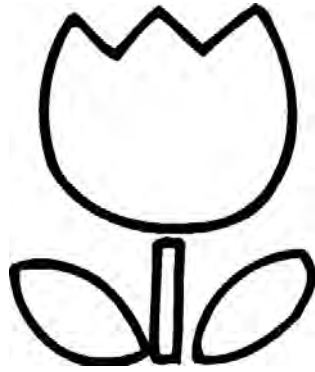
When I came here last year, I was afraid to meet people and to go to my kids' school. I was scared to speak English. After I started my English lessons with Ms. Trudy, I felt I'm living in the United States.

At the beginning of the lessons, it didn't go smoothly. I knew Ms. Trudy tried very hard to help me by finding the best way for me to learn English. She used many different kinds of methods. For example, she gave me the New Corner's Almanac to read for homework at the beginning of the month. She recorded a tape of our conversation and corrected my homework. We even sent a few e-mails to each other every week. I always thought that I was taking advantage of Ms. Trudy's generous assistance. When I felt too lazy to do the homework, I felt sorry for Ms. Trudy. Then I would push myself to finish all the homework and do it as well as I could.

Now I realize how lucky I am. Because of Ms. Trudy, I speak to my neighbor every day, and I am room parent for my second-grade daughter this year. The only thing I can do is say "thank you" to Ms. Trudy and the Literacy Center. Also, I will continue my study of English.

Kelly

Country of Origin: Taiwan



My Special Moments

My Favorite Teacher Remembered

Her name is Fakhria Jon. She taught first through third grade, and then she repeated that cycle. She was beloved by everyone. When she started to teach, all the students were quiet until the lesson was finished. She was a good storyteller. She was very polite and friendly with everyone. Her golden hair, blue eyes, and tall height made her beautiful. Her smiling face, which greeted each student, was very nice. All the students were surprised at how much I loved her, and I still love her but I don't know where she is now.

On the 21st day of March, the first day of our New Year, she prepared the table with beautiful, white flowers in a white vase. She cooked chicken with yellow rice that she flavored with cinnamon. Another food was roasted beef with spinach and a potato pie. The drink was tomato juice with black pepper, garlic, and minced dill; this drink was everyone's favorite. At the end of the party she took a picture. This picture is still with me. Whenever I see this picture, it reminds me of my teacher and my classmates. I hope she will be successful with her family forever.

Naila

Country of Origin: Afghanistan

A Memorable Experience

I had an experience last year because I applied to become a citizen. For me, it's important. I am interested in learning more English. I need it in my work. I want to go some day to Washington, D.C. I want to visit museums and the cemetery.

Antonia Zavala

Country of Origin: Mexico

A Psychic Magic Show

When I worked at the Donetsk Institute of Physics in the Ukraine, I saw different shows in our Institute. Once I saw a psychic magician show. A notebook was made available to the audience, who were asked to write their names. In this notebook people could choose to write their name or not write. There were ten names of people who agreed. Then an audience member (guide) led the blindfolded magician by the hand. The guide knew everybody in the audience who wrote their names in the notebook. The guide silently read a person's name. The magician stopped near the person whose name the guide had read to himself. Since the guide was my coworker, I didn't suspect that he acted in collusion with the magician. So far, I do not understand this trick by the psychic magician.

Volodymyr Sukhoy

Country of Origin: Ukraine

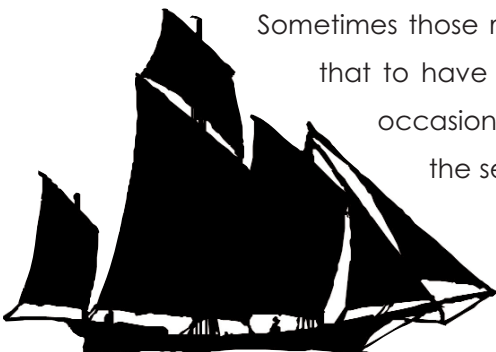
Superstitions

A multitude of different superstitions existed and exist now in the world.

In ancient times the world was full of unexplained phenomena, darkness and fear. To most people superstitions were part of the relationships between gods and men. This is why so many rituals, myths, and ceremonies were born.

Sometimes those rituals were very dangerous for human lives. A popular belief was that to have a woman on board would bring bad luck to a ship. There were occasions when panicked men began to throw their female passengers into the sea when there was a terrible storm and the ship might submerge.

The shipbuilders and the sailors in the Near East tied the most beautiful, young slave girl they could find under the keel of the ship when a new vessel was put into the water. Her blood would



inspire life into the ship, and her body would serve as a sacrifice to the harsh naval gods.

Shipbuilders also decorated the front of their ships with figures of beautiful goddesses, ferries, and graceful native girls. These figures were almost always bare breasted. The sailors believed that a woman's beauty would pacify the stormy seas and make them calm.

Now we don't have dangerous superstitions (maybe I just don't know of any), but every family has superstitions. For example, often people wear amulets and lucky charms to prevent the "evil eye." Marriages are planned for certain days and certain months. Other examples are a black cat walking in front of you is bad luck, knocking on wood is good luck, spilling salt is bad luck, etc.

And what about you? Do you have your own superstitions?

Tanya Babkina
Country of Origin: Kazakhstan

Birth of a Baby

These days I am mostly spending my time taking care of my new baby, Lucy. She was born on January 8, 2008 and is now seven weeks old. I had an easy delivery. She was a healthy girl, seven pounds.

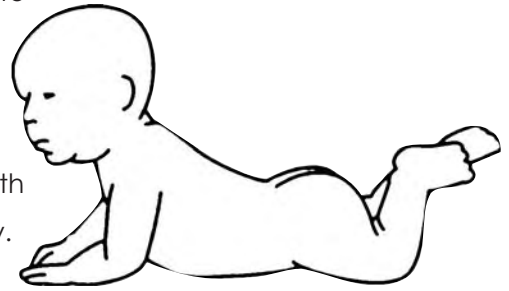
I gave birth to Lucy four days before my due date. I was so busy during the days before I gave birth. I went to the doctor's office for a check-up and went shopping at Costco. When I met my friend in Costco I said, "I may deliver my baby today or tomorrow."

After I came back home, I started doing many chores. I felt so tired then, so I took a nap. When I woke up to get dinner ready, I felt a little contraction, but I didn't know if it was a true labor contraction. After a while, I began to measure time between contractions, and then I was aware that this was true labor because the contractions were at intervals of 30 minutes. I called my husband who was coming home after work, and he was more anxious than me. I calmly cooked a seaweed soup that I have to eat after delivery and cleaned up the house.

When the intervals of contractions were five minutes apart, my husband and I left for the hospital where we had already gone for a tour of inspection. But first we had to take Andie to my friend's house before going to the hospital. My friend hoped I would have an easy delivery.

As soon as I arrived at the hospital, I felt a bad contraction and we went immediately to the delivery room. The nurse told me my cervix was already dilated 5 cm. and it was a good time to get an epidural. I had to wait for the epidural doctor for a pretty long time because that doctor was giving them to other people. Because my cervix had already dilated more, as soon as I got the epidural, I had to push. After 30 minutes I pushed and gave birth to a baby girl, Lucy. She was so cute and healthy. I was discharged from the hospital after I stayed two nights, and now I am almost recovered.

I feel happy when I look after my new baby though it is hard to care for a baby. I wondered what she looked like during the pregnancy period. Her eyes are similar to those of my husband, and her nose and mouth are similar to mine. Andrea, my first daughter, loves Lucy. She always looks at her baby sister with a smile. Andrea is looking forward to playing with her sister, Lucy. I am mixing breast feeding and bottle feeding now, but I intend



to give only formula in the future. I am so happy but sometimes I feel tired because of lack of sleep. Of course, my husband helps me care for the baby. I told myself, "Let's enjoy this time."

Asian women think postpartum care is so important. Many old people say that if you make light of postpartum, you will suffer from constant illness. So for one or two months Korean mothers usually help their daughters who gave birth to a baby until they get back to normal. And many women who deliver a baby also take herbs to recover their strength. Of course, I also took Korean herbs that my mom sent. In my case, my mother-in-law helped me get back to normal because my mother is not in good health. Thanks to my mother-in-law's assistance, I got back to normal and I am grateful to her.

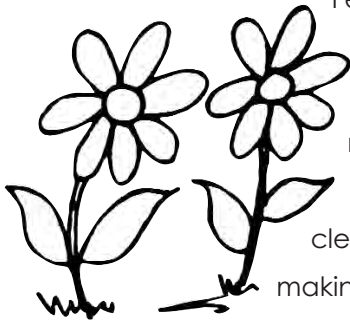
I gained about 32 pounds during my pregnancy period. As soon as I gave birth to my baby girl, I lost about 10 pounds, but much weight that needs to be reduced still remains. My abdominal fat gained during pregnancy is serious. I feel so happy whenever I see my baby even though I had a hard night and as yet none of my former blue jeans fit me.

"Lucy, grow up in good health, please."

Anonymous
Country of Origin: Korea

Spring

In the middle of March, when I see the ground covered with little bits of soft, white snow, I feel like spring will be right around the corner. Spring is one of my favorite seasons. I love the smell of green, moist grass.



I enjoy hearing a few birds singing and watching them playing around my front and back yards. I plant flowers in my garden; it is my favorite hobby. After a long, gray and frigid winter, spring means a new life with a new opportunity for me. I feel full of energy and happy when it is a warm and bright, sunny day. I can't stop sitting on my patio and looking up at the beautiful, blue, clear sky. Spring is the beginning of four seasons with the fresh and warm air making me realize how wonderful my life is.

Kelly

Country of Origin: Taiwan

Chinese New Year

All Chinese people have two New Years. January 1 is the New Year in the Western calendar. Most Chinese people do not celebrate this holiday. Chinese New Year is on the first day of the first lunar month in the lunar calendar. Most Chinese celebrate on this holiday. Whenever Chinese people think of New Year, they're happy and excited to celebrate because everyone has a long vacation to enjoy and celebrate this holiday. In addition, the government and some Chinese companies give Chinese employees a money "reward" on this holiday.

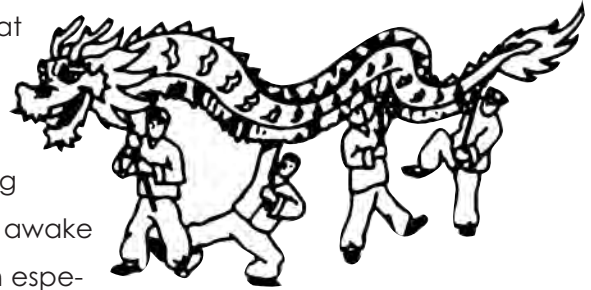
The story of Chinese New Year is about a wild monster named "Year" who lives in the mountain. When winter is coming, the monster is hungry so he goes down to the village to eat chicks, cows, sheep, even people. People try to kill this monster but they fail. Finally, people find out that this monster is afraid of fire-light, red colored things, and loud voices. When the monster comes again, people burn things to make fire and bang on pots and drums. Every family hangs up red scrolls and gatepost couplets outside their door. Because of the loud voices, fire, and red couplets, the monster is frightened and goes away and doesn't come again. On the lunar calendar's New Year's Eve, it is considered a good time for the family to get together and burn a fire until midnight. When the next day comes, people celebrate with fireworks, playing drums and doing the lion's and dragon's dances. People say "Congratulations, " "Happy New Year" to each other, which means they are thankful that the last year was a peaceful one.

According to Chinese tradition, every year on New Year's Eve, everybody has to go home to see his or her parents and eat a "happy family" dinner together. The happy family dinner includes four foods and one soup. There are seafood, fish, meat, and chicken mixed with vegetables. According to Chinese tra-

dition, you must only cook a whole fish, not pieces. Also, people must not eat the fish head or cut the tail to ensure that their yearly income will be increased and be abundant in the New Year.

After dinner every family enjoys watching TV, playing cards or chess together. But all the kids need to keep awake until midnight so their parents will live long lives. Children especially like New Year because after they wish their family and relatives “a

happy New Year,” they get “lucky money” from adults. Children use this “lucky money” to buy new toys, books, video games, new clothes, or shoes. Sometimes they go to a coffee shop, disco, theater, and night market to enjoy their happy time until midnight. Many businessmen open their stores at night to get money from the young people. Another Chinese tradition, once the children are grown and working and earning money themselves, is to give “lucky money” to their parents hoping they will have a happy and long life.



The annual firecrackers and fireworks festival in Taiwan occurs on the first day of the first lunar month. When the time is 12 a.m. in the morning on January 1, everybody celebrates with fireworks. People explode a string of small firecrackers in the streets, shops, stores, and houses. In addition, there are many traditional dances, lion's and dragon's dances, in a park, presidential esplanade, or public square to celebrate the New Year. Some people worship the Buddha at a temple because they wish that their new year will be abundant, rich, and peaceful. Taiwan is a small island but over 90% Taiwanese believe in Buddhism, so you can see many people in the street wearing masks, playing drums, and dressed up to play the role of different Gods. Their purpose in doing this is to make the monster named “Year” escape so the coming New Year will be peaceful. It is a religious custom but the New Year is very important. We have many activities to celebrate it.

Finally, Chinese New Year is a very popular holiday for Chinese people. When it is coming, everybody is planning to travel all over the world. After New Year's Eve, many families travel to go shopping in Hong Kong or to see the snow and enjoy the hot springs in Japan and Korea. These are holidays when all Chinese people enjoy their New Year's vacation. Everybody has a happy New Year. So do I.

Wen-Wen Huang
Country of Origin: China

I Miss Mexico

In my country I miss my beautiful sister, my family and my traditions. For example, November 2 is the Day of the Dead. On this day we put up an altar for my Granny who went to the sky. On the altar we put special flowers, Granny's favorite food and beverage, candles, a skull made of sugar with her name on it and much more.

This day is not melancholy for me. Why? We only remember the good times.

I love my sister. I miss you Granny Natalya.

Leivy Rodríguez

Country of Origin: Mexico

Chinese Zodiac

Do you know about the Chinese Zodiac? At one Chinese restaurant they have a placemat that tells you: "Many Chinese believe that the year of a person's birth is the primary factor in determining that person's personality traits, physical and mental attributes and degree of success and happiness throughout his lifetime." Each year is like an animal: rat, ox, tiger, rabbit, dragon, snake, horse, sheep, monkey, cock, dog or boar.

I'm a dragon. I was born in 1964. Zodiac said the dragon's life is "complex." The dragon is most compatible with the rat. That's true! I married Kui; he is a rat. He is very "ambitious and honest." We're so happy! We have two daughters: Catherine and Emily. Catherine was born in 1994, the year of the dog. She is very loyal and honest. Emily was born in 1999; she is a rabbit. She wants to be a teacher and she is learning a lot of things: ice skating, gymnastics, Chinese dancing. Zodiac said that the rabbit is "talented and articulate." It is true!

Do you know your Zodiac? See if you can find it. If you can't get a Zodiac calendar, go to a Chinese restaurant.

Lan Sun

Country of Origin: China



My Travels

Vacations

My husband and I have lived in America for four and a half years. I clean houses and my husband is a truck driver. He works hard. He comes home on weekends. I work all day. When I am not working, I like to watch TV, shop, cook, and read magazines. My husband and I like to go on vacations. Every winter we go skiing. We have been to Colorado, Wyoming, and Canada. Last summer we were in Niagara Falls, Toronto, and Utah. Sometimes we go to the lake in Indiana.

My mother and sister live in Lithuania. My husband has a mother, father, sister, and brother. They live in Lithuania. My husband has a cousin and aunt who live in America. On Easter we went to their house. In the morning we went to church and had dinner at two o'clock. My husband's cousin cooked ham, potatoes, carrot salad, cabbage salad, stuffed eggs, and cake. I cooked herring, Lithuanian salad, fish, and painted eggs. It was a very nice, happy Easter.

Jurate Jarasuniene
Country of Origin: Lithuania

Lithuanian Salad

4 carrots

3 potatoes

1 cup peas

4 hard cooked eggs

3 sweet pickles

4 tablespoons of mayonnaise

Cook carrots, potatoes, and eggs and cut into small pieces. Mix and add mayonnaise, salt, and pepper.

Herring with Vegetables

1 herring fillet

2 onions

2 carrots

1/3 pound of mushrooms

Cut onions, mushrooms, and carrots into small pieces and stir fry. Cut herring fillet and mix.

Visiting the Hindu Temple

The Hindu temple on Route 59 is a magnificent example of Hindu culture. The work on the wood is beautiful. This temple reminds me of the Catholic churches in Mexico. The style of construction is called Baroque. This style is very elaborate and excessive. When you are inside, your eyes do not know where to look because it is full of details and steals your attention. Everywhere you look you find fantastic forms and beauty.

The Hindu culture is rich in diversity. The intention of this temple is to keep the Hindu culture for the people who live in the U.S.A. Hindu children born in the U.S.A. have the opportunity to know and practice the culture of their parents. For the people who do not know Hinduism, this is a great opportunity to know about this culture.

Visiting this temple was an idea of my tutor, Eileen, who was searching for new ways to help me with speaking English and to give me the chance to see new and different places where I live.

Analía Perez Hernandez
Country of Origin: Mexico

A Special Trip

I am Alfredo. I'm interested in taking a special trip. I would like to visit my home country. I want to visit my family, my park, my market. I want to walk down my street. I would like to visit my first girlfriend, see all my friends, and remember many things. I wish I could visit my Mexico soon.

Alfredo
Country of Origin: Mexico

My Trip

I got one month's vacation to go to Vietnam. I started on January 19 and I came back on February 20. During this time I lived with my son's family in Saigon, and I visited some friends. After that I visited my aunt's family in Go Cong Province and I went to places with beautiful landscapes such as Phan Thiet beach, Long Hai beach, Chain Doe Pagoda on the mountain. I ate a lot of seafood. I felt "fat" after I came back to America.

I remembered many people in America when I went to Vietnam, and I remembered many people in Vietnam when I came back to America. I love my first country, and I love my second country too. I had a wonderful trip.

Anonymous
Country of Origin: Vietnam

Miami Vacation

Last year I went to Miami on my vacation. I like Miami because the weather is so nice. Everything is beautiful. I like to go on the horses to the beaches every day on my vacation. We went on a cruise to see the houses of the famous people like authors, singers, players, and actors.

Faustino Fierro
Country of Origin: Mexico



Appendix

Our initiatives, supported by our community partners, provide the basis needed to help our learners read, write, speak, and understand English. Each generous donation helps makes possible project like this.



2007 Community Partners

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	Naperville United Way	Women's Association – Union Church of Hinsdale



Ladies for Literacy Club

Ladies for Literacy club members sponsor a woman to learn English . . . creating a foundation for self-sufficiency, strong families, and communities.



Letters for Literacy Partners

Letters for Literacy is a fund-raising effort that lets local employers and organizations "buy a letter" and help support adult tutoring instruction designed to improve skills for employability, health and welfare, and overall independence.



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Literacy DuPage provides customized, on-site, practical English classes designed to meet the specific needs of the workforce. Workforce Education consists of customized literacy and basic math computation classes held at a work site and designed to provide effective, job-related communication tools.



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