



Spring 2026
American River College

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The Parrot



ISSUE #204
SPRING 2026

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



BILINGUAL

By Olesia Baranova, ESL 315

In many immigrant homes, the native language is like a plant sitting on the windowsill. It is still alive but slowly fading and dying because English gets more space and attention, and the native language doesn't have enough sunlight to "grow." I have seen it many times among my friends' families whose kids were born in the US or came here as kids. *Continue on page 22*

ADDICTION

BY ALEKSEI GONCHAROV, ESLL 325



I am Aleksei, and I would like to share my experience with others, so perhaps someone will not come across the same problem. This narrative serves as an expression of my earnest emotions and feelings about an ordeal that I went through to quit my bad habits that the world is drowning in nowadays. Smoking, alcohol, and drugs are the issues a human being should get rid of immediately as soon as it comes out. Even though I had nice friends and did sports, I began to consume adult products and form *Continue on page 22*

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Got a Funny ESL Story? Pick up ARC Gifts!
See page 3 for details.

ASKING & GIVING ADVICE

Hello, Everyone!

I need some advice about enrolling in classes at ARC. I'm 18, don't work, and I want to take full-time for my AA degree. I feel a little unsure about which classes I should take first, and I also want to make the most of online classes without getting behind. Can you give me some suggestions on how I should plan my schedule and choose the right classes?

- Artur S., ESLG 51

Hi Artur,

I think you should check with a counselor early because they can help you with planning your classes step by step. You don't have to do everything alone, and it really helps to write down your deadlines in one place.

- Kateryna T.

Got a Funny ESL Story? Pick up ARC Gifts!

The Parrot wants to hear from **YOU**—students, staff, faculty, and administrators!

Tell us about a funny or memorable moment you've had while learning or teaching English.

Send your story to TheParrot@arc.losrios.edu.



As a **BIG** thank-you, receive a gift from *The Parrot*.



Spring 2026
CAREER FAIR
April 7th & 8th
10 AM TO 2 PM
IN THE ARC STUDENT CENTER

 **CAREER CENTER**
AMERICAN RIVER COLLEGE

OPEN TO ALL STUDENTS
AND LOS RIOS COMMUNITY

AMERICAN RIVER COLLEGE 4700 COLLEGE OAK DRIVE, SACRAMENTO, CA 95841

You're Invited!

Looking to strengthen your team with fresh talent? 🚀

Join us for the **Spring 2026 Career Fair** at American River College. This is your opportunity to connect with a diverse pool of motivated students and members of the Los Rios community who are ready to make an impact in their fields.

When: April 7th & 8th, 10 AM – 2 PM

Where: ARC Student Center

Partner with the ARC Career Center to find your next great hire. We look forward to seeing you there! 🤝

 [Career Fair](#)

American River College Career Fair - Spring 2026

Apr 7th - 8th, 2026 • 10:00 am - 2:00 pm PDT

Apr 7th - 8th, 2026 • 10:00 am - 2:00 pm PDT



Life in My Homeland and Then Emigration to the United States

SAYED MUJTABA KOHISTANI, ESL 310

NARRATIVE ESSAY

Emigration, by its very nature, always carries both bitter and sweet memories. There is no emigration without difficulties; however, we must not forget that after many hardships, ease and opportunity also appear.

First, I would like to emphasize that we are all human beings, and the Earth is the shared home of humanity. It does not truly matter which religion or belief we follow, which social class we belong to, what color our skin is, or which language we speak. Human beings grow accustomed to the language, faith, traditions, color, and identity of the region in which they live and come to see themselves as belonging to that land, because this instinct is rooted in human nature.

I am one of the thousands of people who chose emigration. In 2023, I left the land called Afghanistan, where I was born, and traveled to the United States.

My life story begins with being born into an educated family. My father was an administrative employee, and my mother was a teacher responsible for educating students. At the age of six, I began school, and at eighteen, I graduated from the twelfth grade. However, like many young people in my coun-

try, I had to take on family responsibilities and was unable to continue my university education.

We had gradually become accustomed to the many ups and downs of life in Afghanistan. Unfortunately, in 2021, a group that had been fighting the Afghan government for many years ultimately took control of the country through violence and killing. I do not wish to speak further about the cruelty and behavior of that group, but with their return to power, many others and I were forced to choose emigration, and eventually we arrived in the United States.

From the bottom of my heart, I express my deep gratitude to the government and the people of the United States for supporting immigrants especially those who sought refuge in America after the collapse of Afghanistan and for welcoming us with kindness and compassion.

As is clear to everyone, life in Afghan society is very different from life in

the United States. As a newcomer, I faced many challenges such as language, culture, religion, and many other difficulties. Fortunately, I was able to adapt to this modern society in a short time and gradually became accustomed to it. All of this comfort is the



result of the kindness and humanity of the American people, for which I am sincerely thankful.

Today, my children are studying in school. My wife holds a childcare license and is working in child supervision. I am currently an English language student at ARC and also work part-time. I have good friends from different races, religions, and countries with whom I talk, share stories, and create sweet memories of life.

My plan is to strengthen my English language skills and complete my studies in the health field, specifically in MRI technology.

America is my second home. My children and I are committed to serving this land. Long live humanity, because in a society filled with compassion, we felt the pain of emigration much less.

GOOD NEIGHBORHOOD

YUE MING, ESL 47

OPINION ESSAY

Do you like your neighborhood? A good neighborhood improves the environment and value. I like my neighborhood for several reasons.

The first reason I like my neighborhood is because the area is near many stores. I live in an old and quiet community. It is small but it has many good stores around it. I love to spend my free time to go to there to walk around. There is a grocery store, so it helps me save time if I need something in a short time. I do not need to drive far. Next to the grocery store is Petco. I like to go in the store to look at animals. That area has a coffee shop also. I usually like to get coffee and sit on a chair enjoying beautiful moments. Indeed, the area around my neighborhood helps me a lot.

The second reason is the people around us. The people around us are very nice and friendly. When I see the neighbors, they always smile and say hi to me. During the summer, we like to have a party together. They bring delicious food to share. We talk and laugh. I enjoy spending time with my neighbors. My neigh-

bors take care of each other. When we go out of town, we don't worry about our home. They give water to my plants and watch our home. For me that is a big help. Indeed, the neighbors around us are like relatives.

My neighborhood has special streets and park, so I like it a lot. Two blocks away, one street is special because in the winter time the whole street decorates their houses. The colorful lights make the night bright and beautiful. If you walk down that street, they offer you a hot drink. The lights and drink make my heart feel warm in winter. In the neighborhood, there is a little park. I like to take my dog for a walk over there. The trees, grass, and flowers produce fresh air. I enjoy the fresh air in the park, which is different from that at home. Indeed, streets and a little park make the neighborhood more special to me.

In conclusion, I love my neighborhood with many stores, people, special street, and a little park. In short, a good neighborhood helps you enjoy where you live.

GOOD CHARACTERISTICS

OKSANA KUTSIUK, ESL 55

OPINION ESSAY

Persistence, Self-Control, and Optimism Help Us Overcome Difficulties

Why does one person overcome difficulties easily while another does not? All people are different. We differ not only in appearance but also in character. There are difficulties in every person's life, and they test our strength. However, some people cope with them, while others quickly give up. Three characteristics a person needs to overcome difficulties include persistence, self-control, and optimism.



The first important characteristic for overcoming difficulties is persistence. It helps to achieve goals. A person who never gives up after the first failure has more chances to get the desired result. Even if the way is hard, persistence leads to success. A good example for us is Helen Keller. She was blind and deaf from birth, but it didn't prevent her from getting an education. Also, persistence improves willpower and character. If we keep trying when we face difficulties, we become stronger and more confident in ourselves. It helps to overcome difficulties in the future. Moreover, persevering people inspire others. Their example shows that success is possible if you don't give up. Such people become role models for their family, friends, and colleagues. Indeed, persistent people achieve success even after numerous failures.

Self-control is another important characteristic

of a person. It prevents rash actions and words. If you are disappointed or frustrated and cannot control yourself, you may do something you will later regret. People often say harsh words in such moments, and words can hurt even more than actions. Self-control helps you stay calm in difficult situations. A person with strong self-control focuses on what can be changed, instead of worrying about what is beyond their control. This ability helps to avoid panic and make wise

decisions in difficult situations. For example, when I was younger, I used to find it very hard to control my emotions when things did not go the way I wanted. But now I understand that getting nervous does not solve problems. It is better for me to stay calm. Self-control develops inner strength and confidence. It provides a sense of stability and helps move forward when things get tough. In short, self-control allows us to concentrate on what is truly important and overcome obstacles on the way to our goals.

Finally, optimism is an important quality that helps people overcome difficulties. It helps to find some good things even in any situation. A person who believes does not focus only on problems but looks for ways to find solutions. If something bad happens in my life, I accept it as something temporary. As a Christian, I believe in God's help, because

nothing is impossible for him. Optimism also helps you recover faster after failures. A person does not

optimism. Persistent people continue to move toward their goal even when it seems impossible.



People with self-control can stay calm and make wise decisions in difficult situations. Optimists believe in their success and that everything will be good. So, if a person can develop and combine these three characteristics, they will be able to overcome any difficulty in life.

dwel on past mistakes but learns from them and moves on. She sees every failure as an experience, not the end of the journey. Optimism improves emotional state and relationships with others. For example, I try to communicate with optimistic people. I find it difficult to talk with those who are always dissatisfied with something. Therefore, optimism helps a person overcome difficulties and move forward.

To overcome challenges, a person needs three important qualities: persistence, self-control, and



EFFECTS OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON YOUTH

OKSANA SKOCHOK, ESL 55

CAUSE & EFFECT ESSAY

Do you know anyone between the ages of 12 and 19 who doesn't use social media? In fact, social media plays a big role in the lives of young people. Today's teenagers spend a lot of time online. But is it always bad? Thanks to new technologies, social media is expanding its opportunities, so what useful things can it offer the younger generation? There are three main positive effects of social media on young people: communication, access to academic resources, self and skill development.

One of the main effects of social media on young people is communication. Using digital platforms, teenagers can communicate with friends and relatives who live far away. By sending messages, photos, or videos in real time, they can share news from their lives. Young people can also make new friends, even from different countries, whom they would never have met in real life. Thanks to social media, this can be done much more easily by simply liking a photo or writing a comment. There are many online communities on social networks based on interests. Being a member of such communities, young people have the opportunity to communicate on topics that interest them. They discuss their favorite music bands, new movies or favorite characters, sports, and books, for example. In such communities, teenagers can share their thoughts and receive support from members. In this way, teenagers deepen their knowledge

and expand their interests. Thus, these platforms bring young people together, even across great distances.

Another effect of social media on young people is access to academic resources. Thanks to social media, educational institutions can provide groups of students the opportunity to attend classes online through their social media platforms. Due to different reasons, young people do not have the ability to study in person. By attending online classes, young people have the opportunity to gain an education without visiting traditional classrooms. There are many channels on social networks that publish useful educational content. They provide free learning materials on various subjects. By sharing educational videos and hosting online lec-



tures, these channels help teenagers learn more effectively and better. In addition, there are social networks that allow university professors to create training courses for students. Using social media tools, young people can take professional online courses and receive certificates from leading universities in the world without leaving their homes. Therefore, online networks provide excellent opportunities for access to educational resources for the young generation.

The third and equally important positive effect of social media on young people is the role

of digital platforms in personal growth of young people and skill development. Nowadays, social networks serve as a platform for self-expression and self-realization of young people. Various networks allow teenagers to share their creative works, such as music, photos, poems, and drawings. Because of the Internet, many young people have become popular and have shown themselves to the whole world. By publishing interesting content, teenagers attract the attention of the audience. Receiving positive feedback encourages them to develop their talents and increases a teenager's self-esteem. By creating their own blogs, young people cultivate new essential skills required for their channels' growth, such as video editing, copywriting, and graphic design. Developing such skills can help a teenager in their future career choice. Social networks pro-

vide a lot of space for young people to express themselves, grow creatively, and acquire useful skills.

To summarize, because social media provides the opportunity to communicate, young people are able to connect without borders. Digital platforms offer free access to academic resources, so education becomes more widely available and convenient. Since social networks are accessible and popular, teenagers can develop useful skills and self-realization. Yes, social networks occupy a significant part of the lives of young people. Sometimes this causes concern, but a careful and balanced approach to the use of social media will benefit the development of our younger generation.

CHARACTER TRAITS

MARYNA SEMKO, ESL 47

DESCRIPTIVE
PARAGRAPH

I have several characteristics that describe my daughter, and some of them are good while others are bad. One good quality is that she is curious. For example, she loves to read, and she even has her own little library at home. Another good characteristic is that she is kind. An example of this is she always tries to support me, her friends, and other people when they need help. However, she also has a negative characteristic: she can be shy. For example, after she meets new people, she feels nervous and shy, but she always tries to work on this. As we can see, she has both good and bad characteristics such as being curious, kind, and shy, but she is still the best daughter for me.

The Internet in Children's Life

NATALIA ZABABURINA, ESL 55

EFFECTS ESSAY

Do you have any worries when your children spend time on the internet? I am worried about it because my children use the internet every day for studying, playing, communicating, and exploring. It has become an important tool for their education and socializing in the modern world. However, I don't feel comfortable allowing unlimited screen time. Over the last few years, it has become evident that the Internet has several positive and negative effects on children.

One of the most important effects of the Internet on children is that it helps them with education to learn and discover new things. First of all, educational websites, videos, and online games make studying more enjoyable and easier to understand. For example, Clever, Lexia, and Math 99 help my son improve his school skills quickly. Moreover, Duolingo helps my daughter learn Spanish for free because she wants to be ready for the next school year. In

addition, children can search for information in web libraries to complete school projects. They also use online dictionaries when they need to learn new words. Furthermore, many teachers share helpful lessons and resources online. Children often communicate with teachers and classmates through Zoom, email, or messaging groups to work on group assignments. Finally, online quizzes and practice tests allow students to review lessons and check their progress. In summary, the Internet gives children access to knowledge from around the world, which inspires curiosity and studying.

Another positive effect of the Internet on children is that it helps them improve their personal skills. For instance, many children use websites and videos like YouTube to learn new hobbies, such as drawing, cooking, or dancing. My daughter, for example, has several apps for creating digital art, and she practices different techniques. Additionally, kids can also take online lessons for guitar, piano, or drums from professional teachers. Sometimes my son watches videos with drum players for motivation and learning new techniques. Moreover, children can play chess or logic games to improve memory, problem-solving, and concentration. Some even participate in international virtual competitions, which helps them build confidence and earn money. Also, my kids

believe that the Internet helps people improve skills and start their own businesses because we live in the modern world of high technology. For example, if child makes something handmade, he can sell it online using apps like Etsy or social networks. Indeed, the internet has one of the most important effects on children which helps them express themselves, reveal their talents, and develop useful skills for the future.

On the other hand, the Internet has some negative effects on children that cannot be ignored. There is too much

unnecessary, inappropriate, or dangerous content online. Without control, children may accidentally see violent or harmful material that affects their emotions. Moreover, social media can cause stress when children compare themselves to others. Spending too much time online can lead to addiction, making it difficult to focus on school responsibilities. As a result, children may waste hours on useless

websites, short videos, or online games instead of developing healthy habits. Unfortunately, for my kids, in our family we must limit the time internet and gadget use because without rules and limits they can waste time playing games or watching movies. Furthermore, physical activity decreases, which can cause health problems. Technology can also reduce face-to-face communication skills if used too often. In summary, the Internet has several negative effects on the children, and those effects can become stronger than the positive ones without limits, parents' control, and rules.

In conclusion, the Internet plays an important role in children's lives. On one hand, it helps them study, discover new interests, and improve useful skills. On the other hand, without proper control it can expose them to harmful content, addiction, and health problems. Therefore, parents should guide their children, set reasonable time limits, and monitor their online activity. When used responsibly, the Internet can be a powerful tool for learning and development. Ultimately, the key is to find a healthy balance between education, entertainment, and real-life activities.



BAD PETS

BY NADIYA KIPORUK, ESL 47

OPINION ESSAY

I like animals. Our world would not be as diverse if there were no animals. Some people keep pets. But some animals are bad to keep at home, such as tigers, raccoons, and snakes.

First of all, tigers. These are wild animals like big cats. They can be dangerous because you don't know if they can show aggression. They eat too much meat every day, so it is expensive to keep them. You must work harder to earn more money; therefore, meat is expensive to feed them every day. People spend more on tiger food than on their own food. Also, they don't use litter boxes. They use territory marking, so it is bad smell at home. When they are angry, they don't throw things. They can throw a person out. Because of this, in my opinion, tigers are not good pets.

Next, some people keep raccoons as pets. They are very smart and cute animals. But at the same time, they can be little criminals. They can open cabinets, doors, steal food, shiny objects, and steal your dignity. Raccoons are very playful and curious, especially when they are young. They are interesting to people. But raccoons are also bad and have several disadvantages. There



are a few of them. They have wild instincts and can become aggressive. They have strong jaws and sharp claws, so they bite and scratch a lot. Their bites can be serious and dangerous. They can break things. Raccoons are also disease carriers. Therefore, I think that raccoons are not good pets.

Finally, in my opinion, snakes are bad pets. Some people love to keep snakes and sometimes even big ones. Large snakes can be aggressive and attack people. I remember a story I read a long time ago. One woman had a python snake. One time, she saw that he had stopped eating and was lying next to her when she was lying down. She thought that he was sick, so she asked the doctor about him. He told her that, "the snake is not sick, but starving. It's freezing up space and sizing you up to swallow you." Because snakes are dangerous, I think it's scary to keep them at home.

In summary, I do not advise keeping such animals at home. Predatory animals do not make good pets; therefore, I advise people to think first and not buy these animals.

A WEBSITE TO LEARN ENGLISH

TANYA ZAVHORODNIA, ESL 47

REVIEW ESSAY

Learning English can be difficult, but right website makes it easier. I use views and online tools to improve my English skills. In this essay, I will explain why *Easy English Channel* on YouTube is very helpful for me.

First of all, *Easy English Channel* has very clear and natural conversations. The videos show people speaking English in daily life. For example, they talk about habits, work, feelings, and free time. These topics are common and useful for everyday communication. The speakers talk slowly and clearly. Because of this, I can understand their pronunciation better. Therefore, this helps me improve my listening skills step by step. Overall, these natural dialogues help me understand native-English-speaking people.

Another important advantage is learning new vocabulary. In every video, I hear new words and expressions. The words are used in real situation, not only in textbooks. Because of this, they are easier to remember. In addition, the

videos have subtitles. I can read and listen at the same time. So, this helps me connect spelling with pronunciation. Sometimes I pause the video and repeat the words. As a result, my pronunciation becomes better because the vocabulary practice on this channel is very effective for me.



Finally, I like how comfortable and interesting this channel is. The video doesn't feel like difficult lessons. Instead, they feel like real conversations with friends. I can listen to these conversations in the car. I can listen to them while I cook at home. Therefore, learning English is very convenient from me. Because of this, learning English

is not stressful. I listen to the videos regularly during my daily activities. So, this channel keeps me motivated to continue learning.

In conclusion, *Easy English Channel* is a great tool for learning English. It helps me improve listening, vocabulary, and pronunciation, through real life. Therefore, English feels more alive, more real, and more possible for me.

OPINION ESSAY

BLESSINGS IN MY LIFE*NATALIYA SHYMYK, ESL 47*

In life, we have a lot of blessings. I remember a lot of blessings in my life. Blessings are important for every person. In my life, I am thankful for my grandmother, my photo album, and my hometown.

First, I am thankful for my grandmother. She was a very important person in my life. My grandmother was a very kind and positive person. She always helped me in difficult situations in my life. She often gave me good advice. She cared for me because my parents worked more time. In my childhood, my grandmother always played with me. For example, I often remember how I spent time with my grandmother. We played as teacher and student or shop assistant and customer. Also, she taught me how to cook. I am thankful for my grandmother because she was very important in my life.

Next, I am grateful for my photo album. This is one of the things that remind me of many memories. My photo album with pictures of my family is very important for me. This thing saves pictures of important people in my life. I often like to look at my photo album. For example, on the weekend I was looking at photo album of my childhood, pictures with my family. This reminds me a lot of very interesting and important events in our life. I look at my photo album and miss my family, my friends, and my relatives. For instance, I like to look at pictures with my parents when I was child. In this picture, we were very happy and smile. This is my favorite photo. I am thankful for my photo album and the

possibility to look and remember important people and events for me.

Lastly, I am thankful for my hometown. This is a very important place for me. This is the place where I was born, raised and worked. In my hometown, I had a lot of friends who were important for me. Also, this place has very beautiful views and great nature. I often walked with my family or with my friends along streets with beautiful green trees. Also, in my hometown were a lot of mountains where I often walked. For instance, I often walked with my father in the forest for mushrooms. This place is very important for me. I am grateful for my hometown because this is a very beautiful place, and this place reminds me of home.

Indeed, my grandmother, my photo album, and my hometown are really important in my life, and I am thankful for them. My grandmother is important for me because she loved me very much, my photo album and my hometown are important for me because they remind me of home. I am thankful to God for all in my life.



Do You Have a Hobby?

BY ZHANNA KAPUSTIAN, ESL 47

HOBBY CORNER

If you don't have a hobby, then you need to think about that. Every person should have at least one hobby. I have several hobbies that I enjoy. Embroidery, reading, and baking give me an opportunity to relax and lift my spirits.

When I was still a child, my crafts teacher taught us how to embroider. For girls, it is important to be able to hold a needle in their hands. Therefore, you can mend something or learn to sew new things. For me, this turned into a hobby. I have enjoyed embroidery since childhood, so my mother approved of my interests. She invested a lot in my hobby, even though she was not interested in it herself. As a teenager, I had less and less time left for my favorite hobby. Finally, when I want to distract myself from the hustle and bustle, I pick up a needle and do some embroidery.

Certainly, reading is also important and enjoyable for me. Although when I was a child I really disliked reading, I do not know what influenced me to change my mind. Then I started reading different kinds of books such as novels, historical books, and books about discoveries. Now I prefer reading about parenting and

relationships. Of course, I read a lot of children's books to my son. Now I have to read books not only in Russian and Ukrainian. Reading in English is a challenge for me, but it is actually interesting. Therefore, reading is and will continue to be a part of my life, and as long as my son asks me to read to him, I will read to him.



Today, baking is my favorite hobby. First, I relax when I work with dough. When you touch the dough, it is like magic. Second, I invest all my love in it. I really like it when the house smells like baked goods. This scent is like a warm embrace, a feeling of comfort and care. It reminds me of my grandmother and her delicious buns. Finally, I enjoy baking gingerbread cookies with my son. These are his favorite cookies, and we make them at any

time of the year.

Indeed, in every period of my life I have had my hobbies. Some hobbies are not as important to me right now, while others take up more time in my life. When I need to relax, be alone, and forget about the hustle and bustle, I choose one of my hobbies: embroidery, reading, or baking.

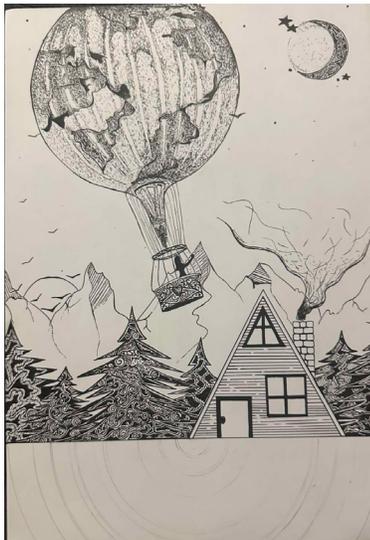
The Art of Mariana Temerivska

Parrot Palette



Do you draw free hand, or do you use tools such as a ruler to help you?

I mostly draw by hand, but for lines like circles I use a compass and sometimes for long lines I use a ruler.

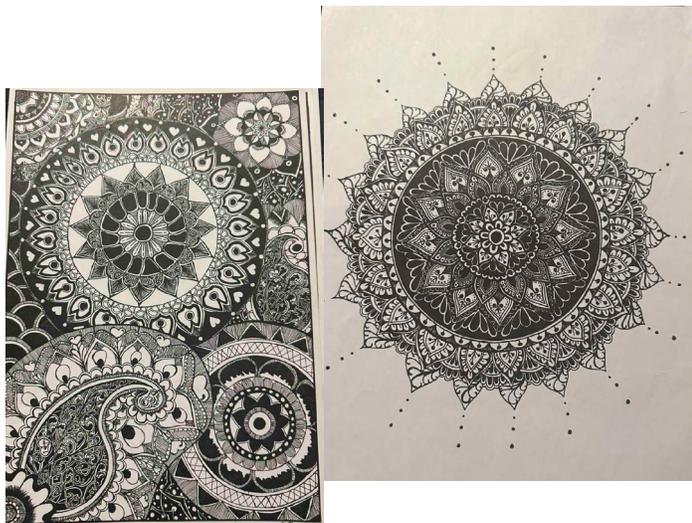


When did you start drawing? Did you teach yourself, or did you have a teacher?

I started drawing back in Ukraine in high school, and I was 12 years old then. No one taught me. I just loved to draw since childhood.

Some of your drawings have so much incredible detail. How long did it take to draw one of the really complicated designs?

I drew it in a day.



Where are you from and what do you want to study at ARC? Do you have specific career goal?

I am from Ukraine and I am currently studying ESL 47, ESLG 41, and ESLL 41 English classes. and I want to continue my studies in the medical field.



**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 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 sorely missed.

Requirements:

This scholarship will be awarded to one ARC ESL student who has 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 24 units in ESL at ARC before the start of the Spring 2026 semester**.

Timeline:

The application time period for the Spring 2026 scholarship will be in March (from 3/01/26 - 3/31/26), and the scholarship winners will be announced in late April or May 2026.

Application: Please click on [Spring 2026 Susan Pezone Memorial ESL Scholarship](#) to open the scholarship application.

"I love words though they sometimes get the better of me. Being a writer has always been my dream. For me, writing is kind of like studying a language. I know I'll never master it, but it doesn't matter because it's so much fun along the way." --Susan Pezone in A Collection of River Rock Writing: Sacramento (page 65)



Fall 2025



Student Health & Wellness Center
 Located Between Student Center and Community Rooms

Learn More About Your LOS RIOS STUDENT HEALTH AND WELLNESS SERVICES

available to currently enrolled students!

**Try it Out
Talk it Out**

Our vision is to **empower** students with the knowledge, skills and resources to support their **physical and mental wellness**, so they may **achieve** their educational and life goals.



Peer Support: Safe, **anonymous, peer-to-peer** platform 24/7, ability to filter to find their global community



Therapy and Advocacy: Meet with a Student Health and Wellness Center (SHWC) therapist or advocate, **in person or virtually**.



Online Therapy: Talk to an online licensed therapist during the day, **evenings, and weekends**.



Gender Health Center: Free therapy services (in-person or virtual) for those who identify as **SGL/2SLGBTQIA+ or questioning**.

FREE Mental Health Services

WHAT MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT WORKS BEST FOR YOU?

	Los Rios SHWC	BetterMynd
In-person appointments	✓	✗
Available during traditional hours	✓	✓
Available during evenings and weekends	✗	✓
Remote appointments (Zoom)	✓	✓
Walk-in / emergency visits	✓	✗
Ability to select therapist based on demographics, identities, lived experiences, and specialties	✓	✓

If therapy isn't the right choice for you, maybe peer support is. Access 24/7 online peer support through **Togetherall**.

FREE Physical Health Services

- Health and illness assessments
- First aid for minor injuries and illness
- Over-the-counter medications
- Narcan and fentanyl testing strips
- Pregnancy testing
- Sexual health concerns/education
- Covid self-tests
- Condoms (male and female) and lubricant
- Flu A/B testing
- Flu vaccine
- Strep throat testing
- TB risk assessments
- Health requirements for academic programs
- Immunizations/titers*
- TB skin test*

*Low Cost



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BILINGUAL

BY OLESIA BARANOVA, ESL 315

LEAD ARTICLE

Continued from page 1

Children speak English at school where they spend a lot of time, they communicate with friends in English, and they watch cartoons also in English. Finally, they realize that they cannot express their thoughts clearly and easily in their native language. This creates a serious question for families if parents should push their children to be bilingual or not. I believe immigrant parents should strongly encourage their children to be bilingual, even if the children resist, because it helps to keep families connected, protects cultural identity, and gives children long-term opportunities in their career and understanding multiple cultures.

First, speaking one's native language helps families to stay closer and be connected to older generations. When children can communicate in their home language, they can easily talk to their grandparents who most likely don't speak English because they came to a new country at an older age and found it difficult to acquire a new language. It also helps to prevent generation gaps that even can happen in the native country with the native language, not to mention foreign countries. Besides, when parents insist on speaking their native language at home, children can listen to family stories, jokes, and memories from their parents and grandparents lives. That makes the home warmer when everyone can understand one another and feel understood.

Second, keeping the native language alive at home helps us to protect cultural identity because language carries traditions, humor, jokes, and even ways of thinking. Some of my parents' friends moved to the US fifteen to twenty years ago, and they always insisted on their kids speaking only Russian at home. The children didn't like it at all at the beginning, but then it became their

habit: no English at home. Now, when they become adults, they are so grateful to their parents for pushing them to be bilingual. Now they have two languages they can call native. Learning a native language at home helps preserve cultural identity. Kids who grow up immersed in a native language understand traditions, ways of thinking, and the jokes in a way that adult learners cannot.

Some people think that making children learn and speak their native language at home could confuse and overwhelm them. They also say it might stop children from learning either their home language or English well. It seems true at first because learning two languages could be challenging. However, at a young age, children can acquire several languages to a native level with very little effort. Even if they speak mostly the native language at home, it will not influence their fluency in English because they spend most of their time speaking it outside. In addition, being able to speak two languages at a native level can

open opportunities for more jobs. They can also become excellent interpreters, understanding all the details, idioms, and cultural meanings behind both languages. So, pushing children to be bilingual even if they resist is still a good idea.

In conclusion, immigrant parents should strongly encourage their children to be bilingual because it keeps families connected and protects cultural identity. Being bilingual is not only about speaking and understanding two languages, but it's about staying connected to your family, understanding and being a part of your culture, and having more long-term opportunities. Even if children resist now and don't find it important, they will really appreciate it when they grow up and be thankful that their parents stayed persistent and helped them keep their culture.



ADDICTION

BY ALEKSEI GONCHAROV, ESLL 325

ARTICLE

Continued from page 1

an addiction that I didn't realize came along with them. I made several attempts to quit that were unfortunate and ended up in the U.S. This action played a crucial role to help me and ultimately, I learned a priceless lesson.

My best friends and I were growing up together in the same class. Our view on the world was as simple as any child's - pristine, naive, and bright. Interests were formed as is from cartoons, child-like humor, and some games. The lifestyle was not conspicuous at all. We had fun together, hated together, and even did sports together as the time went by. Everything changed when I turned fourteen. I was boxing, wrestling, and did a great job training outside on my own. The only thing is an inevitability of new peer-acquaintances when you train alongside your best friends, especially with a kindred-minded person who wants to become as massive as possible like we did. Some of them had harmful habits, but I didn't care as much. We then started to casually meet one another to spend time together. Thus, I met even more smoking, drinking, or drug-addicted people, but those didn't like doing sports whatsoever. I accepted this fate because of being amiable and eager to make new friends. I eventually ended up making up my mind that the fact that I do sports keeps me afloat.

Four years later, I managed to smoke a pack of cigarettes at this point because less was



not enough. I did the same pace in sports but was wondering, "What would I achieve if I didn't have the bad habits?" and ventured to make it out. I caught a disease and decided to quit. The flu was a gift of God descended upon me. Because I felt bad, the feeling only contributed to my sobriety period. Once I tried to smoke during the flu, but it was so

awful, I couldn't stand it. I felt dizzy, vomit-like scent struck my nose, vision abruptly blurred, and my body was shivering as if an annoying mouse was looking for a tiny dog. I remembered all this suffering and kept abstaining. That was the college era - the era of brand-new vapes. I felt redundant because I wished I would quit but fluctuated due to my peers' behavior. We had been going outside every

break to smoke, to curse professors, or simply feel alive after three hours of being inside the building, and it invigorated us as we headed towards the next lesson. Unfortunately, I belonged to the first group of students and it was a torture to stand by my peers and simply talk. It seemed even particles of vapes being breathed out was enough to intoxicate me, and my mind slipped: "It won't be like it was the last time during the flu; this is not a cigarette. I know right, you miss it, trust me you will keep abstaining even after".

—"Hey, pass me your pod-system" - I blurted out as my pupils widened.

—What happened? Aren't you abstinent? This is your first month.

—Yes, I am, I feel hesitant though. It won't be bad,

so pass it.

The second nicotine filled my blood cells, I knew the month was spent to no avail, but the dopamine claimed the opposite as it spread, and I have started over.

Soon after, by a twist of fate, it turned out that I immigrated

to the U.S. I had been smoking for my whole journey. Within the country I caught myself contemplating, "what if I've been smoking because my friends have? What if it might have been better to avoid those who are smoking to not be bonded with my addiction?" Surprisingly, right after I lost the people I could smoke with, I became capable of struggling with my addiction easier. Additionally, since I was nineteen, I couldn't purchase them on my own. My jacket, once soaked with the smell of burnt ash and vapor, lost its scent, as well as its memories of the addictive past. I exclaimed silently to myself, "that is what I needed!" - My new lifestyle. As three more years passed, this is a new me. I am twenty-two and no Satan's whims still touch my purified heart.



Humanity, especially kids, are prone to relating the "live life to its fullest" phrase to anything their parents, laws, or schools have restricted. Everything, but something they potentially could monetize, can be useful to the humanity, or at least to your very own and true self in the future. Why would not

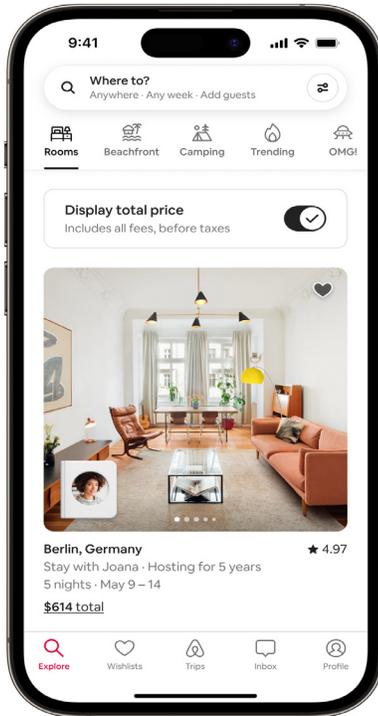
one prefer to devote himself to studying the science over the substances. It is easier, eh? It will not be easier to teach an offspring to not smoke with a cigarette coming out of your mouth and whip him for wanting to be like his father. Children, after all, are a reflection of their parents; then let's look at this mirror as if one in the bathroom. One shall clean it consistently to keep their house neat. Let this "mirror" be a perfect example for one of your descendants. Furthermore, the fact that one has a lot of friends is not all purely for the sake of amusement.

In fact, the more friends you have, the less time you have left for yourself. I don't blame my past self. Conversely, I appreciate the lesson I derived for my whole life besides relating the popular phrase to useful things. The second lesson was to choose friends wisely.

AIRBNB: A GENIUS IDEA WITH TWO SIDES OF THE STORY

BY SAYED EDRES SADIQI, PARROT STAFF WRITER

APP REVIEW



When Airbnb was first introduced, it was nothing short of a genius idea.

The concept of creating a platform where people can easily find accommodations around the world, while feeling at home even when they are miles away, revolutionized the way we travel. Whether someone is on vacation, a business trip, or temporarily away from home, Airbnb offers access to the comforts and conveniences that traditional accommodations sometimes lack.

From fully equipped kitchens to cozy living rooms, it gives travelers the opportunity to experience a new place without sacrificing the familiarity of home.

One of the greatest strengths of Airbnb is the variety of options it provides. Travelers can choose from apartments, houses, studios, or even unique stays depending on their needs and budget. For many people, this flexibility is what makes Airbnb so appealing. However, like everything else, Airbnb comes with both advantages and disadvantages, and these can vary from person to person. Each individual has different tastes, preferences, and expectations when traveling. What feels perfect for one person might not suit another.

Personally, I find Airbnb to be an excellent choice when traveling with a large group of friends or family. In such cases, it often offers better value than booking multiple hotel rooms. A larger shared space allows everyone to stay together, spend quality time in the living room, cook meals in the kitchen, and enjoy a sense of independence. The cost per person is often lower, and the overall experience feels more comfortable and

communal. Having access to facilities like a kitchen, laundry, and common areas can make group travel more convenient and budget-friendly.

However, my preference changes when I travel solo. In that case, I tend to prefer hotel accommodations. While Airbnb offers space and independence, it also comes with responsibilities. Many listings have specific rules and regulations that guests must strictly follow. There may be quiet hours, sometimes as early as 10 PM, especially in residential neighborhoods. Playing music loudly or hosting gatherings can disturb neighbors, potentially leading to complaints. These restrictions can make a vacation feel less like a break and more like everyday life with rules to follow.

Additionally, staying in an Airbnb often requires maintaining cleanliness throughout the stay. While basic tidiness is expected anywhere, in Airbnb it can sometimes feel like continuing household responsibilities rather than escaping them. Many travelers also choose to cook their own meals to reduce expenses, which, while practical, may reduce the excitement of dining out and experiencing local cuisine. Instead of fully disconnecting from routine life, guests may find themselves cleaning, cooking, and following house rules, essentially recreating the structure of home while supposedly being on vacation.

That being said, these experiences are highly subjective. For some travelers, cooking meals and enjoying a quiet residential atmosphere enhances the trip. For others, especially those seeking relaxation and service, hotels may offer a more carefree experience with housekeeping, room service, and fewer personal responsibilities.

In conclusion, Airbnb is undeniably a brilliant and transformative platform that has reshaped modern travel. It provides flexibility, affordability, and a sense of home that many travelers appreciate. However, it also comes with limitations that may not suit everyone's travel style. For group trips, it can be an ideal and economical option. For solo travel, hotels may offer greater convenience and freedom from responsibility. Ultimately, the choice between Airbnb and hotels depends on personal preference, expectations, and the purpose of the trip. Like many innovations, Airbnb is not simply good or bad, it is a matter of what works best for each traveler.

EXPLORE CALIFORNIA: A FAMILY PHOTO

BY MANNY, PARROT STAFF WRITER

EXPLORE



A quiet island of pine trees stands in the middle of Silver Lake, perfectly reflected in the still water beneath a brilliant summer sky. Above it, the glowing core of the Milky Way stretches across the darkness like a cosmic river of light, filled with dust clouds and countless stars. The calm lake mirrors both the trees and the galaxy, creating a moment where earth and sky seem to meet. The scene feels peaceful and timeless, capturing the beauty of California's night sky and the silence of the Sierra landscape.

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LIFT YOUR VOICE

EVENT

BY SAYED EDRES SADIQI, PARROT STAFF WRITER



On Wednesday, February 18, the American River College Student Center transformed from a busy midday walkway into a vibrant stage for creativity, storytelling, and connection. Hosted by the Black Student Success Center in partnership with Arts Homebase, “Lift Your Voice” invited students and faculty to step into the spotlight and share their talents through music, poetry, storytelling, and spoken word.

What made this event stand out was not just the performances themselves, but the atmo-

sphere it created, one that encouraged authenticity, vulnerability, and community engagement.

The afternoon began with a warm welcome that set a tone of openness and inclusion. Students from various departments gathered, some intentionally attending, and others drawn in by the sounds coming from the stage. The first performer, a student musician, opened the showcase by singing two songs while playing the keyboard. The melodies were soft, calming, and spiritual, filling the Student Center with a peaceful energy. As the music echoed through the space, more students slowly made their way inside, curious and captivated by the sound. What began as a scheduled campus event quickly became a shared experience.

As the performances continued, the event shifted from soothing musical expression to something deeply personal. An ARC professor took the stage and shared a heartfelt story about the loss of her mother. The room grew still. Conversations stopped. Students who had been standing in the back leaned forward. Her story unfolded step by step, drawing the audience into her memories and emotions. Many listeners, including myself, found ourselves reflecting on our own experiences with loss and hardship. The silence in the room was powerful, not empty, but full of empathy.

This emotional transition highlighted what made “Lift Your Voice” different from many traditional campus events. It was not limited to one type of expression or one emotional tone. In-

stead, it offered a mixture of joy and sorrow, celebration, and reflection. The combination created a meaningful balance that allowed attendees to experience a wide range of human emotions in just a few hours.

Later in the program, Professor Michael Angellone shared a passage from an engaging novel, once again shifting the atmosphere and drawing the audience into another world through literature. His reading reminded attendees that storytelling, whether through music, memoir, or fiction, remains one of the most powerful tools for connection. Each performance added a new layer to the event, reinforcing its purpose: to create a platform where voices could be heard and appreciated.

Food and drinks were provided, encouraging students to stay, socialize, and support their peers. Yet beyond refreshments and entertainment, "Lift Your Voice" represented something larger. It reflected the mission of the Black Student Success Center, to cultivate spaces where students feel seen, valued, and empowered. By providing a stage for both students and faculty, the event strengthened the sense of belonging that is essential on a diverse community college campus.

Events like this matter at ARC. Community colleges often focus heavily on academics and transfer goals, but creative spaces are equally important. They allow students to step outside

the pressures of coursework and express parts of themselves that may not appear in a classroom discussion or assignment. For some, it is an opportunity to showcase talent. For others, it is a chance to listen, learn, and connect. In both cases, students benefit from being part of a campus culture that values voice and creativity.

"Lift Your Voice" demonstrated that art can build bridges across departments, backgrounds, and experiences. It encouraged participation, vulnerability, and support among peers. By

blending music, storytelling, and literary readings into one shared event, ARC reinforced the idea that every voice deserves a platform.

As the afternoon ended, attendees left not only with full plates but with full minds and hearts. The event served as a reminder that beyond

lectures and deadlines, ARC is also a community, one that thrives when its members are given the opportunity to lift their voices.



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3. After you choose in-person or online, sign up using your student ID number and birth date.



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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 accepts 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.



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.

OUT OF THE CAGE

PARENT TO PARENT PROGRAM AT ARC

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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.

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



Mentee Registration



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