



Spring 2022

THE PARROT



ISSUE # 160

Your ARC newsletter by and for ESL, multicultural, international students, Californians, and, well, anybody really...

Vickee Moy: Helping Refugee Children



The Parrot: Hi, professor Vickee Moy. It's our pleasure to have you here today with us for the interview. We know that you are a professor at Sacramento City College, one of the colleges in Los Rios District, and the director of Starting Point – an organization to help refugee children. Can you tell us why you chose to become an ESL professor?

Professor Moy: I just really love different cultures. When I was in school in Sac State at the time to study to become a teacher, I decided to focus on teaching English. I love to work

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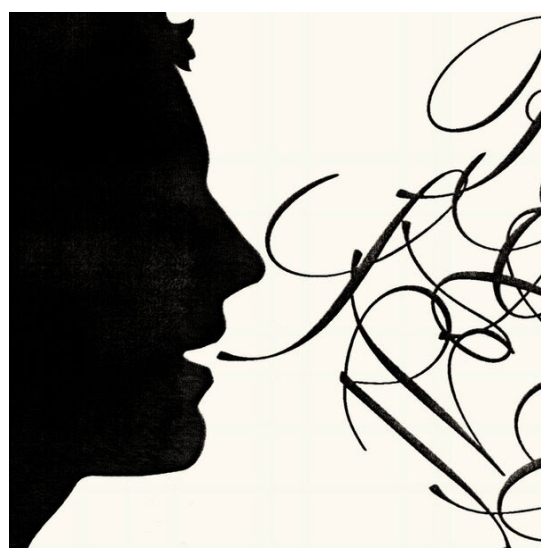
Bird's Eye

p. 31

"Don't be pushed around by the fears in your mind. Be led by the dreams in your heart."

Roy T. Bennett

Why Do We Prize Writing Skills over the Ability to Deliver a Spoken Argument? - by John McWhorter



As time goes by, I am ever more perplexed by why we make students learn to write the classic five-paragraph essay but have so much less interest in developing their spoken argument skills. As much as I love writing, I wonder if there is something arbitrary in the idea that education must focus more on the written than the spoken word. I'm not referring to the mano a mano of debating or the thrilling but colloquial speechmaking of preaching. I'm talking about formal

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Susan Pezone Memorial ESL Scholarship Recipients



My name is Sergei Marichev. I was born and raised in Russia and my native language is Russian. In 2016, my family moved to the USA and we settled in Sacramento. My major is Sociology, this is my eighth semester in the ARC, then I am planning to transfer to the university.

In December, I was notified that I had been awarded the Susan Pezone Memorial ESL Scholarship for Fall 2021. This is very good news and a great honor for me. I am proud to be one of only three ESL students to receive this scholarship.

I personally did not know Professor Pezone and did not have a chance to study in her classes. However, I learned about her from other professors of the ESL department, who spoke of her with warm and kind feelings and sincerely regretted her passing.

I have always loved and continue to love reading books. My favorite authors are Russian classics, such as Alexander Pushkin, Nikolai Gogol, Mikhail Bulgakov, besides, since childhood, I love the books of American writers Mark Twain, O. Henry, and especially Jack London, whose name is quite closely associated with California.

Thanks to the ESL classes, I began to love writing essays in English. If I liked to read before, and books have always been my companions throughout my life, yet I was very reluctant to

express thoughts on paper or on a computer. However, the ESL writing classes helped me understand and love this process. I like to study the materials, highlight the key points there, and paraphrase, quote, and add my own thoughts to create my own essay.

This semester, in Professor Travis's class, we turned to a very interesting topic, this is the topic of the protest movement in the United States and now I have completed a rather large research paper entitled, "Anti-War Protests Against the Vietnam War as a Prime Example of the Civil Rights Movement in the United States." I have always been interested in the Vietnam War. Some of my favorite films are *Good Morning Vietnam* by Barry Levinson and *Forrest Gump* by Robert Zemeckis, but I knew little about the details of this protracted military campaign. Now I have researched a lot of academic sources and made my own opinion about this war and about the anti-war protests of that time. And this process was really interesting and exciting.

Sincerely and from the bottom of my heart, I would like to thank all the professors of the ESL department for the knowledge they give to students for whom English is not their first language. I cannot list all the professors, but I want to mention those whose classes I happened to take during my studies in the ARC or contacted them on other issues. These are Professors Allyson Joye, Sanda Valcu, David Evans, Margaret Travis, Kristine Fertel, Miralynn Malupa, Elizabeth Specker, Thoeung Montgomery, Judy Leatherman, and Patrick Hoggan. Thank you, the knowledge you give us is truly invaluable. Once again, I would like to express my gratitude to all the ESL department staff for giving non-English-speaking students the ability to communicate in a new country.

Sergei Marichev



I start with the name of God and greet to all. I am Mahnaz Faramarzy from Iran. On February 17 on my birthday, I began my 11th year in the United States. I am a citizen now and America is my country as well. I love working with children and this has been my first job in my new country as well. I study Early Childhood Education and ESL at American River College. For some reason, I took only one or two classes per semester. I would like to transfer, but unfortunately there are many problems. Anyway, I will do my best. My Lord, give me strength please.

How do I feel about receiving this scholarship? "Happy" maybe is the wrong word for me, I have something higher than happiness. I cannot describe it because my dream has come true. I got my chance, the one I always wanted. I feel great about this scholarship. I was allowed to write my feelings to dear Susan and talk to her. I was able to tell you about dear Susan too. My writing was accepted by the professors. Thank you so much for your time. I really would like to say thank you so much to the ARC community and to the great families for doing Memorial scholarships because they remind us of the memories of kind and conscientious people. Yes, thank you so much for your time and everything. You gave me a big chance to improve my English. I was lucky. I am thankful to my God.

Susan Pezone was one of my professors. Susan's family, "I hope you can endure this great

sorrow. I'm truly sorry." I also thank you very much for doing this scholarship to us. Although Professor Susan is not with us anymore, her memory is always with us." We miss you dear Susan." I remember the semester that I had a class with Susan. She was ill, but she did not tell us at all. She didn't rest at home. She was kind, calm, thoughtful and loved her job. I could see that perfectly in class. She had time for everyone and answered our questions after class too. She was thin, and her right hand was tied with a splint. I remember on the first day of class she told us, "Sorry I write badly on the whiteboard because my hand hurts today." Dear Susan loved her students and her job.

I love writing, reading, and listening in English and Persian. Those are my favorite activities. A new world began for me when I started English in middle school. I would like to try learning other languages as well. I have a long way to improve my writing skills. I will do my best and try it. I'm more confident about writing in English right now. I have written many things about homeless, poor, children with cancer, and hungry children in the world. I like to write in the white heart of my paper with the heart of my pen. I have a diary too. It is like an amazing book, I love it because we have many mysteries and facts together.

I know many writers and I like them. I have read many books in Persian, and, of course, I try to read many books in English as well. I read many English books translated into Persian too. When I listen well, I can write and read better. My field of study was Persian literature. Books are like a big garden full of flowers, each flower has its own smell and beauty. Books are my best friends and flowers. I would like to introduce you to *Shahnameh* by Ferdowsi. It is one of the great literary books of my country Iran. This book is in Persian and English. It is an epic and literary book. I hope you enjoy it.

First, I am grateful to my God. My parents encouraged me to learn and to experience. They said, "Mahnaz, with learning each new language

you become a new person with a new world, so try it, but remember that you cannot do it alone." I am also grateful to my "second parents" who are my professors. In Persian we have a proverb that, "Good teachers are our second parents." Because they teach us with kindness and effort. My professors helped me to continue this journey and will continue to do so. "I also thank the ARC community, ESL Center, ARC professors, friends, children, and my family. They gave me a big chance to hear, think, read, talk, do, and write so I can improve myself. My Lord, you have been gracious to me.

I wasn't alone in this educational journey, and they were always with me and, of course, they

will be. I am thankful for your time.

Donating blood is Donating life. If you can, please do it. Please help UNICEF and Children's Cancer Hospitals because they need money. The amount of money does not matter, your help and purpose are important. Thank you so much. I think, as long as a person is alive, she/he should be good to others so that she/he can die in peace. always be hopeful.

I always hope for everything.

My Lord, you have been gracious to me.

Mahnaz Faramarzy



I'm from Syria. I speak Arabic, English and some basic French. I have been in the U.S. for about four years. I studied for four semesters at ARC. I don't have a major yet. For now, I only study English, but later I want to study Early Childhood Education. I feel great about receiving the Susan Pezone Memorial ESL Scholarship for Fall 2021. I felt how much appreciated my hardworking is. Appreciation gives me the momentum to go forward and reach my full potential.

Unfortunately, I didn't know Professor Susan Pezone before. But Professor Driscoll told us how great Professor Susan Pezone was.

I enjoy writing because it lets me express my thoughts and feeling. I enjoy reading books of any kind, and I read in both English and Arabic. Every piece of writing is interesting for me, so I enjoy reading for every writer.

I would like to thank my family for the emotional support they gave me during my educational journey. And I also appreciate the support the CRC and ARC professors gave me during the learning process. I finally want to thank ARC for the scholarship. I think it is a good idea to commemorate the memory of great people like Professor Susan Pezone. This encourages people to work harder to fulfill their full potential.

Ghiasa Zeyadeh

Student Chirpings

MY COLLECTIONS

Books

My mother-in-law is interested in collecting books. She only has old books. We don't come home without a book when we go to the library together. We pick up old books that people give away and then we take care of them. How? We glue the torn pages. It's not a problem. We enjoy spending time together in the library. My mother-in-law remembers each book. I have decided to continue collecting books. I hope my mother-in-law agrees.

Dilafruz Tadjibaeva
ESLR20
Descriptive Paragraph



My Earrings

I love earrings! I really love different earrings so much that I didn't even notice how I started collecting them. At first, it was a problem because I bought all the earrings. I saw it in stores, but then I noticed that many of them I never wore. So, I decided to organize their storage and bought special holders for them. Now my earrings are all organized and hanging together. I think I have about 60 pairs of them. When I take care of them properly, I enjoy the process. Each pair of earrings is different in size and color. They look very nice. The only problem is that sometimes in my life, there are not enough special events for especially beautiful earrings. However, I hope I can wear them somewhere in the future.

Anna Petruk
ESLR20
Descriptive Paragraph



Starting a New Life

So many people from different countries decide to move to another place and begin their life from zero every day. The first reason is people always want to live better. Unfortunately, so many countries do not have a satisfactory standard of living. In my country, Ukraine, a lot of my friends work day and night for minimum income, even if they have a high education. Nobody can accept it, and many of my friends are moving to other countries or other cities for a better life. The second reason is that somebody moves to live with their relatives. Everyone wants to be near his or her family. I understood it when I left my family in Ukraine. Although I talk with my mom via Viber or FaceTime almost every day, I still want to see her face-to-face and hug her. The third reason is that somebody wants to follow his or her dream in a country that has many more opportunities than their native country. This is the reason for me because I can do my favorite kind of business in the United States. I develop myself and my selling page on eBay every day, and I get the results of my labor and efforts. In conclusion, starting a new life in a different place is so hard, but no one moves from their native country without concrete reasons for it.

Alisa Zolotukhina
ESL 47
Opinion Paragraph



People look for a better future for themselves and their children by looking for safe places and stable countries where they can study, work and practice freedom. There are many reasons to do that. For example, war is the main reason, and people try to look for a safe place where they can live and raise their kids. The second reason is looking for a better job. Some countries have better chances for jobs with high salaries, so people try to leave their countries and go to these countries where they can find better jobs. Also, students leave their home country to look for a better education. Many students move to countries with good universities. In many places around the world, they can't express their opinion freely, and as a result, they move to more democratic countries. In conclusion, looking for opportunities in different places can give us a better future, better life experiences, and live in safety and freedom.

Nawal Al Hamati
ESL 47
Opinion Paragraph

Effects of Longevity

What would you do if you could live longer in good health? I bet every person thinks about this question at least once in their lifetime. Many people have diverse answers to this question. When it comes to the topic of longer-lasting life, some of us agree that everyone would live better if their life extended its time. Some don't. Where this agreement usually ends, however, is on the question of how that affects us. Whereas some are convinced that it has good impacts like starting their life over and remarrying another person, others maintain that crazy long life is meaningless. In my view, I think I don't want to live longer because living and existing have suffering and good things like happiness mixed in it. We can't argue that. Personally, I just want my life to be mine. I want my unique life to be more precious and fully lived. Also, too much life has much suffering. Some people would be interested in increasing their longevity. That decision may be good for them from their perspective. However, I do not support living longer for several reasons; they cannot fix life's mistakes and marry the loved one again.

Some people believe that their mistakes can be fixed. According to Gregory Stock, director of UCLA's School of Public Health, "Doubled lifespan would give us a chance to recover from our mistakes." They think that if they have time in the future, they would solve the problem which they lost. Of course, they can fix their behavior or attitude towards mistakes to be a better person. But it is not as easy as it seems. While I understand their point, I do not agree with it. We make mistakes again even if we realize the action of our mistake, and we repeat our own mistakes again. I think human beings are one kind of animal that does a lot of things in their lifetime. They just

make a lot of mistakes. For instance, they get greedy with money or their attitude is so brutal that they do not respect their parents. Living longer affects the mistakes they make. They can make a mistake without the intention of fixing it. No matter how they try, they still make a mistake. It is what makes life.

We get to choose only one person and marry them, more clearly, there is a saying, "only one soulmate for the rest of my life," not in plural "soulmates". Some people believe that longer life would solve a lot of problems including their marriage. Like when you married the wrong person for a long time, you

can just marry again with someone who you truly love. I understand their views; however, I do not agree with them. My perspective on that is that they need to be careful with their choice of love. I have one example of this case. My cousin had a kind wife, but he used to drink alcohol, and his wife could not stand it, so eventually, they got separated. Before their divorce, they had no kids,

so my cousin had no joy in having kids and raising them. Now he is living his life with no joy and without a good partner. According to my example, people need to work on their marriage carefully, whether their life is long or not. Longer life is nice but for too many people, love is insufferable.

To sum up, I know it's a very complicated issue for everybody. I mainly think one unique lifetime is enough for people. But I can't argue more because problems and people are so different. Both marriage and mistakes of life are really serious things. Ultimately, I just think people should think more carefully about their life's events and actions.

Maral Lkhagvasuren

ESL 315

Argumentative Essay



Where Do You Come From?

I come from Afghanistan, which is my native country. This was a really hard decision we made to move from a native country to a new place. It is really hard to make a new life and learn a new culture and a new language. I am also one of the people who come from another country to the USA. I miss my home country for several reasons. I grew up in Afghanistan, and there are my family, friends, and my school where I started to learn from the first step, so I miss my home country. And it is really hard to be far away from it.

First, my family is in Afghanistan, and I was born there and grew up there. That country gives me a lot of things from the first step of life. I was with my siblings and other family members that we played with and made some memorable moments that are in my heart today. For example, my siblings, cousins, and I played football in our backyard every afternoon after coming from school. I was a goalkeeper and one time I ran away from my duty because I was

afraid of the ball when it came quickly forward to me, and everyone laughed at me and I will never forget that. In addition, there were all of my youngest moments when we had fun together. All my relatives that were my age went to different countries and they are also missing Afghanistan as much as I am. Therefore, I miss my home country because of my family and old memories there.

Second, friends and my classmates are still there. My friends remember that we have been



Kabul, Capital of Afghanistan

friends from the early days of our course when we started to learn math and English. It is very important to have your friends in your heart and to be in contact with them. Moreover, for me, it is also important to remember my friends and be with them in all situations. We had a lot of happiness together. We had beautiful days on our birthdays and other parties that we spent together. In summary, I miss my home country and the friends that are still there.

Thirdly, school was another reason that I miss my home country. My first school's name was "Bebe Sara" where I started to learn in the beginning class. In my native country, we also start to learn from the age of six or seven years old. I also was at this age when my parents enrolled me in school, and that was my first experience of being a student at school. In addition, I was a really good student in my first year of school. Everyone wants to have a good result from the whole year that they learn. I can remember very clearly my first class when I was in first grade, and this is an unforgettable memory from my first class at school. My first class was in a big building and it was warm and not cold. My teacher's name was Mrs. Hamida and she was a really kind teacher. This is really sad for me that I can't go to my country for some reasons that are in my country now. And those reasons can not remove all those memories and days that I spent for education in my school in Afghanistan. In brief, I want to say it was a really good and lovely memory that I had with my classmates at

my school in Afghanistan that I miss.

In conclusion, everyone misses their home when they live in different countries, and everybody has a different reason for missing. I miss my home country too because my family, friends, and my first school are there.

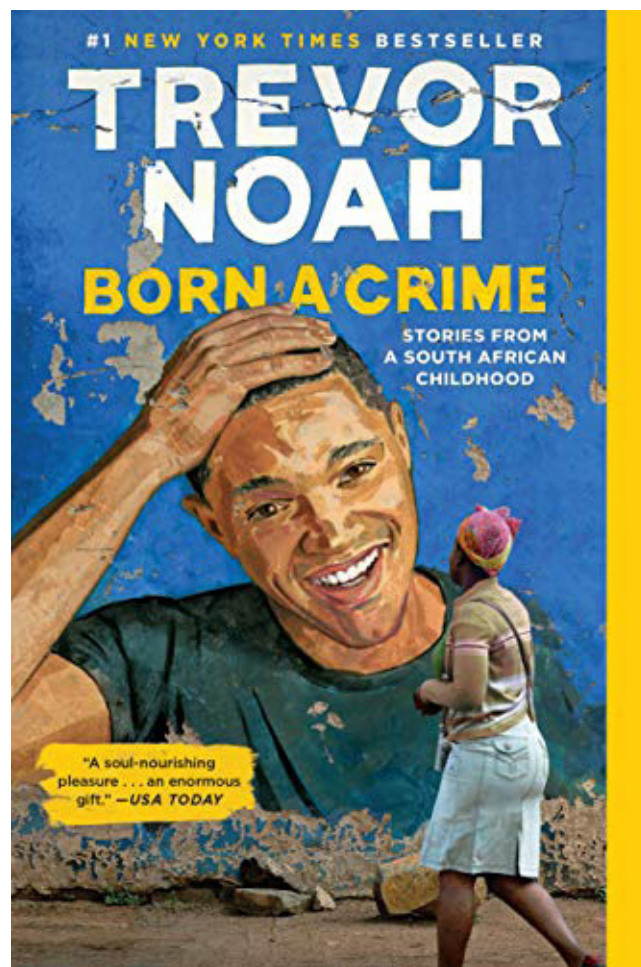
Palwasha Sekandri
ESL 47
Opinion Essay



Read and Response to *Born a Crime*

Trevor Noah's book *Born A Crime* is a story of his life that is an autobiography. This book tells the story of Trevor Noah and his family in South Africa during apartheid. Trevor learns a lot about what the world is like and encounters many situations in the book. The challenges he faced helped him become who he is today. In writing this book, Trevor Noah wants everyone to see what he went through and what it was like to live this life. Noah is of mixed race, with a white father and a black mother, which makes his very existence a violation of the laws of apartheid against interracial relationships. Noah and his single mother are believed to be suffering from poverty: apartheid laws are designed to keep non-whites too poor and hopeless to fight the government. But the end of apartheid does not end this poverty or inequality, rather, it leaves lasting wounds, especially in indigenous African communities, who remain trapped in a world limited by violence, poverty, and suspicion. In the book "Born a Crime", Noah achieved his purpose very well as he gives a deep insight into what it was like to grow up in apartheid in South Africa and presents a deeply personal view of how racism has shaped itself.

Trevor Noah emphasized a lot of powerful examples for the readers to learn. One of them involves his mother, Patricia, as he wrote in his book, "We tell people to follow their dreams, but you can only dream of what you can imagine, and depending on where you come from, your imagination can be quite limited. The highest rung of what's possible is far beyond the world you can see. My mother showed me what was possible" (Noah 73). Patricia decided to give birth to Trevor during apartheid and raised him herself. More importantly, she wanted Trevor to be free to go anywhere, do whatever he wanted, and be who he was. She also gave him the tools to do so. She taught him English as a native and read to him constantly. She talked to him like an adult, which was unusual for South Africa. She kept telling him Bible stories and asking how they related to his life. She taught him what the school could not think of. She said, "Even if he never leaves the ghetto, he will know that the ghetto is not the world. If that is all I accom-



plish, I have done enough" (Noah 74). Her main point in life was to show Trevor that there are far more opportunities in life, she wanted him to go out in the world and not stay in his place in the ghetto like most of the people at that time did.

Another example that stood out in the book is when Noah wrote, "Maybe I didn't look like you, but if I spoke like you, I was you" (Noah 56). In this quote, Noah refers to his knowledge of a few languages. He could get along with anyone from different cultures and it helped him overcome some bad situations.

My favorite chapter from *Born a Crime* is chapter 5, "The Second Girl". The reason it stands out is of Noah's mother, Patricia, who said to Noah, "I chose to have you because I wanted something to love and something that would love me unconditionally in return" (Noah 63). Patricia never felt like she belonged anywhere, she grew up with nothing, so the reason she had Noah was to have someone



in her life. Despite all their difficulties in life, she still somehow managed to show Noah the world, the life she never had. Patricia expresses her love for Trevor, showing him opportunities that others do not see. She acknowledges that even if he never succeeds, this expanded sense of opportunity is his own reward, as it gives him a perspective that will never be available to those who have spent their entire lives trapped by Soweto. Just as he sought his own freedom by living in the white part of Johannesburg center during apartheid, she seeks Trevor's freedom by showing him things he can achieve himself, even if the world does everything it can to stop him.

I really liked this book as it showed me a lot about apartheid in South Africa. This book gave me a better idea of the system of racial discrimination before and after its cessation by survivors. His mother seemed to be a strong, intelligent, and religious woman who passed on much of her wisdom to Noah. In Noah's place, I would listen more to her religious stories and not argue against God. In this book, Trevor Noah tries to teach readers how to find your path in the world, how to belong somewhere, despite the difficult life you have. I would recommend this book *Born a Crime* to others as it is a great opportunity to learn about the apartheid regime in South Africa. Since Noah was born a few years before it was exterminated, he offers a deep immersion in

the country's culture before and after apartheid. He skillfully deconstructs the effects of apartheid that have affected society.

Works Cited:

Noah, Trevor. *Born a Crime: Stories from a South African Childhood*. First edition, Spiegel & Grau, 2016.

Sofiya Sidorchuk
ESL W340
Opinion Essay



Photo of the Month

A Night in Narnia

This is one of my most beautiful nights so far! Great company and also a great view. The Milky Way shining right next to my favorite lighthouse. The weather was clear and dry and the breeze was a little cool, a great mix for a chill night. For this shot in particular, I had to wait in the same spot for about 40 minutes to have the Milky Way aligned perfectly right next to the lighthouse (since the sky is always moving). This photo was taken at Pigeon Point Lighthouse, in California (only a couple of hours drive from Sacramento). From May until November and if Karl the fog (the fog that rolls into the Bay Area almost every day during summer) lets you, you can definitely enjoy a full view of our galaxy with almost no light pollution as you can see in this single image.



I hope you enjoy this month's photo and I wish you all a good and productive Spring 2022 semester!!!

***With Love,
Manny.***





Spring 2022

<https://lrccd.zoom.us/j/97773383036>



Mon -Thu 8am-7pm Fri 8am-12:30pm

New ESL Student Questions

Study English in the LAB

ESL Program @ ARC Info ESL

Assessment Info

Dari

Translation

Russian

Spanish

Ukranian

Romanian

German

Pashto

French

Hmong

Arabic



National Bacon Day

Did you miss it again? Were you too focused on celebrating New Year's Eve? Yes, it was National Bacon Day on December 30, and you probably didn't even know it! I know. You probably think, and rightly so, that "every day is bacon day! I don't need a special holiday for it." And while most food is often better when shared, bacon is the exception, right? With bacon it is best to keep the peace by not sharing. Everyone should have their own plate with clearly demarcated zones to prevent any stealing of the bacon.

Well, it's not too late to start planning for National Bacon Day 2022! Here is a bit of history as well as a link to a great little book that every bacon lover should check out. Don't be fooled by the fact that it's read out loud by a staff member at the Children's Museum of Sonoma County. You'll love it...maybe as much as bacon! Luckily, you don't have to choose. You can have some bacon while listening to *Everyone Loves Bacon*.

Besides eating bacon on December 30, celebrate the day by listening to this delightful reading of *Everyone Loves Bacon*.



Besides eating bacon on December 30, celebrate the day by listening to this delightful reading of *Everyone Loves Bacon*.

History of Bacon

National Bacon Day was created in 1997. But, the consumption of pork, especially bacon, dates back to 4900 B.C. At that time, the Chinese domesticated pigs, and they used to preserve pork bellies with salt. This tradition made its way to Romans and Greeks through the conquest of the Middle East.

Not everyone knows, but bacon can be counted amongst the superfoods. It contains a high constituent of nutrients. Consumption of bacon regularly can also improve intelligence and memory. It can also be helpful in fighting Alzheimer's disease. So, celebrate the amazing benefits of

this superfood on National Bacon Day.

Ancient Roman's early form of bacon was pig's shoulder that was broiled along with dried figs and was served with wine. The word bacon can be traced back to different languages before the 12th century. The word comes from the French word "Bako," the German word Bakkon, and the Teutonic word "Backe." All of these words refer to the rear end of the pig.

In the 16th century, the word *bacon* referred to any kind of pork, and after the 17th century, *bacon* solely meant salted and smoked pork belly.

In Medieval times, bacon was quite common among Anglo-Saxon peasants. Each family had its own recipe for curing and smoking bacon.

Source: <https://www.nationaldaystoday.com/national-bacon-day/>

Continued from page 1

oratory. Back in the day, people would clear their throat and deliver. They weren't winging it. They would plan their remarks, without writing them out word for word. They knew their topic and, from that, they spoke.

Today, people may give a talk but with no expectation that they have their material down and not usually with the idea that they will attempt to convince us of a proposition by making a case. Our sense of a spoken presentation is less formal, more personal, looser. But more formal oratory has its uses.

Sheer aesthetics is one of them. For example, to Americans in Gettysburg on Nov. 19, 1863, the address they gathered to hear was not delivered by Abraham Lincoln. His speech lasted but two minutes. Former Secretary of State Edward Everett gave a two-hour speech from memory.

This was no talk of the kind we most often encounter these days, but an oration, opening with: "Standing beneath this serene sky, overlooking these broad fields now reposing from the labors of the waning year, the mighty Alleghenies dimly towering before us, the graves of our brethren beneath our feet, it is with hesitation that I raise my poor voice to break the eloquent silence of God and nature." He spoke of the hypocrisy of slavery in a country that was supposed to be free, the crime of the Confederacy's rebellion and the horrors of war.

People actually thrilled to these very long speeches in this era. It was very common to attend them. As strange as they may seem to us now, these events were no more peculiar than what we know as stand-up comedy these days, in which someone strides onto a stage with self-conscious bonhomie and spends about 20 minutes making an audience laugh with general, often self-deprecatory remarks and then thanks the audience and walks off. Stand-up in those days would have seemed as weird as watching someone talk in long sentences for hours seems to us.

I also think, as I read a book about 19th-century England, of the way parliamentarians used to communicate. The men regularly made their points to their colleagues in speeches that could run far beyond what anyone could write out and memorize

word for word, in contrast to now, with speeches subject to time limits. Or: Black people of letters, such as W.E.B. Du Bois and Maya Angelou, engaged in oratory contests when they were young, competing for prizes according to how gracefully and how convincingly they made a case for some proposition. The tradition of such contests continues in the Black community.

Casual Speech	Formal Speech
Casual Writing	Formal Writing

Modes of Communications

When I have given oral presentations, I reach people more directly than if I'd written everything down for them to read. When people can see your face and hear the melody of your voice, your point gets across more vividly. Language evolved, after all, for face-to-face contact, not rendered as glyphs on paper.

The question is why oratory of this kind is so much less central to the culture than it once was. The fact that there exists an organization like Toastmasters, which fosters ability in public speaking, only underscores that this skill is no longer a given from schooling and general acculturation.

Imagine a square divided into four smaller ones. The top left square is casual speech; the top right square is formal speech. The bottom left square is casual writing; the bottom right square is formal writing. We have, as it were, an empty square in our grid.

Casual speech is how we communicate most

of the time. Down from that square, casual writing once upon a time meant the way you may have written letters to friends or the written language of passed notes or dorm message boards. More recently it is texting and email, in which we use the mechanics of writing to express ourselves in a way that sounds like talking. Formal writing is the five-paragraph essay and, of course, books and articles.

But what about that upper right square, formal speech?

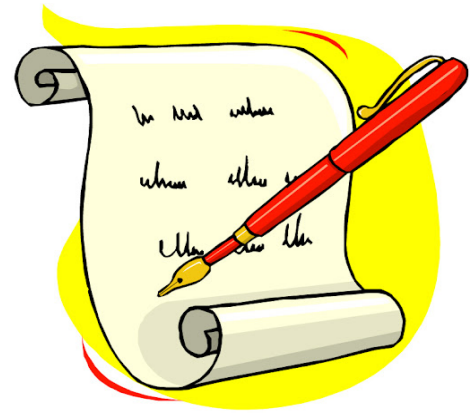
That is what Everett and Du Bois and others considered natural, even if it seems as antique and clunky to us as steamboats and corsets. When we communicate formally, we moderns think first of getting language down on a page in written form, perhaps out of a sense that this is how to deck language out in its Sunday best.

Indeed, there is the TED Talk, but besides its air of casualness (business casual), note that the result is thought of as a unique genre, subject sometimes to a mannered chuckle. The storytelling events put on by The Moth also qualify as oratory but, again, usually pitched in a snug, relatable tone and less about making a case. Today, the formal speech is othered rather than fundamental.

Perhaps it seems that to organize our thoughts properly beyond the level of "Want mustard with that?" we need to tie them down with the yoke of writing.

But the ancients didn't think so. Even with a fully developed writing culture, the Greeks and Romans valued the ability to stand and pose and pace in front of an audience and make their point through speaking it — and formally,

not colloquially. Even today, there are revered



intellectuals who mainly express themselves by speaking rather than writing, such as Cornel West.

As odd in its way as the old-time, lengthy speech is today's academic article. In many fields, these tend to be so imposingly long that few readers get through them. They can seem about as inutile as the sculptures up high on European cathedrals, where, for centuries, no one could see them but God.

Academic articles look great from a distance, get their authors promotions and can be a joy to write because people can feel they have fully expressed what they know. But all but a few go virtually unread because there are too many of them and too little time. I can tell you that a lot of my earlier articles were all but unreadable because of length and style — or lack thereof.

In that light, I am certainly not wishing we would go back to listening to people talk for hours at a time; we have more to entertain us these days. But I imagine a different universe in which



academics would be expected to present most of their ideas in solid PowerPoint versions, narrated in formal language, getting across the amount of information a person can actually absorb in 20 to 30 minutes.

I wish students had the choice of either writing essays or speaking them. We would train them in the ability to speak carefully and coherently with the same goal of making a point that we require in writing.

A lot of people really hate writing. It's an unnatural activity, as humanity goes. If we imagine that speech has existed for 24 hours, then according to all modern estimates, writing came along only sometime around 11:30 p.m. Writing is an artifice, and given a choice, most people would rather talk (or text).

For students who prefer it — and most of them likely would — the idea would be to give an oral presentation to the class, going from a memorized outline of planned remarks but expressing its points spontaneously. They would be graded on the quality of both the delivery and the content.

I have done this in one of my classes, and often the students who choose speaking make a better case than many of those who opt for writing. They seem to connect more readily to the task of talking than to writing an argument and execute it with more passion. It is unclear to me that there is a reason to classify oral suasion as something lesser than the written version, as long as students are instructed that they are to maintain a basic, tempered poise, without relying on volume or colorful rhetoric to stand in for logic.

Some will object that students will need to be able to craft arguments in writing in their future endeavors. But to channel the modern kind of skeptical response: Will they, though?

How elaborate do memos get? And especially, are enough students really likely to need writing that it must be drilled into all of them? An alternate universe would be one in which students who thought of themselves as likely to need such a skill in the future, such as in the law, would be the ones who choose written over oral expression.

When I am asked to speak about something, I do some written preparation to organize my thoughts, but I don't craft sentences. I fashion my ideas into exactly three basic points. In terms of realistic expectations of human attention span, especially in our eternally distracted era, even four points is too many, but two isn't enough. Three points, each expressed with about three subpoints. I consider it my job to be able to hold this much in my memory, along with intentions of an introduction and a conclusion.

To be sure, only formal writing can harbor "Beloved" or "Ulysses," extended scientific proofs or detailed historical documentation. However, when it comes to individuals expressing their intelligence for assignments or teaching, I cannot see that writing is the only legitimate and effective vehicle. We are a society that values speaking engagingly but places less of a value on speaking precisely. This is a mere matter of cultural preference; I wish it would change.

John McWhorter is a linguist from the United States working as an associate professor of English and comparative literature at Columbia University. He teaches linguistics, American studies, philosophy, and music history. He is the author of a number of books on language and interactions with race, and his work has appeared in several popular publications. His research focuses on the formation of Creole languages and the transition in language grammar as a result of socio-historical phenomena. (biographyscoop.com)

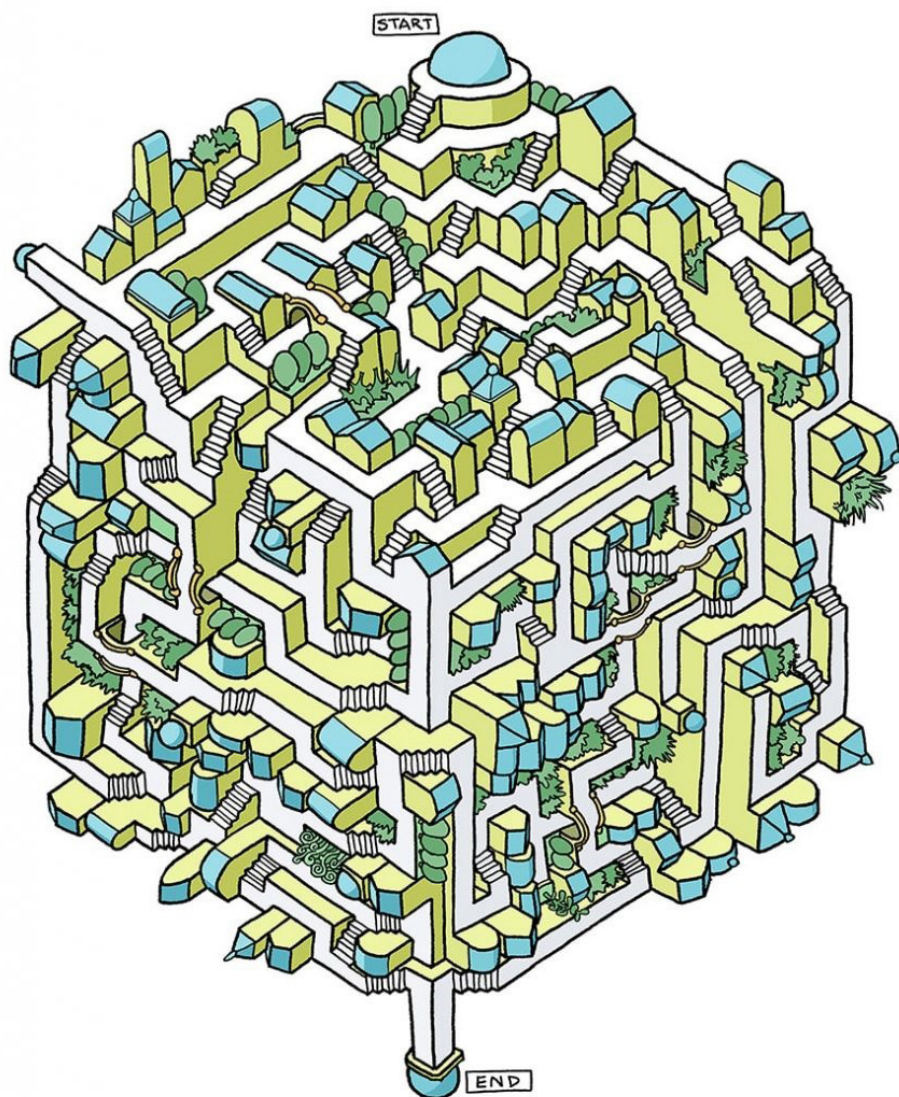
What do you think? Send your comments about the ideas in this article to TheParrot@arc.losrios.edu



Source: <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/12/opinion/writing-spo-ken-argument.html?searchResultPosition=1>

Some More Parrot Fun

Cube Maze

**Rule:**

Get from START to END in this cube maze, created by Sean Jackson.

Go for it!

See the answers on page 27



Poem

Valentine for Ernest Mann

You can't order a poem like you order a taco.
Walk up to the counter, say, "I'll take two"
and expect it to be handed back to you
on a shiny plate.

Still, I like your spirit.

Anyone who says, "Here's my address,
write me a poem," deserves something in reply.

So I'll tell a secret instead:
poems hide. In the bottoms of our shoes,
they are sleeping. They are the shadows
drifting across our ceilings the moment
before we wake up. What we have to do
is live in a way that lets us find them.

Once I knew a man who gave his wife
two skunks for a valentine.
He couldn't understand why she was crying.
"I thought they had such beautiful eyes."
And he was serious. He was a serious man
who lived in a serious way. Nothing was ugly
just because the world said so. He really
liked those skunks. So, he re-invented them



as valentines and they became beautiful.
At least, to him. And the poems that had been hiding
in the eyes of skunks for centuries
crawled out and curled up at his feet.

Maybe if we re-invent whatever our lives give us
we find poems. Check your garage, the odd sock
in your drawer, the person you almost like, but not
quite.

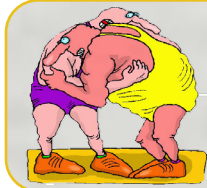
And let me know.

Naomi Shihab Nye

Want to read more poems from Naomi Shihab Nye?
Visit: <https://poets.org/poem/how-do-i-know-when-poem-finished>

Source: <https://poets.org/poem/valentine-ernest-mann>

Parrot Warbling



Grappling with Grammar

Collective Nouns

Definition: The word "collective" comes from the same root as the word "collection". A collective noun names a group, which is like a collection of people or things.

family team choir
jury pile government
orchestra crowd

Grammar Point: In American English, a collective noun is a single group, so the verb we use with the collective noun ends in -s.

Examples: My family is healthy. The team plays very well together.

Hint: Beware of plurals! Students can be a group, but that doesn't make the word collective. It is plural. One student is **not** a group.



Source: <https://www.englishgrammar101.com/module-1/nouns/lesson-7/collective-nouns>

Idiom--Attic

"A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush"

meaning: used to say that it is better to hold onto something one has than to risk losing it.



Source: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/a%20bird%20in%20the%20hand%20is%20worth%20two%20in%20the%20bush>

The Letter K

The letter K makes only one sound; the sound heard in the words kiss, monkey, and make. This consonant sound ranks in the not so common category along with its counterparts:

h, j and w. In some words, the letter K can be silent; this occurs when the letter K is paired with the letter N, as in the following examples:



knock, knot, know, knife, knee, knit, knead, knowledge

Source: <https://www.sightwordsgame.com/alphabet/the-letter-k/>

The Strangest Pet

By Wordy Birdy

Life's more fun with a cat!
 Yes, that's just what they said.
 Theirs must be happy, round, and fat,
 Where mine's crazy instead.

It's just she's rather odd you see,
 I found her on the street.
 She's got fingers and toes like me,
 But can't land on her feet.

Her face is cute, but wears a mask,
 Her eyes framed in black hair.
 In the sun she doesn't bask,
 But likes the fresh night air.

She chitters, chatters, but doesn't
 meow
 And prefers to eat our trash.
 She gets in the bin, I don't know how,
 And jumps out with a crash!

I took her to the vet one day
 On a sunny afternoon.
 He shrieked, "Get that thing away!
 That's not a cat, it's a racoon!"

Rigoberto's Riddles

What tastes bet-
 ter than it smells?



A tongue.

Silly Vasily's Chuckle Chamber

Only 10

A conversation in the restaurant
 between two friends.

Ricky: My sister is a U.S. citizen,
 but she said there was
 no way she would be
 voting in the 2024
 election.



Bob: Oh, why
 wouldn't she be voting
 in the next election?

Ricky: Because she is
 only 10 years old.



Eat the World!

The Parrot represents students of many hues and sounds --- no news there. Indeed, birds of a feather flock together, right? They also eat together. The Parrot is proud to present Parrot fodder from around the world in this and subsequent issues. Squawk!

Yaksik - Korean Sweet Rice Dessert



Ingredients:

4 C sweet rice & 2 C water
 (1 1/3 to 1 1/2 C sugar + 3 T honey) OR (1 1/2 C dark brown sugar)
 4 T soy sauce & 4 T sesame oil & 1/2 tsp salt
 1 tsp cinnamon powder (optional)
 1 13 oz canned chestnuts or 1 1/2 C peeled chestnuts (uncooked) & 2 T pine nuts
 1 C dried jujubes (optional)

You need: a pressure cooker, 8x8 cake pan or 12 or more cupcake liners or ramekins (optional).

***** C (cup), T (tablespoon)**

Directions:

1. Measure the sweet rice and soak in cold water for 1 hour (soak 5 hours if you are cooking in the microwave instead of a pressure cooker).
2. Measure and prepare the pine nuts, chestnuts and jujubes. Drain the syrup from the canned chestnuts and set aside. Canned chestnuts work best but you can also use uncooked peeled chestnuts.

Wash the dried jujubes, making sure the dust in between the wrinkles are completely washed away. Dry them with a towel. If they are seeded, cut around the seed. If they are seedless, one less thing to do! Cut the flesh into small squares (1/2 inch) or strips.

Save the seeds and make some jujube water by boiling and then simmering the seeds in 2 cups of water for 10 min. Now you have jujube tea (daechucha) which you can drink with some honey and also use some to cook the rice later. Jujube water adds much more flavor.

3. After the sweet rice has soaked for an hour, drain the water from the rice. Cook the rice in a pressure rice cooker by adding 2 C of water (use 1/2 C of the jujube water from step 2 if you can) and follow the instructions for cooking regular white rice. If you don't have a pressure cooker, you can cook the rice in the microwave – add about 1 C of water and cook on high for 10 minutes.

4. When the rice is cooked (the rice will be very sticky but should not be too mushy), add the sugar, soy sauce, sesame oil, salt and cinnamon powder. Mix the rice well but not too much because it will become too starchy. Stir only until the rice is evenly seasoned.

5. Add the jujubes, chestnuts and pine nuts. Fold them into the rice.

6. Put everything back in the pressure cooker and if you have a 'steam' option, steam for 20 minutes. If you don't have a 'steam' option, just choose the shortest rice cook time and cook it again.

7. You are ready to serve Yaksik now (or later). Fill a 8x8 cake pan with the Yaksik and let it cool. Once it's cool to touch, cover it to keep it from drying. Cut it into small squares or 2/3 in thick slices and serve. You can also spoon them into cupcake cups or ramekins. Again, when it's cooled, cover with some plastic wrap.

Source: <https://kimchimari.com/yaksik-korean-sweet-rice-dessert/>

Around the World

SEOLLAL - KOREAN LUNAR NEW YEAR

Today we will go to Korea to see how Koreans celebrate their new year, Seollal. Let's explore this wonderful holiday.



If for Westerners, Christmas is the time for family, then Lunar New Year is the time Koreans spend with their family. Korea has unique customs and traditions for this holiday.

In 2022, February 1st will be the Lunar New Year in Korea. In the new year, people usually wear "hanbok", the traditional clothes for Koreans when they bow deeply to show respect to their elders. This custom is called "sabae."

Another important tradition is called "char-



ye", which describes worshipping their ancestors by preparing a table with food as a gift.

There are many traditional dishes for Korean New Year like (tteokguk) a ricecake soup, a pancake-like dish (jeon), and many other side dishes. "Yunnori" is the traditional board game played on the Korean New Year.

It's wonderful to be together with families in the new year. Let's explore other festivals in every other issue.

Parroteer: Tuyet Le

Source: <https://www.90daykorean.com/korean-lunar-new-year/>



Reading for Beginners

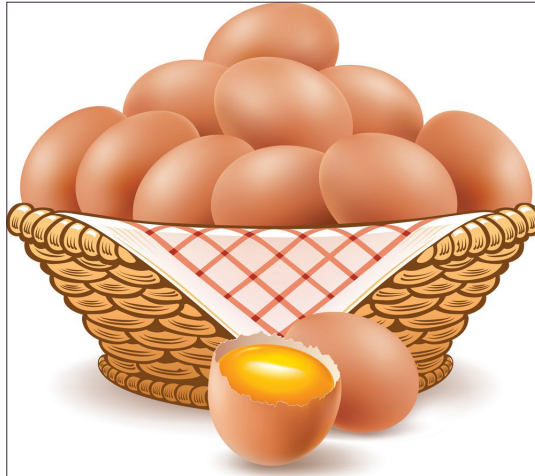
Preparing Food

Jack was hungry. He walked to the kitchen. He got out some eggs. He took out some oil. He placed a skillet on the stove. Next, he turned on the heat. He poured the oil into the skillet. He cracked the eggs into a bowl. He stirred the eggs. Then, he poured them into the hot skillet. He waited while the eggs cooked. They cooked for two minutes. He heard them cooking. They popped in the oil.

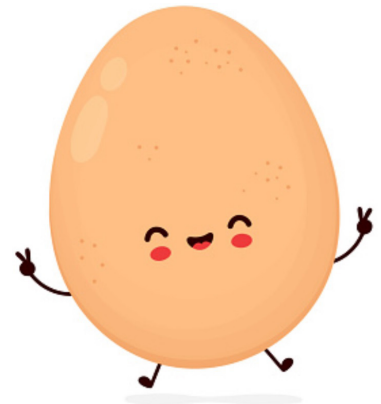
Next, Jack put the eggs on a plate. He placed the plate on the dining room table. Jack loved looking at his eggs. They looked pretty on the white plate. He sat down in the large wooden chair. He thought about the day ahead. He ate the eggs with a spoon. They were good.

He washed the plate with dishwashing

soap. Then, he washed the pan. He got a sponge damp. Finally, he wiped down the table. Next, Jack watched TV.



Source: <https://lingua.com/english/reading/preparing-food/>



Did You Understand the Text?

Please answer the following comprehension questions:

Question 1:

Where did Jack eat the eggs?

- a. In his room
- b. In front of the TV
- c. In the kitchen
- d. At the dining room table

Question 2:

What food was cooked?

- a. Pork
- b. Fish
- c. Eggs
- d. Rice

Question 3:

Jack cooked in a skillet. What is another word for skillet?

- a. Pan
- b. Slow cooker
- c. Oven
- d. Microwave

Question 4:

How long did the eggs cook?

- a. Three minutes
- b. Ten minutes
- c. Five minutes.
- d. Two minutes.

Interview with Professor Vickee Moy

Continued from page 1

with different cultures and help them develop their skills to become successful here in the United States. I have been doing it for about 20 years. I love what I do. It's really a joy to teach my students. I have so much fun with them and I love interacting with them. I love my job in so many ways.

The Parrot: How long have you been at SCC?

Professor Moy: I've been teaching for about 20 years. I taught for 10 years, then I took a break for 10 years because I wanted to be home to raise my children. I returned about 10 years ago.

The Parrot: Do you have any memorable stories about one of your ESL students?

Professor Moy: The one that comes to mind first, it was about 5 years

ago. We got a lot of students from Afghanistan, and during that time I knew very little about Afghanistan. It was even hard for me to be able to find it on a map. There was one student in particular who is

really open about his life, his country, and challenges here in the United States. He often came to my office to talk, to share, or we would be in the hallway like during breaktime and we just chatted 10 minutes before and after class. His stories are what inspired me to start my organization. He has inspired me and really has changed my life and inspired me to start my organization. He has been a major part of my organization. He is my interpreter like my voice to the refugee community. On a personal note, he has become like a dear friend and a brother to me. Honestly, I've never imagined that a student could become like a brother to me. I will remember it for the rest of my life.

The Parrot: Before we talk about your non-profit organization, how about a few things that you really like— book, movie, hobbies, snacks, etc.?

Professor Moy: I really enjoy running. I have been

running for about 12 years or so. I enjoy running in the neighborhood and I do a couple races every year like 5K or 10K races.

The Parrot: Why did you establish Starting Point?

Professor Moy: That student was the reason behind why I established Starting Point. After I heard his stories, I gained a deeper understanding of the challenges refugees face when they rebuild their lives here in the U.S. I felt moved to take action and help, so I established Starting Point to support refugee children with necessities and programs when they resettle in the area. I couldn't have opened this organization if he hadn't shared with me five years ago.

The Parrot: Can you share one or two highlights that you've experienced with Starting Point?

Professor Moy: One highlight is the launch of our soccer program in 2018. We wanted to support our

kids' love for the game and to help keep them both physically and emotionally healthy, so we got the kids geared up and out on the field playing. I loved how our 9 and 10-year-old players chose the team name Motahid, which means unity in their language, because they said that although they come from different tribes in Afghanistan, they play unified like brothers on and off the

soccer field. I always love seeing the kids smiling and laughing, and the parents cheering from the sidelines. Our soccer program has definitely brought a lot of joy, hope, pride, and unity to our players and the community.

The Parrot: What frustrations have you had as you tried to be of help to refugee families?

Professor Moy: I would say that it is frustrating that our small, volunteer-run organization cannot handle all the needs in the refugee community. The needs are often far greater than what we can handle. We are run 100% by volunteers, myself included, so we have no staff. We are a very small organization, but people think we are huge when they see us in the newspaper or on TV. So, sometimes I get frustrated because there is such a great need in the community, but we can't do everything. There is such a great



need, but we are limited with what we can do and how many people we can serve. I want to do more, but realistically I can't, so that frustrates me sometimes. I just try my best and try to help one family at a time.

The Parrot: Do you think of expanding your organization to help not only children but their parents or just some immigrants who are new to this country?

Professor Moy: When we first started, I was thinking about helping entire families and then a lady I know said, "Why do you want to do that? Because there are already so many agencies focusing on the entire family." We decided to focus on children because there is no organization that does that. We decided on helping refugee children because refugee children make up about 50% of all refugees in the world.

The Parrot: What is your hope and dream for the future of Starting Point?

Professor Moy: I hope to continue what we're doing today, and I said that because for the past 4 years, I tried everything I want to do and I've done everything that the community asked me to do. I'm really satisfied with what we have accomplished for the past 4 and a half years. We hope to make different programs better and more effective to give newcomers a successful new beginning.

The Parrot: The Starting Point website mentions English classes in the future. What do you hope to offer?

Professor Moy: We had some volunteers go to the complexes or to homes and gave English lessons. It went really well and then Covid came, so we had to stop. We hope to start that up again, maybe in the future. You know it was just three months, and it gave us ideas about what works and what doesn't work. We hope to revisit that later.

The Parrot: Your website only displays in English, so it might not reach people who are in need but don't know English. Have you ever thought of adding more languages to your website?

Professor Moy: Because of the huge population that we serve, we really realize the need to get things upgraded and expanded. Everything is in the basic level right now. We hope to do that, too.

The Parrot: What suggestions do you have for people who want to help refugees and new immigrants?

Professor Moy: At first, if they are interested in our organization, I'd love to have them come partner with us to get involved to help newcomers as their new beginning. I always encourage people to check out our Facebook page because in social media

people can get a better idea of what we're doing on a weekly basis. As our website just has general information, if there're things that interest them, I would encourage people to reach out to us about how to get involved either individually or gather their friends, family members, coworkers to join us. We have multiple events in

the community. We can use helping hands to help us welcome new families

The Parrot: Many ESL students read *The Parrot*, so back to ESL students. Do you have any advice for ESL students?

Professor Moy: Take time to build a solid foundation in English and to connect with your fellow classmates and professors. Share about your country, culture, dreams, and aspirations. In doing so, you will see the beauty behind everyone's stories.

Interviewer: Tuyet Le



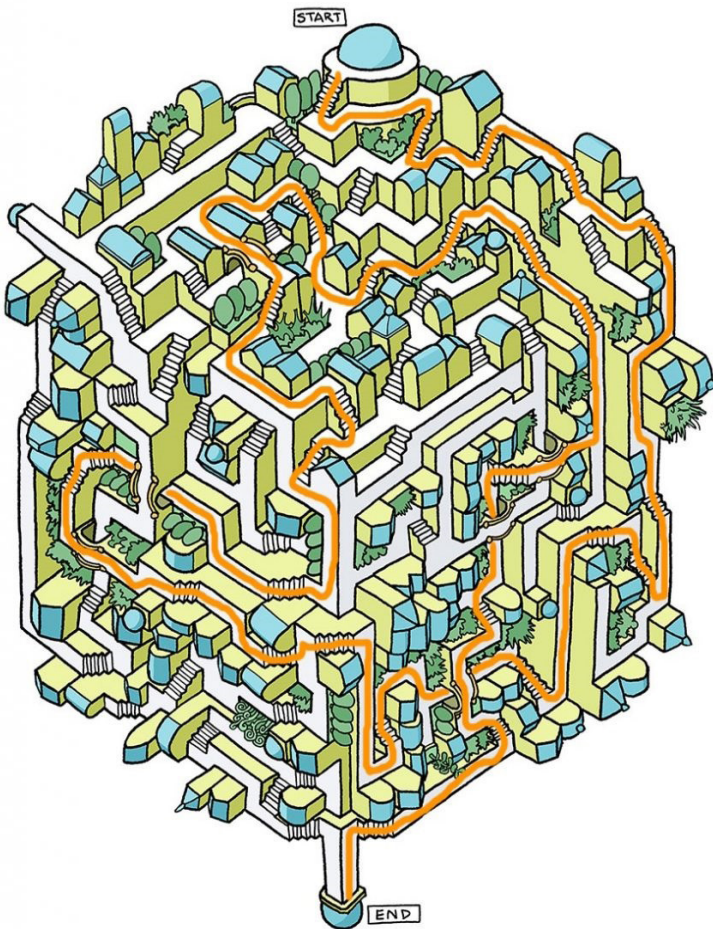
English Practice Hour



English Practice Hour

It will be
online

Please contact Professor Denise Saur
at saurd@arc.losrios.edu for a link to the
Zoom session.

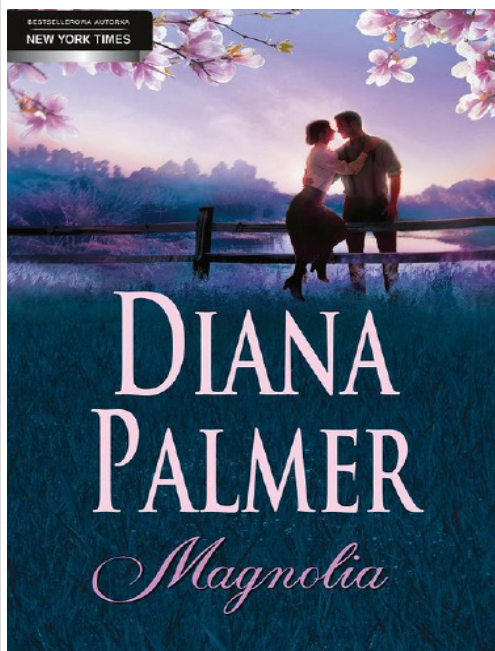


Did you find
the way?



Books Enjoyed by ESL Students A Survey from ESL L310 Students

What's one of your favorite books?



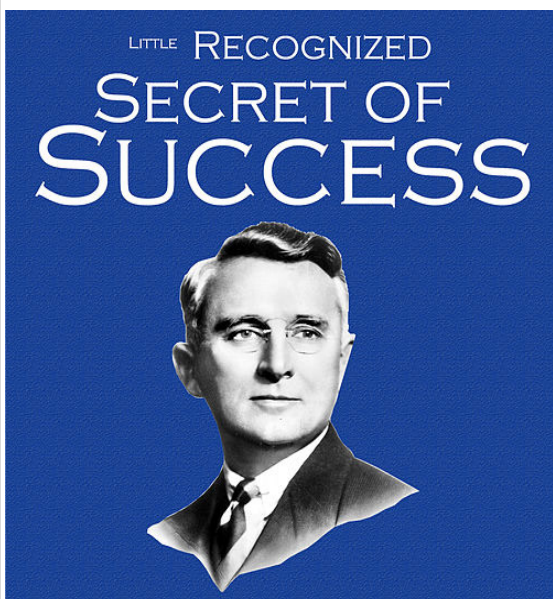
Leticia Fonseca

I want to share with all of you one of my favorite books. The title is **Magnolia** and the author is Diana Palmer. It is a romance novel. I really liked it because it combines romance with self-improvement. When I was reading the book, my mind was floating in the 1900s. I like the elegance of how the author talks about the women and how she thinks they can do whatever they want to do. I would give it 5 stars.

Inna Zhukova

I like to read. Most of all I like to read books about life. I recently read a very interesting book. It was a Ukrainian book **When You Are Near** by Svetlana Talan. I really liked it. The author told a dramatic story about a girl who contracted AIDS when she

was helping victims of a car accident. The scary word "AIDS" changes live forever. Everyone turned away from the girl, even her parents. I liked the very interesting plot of this book and coverage of an important problem of society's attitude to the infected. After reading this book, I really thought about the meaning of life. I would give it 5 stars.



Alhama Jahish

My favorite book is **Secret of Success**. It is a really interesting, informative, and effective book. The author is Dale Carnegie. When I first read one page of the book, I became more interested and every night before bed I read a few pages. It had a very powerful effect on me and increased my self-confidence and I learnt many ways of solving a problem, ways of thinking, and dealing with difficulties. There are many stories from famous people about how they become successful that really help us to continue our passion and to not give up. I rate it 5 stars.

English Learners' Corner

How to Stay Motivated to Learn English

When you are learning English, it can be stressful and very challenging. You may feel like giving up and that you may never learn English as well as you would like. If you have ever felt discouraged when learning English, here are some ways to help you stay motivated!

1. Try to remember the reasons you want to learn English



After studying for so long, it can feel like you will never improve. To help keep your motivation, you need to think back to what made you start studying English and how you felt. You can use this as motivation when you are feeling down.

2. Set realistic goals



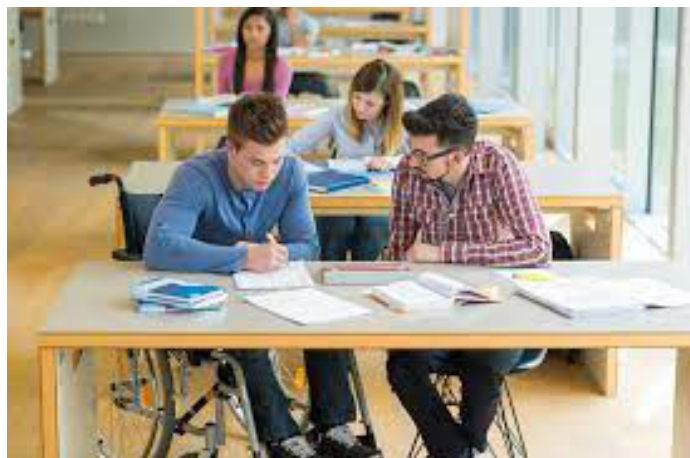
Of course, everyone wants to learn and master English as fast as they can! However, if you set goals that are way too high, it can be discouraging when you do not achieve them. Failing to achieve unrealistic goals can cause you to give up entirely. That is why you should set realistic goals that

challenge you to work hard. Make sure that you also celebrate the completion of these goals to help motivate you even further! Treat yourself to some dessert, a fun day doing what you love, or even just a little break to relax!

3. Stop and look back at your English language learning experience

After studying for a while, look back and think about how you were when you started. Sometimes it helps to think about or look at how your English has improved over time and see all the progress you have made. When you can look back and see how far that you have come, it can motivate you to keep going to make even more progress!

4. Have a study buddy



Studying with a friend is a great way to make studying more fun and exciting. Even if you don't have a friend to study with you, there are plenty of people online or online communities for other people who are learning English. Being able to talk to someone else who is going through the same experience can help you to be motivated and motivate others as well.

5. Don't give up

Never give up on continuing to improve your English!

Source: https://www.aels.edu/detail_post.php?id=507

Parrot Student Voices

Here, our students tell a story from their past. Their stories may be about happy days, or sad events... but the stories are always told in their own words.

Coming to the U.S.



"Hello, My name is Inna. I am from Russia. Today I'm telling you the story of "How I came to the United States from Russia in 2007". Before coming to the US, I was a student at the Tomsk State University..."

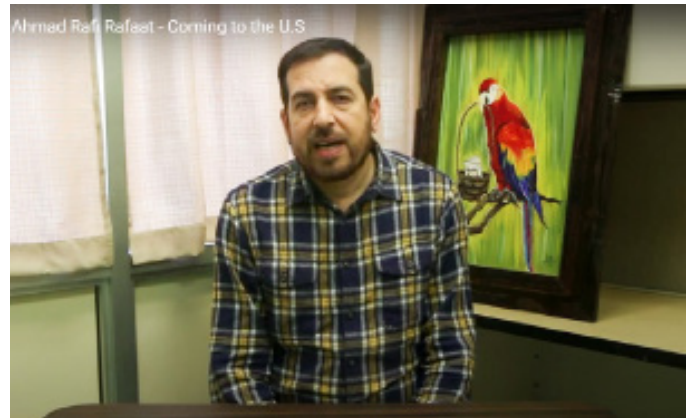
-Inna, from Russia.

Click on *Inna's* photo to find out what happened

"...I miss my country, my father, my brothers and sisters, my friends and the food! Because we have good food in my country. My culture is nice because..."

-Ahmad Rafi Rafaat, from Afghanistan

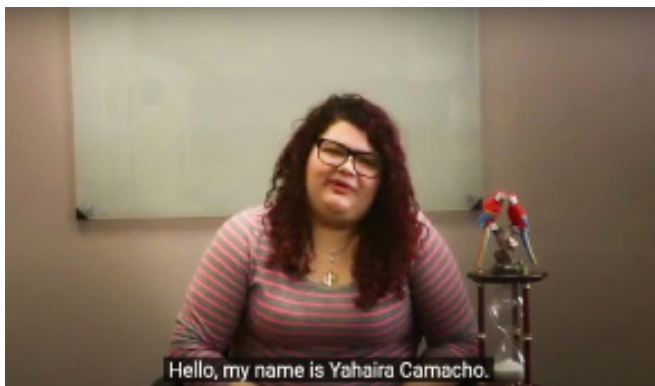
Click on *Ahmad's* photo to find out what happened next.



"One day I was working with my mom at the store (back in Mexico). We were alone when two guys came in and break down the store and some guy put the gun on my mom's head and..."

**-Yahaira Camacho,
from Mexico**

Click on *Yahaira's* photo to find out what happened next.



Bird's Eye



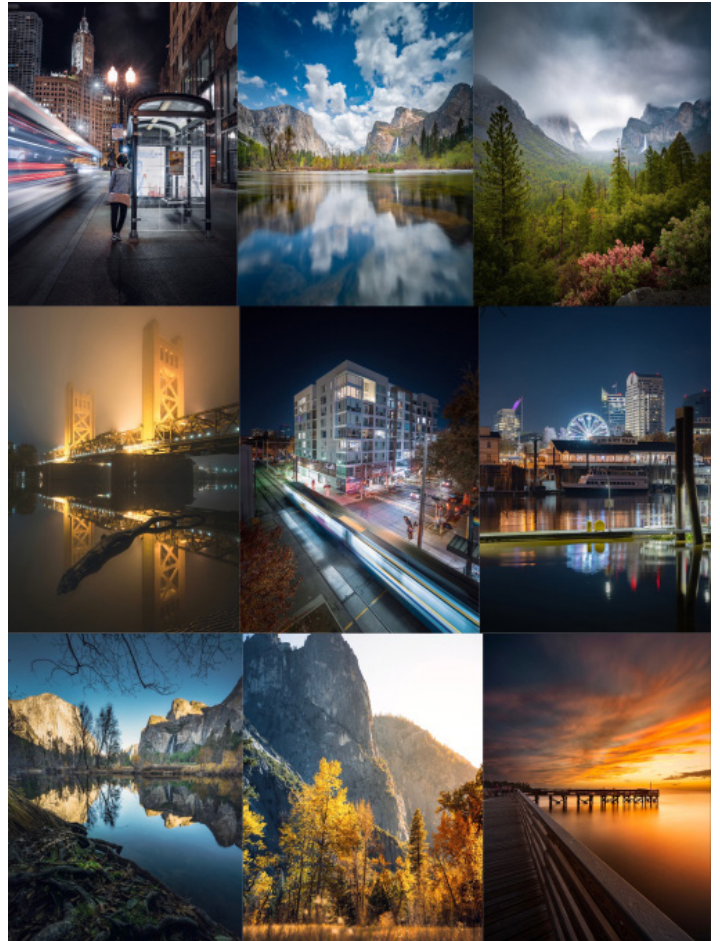
Hello dear readers! My name is Emmanuel Madrid (aka Manny). I'm 28 years old, and I'm from Colombia, living in California for about 5 years now, and I'm currently an American River College Student and a employee of this amazing newsletter!

I'm a self-taught photographer who loves nature, especially the stars and the beautiful sunsets.

Photography has always been my passion ever since I first came to the US, and what started with a little passion has become an everyday activity that helps me see the world with a different and beautiful perspective. There's beauty all around us, and it's fun to know how to capture it! And that's why I'm creating this column! In every new issue, I'll be sharing with you some tips that I've learned that have improved my photography tremendously and the way to shoot!

I'll be sharing tips from how to use your phone camera, to how to photograph the sky at night using a camera; from how to take better selfies with your phone to how to do long exposures and make the car lights to look like fun lines! I'll also share recommendations on the best apps for editing and taking photos.

So, stay tuned and get ready to take your photography to the next level!



"Encanto" Movie Review



When I was asked to do a review of the first Colombian Disney movie I immediately said yes!. As a Colombian native citizen, I feel very proud to give my opinion on this movie inspired by my native country. I'm no movie critic though, so I'll try to make this as personal as I can!

Encanto is a movie based in the Cocora Valley, a beautiful valley filled with really tall palm trees in the department of Quindío, but it also includes references to other places in Colombia such as Cartagena (you can see the wooden balconies decorated with flowers typical of this particular city) and the River of Five Colors (where Abuelo Pedro gets killed and also where Mirabel helps Abuela heal her broken heart).

The story begins with Abuelo Pedro and Abuela Alma and how their miracle was born. It



Cocora Valley



Cartagena's Hotel Balconies

talks about a very sad reality that still happens to a few families in the little rural towns in Colombia: urban displacement, a sad reality that I'm glad was shown in this movie since it's a cruel reality we are still dealing with. They get displaced from their village and Pedro sacrificed himself for his wife and three babies and for the people in town too in order to bring hope for them all, and all that hope and the grief and the pain combined to create a miracle that saved Alma and the babies and the whole village by giving them a refuge far away from the conflict. The kids eventually grew up and Abuela soon has grandchildren including Mirabel, whom this movie is based on. La Casita (the magic house the family lives in) gives gifts to all of them except for Mirabel, but without any kind of special super powers, she ironically ends up saving the miracle and her family and also helping them find peace and hope!

Encanto is about family bonding through communication; listening with love and patience is the best healer in any family situation, and that's what Mirabel did. She might not have a great super human gift, but she had a special power that you and I could easily have and that is the power of listening! We can clearly see that whenever she would talk to her sisters or Uncle Bruno or even Abuela, she would listen and

sometimes all we need to heal and figure things out is to be heard, to freely express our feelings without being afraid of being judged and that's what family is supposed to do, and that's what Mirabel did throughout her journey to save the miracle: she listened to her beloved family as it is supposed to be!

It also, of course, features typical food from Colombia, such *arepas* (what Mirabel's mom uses to heal people) and *ajiaco* soup (what they eat at Isabela's engagement) just to name a few. The diversity of Colombian food is very wide and I'm happy Disney did the research and took the time to include some of it throughout the movie.

Ajiaco, as seen in the scene where the family was having dinner.



I asked my niece and nephew (*Encanto's* number 1 fans) and they told me that the movie taught them to love their family and always listen to their problems and be positive and never lose faith! So clearly Disney did a great job! Though there's also some people (usually adults) from Colombia who have criticized the movie saying

it's not portraying the real problems Colombia is facing (such as corruption and crime), but as I said to one of them: *Encanto* is not supposed to be a documentary about the problems in Colombia, it's just an animated DISNEY movie made for kids!

If you haven't seen the movie yet, what are you waiting for? Go get your family and go to Disney Plus and stream it for free! The plot is amazing, the animation is out of this world, and the music is as catchy as it gets! You'll laugh and cry (at least I did, hehe) and most importantly you'll get to see some cultural references to one of the most beautiful countries in South America: My Dear Colombia!

Staff Writer: Manny



La Casita-the magic house of Mirabel's family

Help for Refugee Children

Starting Point is a nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting newly-arrived refugee children in the greater Sacramento area. The organization strives to give them a warm welcome by providing basic necessities and programs as they begin their new lives in the U.S. They do things like meet refugee families with children at the airport, give them welcome baskets, provide basic ESL and computer lessons, and they have even started a very popular soccer team for the kids. Visit the website and click on [REQUEST HELP](#).



<https://www.startingpointworld.com/>

Want to Help?

Starting Point is directed by Vickee Moy, a professor of English as a Second Language professor in Sacramento. She launched Starting Point in June 2017 after being deeply touched by her refugee students' stories about their lives in their native countries and about their new lives in the U.S. Starting Point is one way she hopes to honor and remember their incredible stories and beautiful lessons about perseverance, strength, hope, and humanity.

As a child of immigrants, Vickee feels a connection with new arrivals and is passionate about helping them begin successful lives in their new country. Along with her husband and three sons, she is excited to reach out to this growing community of newcomers.

There are several ways that you can help Starting Point to help children. You can put together a welcome basket, assemble a backpack with supplies, help buy shoes, assist with lessons and program development for SPARK (Summer Program for Arts, Recreation and Knowledge), or even coach and support a soccer team!

Donations to starting point are tax deductible. Please visit the [Starting Point Volunteer Page](#) for more information.



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QUESTIONS/COMMENTS?

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