

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



The Parrot



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Inside This Issue

My First ESL Professor at ARC



I had the privilege of interviewing Professor Specker, my first professor at ARC, whose guidance greatly influenced my educational journey. In our conversation, we discussed her background, passion for teaching, and insights into student engagement and learning. Her dedication to education and her students' success were evident throughout the interview. Professor Specker was my

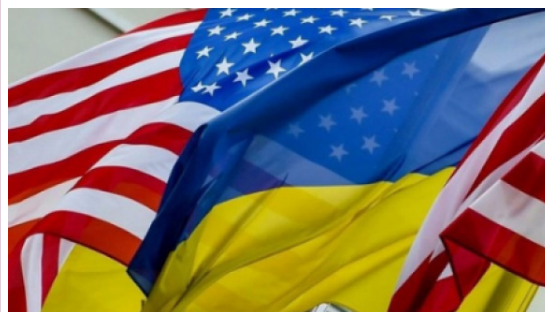
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I Am an Immigrant

Immigration is a little death, psychologists say. I am an immigrant. I have died twice.

I first emigrated in 2022. It was to the Czech Republic. Why the Czech Republic? Because it was the best solution then. Because the war started in Ukraine, and in order to save our lives, we had to leave with my daughter. It was a small town called Zlin, and there was a free apartment of my friends' acquaintance, where we could live. The first two months I cried



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Would you like to contribute to The Parrot?

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Iftar Grab & Go

Pick up a **FREE Iftar Snack bag** to break your fast before class and celebrate **Ramadan** with fellow students!

Power-Up Fast Snack Packs! ⚡

MAR 3RD - 28TH

at **Learning Resource Center**
Room #162

Finding Your Place at the People, Culture, and Society HomeBase!



“Home” can mean different things to different people. Is it the place where you grew up? Is it where your family is? Or is it simply where you feel most comfortable and supported? At the People, Culture, and Society (PCS) HomeBase, we believe home is a space where you can be yourself—a welcoming environment filled with like-minded individuals who care about your success and are always ready to lend a helping hand.

Located in the Learning Resource Center (LRC) Room 162, the PCS HomeBase is your one-stop support hub for navigating college life. The moment you walk in, you’ll be greeted by our dedicated team of HomeBase Specialists, Clerks, and Peer Mentors, who are here to guide you every step of the way. Whether you need help scheduling a counseling appointment, registering for classes, or figuring out how to access your syllabus on Canvas, we’ve got you covered. Need assistance with eServices, financial aid disbursements, or creating a Student Education Plan? We can help with those things too!

Beyond academic support, our HomeBase offers a relaxed space where students can unwind, connect with peers, and enjoy free snacks—thanks to BeaverCares! Students can pick up two snacks per visit, making sure they stay fueled throughout the day. Plus, we provide free printing (up to 10 pages per day), and our computer stations are available for students who need a quiet place to study.

While we strive to assist students with their individual needs, we also serve as a bridge to other campus resources and learning communities. If there’s something we can’t help with directly, we’ll connect you with the right department or service to ensure you get the support you need.

Stay in the loop with our latest events, important deadlines, and fun activities by following us on Instagram [@archb_pcsoc](#). You’ll never miss an opportunity to get involved, meet new people, and make the most of your time at ARC.

The PCS HomeBase is located in the **Learning Resource Center (Room 162)**. Our hours are **Monday–Thursday from 8 AM to 5 PM and Friday from 8 AM to 4:30 PM**. Drop by and discover your HomeBase community today!



How to sign up for ESL Assessment

1. Scan the QR code below with your phone, or click on English as a Second Language (ESL) Assessment if you are on a computer.
2. Read all the information, and then scroll to the bottom of the page to choose if you want an in-person or an online ESL Assessment session.
3. After you choose in-person or online, sign up using your student ID number and birth date.



Need help?
esl-assessment@arc.losrios.edu



My Favorite Food



My favorite food is *Qabuli palaw*. It's an Afghan traditional food. It's an important dish for every party, such as Eid, weddings, engagements, birthdays, and other small gathering. We eat it for dinner or lunch, not for breakfast. It is such a delicious food. We can easily find the ingredients for it in America. We make it with basmati rice, lamb meat, carrots, and raisins. First, we cook the meat with onions, garlic, salt, and oil. After that we boil the rice until it's about 80% cooked, and then combine it and bake for 40 minutes. If you want to try *Qabuli palaw*, you can find it at Afghani restaurants like East Market, Shams Market, all season restaurant, and others. I don't eat it daily. Eating this daily is not good for our health, because it has a lot of fat and starch. My aunt really likes it, and she eats it daily, so her cholesterol level is very high, and she has diabetes because of eating it daily. One time during Eid, when I was a little girl, my mom cooked *Qabuli palaw* with sesame oil. It was so delicious with the special smell. I remember that delicious taste and aromatic smell like it was yesterday. I really miss my mom and her *Qabuli*. Indeed, I really like both eating and cooking *Qabuli palaw* because it's delicious, easy to make, and keeps my traditions alive.

Safia Hameedi - ESL 47
Descriptive Writing

Yummy Carrots



One healthy plant besides the potato is the carrot. Carrot is easy to grow and healthy to eat. I remember how in my childhood, my parents and I grew carrots in our garden. Carrots need only a little space to grow long and straight. They need sunlight and well-drained soil to grow well. Growing carrots at home is simple and fun. For example, when I was a kid, my brother and I competed to grow the longest carrot in the garden. We carefully planted our seeds in the best spots, watered them every day, and watched them grow. It was a friendly competition that taught us the patience and care plants need to grow. Carrots are full of vitamins, especially vitamin A, which is good for vision and strong immune health. My kids really like carrots, and they take carrots to school as a snack. I enjoy carrots in salads, soups, stews, and cakes. One of my favorite juices is carrot with apple. Indeed, carrots are a wonderful food. Starting to eat carrots is a great choice for your health.



Zinaida Karastoian - ESL 47
Descriptive Writing

Getting the Dream Together



One day we said,
“Let’s learn together.”
But how hard is it to
learn a new language?
And how can learning
together help you?

First, let me give
you a brief story about
us. We are Lilian and
Jose, and we are ESL
students at American
River College. We have
been married for five
years and decided to
embark on a journey
of learning and self-im-
provement together.

This story be-
gins when my hus-
band gets a job at
a Spanish-speaking
television station and moves from Mexico to
Sacramento. Because of that, he decides to
study English at ARC. Sometime later, I arrived
in this beautiful city to meet with my husband,

and he told me about the school, and we de-
cided to study English together.

So, this has become a goal that we have
in common. But I’m not going to lie; it hasn’t
been easy for us to learn a new language, and
we also must coordinate our class sched-
ules so that it doesn’t interfere with work sched-
ules. However, studying together has become
a space for mutual support, especially when
one of us feels frustrated for not understand-

ing a school subject or
feeling blocked when
doing a task. But de-
spite the frustrations
so common when
you’re learning some-
thing new, we have
overcome it together.
Also, we love to share
our experiences and
achievements because
we have learned how
to complement each
other to continue mov-
ing forward with our
goal.

In conclu-
sion, learning a new
language is hard. But
achieving the dream
together is easy when
we can support each

other. So, let’s learn together!

**Lilian Valenzuela - ESL 37
Narrative Essay**



Continued from page 1

constantly; I wanted to go home. There we were without family, without friends, without work, without my previous life. But I had a responsibility to my daughter. I found a job, we made friends, and my daughter went to school. We lived there for 9 months.

The second country was the USA. Why the USA, why California, why Sacramento? My friend Liliya lives here. She arrived with her family four months earlier, and she helped find a sponsor for us. We lived with them for the first two months, and after that we rented a room in the house. Then I bought my first car and found my first job as a maid in a hotel. The first year I bought a ticket home every week, after a year once every other week, and after two years I got used to it a little. We made friends, a lot of acquaintances. It took me two years to get used to it.

Both of my immigrations were very diffi-



cult. I started my life from scratch twice. These are completely different mentalities, different laws, different languages, different cultures and traditions, and different rhythms of life. My family, my friends, my favorite job, and my usual life were never nearby. Some Czechs were angry with us because a lot of people came. Sacramento has a very large community of Slavs who have lived here for a long time and have recently forgotten what emigration is. But there were also many kind, sympathetic people who opened their hearts to us. I remember everyone.

In conclusion, I recommend staying strong. Anyone can give up, but not everyone can finish. It will be hard, but everything is possible. But if you take steps every day, you will see the result later. Believe in yourself, believe in your dreams, and strive for the best. Don't give up! In the end, you will be proud of yourself.

Vladyslava Fedorenko - ESL 47
Narrative Essay

My Immigration Story **Jana Perciun - ESL 325**

The first half of this article appeared in Issue #189 of [The Parrot](#).

The experiences of looking for a job

Consequently, I spent countless hours completing and submitting job applications online. I approached the process with realism and did not set high expectations for a prestigious job. Yet, I felt as though I was applying for a CEO position as I filled out these applications. Each one contained



endless biographical questions, required meticulous information about degrees and certifications, and strict questionnaires about everything I had done and not done in my life, just to apply for a humble position. And guess what? I have not received any feedback from those applications to this day.

Next, I tried to look for a job through newspapers from local small stores. These newspapers

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An Unexpected Journey: Feb. 24, 2022

Do you like to travel with your loved ones? My family and I lived in Odessa, Ukraine, a city on the Black Sea coast. My husband and I flew out on a romantic Valentine's trip to Cancun, Mexico, on



February 14, 2022. Our kids stayed at home with our parents. Before leaving there was a strange feeling in my soul. I thought it was the excitement of a distant trip, but no one could have imagined that our journey would be so long. This journey turned out to be an unexpected move to America.

My husband and I stayed in Cancun for 10 days. On the eve of the end of the vacation, in the evening, I received a message from a friend that the

war started in Ukraine. It scared me very much. My heart was beating so hard and fast I started calling my parents in panic and tears. It was early morning at home. I woke up my mother with the words: "The war started! Go to the bomb shelter, take care of yourself and our kids."

In the morning, we went to the airport. I didn't sleep all night, cried a lot and called my daughter and my mother. The twelve hour flight from Cancun to Warsaw, Poland lasted an eternity for me. It's a terrible feeling when you have no way to find out if your family is safe. My mother-in-law brought our kids to Poland. We lived for four months in Warsaw. When the program "Uniting for Ukraine" opened, our friends sponsored our family to receive a "parole" to enter America.

In conclusion, the memories of this journey from Ukraine to the United States give me goosebumps and tears. This trip changed our lives. Our dream is for our kids to meet their grandparents. It will soon come true, and they will come to visit us.

Olesia Onishchenko - ESL 47
Narrative Essay

The Grateful Gull

My Gratitude List

Thanksgiving is the day that makes us think and appreciate everything we have in our life. For me, Thanksgiving has deep meaning because I have many blessings in my life, and my heart is filled with gratitude. My gratitude list is very long, and I write this with tears in my eyes. Today I share just a few things that are very important to me, and I am really grateful for my washing machine,

my home, and my ability to sing.

First of all, I am truly thankful for my washing machine. When I came to America, my first home didn't have a washing machine. It was so uncomfortable because our used clothes were not clean for several days. During that time, I really appreciated washing machines. Moreover, I realized

that household appliances, like a washing machine, help me a lot. I remembered my grandmother, they didn't have a washing machine, and they washed by hand. It was hard work. Then my husband and I visited some stores looking for a washing machine. Finally, one day we bought one at Costco. I was so happy that I could turn it on any time, and my laundry basket was not filled with dirty clothes.

I am so grateful to the people who created the washing machine! It is so easy to just press buttons and get clean clothes as a result. Indeed, wearing clean and fresh clothes is a significant blessing to me, and I am grateful for my washing machine.



Second, my home is a place of peace and comfort to me, so I feel deep gratitude. I always return to my cozy home with great joy. My house is located in an area where there are nearby many stores, and this is very convenient for me. Furthermore, there is a park nearby, where I often like to walk. I really like my house because there is a large kitchen and large living room that I really like. My favorite place in my home is the living room. In my living room, every evening my family spend time together, and that makes me happy. Next, I really like my backyard. There is a swimming pool and many different flowers which give me joy. Besides, I have a small garden in my backyard, where I grew tomatoes and cucumbers this summer. The lemon tree is a decoration for my house and my yard because it has a lot of

lemons. Also, it not only decoration for my home, but it makes me so happy with abundant fruits. In summary, my cozy house is an amazing place to me for which I am infinitely grateful.

Last of all, my ability to sing is something I cannot imagine my life without, and I am greatly grateful for it. This is a special gift from God for me. I remember singing since

childhood to this day; songs are in my heart. I get a lot of pleasure from music and singing. Singing cheers me up a lot, songs make my life active, because to sing well you need to spend a lot of time sledging and practicing. After that, I met musical people who invited me to work together. I also joined the church choir where I sang for a long time. Later in my life, there were many trips to cities and villages in my country for singing at wedding ceremonies and banquets. In additions, I had opportunities to sing in cultural centers and schools. In my country, with songs I visited many places such as nursing homes, prisons, rehabilitation centers and children's camps. In brief, I live in America now, I left my country, but the songs didn't leave me. They are with me here too. This is a healing balm for my heart, for which I am extremely grateful!

In conclusion, my ability to sing beautifully, my cozy home and my helper washing machine are things that are valuable to me. They are a great blessing in my life for which I feel deep gratitude!

Galyna Borovets - ESL 47

My Past Life

I am from Ukraine. I moved because there is a war in my country and we had to run from Ukraine. I love America with all my heart. I want to say: "Thank you" to America and the people for opening the door to me and my family. But, there are things I miss in my native country. For instance, I miss my family, job, Ukrainian food and my beautiful dresses.

The war breaks my heart because I am worried about my brother and grandma, who remained in the city of Zhytomyr, the city near the capital of Ukraine, Kiev, which often gets bombed. My brother's name is Anatoliy, and he was born in

Ukraine like me. He is my older brother. He is very funny, and he knows many jokes. He is very kind and is always ready to help me. For example, in Ukraine he went to the gym with me. He is very hardworking and responsible. He is never late for his job, and always works many hours. We have a very good relationship without envy or rivalry. We always strike a happy medium. I know that no matter how far we are from each other, we will never become strangers. I am very lucky to have my brother.

In addition, I really miss my grandmother; she was so special to me. Her eyes were always so kind, and I miss her homemade apple pie. Her stories from the past were like time travel, and I loved the cozy sweaters she used to knit for me. Her garden, where we spent a lot of time, is empty now, and I miss it. I wish I could seek her advice one more time: she was so wise, and



I remember her laughter, and it makes me feel nostalgic. Sunday dinners at her house with the whole family bring back memories. Her absence is like a hole in my heart that can never be fixed. Indeed, I really miss my family, and I love them so much.

One more thing I miss is my job. I am a medical representative and a pharmacist. It is a responsible and interesting job with a good salary. I miss various trainings, and I miss the opportunity to help other people. I studied for seven years to become a pharmacist, three years at the Zhytomyr basic pharmaceutical college, and four years at the University. Working

in a pharmacy is really fun. For example, old people come to the pharmacy only to talk with the pharmacist. Sometimes, I was very tired at work, but they always cheered me up with chocolate at the end of the work day. I loved my major. And I hope that in America I will be able to get my license and work as a pharmacist. That is my goal to which I am going.

Another thing that I really miss is Ukrainian cuisine. It is very tasty and delicious. I miss varenyky, deryni, different salads, and borscht. But, I miss varenyky the most because there is no time to cook them there. It's also a traditional dish in Ukraine. Varenyky can have different filling, including ever berries and fruits, meat and vegetables. My grandmother always prepared varenyky with cherries and cheese for me. We often cooked together to cheerful music. How I miss this this time. I love Ukrainian cuisine

with all my heart, and I hope everyone tries it because it is really delicious.

Last of all, another thing I really miss from my country is my dresses. In Ukraine I had a lot of different dresses. One was a beautiful, beautiful dress, which I sewed especially for myself. I miss my favorite dresses. They are in my closet, and each one has special memories. I remember the color and patterns, and how they made me feel. I miss wearing a dress and feeling fabric as I move. Each dress has a story of happy times with friends or quiet moments alone. I miss the confidence they gave me. I wish I could choose

a dress to match my mood like before. Even though time passes, these dresses are timeless to me. I remember the moments they gave me, and it makes me happy.

In conclusion, I want to say that a person will always miss their home, culture, things, and people. You don't forget your roots and your home. It is so important to know who you really are.

***Vira Kotsiubailo - ESL 47
Narrative Essay***

Hobby Corner: Hospitality

How are you feeling when someone asks you about your favorite hobby? Honestly, I never liked this question. This question has always made me feel uncomfortable. Many people like drawing, reading, playing musical instruments, cooking, making things by hand, or doing sports. But all of these are not about me. Maybe if you ask me in another way about hobbies, for example what I like best of all, I will say, "I like people". My greatest pleasure is hosting friends and guests at home. There are several reasons why hospitality is my favorite thing to do or it is better to say my favorite hobby.

At first, hospitality is our family tradition. I grew up in a Christian family since childhood. My parents were always active church members, so we had a lot of people at home. Mama prepared different kinds of dishes, drinks, and my brother and



I cleaned the rooms. It was always fun and loud in our small Ukrainian apartment. I loved this time as a child because the guests brought lots of sweets. Our apartment was always open for different people.

There were people with different illnesses, and my parents prayed for them. Also it was always fun when mama invited foreign guests to our home. Our Ukrainian church has a mother church in Germany, and every summer German youth come to us in Ukraine, and Ukrainian youth go to Germany. And my parents don't speak any foreign language. But my dad is a cheerful and simple person. He always communicated with German youth using gestures and facial expressions, sometimes even showing skits so that they could understand him better. It always made us laugh. Eventually, hospitality became a part of me, something I grew up with.

Secondly, hospitality gives me the oppor-

tunity to bring joy to people. When I lived with my parents, I hosted my friends' birthday parties at my home many times. For example, I had a friend, named Zhenya. She studied in my city, but her parents lived in another town. Once upon a time, Zhenya had a birthday, and she couldn't go to her parents because of fines. So I decided to surprise her. I invited many of our friends to my house, decorated the room with her photos, and cooked various dishes. Then I invited Zhenya to me, as always. She had no idea that a surprise was waiting for her. All my friends hid in the room, and when she came in, we shouted happy birthday loudly. Zhenya cried with joy. We had different activities, dancing, talks and a lot of presents for her. At the end of the day, Zhenya told me that it was the best birthday in her life. At that moment, I got the greatest pleasure from her happiness. Really, the opportunity to bring joy to people is one of the reasons why hospitality is my hobby.

Finally, hospitality is the opportunity to be closer to my children. When we came to the USA, our life started from a new beginning. We left in Ukraine our relatives, friends and all things which we loved. In America, we began to rebuild relationships with people. It was not easy for me because I missed my Ukrainian friends. And I think the older you get, the harder it is for you to make friends. But in this situation our children helped us. First, what my family did when we arrived in Sacramento, we went to the church. And it was a good decision. Our children quickly made friends there, and that's how we met their parents and started to make friends

as families. From this moment my hobby started to make me happy again. I was able to open the doors of my house to people again. When we lived in two bedroom apartments, we had fifteen children and their parents. Today we moved to the house, and we are opening for new guests. My children are happy that their friends can always come to our house and feel at home. And it can be just one friend of my daughter, or the whole home group (youth church group). For example, yesterday my children invited their friends over to rehearse Christmas carols. There were 15 people, guitars, flute, and cajon. It was noisy, fun, but still cozy. I set a small table for the youth, and then everyone chatted and drank tea. Afterwards, my husband took half the youth home; that's how we always did it in Ukraine. When the young people left, they all thanked us for the warmth and comfort. And my children

thanked my husband and me for opening the house for their friends. Of course, because of such moments, the joyful hearts of my children, I understand that hospitality is a wonderful hobby.

In conclusion, what could be better than when your hobby makes not only you, but also everyone around you happy. That is why hospitality is a hobby that came to me from my parents, and now brings joy to people and my children. I hope that this tradition will be preserved in my children and their homes will always be open to people.

**Hanna Semenchuk - ESL 47
Narrative Essay**



Intermediate Reading Comprehension

Can You Spot the Errors? Fix These 5 Grammar Mistakes!

Last summer, my best friend and I was planning a road trip across the country. We wanted to visit several national parks, so we decides to rent a car. However, we haven't booked anything in advance, which turned out to be a big mistake. When we arrived at the rental company, they told us that all the cars were rented out for the weekend. We were so disappointed!

Instead of giving up, we looked for alternative options. Luckily, we found a small local company that offer last-minute rentals. The car wasn't very new, but it was good enough for our trip. On the first day, we drove to a beautiful mountain area where we hiked for several hours. The view was amazing!

During the second day, we was driving through a small town when we saw a local festival happening in the main square. We decided to stop and explore. The people were very welcoming, and they invited us to join their traditional dance. It was such a fun experience!

By the end of our trip, we felt grateful for how everything turned out. Even though our original plan didn't worked, we still had an unforgettable adventure!



Did you find the errors? Check here!

1. was planning had planned (Past perfect for an action before another past action)
2. decides decided (Simple past for a completed action)
3. offer offered (Past tense for a completed action)
4. was driving were driving (Subject-verb agreement: "we" needs "were")
5. didn't worked didn't work (After "didn't," the verb should be in base form)

Rap Music Review



I wasn't a fan of rap music initially because I found it hard to listen to. I couldn't understand its beauty until I watched **Rap Viet**. It became incredibly popular in 2020 when Season 1 started. During the pandemic, when I couldn't go out, I looked for TV shows to watch and discovered Rap Viet. It was the first TV show about rap in Vietnam at that time

and achieved great success. It brought rap music into people's knowledge, understanding, and hearts. Rap music isn't just about yelling or singing too fast to understand; it has various styles that you can choose to enjoy.

I've learned a lot from Rap Viet, especially about how music can reflect a person's character or story. Sometimes, it helps us understand more about our lives and others'.

The song I want to talk about today is from Rap Viet Season 2, which aired in 2021. The song is called "**Stage of Illusion**" by [Freaky](#). The music, the meaning, the stage, the rapper, and the lyrics are all so meaningful and deep. It tells the story of a boy who went through life without caring about his parents until he realized that his true place is home.

Three verses I love and have learned from this song are:

"We all have 2 lives. The first life is when you were born in a good shape or missing. Your second life starts when you realize you only have one."

These verses resonate with me because they





remind me to cherish my life and the people around me. I've experienced this feeling, knowing I only have one life to live.

Continuing with the song, the boy thought

he could move on by himself without his parents' support. However, at the end, he sang:

"Sometimes when you want to escape from the world, when you want to be mature, it is the time to go home."

Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9lrr-6FIXzTO>

Parrot Staff Writer: Snow Le

Elephant Coffee



Yes, you heard it right! Elephant Coffee, also known as Black Ivory Coffee, is the name of this unique coffee. This innovative product aims to transform the negative conflict between humans and elephants into a positive impact. The process does not harm the elephants; instead, it helps bring out the iconic flavor of the coffee with the assistance of humans. Elephants are protected and cared for as they ac-

complish their mission.

Similar to Kopi Luwak, one of the most expensive coffees in the world, Black Ivory Coffee is produced by feeding coffee beans to elephants. The beans are then refined through the elephant's digestive system. While the details of the process might not be something you want to delve into, rest assured that it is clean and safe for consumption.

Interesting facts about Black Ivory Coffee:

1. It is the world's rarest and most exclusive coffee.
2. The coffee beans are refined through the elephant's digestive system.
3. The process fosters a positive relationship between humans and elephants.
4. One kilogram (approximately 2 pounds) of this coffee costs \$3,000.

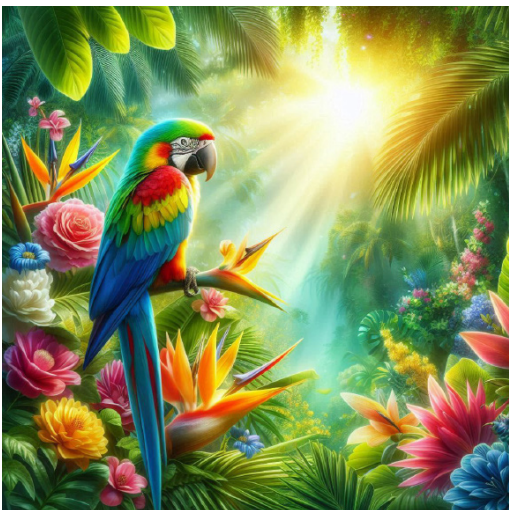
Source: [here](#)



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. We would be
happy to hear from you and will try to
respond ASAP.

The Parrot welcomes all ESL student
matters!



The Amish



The Amish and the River Brethren are two unique Christian sects in the United States that live according to their own traditions, following a simple and disciplined way of life. Both groups are known for their conservative values, modest dress, and strong community ties, which in many ways share similarities with Islamic traditions.



The Amish are well known for their rejection of modern technology. They live in rural areas, travel by horse and buggy instead of cars, and do not use electricity in their homes. They believe in a life of humility, hard work, and separation from the outside world to maintain their faith. Amish communities are tightly knit, and family is the center of their life. They dress in plain clothing, avoid vanity, and follow strict religious teachings that guide their daily lives.

The River Brethren, also known as the Brethren in Christ, share some similarities with the Amish but are slightly less strict. They also believe in a simple life, modesty, and strong religious val-

ues. Historically, they rejected war and violence, choosing a peaceful way of living. While they do not completely reject technology like the Amish, they still value a life of humility and devotion.

Both the Amish and the River Brethren emphasize community, faith, and modesty, which resemble values in Islam, such as simple living, strong family ties, and avoiding materialism. Their commitment to tradition and faith makes them unique in American society, offering an example of how people can live differently while staying true to their beliefs.



Sources:

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<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Amish>



Parrot Staff Writer: Mohammed El mrani

Proverbs

Proverbs are short, wise sayings that have been passed down through generations. They teach important lessons about life, give advice, and reflect the culture of different societies. Learning proverbs helps you understand a language better, as they are often used in everyday conversations. Some proverbs are very wise, while others may sound funny or strange! Let's play a game to see if you can guess their true meanings!

How to Play:

1. Read the proverb.
2. Choose the correct meaning from three options.
3. Check the answer at the end!

Round 1: English Proverbs

1) "Don't put all your eggs in one basket."

- a) Always carry a basket with many eggs.
- b) Don't risk everything on one thing.
- c) Eat eggs for breakfast.

2) "A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush."

- a) It's better to have something small but certain than to chase something bigger and lose everything.
- b) Birds love living in bushes.
- c) If you catch a bird, you will be lucky.

3) "The early bird catches the worm."

- a) Birds that wake up early eat worms.
- b) If you start something early, you have a better chance to succeed.

- c) Never trust birds.

Round 2: Arabic Proverbs

4. "الصبر مفتاح الفرج" (Patience is the key to relief.)

- a) If you wait, good things will come.
- b) Always lock your door with a key.
- c) Keys are more important than money.

5. "يد واحدة لا تصفق" (One hand does not clap.)

- a) You need two hands to make a sound.
- b) Success requires teamwork and cooperation.
- c) Always clap with two hands when listening to music.

6. "من جد وجد" (Whoever works hard will find success.)

- a) If you dig in the sand, you will find treasure.
- b) Hard work brings success.
- c) Always bring a map when searching for gold.



Answers:

How many did you get right? Let us know your score!

1. b 2. a 3. b 4. a 5. b 6. b

Parrot Staff Writer: Mohammed El mrani

Continued from page 1

first ESL teacher, and I still remember my first day in her class. I was late that day, and she was using an article about buffalo to teach us how to annotate a text. It was a challenging lesson for me because I had learned the word “elephant,” but I didn’t know about the different parts of an elephant or the concept of annotation. The lesson felt heavy and difficult at first, but with her great guidance and kind welcome, I worked hard to align myself with the course. Through her support, I successfully completed the class and earned an A!

Thank you for your time, Professor Specker. To start, can you share a little about your background and what led you to become a professor at ARC?

Prof. Specker: Teaching was never my initial plan; I was afraid of it! But it kept looking for me. My first teaching roles were as a swimming and camp counselor. Later, I joined the Peace Corps in Romania, teaching English to grade school children. After returning to the U.S., I pursued graduate studies in applied linguistics, funding my education through teaching. I taught at Ohio State, then continued my studies in Arizona, earning a PhD in linguistics and second language acquisition. Eventually, I realized I loved teaching



and found my place here at ARC.

We are lucky to have you as our professor! What

do you enjoy most about teaching at ARC?

Prof. Specker: I love working with our ESL students. Many are immigrants and refugees, bringing diverse perspectives and experiences. Teaching them has enriched my own life and deepened my appreciation for different cultures. Choosing ARC over other teaching opportunities was one of the best decisions I have made.

What advice do you always give to your students?

Prof. Specker: Annotate! Take notes whether in class, at the doctor’s office, or even when meeting a financial advisor. Writing things down helps with comprehension, memory, and critical thinking.

How do you think ARC helps students achieve their academic and personal goals?

Prof. Specker: ARC makes education accessible. The ESL department provides stepping stones for students to earn certificates, degrees, and life skills. Our flexible scheduling with in-person, Zoom, and asynchronous classes ensures education fits students’ lives. Even I take classes here!

What has been one of your most memorable moments as a professor?

Prof. Specker: Seeing students have their moments when they truly grasp a concept and can apply it beyond the classroom. It’s rewarding to reconnect with former students and see their progress.

What inspires you in your teaching?

Prof. Specker: Initially, I wanted to travel the world for international work, but I have found a fulfilling reverse role helping students from around the

world integrate into American culture and language. Their resilience and determination inspire me daily.

How do you keep students engaged in ESL classes?

Prof. Specker: I encourage independent thinking, peer support, and varied activities, switching between board work, books, and online resources to keep lessons dynamic.

How do you handle challenges in the classroom, especially with language barriers?

Prof. Specker: I slow down my speech, enunciate clearly, and teach concepts in multiple ways. I also encour-

age students to use translation tools or peer explanations when needed. Sometimes, a simple rephrasing from a classmate makes all the difference.

Outside of teaching, what are your hobbies and interests?

Prof. Specker: I love traveling with my family and learning new things. Right now, I'm studying American Sign Language. I also enjoy hiking and spending time outdoors.

Thank you so much for sharing your insights and experiences. It was a pleasure speaking with you!

Prof. Specker: Thank you! I enjoyed our conversation.

Interviewer: Asila Sadiqi

The Power of Communication A Journey of Inspiration



Many students consider majoring in Communication, but what truly defines its value? For Professor Alexander Paez, Communication is more than just a field of study; it is a lifelong passion that transforms lives. His journey from invest-

ment banking to academia is a testament to the power of following one's calling and embracing change.

Professor Paez, a first-generation college student, grew up in a bilingual household with Cuban and Colombian roots. Education was always a priority in his family, though the path to becoming an educator was anything but conventional. Initially pursuing a degree in Radio and Television Broadcasting at San Francisco State University, he spent nearly 14 years in investment banking before realizing that his true passion lay in teaching. Encouraged by friends and family, he took a leap of faith, leaving his corporate career to pursue a master's degree in communication at the University of the Pacific.

Returning to academia in his late 30s was a daunting challenge. Graduate school demanded hard reading and analysis, but it also unlocked a deeper understanding of human interaction and connection. In 2018, he achieved what once felt impossible, earning his master's degree and stepping into the world of education. A Zoom interview led him to American River College, where he now succeeds as a faculty member, inspiring students to explore the depths of Communication.

One of the most essential lessons he imparts is the importance of adaptability. While Communication provides a foundation of theories and techniques, real-world interactions demand flexibility. Whether addressing misunderstandings with students, colleagues, or loved ones, he emphasizes that effective communication starts with active listening. Rather than simply conveying a message, one must tailor their approach to different personalities, cultural contexts, and situations.

Beyond the classroom, Professor Paez has a deep love for performance and storytelling. If he weren't in Communication, he would likely be in theater or performance studies, blending his passion for public speaking with creative expression. Additionally, he has been a

dedicated swing dancer for over 31 years, finding joy in movement and community connection.

His impact as an educator is marked in the lives he touches. For some students, his classes are not just academic experiences but transformative moments that reshape their futures. Inspired by his passion, I made the decision to change my major to Communication, a choice that now feels deeply aligned with my aspirations. His encouragement powers my confidence, and his belief in my potential reassures me that I am on the right

path.

Professor Paez's journey is a reminder that it is never too late to follow one's passion. Whether in Communication, performance, or any field, the key to success lies in listening, adapting, and embracing the opportunities that arise. His story is not just about career shifts, it is about the courage to pursue what truly matters and inspires others to do the same.

Parrot Staff Writer: Asila Sadiqi

Granny Noetal

Welcome to the Granny Noetal Column! Our student staff is pleased to share valuable tips and advice to support you on your academic journey at ARC.

Dear Granny,

Recently, I started feeling intense pressure from the amount of work I have to do each day. I take several in-person classes this semester, so I have to be on campus every day. I get a lot of homework and very extensive, challenging readings to complete each week. I spend at least five hours on each subject. In addition to that, I have a job and am trying to get involved in extracurricular activities at college. I also take care of my family and constantly help out at home. Now, I barely manage to find time to do everything because of my busy schedule. I would be very happy if you could give me some advice on how to improve my time management.



Studiously yours,
Overloaded & Stressed

Dear Overloaded,

Reading your story, I understand how hard it

must be to balance all your activities. Multitasking is really common among students. It is challenging to turn in everything on time, but it's not impossible! Here are some tips on how to manage. First, I recommend using a calendar and writing everything down with dates and times so you won't accidentally forget anything. Second, try to estimate how many hours you will need to complete your tasks. This will help you plan your day more effectively. Lastly, organize your tasks by groups, like focusing on reading assignments on one day and writing on another. And, of course, don't forget to take a break to clear your thoughts. You'll see how an intense schedule can become more manageable!

Dear Readers,

I hope you found my advice to the student's question helpful. I am thankful for the information and experience a student shared with us. If you need some advice, please share your question with me at:

Granny Noetal

TheParrot@arc.losrios.edu

Thanks,

Punctuation Note!

Comma (,)

Indicating a pause in a sentence or a separation of things in a list.

- **Introductory word:** Personally, I think the practice is helpful.
- **Lists:** The barn, the tool shed, and the back porch were destroyed by the wind.
- **Coordinating adjectives:** He was tired, hungry, and late.

- **Conjunctions in compound sentences:** The bedroom door was closed, so the children knew their mother was asleep.

- **Interrupting words:** I knew where it was hidden, of course, but I wanted them to find it themselves.

- **Dates, addresses, greetings, and letters:** The letter was post-marked December 8, 1945.

Semicolons (;)

Indicating a break in a flow of a sentence.

- **Join two independent clauses:** Be sure to wear clean, well-pressed clothes to the interview; appearances are important.
- **Join items in a list:** The color combinations we can choose from are black, white, and grey; green, brown, and black; or red, green, and brown.

Colons (:)

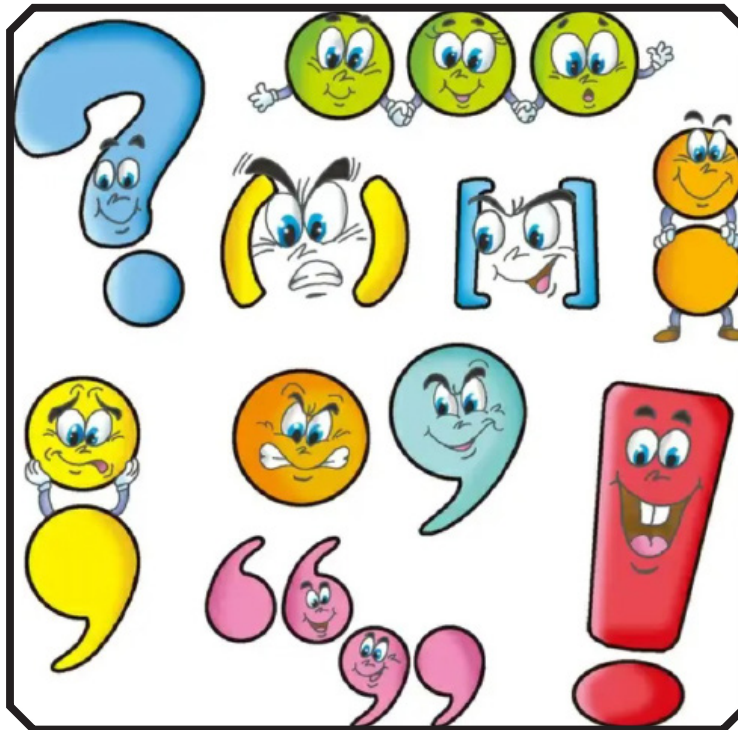
Introducing lists, quotes, examples, and explanations.

- **Introducing a list:** I have to take four classes this semester: English, Statistics, Ethics, and Italian.

- **Introducing a quote:** Mark Twain said it best: "When in doubt, tell the truth."

- **Introducing examples or explanations:** Our company offers many publishing services: writing, editing, and reviewing.

Quotes (" ")



Indicating direct quotations of another person's words or to indicate a title.

- **Direct quote:** Carly said, "I'm not ever going back there again."

*** Indirect quote:
Carly said that she would never go back there.

- **Title:** "Annabelle Lee" is one of my favorite romantic poems.

Apostrophes (')

To be used with a noun to show possession or to indicate where a letter

has been left out to form a contraction.

- **Possession:** Mike's daughter is a doctor.

- **Contractions:** (A contraction is a word that is formed by combining two words.) don't, doesn't, won't, we'll (we will), aren't, let's, there's, and etc.

Parentheses ()

Punctuation marks that are always used in pairs and contain material that is secondary to the meaning of a sentence.

Attack of the Killer Potatoes has to be the worst mov-

ie I have seen (so far).

Your spinach and garlic salad is one of the most delicious (and nutritious) foods I have ever tasted!

Dashes (—)

A punctuation mark used to set off information in a sentence for emphasis.

Arrive to the interview early—but not too early.

Any of the suits—except for the purple one—should be fine to wear.

Hyphen (-)

Looks similar to a dash but is shorter and used in differ-

ent ways.

• **Between two adjectives that work as one:** My doctor recommended against taking the medication, since it can be habit-forming.

• **When a word breaks at the end of a line:** My supervisor was concerned that the team meeting would conflict with the client meeting.

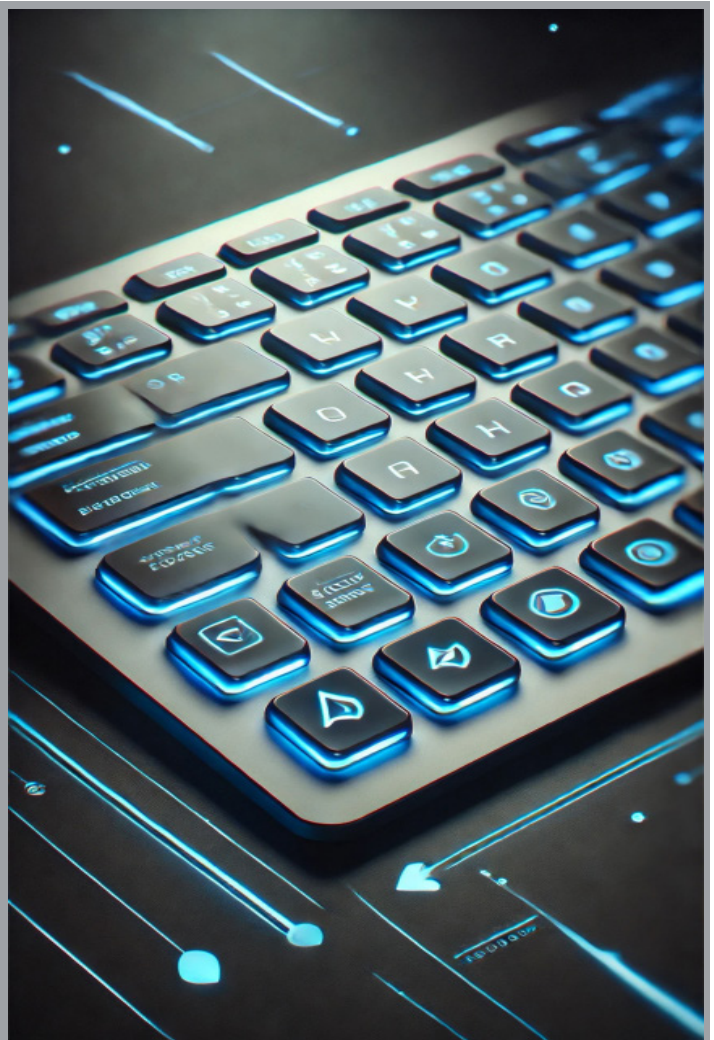
Source: McLean, S. (2011). *Business English for Success*. FlatWorld.

Top 10 Computer Shortcuts to Make Daily Tasks Easier

These days, computers aren't just essential for work; they play a big role in our daily lives, from managing tasks at the office to handling things at home. The more we know about useful shortcuts and tricks, the more time we can save, making our workflow more smoothly and efficiently.

One thing I've noticed is that even experienced computer users, who have been using computers for years, can struggle when switching to a Mac if they've only ever used Windows (or vice versa). It can be a frustrating situation, especially when you need to get work done quickly.

So, to help with that, I've put together a list of essential shortcuts for both Windows and Mac that will speed up your daily computer use and make your workflow much more efficient. Check them out below!



General Shortcuts (Windows & Mac)

Action	Windows	Mac
Find	Ctrl + F	Cmd + F
Open a new tab (Browser)	Ctrl + T	Cmd + T
Switch between open apps	Alt + Tab	Cmd + Tab
Quit an application	Alt + F4	Cmd + Q
Force quit an application	Ctrl + Shift + Esc	Cmd + Option + Esc

File Management & Navigation

Action	Windows	Mac
Open File Explorer / Finder	Win + E	Cmd + Option + Space
Rename file/folder	F2	Enter (while selected)
Delete file permanently	Shift + Delete	Cmd + Option + Delete
Go to Desktop	Win + D	Cmd + F3 (Mission Control)
Lock Screen	Win + L	Cmd + Control + Q

Screenshots & Clipboard

Action	Windows	Mac
Take a full screenshot	Win + PrtScn	Cmd + Shift + 3
Screenshot of a selected area	Win + Shift + S	Cmd + Shift + 4
Copy to clipboard without saving	PrtScn	Cmd + Control + Shift + 4



English Conversation Group

Fridays 5:00-6:00 | North Natomas library

Want to practice speaking English? Join our friendly group!

All languages and levels welcome. No registration. Meet new people and share experiences. This is not a class; it's more a social group for practicing.

Check "Events" for more locations and times at www.saclibrary.org.

Topics:

- Everyday life & things to do
- American culture
- News, pop culture
- Other...You help decide!

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

Continued from page 7

have classified ads where jobs are often posted. I scoured listings for waitresses, cashiers, sales associates, and receptionists to find something suitable for my new status in Sacramento: a recent immigrant with an unrecognizable degree, with lack of work experience in this city, without any authorized certification, and possessing basic English skills. I explained those factors every time I had a phone interview for a job I applied for.



Phone conversations for job interviews became a whole ritual. I would isolate myself in a deadly quiet room, holding onto my prepared manuscript that I had checked with online translations. My heart pounded in my throat while I held my speech. My whole being was focused on catching familiar, known English words that could help me understand the speaker's idea. Often, I found myself having to excuse my inability to understand, asking them to repeat or explain what they had said.

My answers were often simple and short, with unclear pronunciation and sometimes with misleading ideas. In a similar situation during a phone conversation, I was asked to provide an email address, but I mistakenly gave my mailing address. In another instance, due to my incorrect spelling, I wrote down the wrong address, and on my appointment day, I ended up in a different location than where I was supposed to be.

Language barriers as an immigrant at my first job

Fortunately, after almost two months of searching, I got my first job in Sacramento, as

a caregiver at an English-speaking facility. That job was my biggest provocation for my English experience. Initially, to help me to grasp the main idea of conversations, I relied on facial expressions, gestures, and tone of voice. While I could generally follow the message of conversations, expressing my thoughts proved to be difficult.

To adapt my speech, I often replaced the unknown words with simpler, similar words. For instance, when I was asked what was for dinner at that moment, I did not know the word "polenta" in English. Instead, I explained that it is a dish made of boiled corn flour and usually served with stewed meat.

Frequently I needed to repeat my requests because of my poor pronunciation, or I found myself confused by others' pronunciation. One day, one of the elderly ladies wanted me to assist her on her way to the bathroom.

"I need to go potty," she said.

"Party? I think it is not a good idea to go to a party right now." I tried to convince the lady.

"Why not?" She replied with a puzzled look while heading to the restroom.

Confusing terminology encountered in pursuing a driver's license

Another linguistic barrier I encountered was while studying for my driver's license. Both the theoretical and practical driving tests require knowledge of specific driving terminology, which differs from my native language.

For me, it was quite difficult to memorize driving vocabulary in English for the theoretical test. To facilitate my understanding, I sometimes used Google Translate for unfamiliar terms, such as “hazard lights.” Of course, it was a big failure because I received something out of context like “dangerous lights” instead of “lights warnings about a danger.”

During the practical exam, the English speaking instructor might ask about specific car vocabulary like signals, wipers, headlights, and so on. The term “headlights” particularly confused me. I had perceived the “headlights” as two words: “head,” which I knew referred to the up-



per part of a body, and “light,” which is a source that makes things visible. However, I couldn’t determine the meaning of the word as a whole. Later, I learned that “headlights” refers to the light mounted on the front of the vehicle to illuminate the road ahead.

The newcomer’s challenges in searching for a place to call “home”

Throughout these experiences as a newcomer, I faced many other barriers and challenges, one of which was searching for an apartment. Why an apartment? At that time, I couldn’t even imagine owning a home due to the high costs that were beyond my financial reach and the complicated process of buying a house.

First, I came across a rental application fee, which means you have to submit an application for each family member along with a nonrefundable fee each time you plan to rent an apartment. This paid application does not guarantee that you will actually get the apartment. Unfortunately, I lost some valuable money because I was unaware of these rules and regulations at first. Second, I faced challenges in providing the correct documents, demonstrating proof of income, supplying credit history, and finding a co-signer.

I managed all this while speaking limited English, which led to intense frustration, as I struggled to make myself understood and to understand the requirements and names of documents needed for renting an apartment.

Achieving my goal and still working on its development

Although it wasn’t easy, I adapted to various challenges time and again, striving to exceed my own expectations on my journey to achieve my “American Dream.” I now have a home, a loving and supportive family, and I have joined a large community of immigrants while attending college to build my future career.



Jana Perciun - ESL 325

The Swallow's Silverquill

Do I organize my thoughts while journaling? Definitely not – and I love it!

Today, I want to talk about how journaling lets me write freely, without needing to organize my thoughts first. It doesn't need editing; instead, it edits itself. My journal shows who I am. It starts with simple notes like "I missed a few days of journaling" and then moves into analyzing everything, without any particular order. It often ends with incomplete sentences and even touches of fiction. Why fiction? Not in order to exaggerate, but to look at my life in a more creative way.

Do I worry about grammar? At first, I didn't. But later, I wanted things to be perfect. Now, I can't stand a misspelled word or a wrong verb tense. Still, one thing stays the same: I don't change the order of my ideas. I write in a chaotic way – with mixed-up paragraphs and some sentences that are incomplete or just fragments.

I love writing in fragments, using lots of dashes. It isn't very academic, but it's fun! I use dashes to skip over words I don't want to use, like undesired verbs or nouns, or sometimes just use two nouns. This style can't be used in an essay, but that's what makes journaling so freeing. You can make your own rules. Not grammar rules, but ways of organizing your thoughts that feel like your own voice.

This is where self-editing comes in – not to fix mistakes, but to edit in a way that feels true to me. Journaling shapes me as a person and a writer. It helps me create a style that feels right. In that style, I can express my thoughts clearly, in a way that makes sense to me. After all, journaling is not about writing for others – it's about learning about yourself through your own words.

Even now, I hold back from writing too many sentence fragments. I try to make this sound logical because I know a reader needs logic to follow along. But journaling isn't about that. It doesn't have to make sense to anyone except the person writing it. In journaling, there's room for thoughts to wander, for them to be incomplete, for them to have no clear order. And that's what makes it authentic. In journaling, there is only one reader –

the writer.

Every time I journal, I discover new ways of writing – ways to express myself more freely, more creatively. I've come to realize that journaling isn't just about documenting life, as I once thought. It's a space where I can explore and shape my thoughts into something uniquely my own. What might journaling reveal to you, if you let it?



Chirrup 'till next time!

Written by the quill of Sofia Kovalko

Beginner Reading Comprehension

The Silly Cat and the Flying Fish

Tom had a cat named Whiskers. Whiskers was not like other cats. He did not like milk. He did not sleep all day. Whiskers wanted to fly!

One day, Tom took Whiskers to the park. It was sunny, and the birds were singing. They sat by the pond, watching the ducks. Suddenly, a fish jumped out of the water!

Whiskers' eyes grew wide. "Wow! A flying fish!" he said. "If a fish can fly, I can too!"

First, he flapped his paws like wings. Thud! He landed on the grass.

Next, he grabbed a kite. He ran fast, holding the string. The kite flew up, but Whiskers did not. He tripped and fell.

Finally, he climbed a tall tree. He jumped. BOOM! He landed in a pile of leaves.

Tom ran over. "Are you okay?"

Whiskers smiled. "Maybe not today, but I will try again tomorrow!"

Tom laughed. "Silly cat."



Parrot Staff Writer: Mohammed El mrani

Can You Answer These Questions?

1. What is Whiskers' dream?

- a) To drink milk.
- b) To sleep all day.
- c) To fly.
- d) To chase dogs.

2. What did Whiskers see at the pond?

- a) A flying fish.
- b) A flying dog.
- c) A big cat
- d) A sleeping bear.

3. How did Whiskers try to fly?

- a) He flapped his paws.
- b) He used a kite.
- c) He jumped from a tree.
- d) All of the above.

4. What happened when Whiskers jumped from the tree?

- a) He flew across the sky.

b) He landed in a pile of leaves.

c) He landed in the water.

d) He caught the flying fish.

5. Will Whiskers try again? Why?

a) No, because he is scared.

b) Yes, because he never gives up.

c) No, because he wants to be a dog.

d) Yes, because Tom will help him fly.



Movie Review

And Mrs. (2024)



What does it mean to be a woman who defies the script life hands her? That question remains throughout *And Mrs.*, a romantic comedy that risks to turn heart-break into something profoundly personal, unusually humorous, and undeniably empowering. Directed with a delicate balance of wit and sincerity, this film is more than just an individual love story; it's a testament to the resilience of women who refuse to let societal expectations dictate the course of their lives.

At its heart, *And Mrs.* follows the journey of a reluctant bride-to-be (played brilliantly by Aisling Bea), who, in a decision that baffles those around her, insists on going through with her wedding after the sudden passing of her fiancé (Colin Hanks). It's a premise that could easily lean into nonsense, yet the film navigates it with an emotional depth that speaks to something deeply familiar, how we, as women, hold on to love,

identity, and agency in ways the world may not always understand.

Bea's performance is nothing short of remarkable. She embodies a woman caught between grief and defiance, struggling with the weight of love and loss while trying to reclaim her own narrative. The humor in the film is sharp, not just for entertainment's sake, but as a survival tool, one that many women will recognize as a necessary companion through life's most difficult moments.

For me, *And Mrs.* is deeply resonant because it portrays a woman's journey of self-definition in a world that often seeks to label and limit her. I know what it means to fight for my choices, to stand by what I believe in even when others don't understand. This film captures that struggle, that resilience, and that undeniable beauty in choosing yourself, even when the world tells you otherwise.

And Mrs. does something rare in romantic comedies: it allows its female lead to be complex, unpolished, and self-defining. It challenges the idea that a woman's journey to fulfillment must be straight or conventional. Instead, it celebrates the truth that our choices, however unconventional, are ours to make, and in a world that often seeks to shape women's experiences within firm confines, that message alone is worth watching this film for.

If you are a woman who understands the silent battles fought in the name of love, independence, and self-worth, or if you simply want a film that respects the depth of those experiences while making you laugh, *And Mrs.* is for you. It's not just a story about a woman who marries a memory; it's about a woman who honors herself by defining love on her own terms. And that is revolutionary. That is why I recommend *And Mrs.* to anyone who has ever questioned their place in love, society, and life itself because it reminds us that the only validation, we truly need is our own.

Parrot Staff Writer: Asila Sadiqi

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.

Podcast Review

Listening Time

FREE
ENGLISH
LISTENING
PODCAST



If you are an English language learner and want to improve your listening, the *Listening Time* podcast is a great resource. This is a unique podcast specifically designed for English learners, and it lets you listen to spoken English in a simple and convenient way.



One of the best things about this podcast is that the host speaks slowly and clearly, making it easy to follow along. He doesn't talk too fast, which is perfect for learners at different levels. The topics are engaging and useful, covering everything from travel and daily routines to culture and study tips. This makes learning enjoyable and helps you naturally pick up new words. The vocabulary isn't too complex, and if the

host uses a more difficult word, he explains it in a way that's easy to understand.

Listening to this podcast regularly can help you improve your English naturally. To get the most out of it, try to listen every day, even for just 10–15 minutes. Writing down new words from each episode can expand your vocabulary, and repeating episodes will reinforce what you've learned. Practicing "shadowing" by repeating after the speaker is also a great way to improve your pronunciation.

Overall, *Listening Time* is an excellent podcast for ESL learners who want to enhance their listening skills in a fun and effective way. Whether you're a beginner or more advanced, this podcast will help you improve step by step. You can find it on YouTube, Spotify, or Apple Podcasts. Give it a try. Happy learning!

ENGLISH LISTENING PODCAST:
"PATIENCE"



Parrot Staff Writer: Mohammed El mrani

Samanak: The Sweet Taste of Afghan Dish in New Year

Every year on March 21st, Afghans welcome the arrival of *Nowruz* (Persian New Year), a time of renewal, joy, and deep cultural traditions. Among the most cherished customs of this celebration is the preparation of *Samanak*, a unique and symbolic dish made entirely from green wheat. More than just food, *Samanak* carries the essence of togetherness, patience, and prosperity.

Samanak is not just a dish; it is an event, a ritual, or a celebration. It represents patience, abundance, and the hope for a prosperous year ahead. Unlike other sweets, *Samanak* contains no added sugar; instead, its pure natural sweetness comes from the slow transformation of wheat germ, cooked for hours until it thickens into a rich, caramel-like paste. This process reflects the idea that with time and effort, life generates rewards.



The preparation of *Samanak* is a communal activity, bringing together women from families and neighborhoods. Traditionally, they gather around a large pot set over an open fire, stirring continuously while singing special *Samanak* songs. The cooking often lasts overnight, turning into a festive occasion filled with laughter, dancing, and storytelling.



By morning, the *Samanak* is finally ready to be served as the first breakfast of the new year and shared with family, friends, and even neighbors

who could not attend.

As an Afghan girl, I can say that *Samanak* holds a special place in my heart. Every *Nowruz*, we would go to my grandmother's house, which had a large yard perfect for hosting the *Samanak* gathering. A temporary wooden stove would be built to cook the dish, and the entire night would be dedicated to the tradition.

I remember the excitement of staying up all night with the women in my family, watching them stir the large pot with dedication. But it wasn't just about cooking throughout the night. They danced, laughed, and sang the traditional *Samanak* song. That song, which I still remember word for word, remains a deep part of my identity. Even today, whenever I hear it, I am transported back to those precious childhood memories, surrounded by warmth, love, and tradition.

Another beautiful part of the tradition was sharing the *Samanak*. It wasn't just for those who attended the gathering. The next morning, portions were sent to neighbors and relatives who couldn't make it, reinforcing the Afghan values of generosity and community.



For those who have never experienced *Samanak*, it is more than just food; it is a symbol of unity, patience, and celebration. It teaches us the value of hard work and the joy of sharing. If you ever could taste *Samanak* or witness its preparation, I highly recommend it. It is an unforgettable experience, rich with meaning and tradition.



For those interested, here is the traditional *Samanak* song that is sung during the cooking process. While it is in Dari/Farsi, you may still hear the repeated

mention of *Samanak*, capturing the rhythmic and

joyful essence of this beautiful tradition.

<https://youtu.be/8kgTCXcf4C8?si=WPbt3Q-GdYRD-MWw8>

Happy Nowruz! May your year be filled with sweetness, just like Samanak!

Parrot Staff Writer: Asila Sadiqi

Basic English vs. Advanced English

English is such an interesting language. Like most other languages, the version we learn in school or language institutes is completely different from the way native speakers actually use it. So, I want to share a personal memory from my English-speaking journey.

When I first started learning English, some of the very first sentences I picked up were: “Hi, how are you?” and the expected response: “Hi, I am fine, thank you. And you?” Like so many other English learners, I memorized this exchange word for word and used it exactly like that—whether at school or whenever I tried speaking English.

Fast forward a few years, I moved to the United States and, after a few months, landed a job on the Covered California project. All my

coworkers were native English speakers, and that’s when it really hit me: the English I had learned was completely different from the English they actually used in daily conversations.

A perfect example is the first greeting I ever learned: “Hi, how are you?” I always expected the typical response I was taught: “Hi, I am fine, thank you. And you?” But in the office, when I greeted my coworkers, they’d say something totally different— “Hey, what’s up?” And the response? “Alright, you?” That was the moment I realized that native speakers have so many different ways of greeting each other.

Below, I’ve put together a list of basic English phrases versus how advanced speakers might say the same thing in a more natural way.

Basic English	Advanced English
For the purpose of, For the benefit of,	For the sake of,

How are you?	How's it going? What's up? How are you holding up? How's life treating you? How do you do?
Definitely not!	By no means.
Without success.	To no avail.
Considering, Because of,	In light of,
I must decline your invitation.	Sorry, I can't make it. I'll have to give it a miss.
It is rather cold today, isn't it?	Bit nippy today, isn't it? It's freezing out!
I am feeling unwell.	I'm feeling rough. I'm not feeling great.
I will stand by you.	I've got your back.
I am listening.	I am all ears.

**Have a tooth problem?
Need help?
No dental insurance?**

Here are some resources:

WellSpace Health: 916-737-5555

One Community Health: 916-443-3299

Refugee Health Clinic: 916-874-9227

Elica Health Centers: 855-354-2242

California Northstate University: 916-686-8914 (Dentistry school)

Sacramento District Dental Society: 916-446-1211

Emergency Dental Sacramento: 916-318-0911 (open on week-ends
and accept walk-ins).

**Some of these places may require a fee. Call for information about
cost.**

You can also look on <https://cityhub.findhelp.com/> with your zip
code.



Spelling Bee

SPRING
2025

FRIDAY

APRIL

11

9:00 am – 12:00 pm

FOLSOM LAKE COLLEGE

10 College Parkway in Folsom
Community Room (Aspen Hall FL1-20)

REGISTRATION
REQUIRED



tinyurl.com/
FLCSpellingBee2025

*Join us for the Spring 2025
Spelling Bee competition!*

For more information,
contact the Spelling Bee Coordinators:

Diana Tinoco, FLC ESL Professor & Department Chair
tinocod@flc.losrios.edu

Spencer Eckman, FLC ESL Professor
eckmans@flc.losrios.edu

Olga Evans, ESL Teacher
Highlands Community Charter School
oevans@dons.usfca.edu



*Open to ESL Students
& Community members*

FREE EVENT • OPEN TO PUBLIC • GREAT PRIZES

Movie Review

"El Paseo (2010)"



"El Paseo" (The Trip) is a lighthearted Colombian comedy that follows the misadventures of a family (grandma, dad, mom, son, daughter and even the dog) from Bogotá (the capital) who embark on a beach vacation to Cartagena. As they hit the road, they encounter a series of absurd and humorous situations that test their patience, love, and sense of humor.

The film's strength lies in its relatable portrayal of family dynamics, as well as its witty dialogue and physical comedy. The cast delivers solid performances, bringing to life the quirky and lovable characters. The film also does a great job in portraying what a "typical" Colombian family is, showcasing many examples that are simply taken from real life and turned into pure comedy.

The movie's pacing is well-balanced, moving seamlessly from one comedic scenario to the next. The

film's tone is playful and lighthearted, making it an enjoyable watch for audiences looking for a humorous and entertaining film, but also using a warm tone that highlights the importance of spending time together as a family.



Overall, "El Paseo" is a delightful Colombian comedy that will keep you laughing and entertained. If you're in the mood for a lighthearted, feel-good film, this is a great choice. It is also a great choice if you are looking to learn Spanish, as the movie is 100% in Spanish.

This movie holds a special significance for me because it was the first film I watched with my mom, sister, and stepdad as a family. Since my stepdad and mom got married that year, it marked the first movie we all watched together. The movie had us all in stitches, and even though we first saw it in 2010, we often find ourselves quoting lines from the movie or remembering certain scenes to this day.

Click on the image below to watch the full movie:



Parrot Staff Writer: Manny



Scan QR Code

Zoom Hours

Thursday

11:00 AM to 5:00 PM

Friday

8:00 AM to 2:00 PM

ESL Center Spring 2025

On Campus in the LRC

Monday	9:00 to 4:45
Tuesday	9:00 to 4:45
Wednesday	9:00 to 4:45
Thursday	9:00 to 4:45
Friday	Closed

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

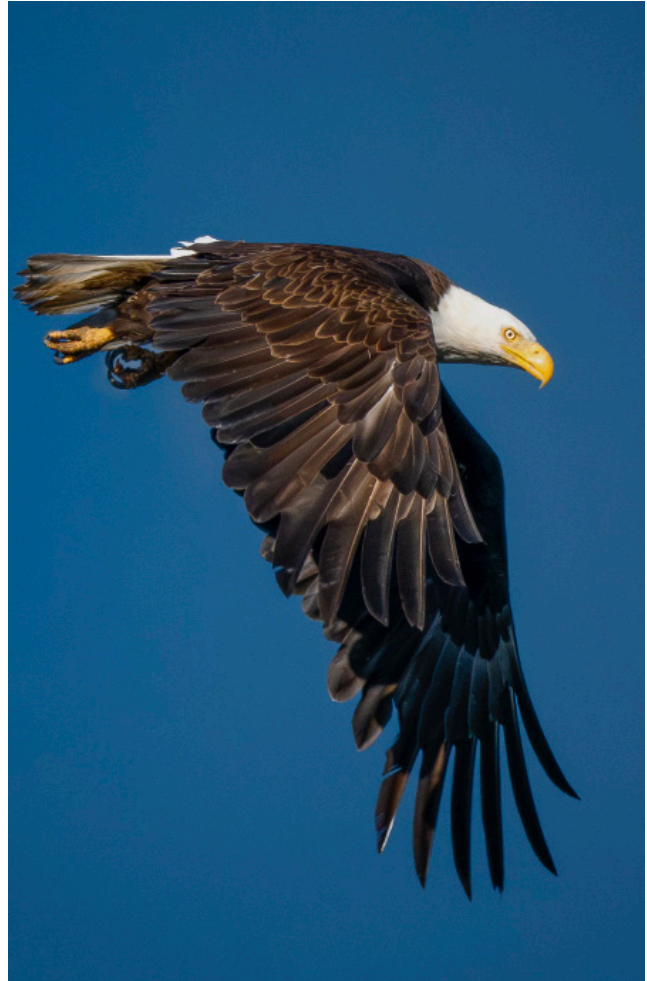


Ask
Questions

Get
Help

Explore California

Sacramento Wildlife Refuge



As a wildlife photographer, I'm always looking for great places to take pictures. *The Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge* in Northern California is one of those special places. It's a key stop for millions of migratory birds, making it a paradise for photographers and nature lovers.

During my recent visit, I was impressed by the variety of wildlife that calls this refuge home. From the majestic bald eagles to the playful river otters, every photo was filled with a new and exciting subject. The refuge's wetlands, grasslands, and rivers provide a unique backdrop

for capturing the relationships between species and their environments.

The Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge is not just a great place for wildlife, but also a testament to the importance of conservation. The refuge's efforts to protect and restore habitats have created a thriving ecosystem that supports an incredible array of plant and animal life.

As a photographer, I feel lucky to have had the chance to experience this amazing refuge. The Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge

is a must-visit destination for anyone who loves wildlife and the natural world. Whether you're an experienced photographer or just starting out, this refuge is sure to inspire and leave you in awe.



All the photos shown in this article were taken by me, using the following equipment:

- Camera: Nikon Z8
- Lens: Nikkor Z 400mm 4.5 S
- Nikkor 1.4tc Teleconverter

Important Tips for Photographers:

- Arrive early to capture the golden hour and misty landscapes.
- Bring a telephoto lens to get up close and personal with wildlife.
- Experiment with slow shutter speeds to create dynamic and artistic effects.
- Respect the wildlife and keep a safe distance to avoid disturbing them.



Parrot Staff Writer: Manny

To see more of my work please visit:
Emrradophotography.com

LANGUAGE & COMMUNICATION HOMEBASE

HOURS

- ✓ Monday-Thursday
8-5pm
- ✓ Friday 8-4:30pm

SERVICES


- ✓ Workshops & Orientation
- ✓ Support Resources & Referrals
- ✓ Counseling Appointments
- ✓ Snacks, Study Space, Lounge Area, Fun Events

Included Majors

- ASL-English Interpreting
- Communication
- Deaf Culture and American Sign Language Studies
- English
- English as a Second Language
- Journalism
- World Languages

Located in the Portable Village Room 613B

Contact Us

 (916) 484-8974

 Askhb-lac@arc.losrios.edu

Out of the Cage

Parent to Parent Program at ARC

Being a student and parent brings unique challenges that only another parent truly understands.

At American River College, a special resource called Parent to Parent (P2P), in partnership with the Mentor Collective, enhances the students' experience by connecting CalWORKs students with a mentor from within the program. Students are paired with someone invested in their success--a person ready to listen, inspire, help navigate challenges, and recognize opportunities.

Additionally, P2P mentors serve as a critical part of a student's success team by serving as a proxy for your dedicated counselors and the CalWORKs program. Mentor Collective's online platform provides training and resources for students' mentors and makes it easy for mentors and mentees to connect.

To enroll in P2P, scan the QR code or call: **(916) 484-8059**



Mentee Registration



QUESTIONS/COMMENTS?

Student Editors: **Tuyet Le, Emmanuel Madrid, Mohammed El mrani, Sayed Edres Sadiqi, Asila Sadiqi, and Sofia Kovalko.**

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.

To see previous issues of *The Parrot*, go to <https://arc.losrios.edu/academics/the-parrot-newsletter>

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