

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



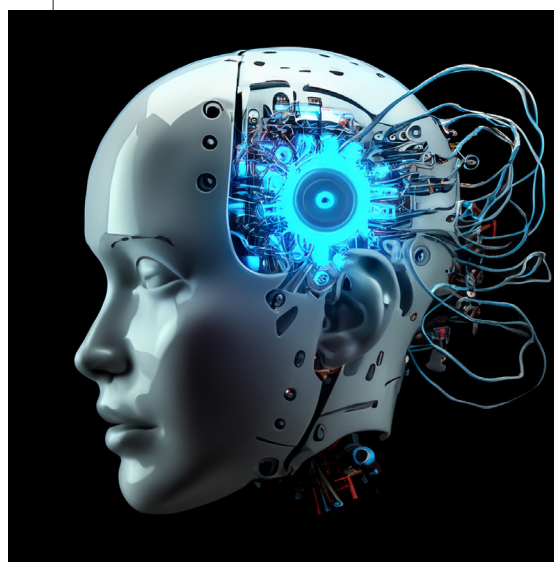
# The Parrot



ISSUE #177  
SPRING 2024



Inside This Issue



## The Rise of AI by Huda Alrikabi, ESL 315

If you have ever used Chat GPT, you were probably impressed by its capabilities and potential, but you may have also been fearful of the kind of future AI would bring. There have always been concerns about the negative effects of new technologies in society. Nevertheless, technological innovations are

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## The Bravest Advocate for Women in Afghanistan

*I have known Malalai Alavi since late 2005, when we both worked in the Herat province of Afghanistan at the Election Commission during the first presidential election. I found Malalai Alavi a talented, active, and kind young woman who supported women's rights, equality, and equity.*

*I am glad that I was able to arrange this interview despite the many difficulties that she struggles with currently in Afghanistan. I am happy*

*Continued on page 32*



Would you like  
to contribute to  
*The Parrot?*

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## Student Chirpings

### *Uzgorod, Cancun, Germany: Nice Places*

**Editor's Note: We wish to apologize for omitting paragraph three from Roxi's writing when it appeared in Issue #176. We are sharing her writing again in this issue in its entirety. Thank you.**



Cancun is a good place to visit. It is a part of Mexico. Cancun has a beautiful ocean. In hotels, they serve very delicious food.

However, if you speak Spanish, it will be much easier to communicate with the personnel in the hotel. I was in Cancun ten years ago, and I loved it there. However, Cancun is not a safe place to walk around. Cancun is a nice place, but I would not visit this place again.

Uzgorod is my favorite place for a vacation. Uzgorod is a part of Ukraine. I was born there. I spent all my childhood in Ukraine. There are beautiful mountains and rivers. People are very nice and polite. Uzgorod has nice schools. I love everything about Uzgorod. But it is hard to make money there, so a lot of people move to different countries for a better life.



When I am rich, I want to visit Germany. I think Germany is an interesting place to visit. Germany has good chocolate. Also, one of my cousins lives there, so I can visit him. My biggest challenge probably would be language. I hope one day my dream will come true.

**Roxi - ESL 37  
Opinion Writing**

## Odes from ESL 350

### Ode to ماء

*"Maa" is the Arabic word for "water."*

*By Aicha Boubeker*

*Elixir of life*

*What can I tell you?*

*You are perfect no matter how you are  
Cold and hard, you make me feel sad, alone  
Here but not, I forgot about you*

*You get upset*

*Then you remind me that you exist*

*How can I forget about you?*

*How can life exist without you?*

*From the sky to the ground, you fall*

*You remind everyone who you are.*

*You talk. Everyone listens.*

*But do they listen to you?*

*Not sure!*

*I heard you*

*You said*

***"PITTER-PATTER. YOU HUMAN! YOU ARE UNGRATEFUL!***

*One day I will go forever!*

*I will leave you if you don't take care of me!*

*I will go to another world.*

*I will leave my home "Earth"*

*I assure you, nothing will be the same"*

*"NO, NO! Please don't leave us!*

*How can Earth survive without you?*

*How can we poor beings survive without you?*

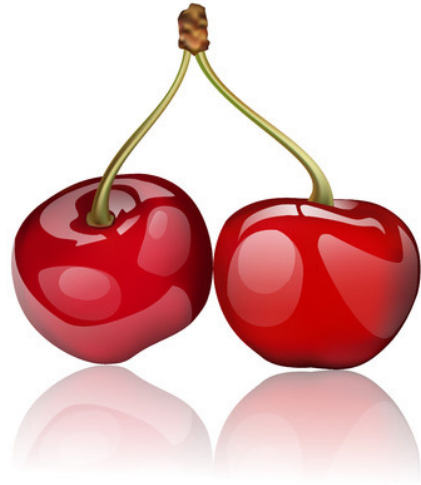
*We promise!*

*We promise!*

## Ode to Cherries

*By Erfan Intezar*

Clusters of big and small  
 Get together  
 In a sweet tree  
 A tree with green leaves  
 How happy is our tree  
 Winter is gone  
 A tree with blossoms  
 White blossoms shining  
 How happy is our tree  
 Winter is gone  
 Our tree has grown  
 With shiny leaves  
 How happy is our tree  
 Winter is gone  
 They are tasty  
 With beautiful color  
 How happy is our tree  
 Winter is gone  
 Your jam is delicious  
 Your taste is delicious  
 They are cherries



## Flowers are Love; Flowers are Us

*By Carmen Lara Zavala*

If you see a rose, what would you  
 feel?  
 Would you be able to like it?  
 Does it make you feel  
 impressed? Like what  
 beautiful is that, and  
 having an open mouth with  
 big open eyes. Wishing  
 quickly to touch it, and feel  
 it, and smell it.  
 People love flowers and  
 flowers love us!!!  
 If so, a rose...  
 you are\*  
 Be happy and lovely!



## Grades: Friends or Foe?

While I was studying in high school, I did a lot of writing assignments on biology. I always got them back from the teacher with a low grade but without any correction or underlining, and we were not allowed to dispute our grades. It made biology my least favorite subject. I think schools and colleges should refuse the existing grading system.

The first disadvantage of the grading system is a large pressure on students' mental health. Before some important assignments, children worry a lot and feel anxiety. And this state often doesn't allow them to get high grades. It is a never-ending cycle. Also, grades can cause a bad relationship between kids and parents. Instead of asking, "What did you learn today?" or "Did you have fun? How was your day?" parents pay attention to grades. Sometimes children feel fear after getting a low grade. Also, comparing their own grades with others can lower their self-esteem and discourage them from studying.

The second reason why the grading system should be revised is its inability to reflect students' knowledge correctly. Checking students' essays, the teacher can't be sure that it is really their own work. On the other hand, students also can't assess themselves correctly with grades. Instead of just grades, it would be great for students to get individual feedback from the teacher, pointing out what part of material should be paid attention to. These comments have to help in future classes and not just assess students' past performance.

However, there are situations when grades are necessary. For example, universities can't accept everyone who has applied. So, they have entrance exams for their future students. Of course, these exams can also be stressful for students. In my country, I was supposed to have graduation exams. Then I had to take exams at all the universities where I wanted to apply. The difference between school and

university exams was huge! But later, there was only one unified state exam. School students could choose a few needed subjects and prepare for almost one year for that exam. The results of that exam could be accepted by any university in my country. I think it is a less stressful way to get the most important grades that could influence your future.

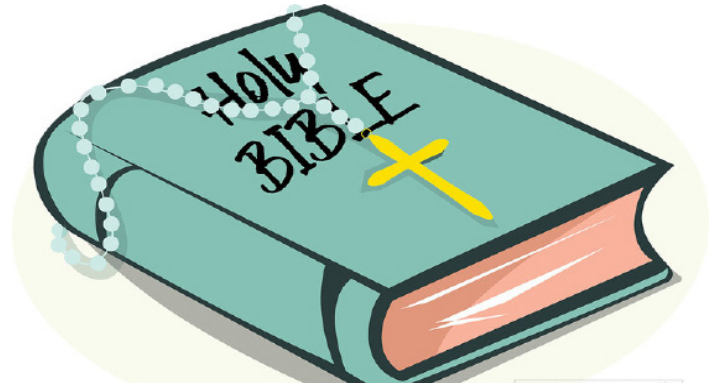
To wrap up, I'd say that the existing grading system needs to be revoked. Grades often become a reason of students' stress and anxiety. They also can lead to bad relationships in the family. In addition, grades don't give a real assessment of students' knowledge. But we still have situations when our level of knowledge needs to be assessed. For those situations, there are supposed to be favorable and calm conditions to prepare for important exams. So, I think schools and colleges shouldn't continue to use grades.



**Olena Shatokhina - ESL 47  
Opinion Essay**

## My Most Useful Things

The first of my important and useful thing is my Bible. I use my Bible every day in the morning and the evening. It is always with me. All people need it for their future life. If people read this book, they will be very smart. I think the Bible makes people kinder and friendly. If people read it, there will not be wars on the earth. I don't need a new Bible because my old Bible is very important for me.



The second of my most useful thing is my smartphone. It is a very important thing for me at this time. I use my phone very often. It is always in my bag. I use my phone to communicate with my friends or members of my family, and sometimes I read news on the phone. Also, I watch interesting programs on YouTube using my smartphone. However, I think we need free time without smartphones. This is time for quiet! I don't need a new smartphone because I have a good working old smartphone, at least in my opinion.



The third thing is my car. I use my car every day. It stays in our parking lot, and when I need to go somewhere, I take my car. In our city, if you don't have a car, you will have a lot of problems. You can't go to stores or to work, and you can't pick up your children at school. I like my car, but if I had more money, I would buy a new car because my old car often breaks down. I will be very happy if I fix this problem.



## Thankful to America

People around the world are grateful for many different things. I am from Ukraine. I moved to California one year ago because there is war in my country. There are three special things that I am really grateful for in America: the majestic ocean, my car, and the opportunity to get an education.

First, a special thing I am really thankful for is the ocean. The ocean is so majestic and huge.

It is my power place. My family and I go to the ocean almost every weekend. We love the ocean near San Francisco. It is called Rodeo Beach. We have fun, play games, and breathe sea air there. What we especially like is eating snacks and drinking hot tea. Being at the ocean with family is great. We enjoy the calming waves, build sandcastles, and swim together. Watching the sunset is the best part—it creates special memories.

In addition, when I go there, I feel excited and peaceful. The place is really important for my family because in Ukraine, we saw a lot of horrible moments. Even the waves make me happy. In summary, I am thankful to the USA for the beautiful and majestic natural places. These places make me happy and safe.

Another thing that I am thankful for is my car. My first car is still in Ukraine, so I thought I would never buy a new car. However, I bought a new and better car here. I am thankful to America for this. When I came to the USA, I felt sad and nervous because all my things were still in Ukraine, but the USA gave me hope. If you work hard and study a lot, you can do anything here. Right now, I have two good cars, my husband is a mechanic, and it is cheap for me. I love my car with all my

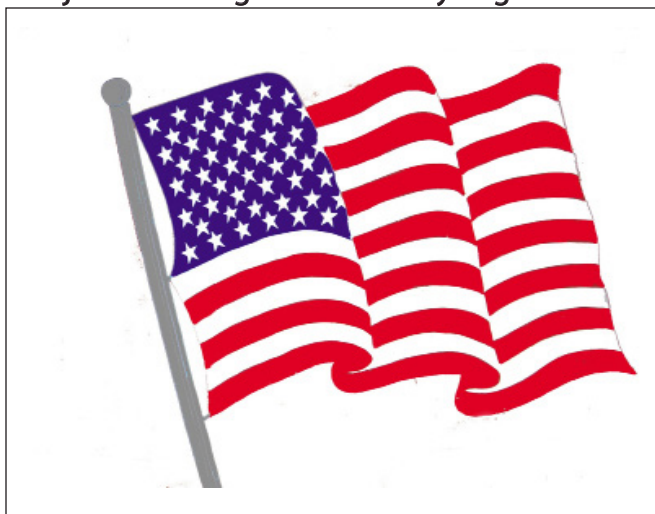
heart. It helps me to go to the college, grocery store, church, park, and the ocean. Having a car means life is easier and more convenient. Thanks to America's car culture, I can enjoy the freedom of the open road. Lastly, the gift of owning a car in America is a source of freedom, for which I am really thankful.

The last thing I'm thankful for is the opportunity to get an education in America. It is very

important to have an education in order to have a good job. I thank American River College for the opportunity and my professor for a quality education. I have the chance to learn and grow. Learning gives me the chance to make friends. At college, I meet people with smiles and interests. Working on projects and sharing experiences in class creates con-

nections. In addition, I want to thank America for paying for kindergarten for my children, so that I can study for a better future. In the future, I hope to get a pharmacist license, to work in a hospital, and to speak English perfectly. It is my American dream. Thank you, America, for the opportunity to study, to work, and to develop.

Indeed, America has given me a lot to be thankful for: the many good things, education, and opening the door to a new world regardless of status. Thank you, America, and God bless you!



**Vira Kotsiubailo - ESL 47  
Opinion Essay**



## What Do You Miss from Your Country?

I'm from Egypt. I came to the U.S.A. seven years ago. I miss many things in my country. I miss my friend Amina, my job, the village, and fresh juices. The special things I miss in my country are my sister, Kochari sauce, my mother's jewelry box, and the tourist city Sharm Elsheikh.

First, I miss my sister Ola and her children. Ola is kind, a good friend, funny, and a professional cook. She is kind because anytime I came home from school late, she didn't tell my mom. Ola makes amazing seafood. She makes good sweets such as cake, baklawa, knafeh (special Turkish sweet), and harissa (semolina cake) too. In addition, she loves raising pets such as chickens, ducks, goats, and rabbits. Also, Ola has beautiful kids: two girls and two boys. The first girl's name is Rahab and she is 25 years old. She is married and has a two-year-old son. The second child is Ahmed. He is 24 years old. He works with his dad in the airport in Alexandria. He loves playing soccer. The third child is Rania. She is 22 years old. She will get married next December. After her wedding, she will live in Washington, DC. The last boy is Ziad he is in elementary school. He is the national champion in athletics. I love Rahab, Ahmed, Rania, and Ziad my sister's children. In sum, I love



my sister because she is a lovely friend, kind sister, and good cook. I miss her very much.

Next, I miss the food in my country. First, I love the smell. I love fresh food. For example, Kochari is a tomato sauce with onion, beans, pasta, salt, black pepper, cumin, rice, and hot sauce. I boil the pasta, beans, and rice. After that, I fry the onion in a pot until the color changes to gold. When it's done, I put all ingredients together and mix them with pasta, rice, beans, and tomato sauce. It's very delicious. Every item for this food is very cheap. Most people in Egypt eat this dish. It is healthy and easy to make. In short, Kochari is very cheap, delicious, and easy to make, and I love it.

Another thing I really miss from my country is my mother's jewelry box. First, my mother had a big box full of jewelry. She had saved money to buy gold jewelry. My mother bought gold pounds and bullion. The bullion is a bar of gold of 33.4 grams and 24 karats. She had a lot of them. Many women in my family save money to buy gold because the value of gold increases over time, especially if its quality is high. My mother had a lot of jewelry that she wore on special occasions, such as Eid, weddings, and birthday parties. We have a lot of my grand-



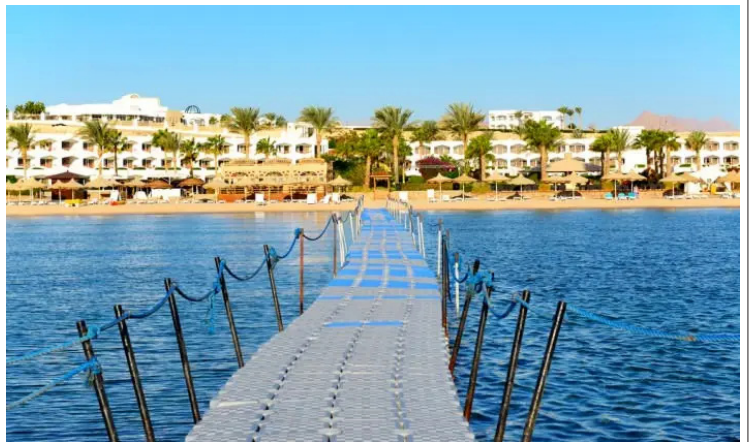


mother's and my mother's jewelry right now. My mother had a necklace in the shape of a gold snake with red ruby snake's eyes. When I was young, I was afraid of its appearance, but when I grew up, I loved this necklace very much. In sum, I love my mother's jewelry because she had a very good idea for saving money. I like the quality and the design of her old jewelry.

Finally, I miss Sharm Elsheikh because it's a very good city, quiet, clean, and the weather is very clear. I do many activities



when we are there. In the morning I used to swim in the Red Sea. Sometimes, I would dive in and watch coral reefs under the sea. Also, I would go on safari in the desert, ride camels, and climb mountains. Sometimes I took a boat or yacht all day on the sea. I like fishing. At night I went to the casino to listen to music, dance, and sing. I liked to sit in the cafeteria and drink Bedouin tea. I love eating fresh fish. Sometimes, I went shopping. The prices are good. For example, the clothing for women is very cheap. In addition, the weather in the morning is very warm and



at night it is warm too. In the summer, it is hot. In the winter, it is very warm. All the people are very kind and friendly. I love Sharm El-Shaikh because the weather is very warm all year. The food is very fresh and healthy. The city is safe, cheap, quiet, and clean. The Red Sea is very beautiful. Indeed, I miss this place.

In conclusion, I live in America now and I love America, but I miss the food, my family, my mother's jewelry box, and places in my country so much.

**Azza Mahmoud – ESL 47  
Descriptive Essay**



## Treasures In My Life

Many people have their own treasures. Some people value their cars, and some people value gifts from their parents. I have my own personal treasures that are important to me. These are three things that are dear to me and that I love: my wedding ring, my parents' house, and my husband.

The first thing I value is the ring that my husband gave me for my engagement. This is also a memory for me of how we started together in our lives. It started when my future husband and my mother went to buy a ring. When I was a student, my husband worked hard as a driver and received a low salary. My husband said that the ring was a symbol of love for me, which would remind me of him even if he was far away. When I was choosing a ring, it was important to me not only to look beautiful, but also to be practical. Seeing this ring, I really wanted it, but I realized that we wouldn't have enough money. It was gold and made of a large, beautiful stone. I was upset, but my mother offered me something that I didn't expect. She offered to give us two of her necklaces and buy us this ring. It was very pleasant and sad at the same time. In short, this ring remains for me as a



memory of that day and is precious to me.

The next thing I really appreciate is my parents' house in Ukraine. This is where I grew up and my parents loved every corner of the house. My father built this house after the death of his mother and moved from the city to the village. He demolished the old house and built a large two-story house. This

village where he was located was from the city, but the place where this house stood was important to my father in memory of his mother. He tried to do everything with his own hands, without the help of a builder. We also helped him, for example, we helped with cleaning or gave him tools. It was hard work, but he did it for us. I

loved the room that my parents made for me as I dreamed. It was bright with large mirrors. The room overlooked the forest, where every morning could hear silence and birdsong. My parents made a large patio overlooking the forest, where they could relax with friends or just relax after a hard day. Mother had a large kitchen where I learned to cook and helped her. Even now, though I have grown up and have my family, my children love to fly to visit Ukraine and spend time in

the house there. In short, my parents' house is a wonderful place because it is the home where I grew up and is a treasure to me.

Lastly, there is my precious husband. He is the person I fell in love with for the first time. We met when I just graduated from school. Then, I was riding a bike with a friend and my husband said that it was love at first sight, and that's how our story began. He was raised in a Christian family, and therefore behaved modestly, but at the same time with dignity. This is a good example for our daughters of what a man should be. He is a very kind person and will always help in any situation. For him, his family is of great value to him, so he treasures what he has very much. He is special to me because he is my support. I'm surprised how he never gives up on any problem. On the contrary, he's glad that he has us so he can be confident that we can handle everything else. He always finds free time to spend together with the

family. It was difficult for us to start all over again together in America, but we did it and it is a blessing for me that I made a good choice. I'm glad that it is my husband who is always my protection and support. Indeed, he changed my life and made our family happy. I will always cherish that.

In conclusion, these treasures are special for my life. They will always be important to me.

**Alona Kokhanevych - ESL 47  
Opinion Essay**





## Holidays in Afghanistan vs. Holidays in USA

I want to share how Afghan-Americans usually spend their holidays if they go back to Afghanistan in the holiday season instead of staying in the United States. Before I go into details, I must say that for the majority of Afghan-Americans this is a really a tough choice to choose whether to spend holidays in the USA or to travel to Afghanistan and spend holidays with extended families back home. There are multiple reasons that make the decision hard on Afghan-Americans.



The first thing is the economic aspect of it. There is a huge amount of money that needs to be spent for return tickets and other travel expenses to go to Afghanistan and visit family. The second reason is that travelling to Afghanistan from the USA is quite time consuming and involves going far away. Afghan-Americans spend two days on the way to Afghanistan and two other days on the way back. I want to focus now on how Afghan-Americans spend their holidays once they are in Afghanistan or when they are in the USA in the holiday season.

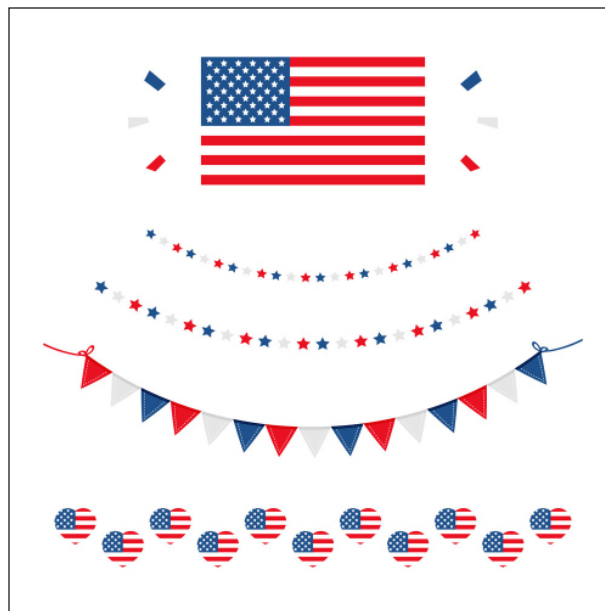
I am sure most Afghan-Americans do similar things when they travel from the USA to Afghanistan. In the initial days of arriving in Afghanistan, it is a family custom to visit elders of the families to pay respect and ask how they are doing. It is worth mentioning that it would look a lot nicer to wear Afghan

traditional clothing when visiting elders of the families; however, if I wear what I am wearing here in the USA, it would make no difference. Then, after the initial visit to elders of families, all the extended family members will be notified by word of mouth that I am in Afghanistan for the holidays. After that, the second phase of the trip will start. In Afghan culture, family bonds play a central role. One fun thing that Afghan families do is to have family

reunions or family gatherings. Although there are many families who are not in a good economic situation to host a guest, when someone from their extended families comes to Afghanistan from another country, they invite them over and host a dinner or lunch. Hospitality and sharing foods with others are inseparable features of Afghan culture. The invitation would be a family gathering where the host will prepare the best food possible and then will have seasonal fruits and chit-chatting till late in the night.

Some of the family members who are in better economic situations own gardens in the countryside of the province they inhabit. When they are hosting guests, they take them to

their private gardens, where there are many types of seasonal organic fruits. Some of those gardens are equipped with swimming pools and children's playgrounds. Under the previous regime, music





was not banned by the government; the host would invite some local musical artists to his/her garden when hosting the guest and then they would have live traditional and classical music.

Another joyful aspect of traveling to Afghanistan on vacation is going to picnic places with family members. Afghanistan is a country with so many nice and beautiful historical places in each province. There are so many historical places in the Herat province, where I am originally from. Some of the historical places are the Citadel of Herat,

Herat Central Blue Mosque, Khaja Abdullah Ansari shrine, Takht-e-Safar Park, Herat Minarets, etc. Visiting the historical places with family members and old friends refreshes the memory of Afghan-Americans.

Attending parties is another joyful thing that Afghan-Americans love to do when visiting Afghanistan. Some Afghan-Americans even coordinate with family members prior to their trip to make travel arrangements in a way that ensures they can attend as many family parties as possible, especially wedding parties.

Now, let's talk about how Afghan-Americans spend their holidays if they decide to stay in the USA. Spending holidays in the USA is a lot

cheaper and easier for most Afghan-American families because they will spend less money. A family trip to Afghanistan for a medium size family costs approximately 10 to 15 thousand dollars, whereas a trip inside the USA is much cheaper and is easier to plan. Usually, Afghan-Americans who are living in California will make a travel plan for their vacation time to go to Lake Tahoe, Los Angeles, Las Vegas, or San Francisco, rather than travel from the west coast to the east

coast. Hence, it is a lot easier to plan a trip in the USA instead of going to Afghanistan. Obviously,

travelling in the USA is pretty easy for all Afghan-American families. Most Afghan-American families prefer to take a long drive, which is more fun and affordable.

Overall, Afghan-Americans in their vacation time love going to Afghanistan rather than spending their holidays in the USA. However, due to some life hardships and financial difficulties, they cannot travel to Afghanistan very often, especially now that Afghanistan is under the control of the Taliban. Instead, they spend their holidays in the USA with the family and friends they have here or have a short trip to nearby destinations.

**Parrot Staff Writer: Sayed Edres Sadiqi**



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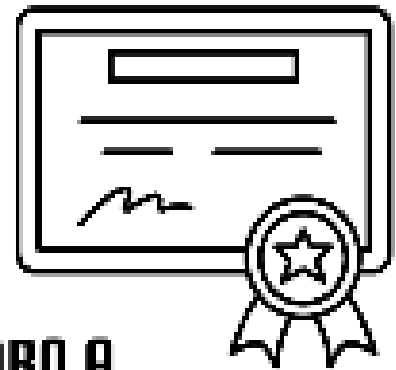
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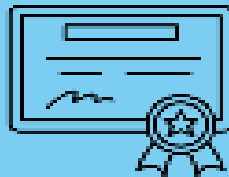
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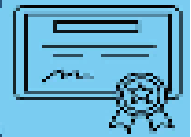
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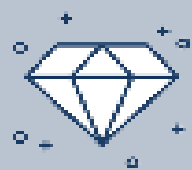
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## Beginner Reading Comprehension

### A Funny Story

Barbara likes funny stories. She likes to hear funny stories. She likes to tell funny stories. She told her mom a funny story. When she finished, she waited for her mom to laugh. "Mom, why aren't you laughing? That was a funny story," Barbara said. "Oh, I'm sorry," her mom said. "Sometimes you think something is funny, but someone else thinks it isn't funny." So, Barbara's mom did not laugh at Barbara's story. Barbara told the same story to her younger sister. Her younger sister laughed at the story.



Want to listen to this story? Click on the website below:  
<https://www.eslfast.com/supereasy/se/supereasy015.htm>

### Can you answer these questions?

#### 1. Who likes funny stories?

- A) Her mom likes funny stories.
- B) Barbara likes funny stories.

#### 2. What did Barbara do after she finished her story?

- A) She continued telling stories.
- B) She waited for her mom to laugh.
- C) She left.
- D) She asked her mom a question.

#### 3. Why did her mom not laugh?

- A) Because she didn't listen to Barbara.
- B) Because she didn't like it.
- C) Because she thought it wasn't funny.

#### 4. Who did she tell the same story?

- A) Her younger sister.
- B) Her dad.
- C) Her pet parrot.







Would you like to  
contribute to *The Parrot*?

If you want to share your work, art,  
opinion, or anything else with  
*The Parrot*, please email us at  
[TheParrot@arc.losrios.edu](mailto:TheParrot@arc.losrios.edu). We  
would be happy to hear from you  
and will try to respond ASAP.  
*The Parrot* welcomes all ESL stu-  
dent matters!



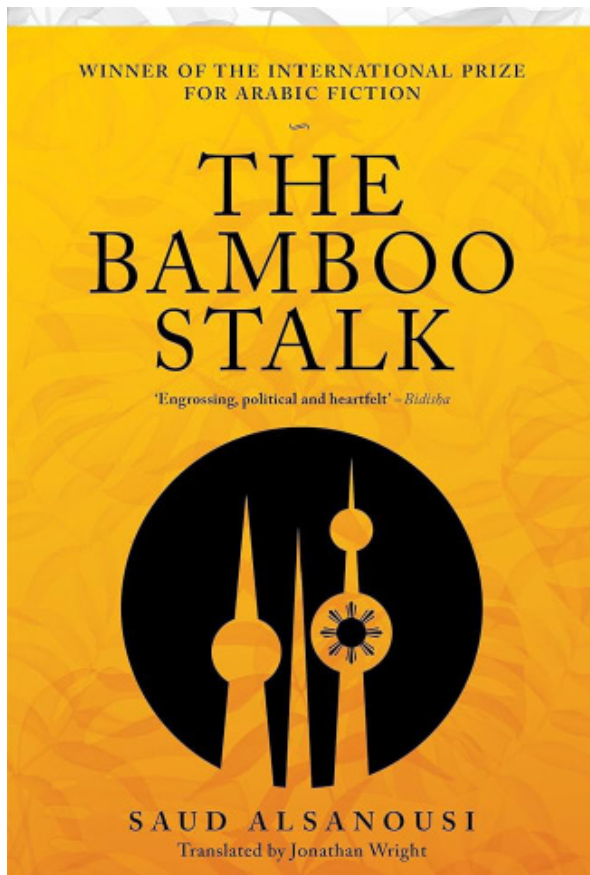
## Book Review: *The Bamboo Stalk*

**Note: This is a review of the Arabic version of the novel, not the English version; therefore, the names of the characters and places are from my personal translation.**

The novel *The Bamboo Stalk* is a distinctive literary work written by Kuwaiti novelist Saud Al-Sanousi. It was first published in 2012 and won the International Prize for Arabic Fiction (Booker Prize) in 2013.



*Saud Al-Sanousi, author of The Bamboo Stalk*



Saud Al-Sanousi's book delves into identity, belonging, cultural diversity, and social conflicts. This novel is one of the few significant literary works that shed light on the complexities of mixed identities in Arab society, especially in the Arab Gulf countries, where many cultures and ethnicities coexist. This part of the world is considered one of the most attractive regions for foreign workers because it offers economic stability. But this stability is not without religious, cultural, ethnic, and political challenges.

This situation contributes to identity challenges, particularly for those with mixed identities.

The novel centers around "Issa," who was born to a Filipino mother and a Kuwaiti father, and it follows his struggle in searching for his identity between Kuwait and the Philippines. Issa grew up in the Philippines in poor and complicated circumstances and always dreamed of going to Kuwait, which he considered "paradise," as his mother described it. When he ended up in Kuwait, he found himself a stranger in his father's country, where he faced rejection from his family and community. The novel presents Issa's challenges in adapting to the new culture and searching for his place in society.

One of the most prominent topics in the novel is the theme of identity and belonging in a multicultural context. This is depicted through Issa, who struggles to define his identity in a volatile world between Kuwait and the Philippines. One manifestation of this identity conflict is that in the Philippines Issa was known as "Daniel" and lived a simple life with his mother and her family. However, when he arrived in Kuwait, he faced a significant challenge in adapting to the Kuwaiti culture. He began to feel alienated and separated from his community due to his cultural, religious, and even linguistic differences. The discrimination he was subjected to by Kuwaiti society because of his Filipino origins created a feeling of inferiority, and this was reinforced by some of his family members. The challenges faced by individuals with mixed identities can affect their perceptions of themselves and

the world around them.



Saud Al-Sanousi is a Kuwaiti novelist and journalist, born in 1981.

The second prominent topic is cultural and social conflict. The novel deals with the cultural conflict faced by Issa, who lives between two disparate cultural beliefs and values. Issa feels differences in the value of family and family relations between the two cultures. In Filipino culture, as seen through the character of Issa and his family in the Philippines, there is a great emphasis on close family ties, mutual support, and maintaining strong, close-knit relationships among family members. Filipinos generally show great compassion and tenderness in their family dealings, which Issa felt during his upbringing in the Philippines. On the other hand, in Kuwait, Issa encountered a different culture where social values and status are prioritized, and individuals are often evaluated based on their ethnic and social backgrounds. This made Issa feel isolated and unaccepted in Kuwaiti society, where he was viewed as a stranger or a “non-Kuwaiti” because of his Filipino origins, which conflicts with his experience in the Philippines, where family belonging and support were essential. Al-Sanousi presents the

tensions resulting from this conflict and how they shape Issa's experience of searching for his place in both Kuwait and the Philippines.

The third topic is diversity and cultural blending in shaping individual identities. For instance, Issa speaks two languages: Arabic and Tagalog. Also, he blends customs and traditions from both cultures into his daily life. For example, he respects Kuwaiti religious and social traditions while maintaining some Filipino customs and traditions that he learned from his mother. This combination of the two cultures reflects the difficulties and challenges people with mixed backgrounds face in forming their identities. The novel highlights how cultural diversity can be a source of strength and wealth, and at the same time, it can create great challenges in the search for belonging and identity. Issa's story reflects many of the real experiences of people from more than one culture, making the novel a powerful way to explore the impact of culture on the individual.

In conclusion, the novel *The Bamboo Stalk* by Saud Al-Sanousi, provides its readers with a rich literary experience that delves into key issues of identity in a multicultural world. By skillfully portraying the inner conflict of Issa's character and the vicissitudes of his life between two contrasting cultures, the novel offers a unique look at the challenges faced by individuals with diverse backgrounds. The novel draws the reader into its world through its sophisticated language and masterful narrative techniques, offering them a deep understanding of complex human experiences. *The Bamboo Stalk* is more than just a novel; it explores profound human issues that touch every reader searching for the meaning of identity and their place in a changing world. Therefore, this novel is essential reading for those seeking a deeper understanding of the impact of culture on personal identities.

**Parrot Staff Writer: Mohammed El mrani**



## English Conversation Group

● ● ● *Wednesdays 2:30-3:30 p.m. North Natomas*

**Want to practice speaking English? Join our friendly group!**

Meet new people in your community and share experiences and ideas.

All languages and levels are welcome. No registration required.

**Topics:**

- Everyday life situations
- American culture
- Things to do for fun
- News, pop culture
- Other...You help decide!

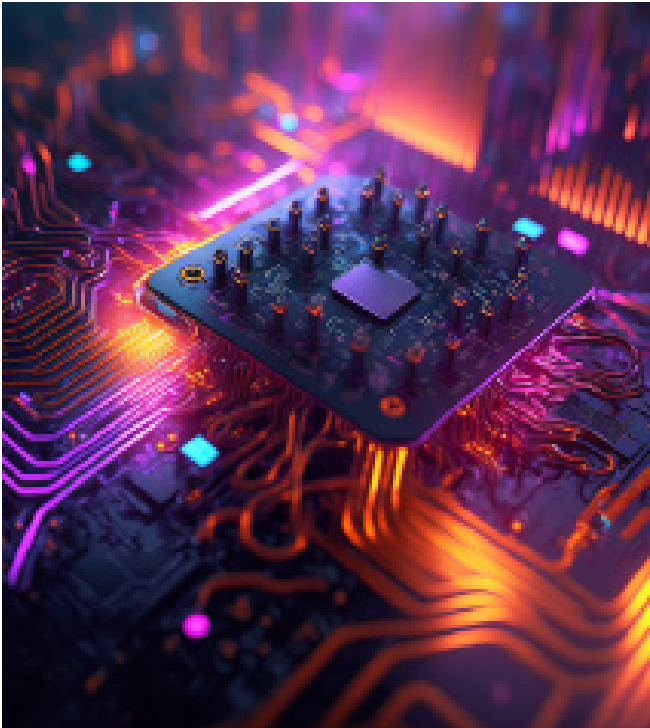
Groups are led by a trained facilitator. We hope to see you there!







*Continued from page 1*



inevitable and in most cases unavoidable simply because it's human nature. This reality definitely applies to AI's current development. These new developments bring us closer to a technology capable of doing jobs that have always been thought of as human work. Tasks like creative writing, art, health care, finance, and autonomous driving are some of the many things AI is capable of doing. This powerful tool could help thousands of people in ways that have not even been thought of. However, like any new technology, AI is a double-edged sword. If not properly used or developed, AI could severely damage society. This is why regulations for AI should be put in place. If none are enacted, AI could negatively impact education, compromise online security, and spread misinformation.

One of the main concerns with AI is its influence on education. Over the decades schools have used a variety of techniques to deter cheating, and at the time they were really effective. Subjects that rely heavily on creativity were also fairly resilient to common cheating methods. However, with the introduction of AI tools,

cheating has become an ever-growing problem. These AI tools are effective because they produce written text that is almost indistinguishable from human writing. Indeed, any assignment requiring written material can easily be completed using AI tools. While AI plagiarism detection tools do exist for such applications, they are highly unreliable and may cause more harm than good. According to a research paper from computer science professor Soheil Feizi, "For a sufficiently advanced language model seeking to imitate human text, even the best-possible detector may only perform marginally better than a random classifier" (Feizi 1). In other words, using plagiarism detectors is hardly better than deciding randomly if a text is plagiarized. Furthermore, students have also been found to use AI tools for research purposes, which can result in very misleading research. For proper research, students need to know the sources and relevance of the information. This is to say, research is an active and not a passive process as AI tools present it. AI bias, which will be discussed in depth later in this text, has also been found in AI tools which could result in biased research. All of these problems combine to create an unproductive and meaningless learning experience for students. According to educationnext.org, "Aside from the ethical issues involved in such cheating, students who use AI to do their work for them may not be learning the content and skills they need" (educationnext.org). This is why regulations and standards need to be put in place for these AI tools to ensure the stability of the education system.

Another fundamental concern with AI is its potential use in malicious activities and information alteration. It shouldn't be a surprise to see AI tools being used in scam operations and blackmail. At its core, AI is a tool that's meant to emulate humans. In other words, AI is a very effective tool for impersonation and manipulation. Tools such as voice emulators

and image deep fakes are some of the many tools used by scammers. According to the Federal Trade Commission, “AI products could be used by malicious actors to increase the scale or sophistication of existing scams” (Federal Trade Commission per.2). On a technical level, AI is also an effective tool for system hacking. AI’s ability to emulate humans makes it a great tool for bypassing online security measures. As Cyber Seniors point out, “AI can create malware that adapts its behavior to bypass traditional security measures, evading detection systems” (Cyber Seniors per.3). These qualities clearly justify why AI should be a regulated system to ensure online security.

On a much larger scale, AI tools could also be used by malicious actors to spread misinformation. This is another widely used application of AI in the media that can have extremely detrimental effects. According to Homeland Security “deep fakes and synthetic media do not need to be particularly advanced or believable in order to be effective in spreading mis/disinformation” (Homeland Security per.5). In other words, as AI tools become more sophisticated, the spread of misinformation will become an even larger problem. If allowed to continue, these tools could easily be used by corrupt politi-

cians or other beneficiaries to influence public opinion. However, there is a much more fundamental issue with the AI system itself. Some AI models were shown to output biased information in accordance with the information it was given. Instead of detecting bias, these AI systems amplify any bias they find in their input data and present it as truth. According to the National Library of Medicine, “Some artificial intelligence (AI) systems can display algorithmic bias, i.e. they may produce out-

puts that unfairly discriminate against people based on their social identity” (National Library of Medicine per.1). This can be extremely dangerous, especially when AI becomes a more widely used tool around the world. For ex-



ample, if AI becomes a tool used by employers to pick out promising candidates, the AI system will likely make decisions that are in favor of certain social groups. These issues highlight the importance of AI regulations. If no regulations are put in place, social disparity will become a big issue that could later develop into civil conflicts.

Some might argue that current online regulations sufficiently ensure public security, and that there is truly nothing special about the issues presented by AI. They might also see AI as just like any new piece of software that is overhyped. This perspective undermines the significance of AI to the human condition. AI is special in that it is able to almost perfectly emu-

late human intelligence, which carries a lot of unique issues, as discussed earlier. Some might also argue that the pinnacle of the technology revolution is the creation of human-level artificial intelligence. While this is debatable, no one can argue against the impact AI could have on society. One can name any field, and somehow AI could be involved. Therefore, saying that AI is hype or not special does not take into mind the bigger picture of AI's involvement in society.

Despite being in its early stages, AI has already caught the world's attention. This technology could change everything about society. But like any technology, it carries a lot of issues and risks that require strict regulations. If none are enacted, AI could compromise the quality of student's education, put everyone at risk of online fraud and hacking, and spread misinformation that could destabilize society. It is very possible that new unforeseen issues will develop, for AI touches on every aspect of society. However, with all of that in mind, it is still important to see the potential of AI in helping push humanity forward. It is good to have a rational mindset when dealing with new technology, but one must not fall for his own bias.

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**Huda Alrikabi - ESL 315  
Argument Essay**





## ARC Student, Mother, and Dari Poem Declaimer: Interview with Shaqaeq Qaderi



**Sayed Edres Sadiqi: Salam, Mrs. Shaqaeq Qaderi. First of all, thank you for giving *The Parrot* the opportunity to have an interview with you. Please introduce yourself and tell us about how you started your educational journey at American River College?**

**Shaqaeq Qaderi:** I am Shaqaeq Qaderi, a student at American River College. I have lived for about two years in the United States of America. I wasn't able to start my education as soon as I got here because I was told that I needed to live one year to become a California resident first and then I could start my education. So, I missed one year of my education because of some paperwork preparation.

**Sayed Edres Sadiqi: What is your major and what semester are you in right now? Also, did you face any challenges when you were enrolling yourself in American River College. If you did, how did you overcome the challenges?**

**Shaqaeq Qaderi:** This is my second semester and I'd love to be a nurse in future, but as of now, mostly I am taking ESL classes to get ready, and then I will take my major classes in future semesters. It is obvious that enrollment in American colleges is so different from enrollment in Afghanistan. I think this is also normal when you enter a new environment or a new system; you will face some challenges. I also experienced that when I decided to start my education at American River College. The enrollment process was totally new for me and I had no idea where to start and how to complete the process. However, thankfully there are so many Afghan students who are working as student helpers in different departments, who went through the enrollment procedures before and know everything from A-Z. They were the best resources for me that helped me so much to get through the enrolment problems. The first person I had the honor to get introduced to at ARC was Prisa Jan, who helped me so much in the enrollment process and played a mentor role for me. I am so thankful for her. I noticed that student helpers who can speak languages such as Russian, Ukrainian, Arabic, Dari, Farsi, Pashto, Urdu, Hindi, etc., are also available in different departments. They can help new students from other countries.

**Sayed Edres Sadiqi: Some of the newly arrived immigrants have strong enthusiasm to start their education here in the United States but, due to unfamiliarity with the new educational system, enrollment procedures, and available resources, can't start their education or enroll at all. So, what do you want to tell those who have this kind of feeling?**

**Shaqaeq Qaderi:** Usually, it is so normal to tackle

challenges when you enter a new system, especially when we are talking about the educational system in America for immigrant students, but based on my personal experience, I would recommend immigrant students to connect with positive-minded people who encourage you towards your life goals and to avoid the negative minded-people who can have a negative impact on yourself. Then, search for the people who went through the same process or

a person who is from your own culture and speaks your language and ask them your questions. There are so many resources that you don't know about, and you will be able to locate them if you look for them.



**Sayed Edres Sadiqi: What particular resources were helpful for you in your first semester?**

**Shaqaeq Qaderi:** I remember my very first day at ARC and how I was feeling that day. It was a mixture of feeling lost and wondering where to start. Thankfully, I knew some ARC students that I was able to contact and get help from. The second resource that helped me was the Afghan student helpers working in different ARC departments. The third resource that was pretty helpful was the professors in the ESL Department. The ESL professors are doing their best to speak in a way that a second language speaker can understand and are available to help you with your lessons whenever you need help.

**Sayed Edres Sadiqi: Immigrant students have different perspectives regarding higher education in the United States. Some may think that higher education in the United States is so difficult and**

**we (immigrants) can't do it. They reason this way because their English is not good or they don't know anything about the education system in the United States. How was your first-year experience at ARC? What do you think about these concerns of other immigrant students?**

**Shaqaeq Qaderi:** First of all, I want to say that the United States of America is a land of opportunity and everyone who comes to the United States should put

in effort to make his/her dreams come true. I know that when you enter a new country, you will face lots of challenges, but this does not mean that you should become disappointed and forget about your dreams and life goals. Pursuing higher education is, I believe, the first step towards dreams and goals. It is obvious and I should say is not super easy, but I assure you that, despite the many life responsibilities I have, I was able to do it with good planning, and

everyone else can do it too.

**Sayed Edres Sadiqi: So, your point is that with good life planning, even if new immigrants have lots of other responsibilities, they can pursue their higher education, right?**

**Shaqaeq Qaderi:** Yes, I was considering my life responsibilities and answered the questions. I am a mother who has all the responsibility of a housewife. Plus, I am a student and a declaimer who actively attends many cultural events. So, I have good planning and I think I'm doing all of my responsibilities very well. Hence, I believe other immigrants with good planning can continue their education alongside the other responsibilities they may have.

**Sayed Edres Sadiqi: How do you spend your free time if you have any, with all the responsibilities you have?**

**Shaqaeq Qaderi:** In my free time usually, I go to

the Sacramento Public Library and study there. I also exercise sometimes, and moreover, I love to spend my free time with my family. Besides all I mentioned above, one thing that I love doing in my free time is declaiming Dari poems.

**Sayed Edres Sadiqi: Wow, that is fantastic. So, you are a declaimer? Can you tell us more about it and share with us how you began declaiming Dari poems as your hobby?**

**Shaqaeq Qaderi:** When I was living in Afghanistan, I loved declaiming Dari poems in my school or on any occasion, but when I moved to the United States of America, my interest and passion in declaiming Dari poems got stronger and stronger day by day. In Afghanistan, my teachers at school and my classmates and friends were always encouraging me to declaim Dari poems. However, when I moved to Sacramento, California, I attended an Afghan culture night where I declaimed my first poem in the United States, and the Dari poem was from Kazim Kazimi. So many people from the Afghan community, people I never knew before, encouraged me a lot, and even my parents noticed that lots of people liked my declaiming, so they encouraged me to continue this path.

**Sayed Edres Sadiqi: How did you first discover your talent in declaiming Dari poems?**

**Shaqaeq Qaderi:** I was born in a belletristic family. My father is a poet. He writes Dari poems, and my brother is a declaimer too. Growing up I saw my brother declaiming Dari poems, and that caused me to start declaiming Dari poems and recording my voice and listening to it. Initially I shared my recording with my brother and he liked it so much and encouraged me a lot. Gradually I got better and better and started to declaim at school and in gatherings.

**Sayed Edres Sadiqi: If there is anything that we did not cover in our interview so far and you want to share with ARC students especially immigrant students, please share?**

**Shaqaeq Qaderi:** I want to say, "No pain, no gain." If you want to achieve something in your life, you have to work for it. Don't lose hope. Put as much effort as you can to make your dreams come true. There is no doubt that you will face challenges,

but I can assure you that you will be able to overcome all the challenges if you have solid determination to work for your goals.

**Sayed Edres Sadiqi: Shaqaeq Qaderi, thank you very much for giving *The Parrot* the opportunity to have an interview with you and sharing your thoughts with us.**

**Shaqaeq Qaderi:** It was a pleasure to have an interview with you. Thank you very much.

**Click on the photo down below to view the poem recited by Shaqaeq:**



**Parrot Staff Interviewer: Sayed Edres Sadiqi**



# Explore California: Lake Tahoe



*Logan Shoals Vista Point, Lake Tahoe NV*

Lake Tahoe is a stunning travel destination that should be on every nature lover's bucket list. It is known as "The Blue Gem of California and Nevada" and offers jaw-dropping beauty in the lake's blue waters and sandy beaches, and in Sierra Nevada's sculptural rock formations.

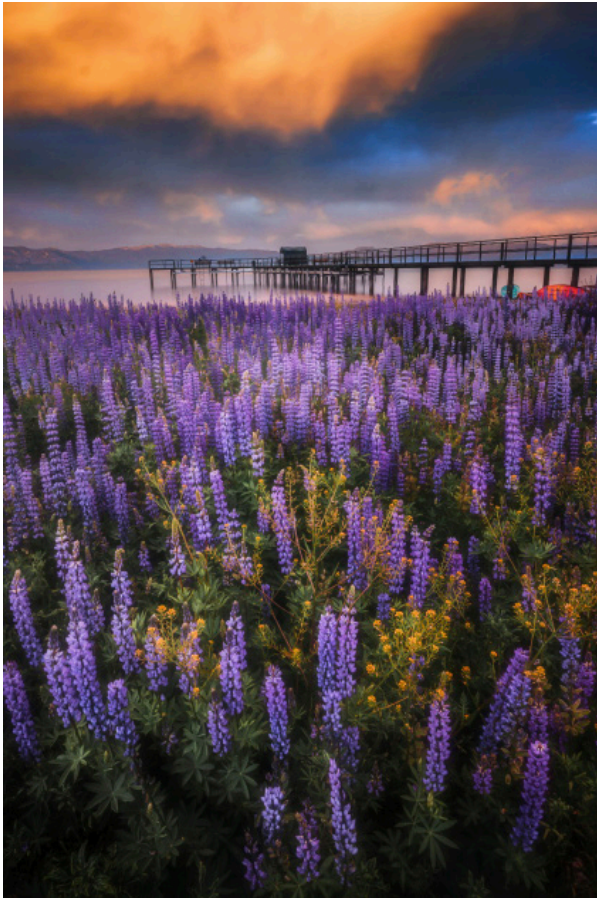
If you're a photographer looking to capture the beauty of Lake Tahoe, there are many great spots to choose from. Two of my

favorite places to take photos in Lake Tahoe are:

**Lake Forest Beach:** A secluded and peaceful public beach located in Tahoe City, California. It offers an incredible view of the lake and is a popular spot for swimming, sightseeing, bird watching, playing horseshoes, picnicking, and wind surfing. It is also a great spot to marvel at Mount Tallac



while surrounded by lupin flowers, as in these photos I took below.



**Cave Rock:** A natural formation located on the southeastern shore of Lake Tahoe, Nevada, USA. It is known for its cultural and spiritual significance to the Washoe tribe and for its unique geological features. The rock was formed about 5 million years ago as a volcanic vent.

Cave Rock State Park is a popular spot for picnicking, boating, fishing, swimming, and hiking, with a stunning view once you get to the top of the rock. I've hiked there during the night and the view is just out of this world! Below is one of the photos I've taken there.

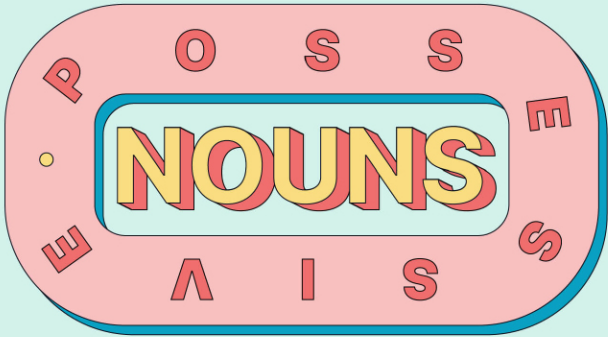


*If you like my photos and would like to see more, please feel free to follow me on [Instagram](#).*

**By Manny**

## Words of a Feather

### Possessive Nouns



#### Definition:

Possessive nouns show ownership. Possessive comes from the same root as *possession*, something you own.

There are two types of Possessive Nouns:

#### Singular Possessives

Add 's to singular words to show possession.

##### Example:

*dog's collar* / *sister's backpack* / *car's engine*  
 (dog + 's)      (sister + 's)      (car + 's)

If a singular word ends in s, it is still necessary to add 's.

##### Example:

*Charles's sneakers* / *Bess's dress* / *bus's tires*  
 (Charles + 's)      (Bess + 's)      (bus + 's)

#### Plural Possessives

If you have added an s to make a word plural (for example, *cat=cats*), adding 's will sound ridiculous (*cats's*). In that case, add only the apostrophe to the end of the word.

##### Example:

*dogs' collars* / *sisters' backpacks*  
 (dogs + ')      (sisters + ')

Just like singular possessives, plural possessives that don't end in s add 's.

##### Example:

*Children's homework* (Children + 's)  
*Fish's bowls* (Fish + 's)  
*Octopi's tentacles* (Octopi + 's)



Source:

<https://www.englishgrammar101.com/module-1/nouns/lesson-8/possessive-nouns>

# Poem

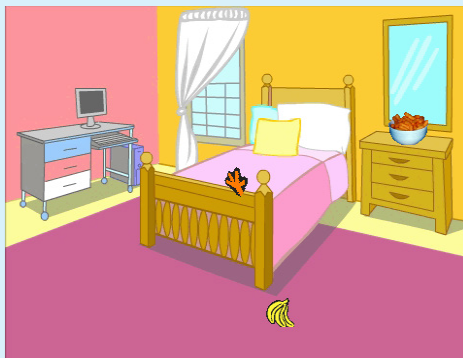
## All the Room You Need

By Lorna Crozier

Sky: an eye that never blinks  
 So much pain in me some days  
 I bend double under its gaze,  
 each vertebra a stone.

This is what comes of being too  
 much alone. There's no end  
 to it here, the sky gives you  
 all the room you need  
 to grow small.

Source: <https://www.lornacrozier.ca/poems/index.html#!>



## Rigoberto's Riddles

I fall, but I don't get hurt.  
 I pour, but I'm not a jug. I  
 help plants  
 grow, but  
 I'm not the  
 sun. What  
 am I?



Rain.

## Silly Vasily's Chuckle Chamber

### My One and Only

Roger, who was 19 years old, was buying an expensive bracelet, to surprise his girlfriend on Valentine's Day, at a very smart jeweller's shop in Hatton Garden, London.



The jeweller inquired, "Would you like your girlfriend's name engraved on it?"

Roger thought for a moment, grinned, then answered, "No, instead engrave 'To my one and only love!'"

The jeweller smiled and said, "Yes, sir; how very romantic of you."

Roger retorted with a glint in his eye, "Not exactly romantic, but very practical. This way, if we break up, I can use it again."



Source: <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/784118985138381999/>



*Continued from page 1*

*that she is advocating and fighting for women's rights with the current regime. Although she is not allowed to work, she is trying her best to advocate for humanity and human rights inside Afghanistan. Therefore, she is a voice of hope for the women in Afghanistan. There is no doubt that we need more women like her. I chose to interview her to encourage and motivate the young women to follow her as a role model and reach their goals.*

**Asila: Can you tell us about your journey as an activist in Afghanistan? What motivated you?**

**Malalai:** I am Malalai Alavi from Herat, Afghanistan.

For more than 15 years, I have been working for human rights; specifically, I am a women's advocate and am fighting to bring changes in women's rights in Afghanistan law. Despite the serious threats I've faced, I wanted to stay in Afghanistan with women of my homeland. While under severe security threats, I have raised my voice for justice for two consecutive years through participation in civil protests, social media, and other media. I have spoken out against explicit human rights violations and harsh restrictions imposed on women in the face of adversity. Fighting in the heart of enemy territory is challenging, and Afghan women protesters experience it every day.

**Asila: What are the biggest challenges you have faced as a woman in Afghanistan while pursuing your goals? And what made you go forward?**

**Malalai:** Being a woman in Afghanistan poses various challenges, including religious, economic, cultural, and social challenges. Undesirable traditions and beliefs prevalent in society directly impact

women's activities. Afghanistan society is heavily male dominated, with the majority believing that women are only created for household affairs, and that women's actions and words should be controlled by men. I am one of these women, and for years, I have fought against it. The result of my struggles has reached the level of accepting beatings, threats, and security risks, but I have not surrendered to any powerful and oppressive demands. Support from some family members and friends has helped me achieve what I aspire to.

**Asila: What are your specific issues of concern as an activist for Afghan women?**

**Malalai:** Gender discrimination, widespread violation of women's rights, exclusion of women from

political, social, cultural, and economic scenes, and the loss of all the achievements made over the past two decades due to international pressure and the activism of Afghan women are not only concerning but also disastrous. In terms of economic self-sufficiency, women in Afghanistan are

now living in poverty. The collapse of the economy has led to a society where women have no rights. Women's political participation has dropped to zero, and most young girls are facing mental health crises. Overall, women are experiencing a regression reminiscent of the dark days of the 1990s.

**Asila: What initiatives have you implemented to empower women in Afghanistan and promote gender equality?**

**Malalai:** When I served as an advisor in the executive branch and High Council for National Reconciliation and as the deputy of the provincial council in Herat, I launched the justice for women movement in 2016. Through an annual plan focused on gender issues, I implemented various programs and organized seminars for government staff.





**Asila: What kind of support, both locally and globally, do you believe is essential for the success of women activists, education programs, and business leaders in Afghanistan?**

**Malalai:** Due to severe educational and occupational limitations in Afghanistan, it is necessary to continue non-official and online capacity-building programs for women through supporting partners. Creating opportunities for small and medium-sized businesses through capital and loans is essential. Internationally, more laws and protection programs for Afghan women need to be established.

**Asila: How has the current political transition in Afghanistan affected your work, and what is your future considering these changes?**

**Malalai:** First of all, we should not call it a "political transition." It should be called the usurpation of power through covert deals. This process has had very negative effects on the work and economy of all Afghan citizens. We need a peace deal structured so that women have a role in politics and society, as they did in the past. However, the regime they created itself poses the biggest threat to women. This regime believes in the spread of Islamic sanctity, and within these sanctities, according to religious fundamentalists, extremists, and clerics, women have no place. The influx of unwanted elements like the Taliban (and some countries support this group) contributes to the survival of the regime and the ambiguity of Afghanistan's fate. All of this is a cause for concern.

**Asila: What are your hobbies, and can you tell us about a favorite childhood experience?**

**Malalai:** My childhood took place during a time when Afghanistan suffered from wars and the deprivation of the right to education under the first phase of the Taliban rule. Unfortunately, I have no good memories from my childhood. Currently, besides keeping up with daily news, I am engaged in reading books and occasionally participating in interviews or sessions with women.

**Asila: What is your specific message for Afghanistan women who are inside Afghanistan and for Afghanistan women who are immigrants in different countries for their self-development**

**and capacity-building or something else?**

**Malalai:** My message for Afghan women who are inside Afghanistan is to never surrender to oppressive rules. Do not accept defeat; continue the fight because no revolution succeeds without accepting risks and sacrifices for victory. Fight for your rights. For Afghan women abroad, empowerment is necessary for progress. Increase scientific and educational achievements in any possible way. Do not leave any human rights organizations untouched. Do not hesitate to make efforts for a change in the fate of women within your country and make the world focus more on Afghanistan.

*"We need a peace deal structured so that women have a role in politics and society, as they did in the past."*

*-Malalai Alavi*





## English Practice Hour

It will be in person and online.

Talk Time meets in Zoom once a week on Wednesdays and in-person once a month on Saturdays. We talk about holidays like Labor Day, but we also just check in with each other, telling highs and lows of our week. Students can email me, Professor Denise Saur, at [saurd@arc.losrios.edu](mailto:saurd@arc.losrios.edu) to get the time, locations, or link.



Scan QR Code

### Zoom Hours

MON - 8am to 12:30pm

THU - 11am to 7pm

FRI - 8am to 4:30pm

## ESL Center

**Open On Campus  
in the LRC!**

**Monday thru Thursday  
8:00 AM to 7:00 PM**

The ESL Center helps all multilingual students with their classes and questions. We speak Farsi, Dari, Pashto, Russian, Ukrainian, Spanish, and more. Come see us!



*Ask  
Questions*

*Get  
Help*



# DIY

## House Number Plaque



### Materials:

- Wood slice
- Mason jar
- Hose clamp
- Screwdriver
- Small piece of wood
- Sandpaper
- Vinyl numbers
- Picture hook and nails
- Burlap
- Flowers



### Tools:

- Screwdriver
- Drill (optional)

### Instructions:

1. Decide on mason jar placement; screw the small piece of wood into the wood slice in this location. Use the drill.
2. Nail two thin nails into the slots of the hose clamp and into the piece of wood.



3. Use a hand screwdriver to tighten the clamp





around the mason jar until secure. Add a picture hook to the back of the wood slice for hanging.



4

4. Use some sandpaper to smooth out the area where you will place the vinyl numbers.
5. Peel off the numbers needed and stick them on the wood slice in the desired arrangement.
6. To finish, wrap a few artificial or real flowers in burlap and place them into the jar. Hang the plaque on your home outside, preferably in a covered area.



Source and video:  
<https://diycandy.com/diy-house-number-plaque>

## Answer



Report, Test, Quiz, Write, Study & Learn

Did you find them?



## Volunteer Opportunity



### 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, and 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.

Starting Point is directed by Vickee Moy, a professor of English as a Second Language 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.

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

### Want to Help?

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.

## 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.

The two students below come from Moldova, a small country on the western border of Ukraine. [Click to read ten things you should know about Moldova.](#)



**"Coming to the U.S."**

*"When I won the greencard, I was very happy about it. I had applied twice to get it, so I was happy to get it on the second try..."*

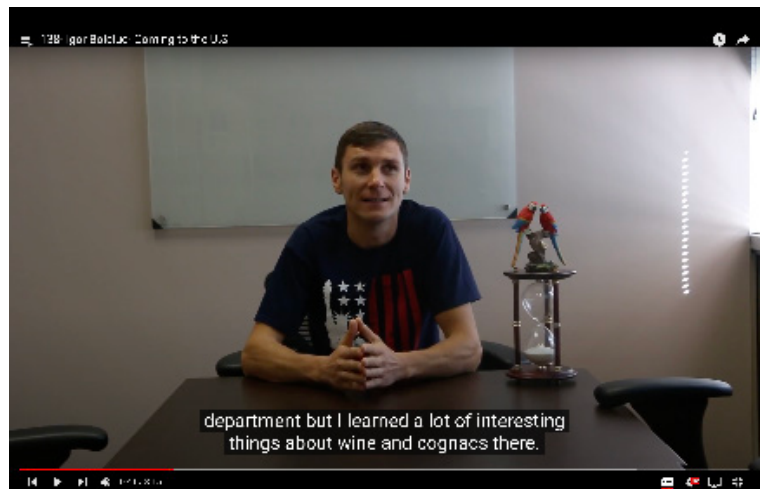
**-Dinu Eftodi, from Moldova**

Click on *Dinu's* photo and hear his story.

*"Our country has a lot of vineyards, so, of course, I worked on vineyard. I worked in the export/import department, but I learned a lot of things about wines..."*

**-Igor Boiciue, from Moldova**

Click on *Igor's* photo to hear his moving testimony.



**"Coming to the U.S."**

# Poetry Across Cultures: Arabic "Duel Poetry" and Rap

Parrot Staff Writer: Mohammed El mrani

There is no doubt that artistic expressions are constantly evolving, and at every stage of their development, they leave bridges across the gaps between cultures. Therefore, art sometimes ignores differences in religion, ethnicity, color, or geography. Therefore, it is common to find some similarities in many artistic expressions despite the differences in culture and geography. This applies to the "poetry of contradiction" (also known as "poetic duel" or "antithesis poetry") in the Arab culture, on the one hand, and to the art of modern rap, on the other.

"Contradiction poetry" is one of the important literary arts in Arabic literature. It is a type of poetry that appeared in the Umayyad era in particular (historically extending from 661 AD to 750 AD) and is characterized by a poetic duel between poets. Each poet praises himself and disparages the other in his poems while adhering to the meter and rhyme of the disparaged poem. Jarir and Al-Farazdaq are among the most famous poets of this art, and their duel poetry received great attention from scholars and researchers in Arabic literature. This type of poetry expresses literary competition and creativity through language and rhetorical



images. Criticism in these poems is not limited to individuals only. Rather, they were effective weapons for criticizing public policies, social conditions, governance systems, and prevailing culture.

At this level, there is a similarity between this type of Arabic poetry and the art of rap because the art of rap is essentially an act of

revolution against existing conditions. This art arose in the United States in the late sixties and early seventies as a form of cultural and political expression for minorities, especially in African American communities. It was used as a means of expressing the social and political issues faced by these communities. Dueling in the art of rap, also known as "battle rap," is

a form of poetic competition in which rappers confront each other in poetic battles involving rhythm and rhyme. Duels in the art of rap are a way to show poetic skill and creativity in rhythm and words.

Another technique that distinguishes the art of rap is the "freestyle," and it is considered the pinnacle of artistic skill. Competitors must confront each other directly without prior preparation, and the two competitors begin a poetic duel with the same rhyme and rhythm. The competition is often in the presence of a large audience and specialists in this art, and



one artist is preferred over another. Therefore, this type of art requires a broad memory, quick wit, intelligence, and mastery of the art of speech.

This type of artistic competition has its roots in the ancient Arab poetic culture, as there was a famous gathering in the Arabian Peninsula before Islam called "Souk Okaz," which was an annual exhibition of poetry and literature. Poetry competition was an important part of the events, where poets competed to

recite their poems to the audience. These competitions allowed poets to demonstrate their poetic and artistic skills. The winning poems were often hung on the walls of the Kaaba (a sacred place for Muslims to which they pilgrimage every year for worship, and it was also sacred

to Arabs before Islam. It is currently located in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia). These competitions are considered important cultural events in the history of Arabic literature.

This similarity between the poetry of contradiction, which belongs to the Arab poetic heritage, and the art of rap is what has led some researchers to say that the rap descends from the Arabic poetic duel and was transmitted from the Arabian Peninsula via commercial caravans over long periods to East Africa, where local rhythms were added that depend on drums. This was the most important change in this type of poetry, that is, the addition of rhythm. This culture was later transferred to America. However, the art of rap did not move directly from Africa to America in its modern form. When Africans were brought as slaves to the Americas, they carried with them their cultural and musi-



cal traditions. These traditions then developed over time and were influenced by other cultures in America, those related to jazz and blues. In the 1970s, in the African-American communities of cities such as New York, a modern form of rap began to take its current form as part of hip-hop culture.

In this context, some argue that rap is an acronym (RAP) that stands for "Rhythmic African Poetry." But the most popular opinion attributes "RAP" to the abbreviation for the phrase

"Rhythm And Poetry," which is the most likely meaning, given the basic characteristics that characterize this art. This is the part about which there can be consensus. It should be noted, however, that this is considered a "backronym," meaning that the acronym actually is not the real

origin of the word but an explanation that became popular well after the term "rap" became common.

In conclusion, we find striking similarities in comparing rap music and the art of Arabic antithesis poetry. Both arts are characterized by poetic competition and creativity in the use of language. In antithetical poetry, poets compete for linguistic and rhetorical superiority, while in rap, the competition appears through rhythm and rhyme. Both express a societal culture and reflect its social or political issues. These similarities highlight the deep connection between artistic expression and the human need for self-expression and identity no matter the culture.

# The Susan Pezone Memorial ESL Scholarship

## The Susan Pezone Memorial ESL Scholarship

Thanks to the generous donations of the family and friends of Professor Susan Pezone, the ESL Department at American River College has established a **\$500** scholarship to honor the memory of Professor Susan Pezone, a dear ESL colleague, who passed away in Fall 2020. **Professor Pezone** was a wonderful teacher, colleague, and writer, who is already sorely missed.

### **Requirements:**

This scholarship will be awarded to three ARC ESL students who have the same **love of learning and writing** that Professor Pezone showed in her teaching and in her own writing, with preference going to students who have already completed a **minimum of 30 units in ESL at ARC**.

### **Timeline:**

The application time period for the Spring 2024 scholarship will be from 03/05/24 to 03/29/24, and the winner of the scholarships will be announced in early May 2024.. The application closes on March 29, 2024 at 5 PM.

\*\*\*Please complete the form below to apply for the Susan Pezone Memorial ESL Scholarship:

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeniTrH2B5ipduelz-delMeg-nUbxuh-sevpPjeG8AdTs-iQQ/viewform?usp=sf\\_link](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeniTrH2B5ipduelz-delMeg-nUbxuh-sevpPjeG8AdTs-iQQ/viewform?usp=sf_link)



## Out of the Cage

### Vision 2030: Generative AI in Higher Education Series

Tuesday, February 27, 2024

#### Generative AI as a General Productivity Booster

12:00 to 1:00 pm

Join an exploration of the growing prominence and promise of Generative Artificial Intelligence in higher education conducted by leadership from the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges, the Faculty Association of California Community Colleges, and the California Community College Chancellor's Office, along with special guests.

Register in Advance here.

Contact: Nicole Griffin - [griffin@flc.losrios.edu](mailto:griffin@flc.losrios.edu)

### ARC Important Dates: Spring 2024

**January 13:** Classes start

**January 26:** Last day to return parking permit for refund

**January 26:** Last day to drop classes and qualify for a tuition refund

**January 28:** Last day to drop classes without notation on record

**January 28:** Last day to enroll in classes

**April 14:** Last day to withdraw from classes with a "W" notation on record

**May 10 to 16:** Final exams

**May 16:** Last day to petition for pass/no pass; Last day of classes; Deadline to submit a refund request to the Business Services Office

**May 23:** Grades due

### QUESTIONS/COMMENTS?

Student Editors: **Tuyet Le, Emmanuel Madrid, Mohammed Elmrani, Sayed Edres Sadiqi, Phong Nguyen, and Asila Sadiqi.**

Faculty Advisors: **Patrick Hoggan and David Evans**

Please let us know what we can do to improve *The Parrot*. We appreciate any and all feedback you are willing to give us. Contact us at [TheParrot@arc.losrios.edu](mailto:TheParrot@arc.losrios.edu). To see previous issues of *The Parrot*, go to <https://arc.losrios.edu/academics/the-parrot-newsletter>

