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# ELI STUDENT VOICES

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## **How to Ditch your Boyfriend** (1st Place)

*Lucie Kadjo*  
R/W40

Nowadays, boys are so bossy and macho that it is rare to get along with them for a while. Relationships between lovers are getting more and more ephemeral. And here are some steps to help you get rid of your boyfriend if he drives you crazy. These steps are very easy to adopt and also work very well. First of all, start complaining about everything. Complain about his dressing, his beliefs, and his excessive gentleness with you. Whenever you go to a public place, you should reproach him about being too close to you whether he holds your hand or strokes you. And do the inverse if he does not. The second point is to behave very busy. Act so occupied that you get all the time a raincheck on his invitation to go out. Then, fall apart in anger any time you see him. Let him think he is the reason of your upset. You can be very mean with him and scream at him even in public. After that, make him think you are not interested to be with him anymore. Tell him you need to breathe and would like to get some distance, space. Finally you can also show up with another guy whom he doesn't know, even your cousin. But be careful about this last step because it can make your boy very mad! I recommend to you this last step as the last alternative. In short, to dump your boyfriend, you should complain, behave busy, be mad at him, try to be distant and, finally, show up with somebody else. If you follow those steps carefully, you can reach your goal. Your boyfriend will not be around and you won't be able to find him anywhere.

## **Same-Sex Adoption** (2nd Place)

*Maria Jesus Bragado Romeo*  
R/W 60

*(This is a timed 100-minute essay)*

Homosexuality is a controversial fact; it has generated debate and discussion among societies for many centuries. The evidence shows that there is a different degree of acceptance from each culture, although nowadays it's a tough issue to treat. In other words, it is a taboo topic. In addition, allowing gays and lesbians to adopt children has created varied arguments.

Man and woman's sexuality is inextricably associated with reproduction, and two men or two women cannot reproduce. Therefore, people against the same-sex adoption argue, in a fundamental way, that it is contrary to nature. Also, they say that biologically it is simply not natural or normal. At first appearance, it sounds pretty logical and convincing but I

wonder if they are aware of the compromise to benefit childhood of the children.

Most children in the United States do not live with two married parents. In fact, according to the 2000 census, "Only 24% homes were composed of a married mother and father with children living at home." Children can be raised much better among two people than a single, let's see: money, affection and education. No matter if those people are from the same gender, numbers are talking and it's all about the new generations—the best for them.

On the other hand, some people believe that having two moms or two dads may cause disapproval from those kids who have heterosexual parents; it implies a negative environment for adopted kids. That's true, the opinion from others in our lives is very important. No doubt about it. But, let's go beyond; why don't we educate our children to respect homosexuality? Why don't we learn to accept it? Why do we have a hypocritical attitude?

In conclusion, I support same-sex adoption for the previous reasons. However, societies must do their homework--nothing is impossible. We should bear in mind that our children are the future and the good development of them is essential. I'd like to refresh the concept of synergy; it is the phenomenon in which two or more agents acting together create an effect greater than that predicted by knowing only the separate effects of the individual agents. An agent doesn't specify gender. Enough?

## **A Deepening Friendship**

*Abeer Alzahrani*  
R/W 40

When I came to Gainesville, I felt alone without family and without friends. You cannot have happiness without someone who shares your happiness. However, now I have a nice friend and we have a great time together. She is a very nice girl from South Korea. She is called Sunny. On UF's Homecoming Weekend, we attended together three different events.

I and my best friend Sunny spent the Thursday of Homecoming Weekend together. We attended the theatre. We saw a play together and we enjoyed it because the actors were professional. We came back home and we ate a Saudi traditional dinner and we talked during dinner. We did this until midnight. It was a warm time talking about our feelings and we slept together as best friends do in Saudi Arabia.

On Friday morning, we woke up early, ate breakfast together like a family, put make up on, dressed up in our nice clothes and went to the bus stop. We were glad and I felt as

comfortable as I do in my own country. I said to myself, "I am in my country now." We thought Gainesville was lucky that day because it was chilly. University Avenue was crowded where the parade was. We chose a good place and sat beside each other. We watched the parade. It was a very fun, enjoyable parade and we took a lot of photos.

The next important event was "Gator Growl." It was like a festival about the UF sports team. I attended with my friend Sunny. There was a comedy actor, bands and music, a mime actor, fireworks, a group of ballet dancers and parachuters. We shared the fans' Gator dancing, hand clapping, encouraging the UF team to win.

I was with a great friend and we spent some great days together. I liked Gainesville during Homecoming Weekend when all the people go out and celebrate together. It was a great chance for me and for my best friend Sunny to spend the whole weekend together and with other people. I think that weekend was special and touched our feelings. I am sure we will not forget that unusual weekend and we will keep it in our minds as a terrific memory.

## Learning English

*Isis Jaimez*

*R/W40*

In the world there are around 6,912 (\*) different types of languages. One of the most popular is English. Learning English is very important in my life for three reasons: 1) it is important to my career, 2) it is important to my personal life and 3) knowing English makes me a more confident person.

English is fundamental to my career because the most important information, articles and academic papers that I read are in English. Moreover, if I want to publish new results, advances, journal articles or other things, it is better for me to write them in English. Finally, if I know English, I will have more opportunities of work.

Also, the English language is important in my personal life because I live in United States now, so I have to speak this language. Besides, a special part of my family (my brother and his wife) live in England, a country where the people speak English, too. In addition, I want to speak another language and the English language is one of the most popular in the world, so I can travel or visit places and talk or communicate with the people.

Additionally, knowledge in English makes me a more confident person. I would like to study my master's and my Ph.D. degrees outside of Venezuela, in a country such as the United States. Furthermore, it is important for my personal growth to know more about more cultures. At the same time it is important for me to gain more knowledge so I can be a more self-confident person.

English is one of the languages most spoken in the world by the people. The people who learn English as a second language do so for many different reasons. In my own situation, English influences my career, my personal life and makes me a more confident person. For these reasons, the English language is the important influence in my life

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<http://www.nvtc.gov/lotw/months/november/worldlanguages.htm>

Research: November 13, 2007

## Back to my Childhood

*Annelena Porto Delgado*

*R/W 30*

In Brazil, we say that when people get older they become like children again. I think that this is true, but I had no idea it would also happen to me at the age of thirty when I traveled to the United States. There are four reasons why I felt like a child again when I first came to the United States. First of all, I could not talk because I did not know how to speak in English. For example, I could not ask for food, and I only could talk to the flight attendant about my gate and my flight number. Another reason why I felt like a child in the United States was because I always needed help when I needed to talk with somebody from the ELI. In this case, I am thirty years old, but I felt like a four-year-old child because my friend needed to talk for me. I also felt like a child in many of my English classes because I only spoke when it was absolutely necessary. These things happened because I did not have a lot of vocabulary, and I was so shy. I just did not know how to express myself, so I did not say anything. The fourth reason is my sociable personality, as I liked to meet new people. Since I was a little child, I loved to talk with people, and I always wanted to get to know new people, especially at the ELI. For these reasons, memories of my childhood came back to me when I first came to the United States. Therefore, the ELI, my classes, and particularly my special teachers Alison Camacho and Deborah Kellerman were outstanding to me. They taught me to "grow up," and they made me feel "older" at my English level. I would like to thank the ELI team for everything. I will never forget my experiences in the United States and my growth from an "English child" to an "English grown-up."

## The Good Effects of Exercise

*Yu-Che Lo (Stan)*

*R/W40*

Exercise is a good activity. It helps people to get healthy. In addition, exercise is a good way to make life better. There are three different beneficial effects of exercise: aerobic effects, anaerobic effects, and team work training.

First of all, exercise has an aerobic effect. It helps you extend your physical endurance. Jogging is the good example of exercise which has an aerobic effect. When you jog, your body is doing an aerobic sport. You feel smothered at the beginning. However, if you keep jogging, you will feel fine; you will even feel better. You also extended your physical bent at the same time. In addition, aerobic exercise also helps your body cells gain more oxygen. It is good for your body's metabolism. Aerobic exercise will make you will feel healthy.

Secondly, exercise has another similar benefit: the anaerobic effect. It has an opposite benefit to the aerobic effect. It is a kind of no oxygen's active, like rock climbing. You don't inhale oxygen when you are doing anaerobic exercise. Your muscles are in stress and you feel tired easily. If you still keep doing anaerobic exercise, you will overlimit the body. Then, you will feel stronger. As you do more anaerobic exercises, the more explosive your muscles will be and anaerobic exercise will help you to gain.

Thirdly, there is one more good beneficial effect of exercise: team work training. Some exercises need more than two persons to play, like play on a team. Although personal skill is important, playing as a team is more important than playing alone. To win a game, always everyone needs to work together. When teammates practice together; they also encourage each other when partners don't play well. It is a good way to learn how to help each other and develop friendships.

Exercise has good effects no matter what kinds of exercises you do. There are three kinds of beneficial effects: an aerobic effect, an anaerobic effect, and team work training. All of those beneficial effects can help people get healthy and help people develop a good sense of team work which is helpful to society. All you have to do is exercise, then, you will gain the effects from exercise.

## **Halloween**

*Saniya Tabenova*

*R/W 50-60*

On Halloween, I went out with my friend downtown in Gainesville, watched how people dressed up, and gave sweets to children. Unfortunately, I had no chance to attend any parties before Halloween so all I did was walk on the streets and have fun at cafes with my friend. It was very interesting to be an observer of such an amazing holiday full of funny customs like dressing up, going out and trick-or-treating, and others. As I was walking, I saw people wearing symbolic costumes of pumpkins, monsters, or popular movie characters. Also, some of the children asked us for candy. It was a great pleasure to give them sweets because in this way you understand that you become the part of Halloween. All in all, it was very pleasant to have a walk to sit in a café, as I learned a lot from that little trip down the streets of Gainesville to see how Americans celebrate the holiday by dressing up and giving pieces of candy to children.

During my trip I've noticed that it differs a lot from the image that I had before coming to the US because people didn't decorate their houses, there were few who dressed up, and also, it seemed to be that Halloween was celebrated mostly by adults, not by children. Almost no one in Gainesville decorated his/her houses or workplaces, and when I walked down the streets, it seemed to me that this was a simple day and there was no holiday at all. In addition, there were very few people who dressed up. However, the most surprising for me was the fact that there were some of them who showed their initiative more than others and these were not the students, but the faculty and staff of the ELI. Also, I can't say that everything was fine.

Halloween is considered to be a happy holiday primarily for children, but now it has turned into another opportunity for adults to get "stoned" and have fun at parties, and there were a lot of drunk students instead of children asking for sweets. To sum up, I would like to say that, despite the fact that Halloween here is different from my image, it is really an interesting holiday and I had a great time celebrating Halloween with my friends.

## **The World's Changing Climate**

*Germain Mavah*

*R/W 40*

The variability in climate is becoming really unsafe for our environment. This change can be determined by temperature increases or decreases. Human society faces risks and pressures due to climate change impact on the environment. These last years, the changing climate has a great impact on the people's health, the state of our forests and precipitation changes.

First, the changing climate has negative impacts on the health of people. For instance, we know that when the temperatures are increased, many diseases can appear. We know that certain bacteria which live dormant at a certain temperature can wake up if the temperature changes. It is the case of malaria in certain areas: the changing climate will make it more favorable for the different mosquito species that are present in the region. This is also true for the malaria parasites. So, climate change can cause more people to get malaria, a dreaded disease. In fact, human health will experience many other direct and indirect effects of climate change. .

Second, the changing climate can also have an impact on the state of forested land – it can cause loss of forest. This threat can increase arid areas. We can have changes in land use because of climate change and that affects both water quantity and quality. We also know that a long, dry season may result in forest fires or desert risks.

Finally, the changing climate causes precipitation changes. It involves burning hot weather. The precipitation over land surfaces has increased in the middle and high latitudes but decreased in the subtropics and tropics. This fact limits organisms' life. It means the ecosystem rules are modified and. these kinds of facts can involve some negative impact on agriculture. We know that the variability of precipitation has negative effects on agriculture because the farming depends on the seasons. This variation involves changing seasons and difficult management of water for farming crops. Thus, these negative impacts include food shortages, hunger and alteration of water resources.

For several years, the climate has changed with many negative effects around us. Furthermore, the variability of climate causes negatives effects on the environment – it has dangerous effects on human health, the loss of forests and the changes in precipitation. Finally, I think that each person should take care about the changing climate in the world because it is necessary for our survival.

## **My Fulfilling Weekend**

*Jong-Hee Park*

*R/W 40*

When I arrived in Gainesville, I thought that everything I'll do is new. Now, four months later, I have already had lots of experiences. Nevertheless, everything I see is still new. This is what makes me feel fulfilled. In addition to these experiences, my English study is also a way of learning new things and makes me fulfilled. Recently, UF's Homecoming Week occurred and that might be the first and the last such experience for me. I had three activities that made me feel contented during that week.

Many people said that one of the most important activities in Homecoming Week is a huge parade. They also said I must see this. So, I saw the Homecoming Parade which so fantastic. I have never seen such a parade since I was born. I had no sooner seen the first part of the parade that I knew that everyone had prepared a lot. They were dancing very well, wearing costumes and make-up, and preparing cars to be floats. While I saw the parade, I took a picture eagerly. I had a really great time, and I saw and felt that I was participating in one aspect of American culture.

Then the day was gone and next day I saw the UF football game. I had prepared a blue UF tee shirt; I also prepared myself to yell louder. It was my first time to see the game in the stadium. All people in the stadium were yelling and clapping like a gator. (They told me that this cheer was called the "Gator Chomp.") I was one of the Gator crowd, also doing this Gator cheer. I had a good feeling like I had once in 2002 during the World Cup. However, the big differences were that I was here in the US and I was not in my country, and the game was not a soccer game. While I was watching, I was yelling English loudly, talking to people in English! It made me feel fulfilled. In addition, when UF won the game, it made me happy.

At the end of the weekend, I had to go to the library. I never forgot my purpose and why I came here. Everything I did, do, and will do here is English. That's why I had to go to the library. In Library West, I studied English: for example, I read a novel, studied grammar, listened to ABC news and did my homework. Even though it was not specifically Homecoming activities, I felt fulfilled and satisfied because of it.

During a good weekend recently, I really enjoyed American campus culture and studied English. These were fulfilling experiences for me: watching the parade, cheering as one of the Gators, and studying English. I really don't need any words. My first UF Homecoming Weekend made me fulfilled and happy that I chose to study in the U.S.

## **Halloween**

*Chia-Jung Tsai (Jessica)*

*R/W 3*

October 31, Halloween, was my first holiday in the United States, and it's also one of the craziest experiences of

mine. I attended two modern costume parties to celebrate this traditional holiday of the Western World. The first one was the ELI party where all students, language assistants, and staff dressed up, though, I almost couldn't figure out who they were. However, their costumes were not just about the traditional holy or scaring evil spirits but included all kinds of things and characters, such as a policeman, a nurse, a cook, and even a refrigerator. The second one was my ELI classmate's party. We drank a lot of punch, took pictures of each other, listened to the music, danced with our costumes on, and make-up on until midnight, and I still felt dizzy when I went to class the next morning. These two parties were quite different, special, unforgettable experiences that I have never had in Taiwan.

In my opinion, the Halloween is really a good holiday for people to release their stress from daily life of the real world. First of all, on this holiday, people can be not themselves but what they want to be, or can be their "real" selves without pretence and hiding. For kids, this is the only day they can "treat" adults by asking "trick or treat" without been punished. Besides, since Halloween itself has a long history meaning and lot of symbols, such as jack-o-lantern, pumpkin...etc; we can also teach and pass along the history of long dead religions to the next generation. In conclusion, Halloween is not only a relaxing holiday, but also a meaningful holiday with its long history.

## **My First Time Halloween Experience in the US**

*Nipapat Techangamwong (Apple)*

*R/W 50-60*

My three Halloween experiences started on Monday. I went to my English teacher's home. I knew a little bit about Halloween. We have the carving pumpkin for 10 groups. It was very fun and I had a good experience to carving pumpkin in Halloween festival. We also brought the food to share together. This party was very simple and I enjoyed eating foods. We didn't have any costumes to wear; we were just trying to make Jack-o-Lantern, the symbol for Halloween. In the evening, I attended Halloween Party at Maguire Village. I enjoyed eating foods and children played games with their parents. I prepared candy and chocolates for playing trick or treat with the children around 4:00 – 6:00 p.m. They enjoyed wearing their costumes. They were very lovely, pretty and very cute. Their parents looked after them all the way. This Halloween party was prepared for children. Wednesday night, I attended an ELI Halloween party. It was very different from two parties that I went to before. Many students wore their costumes. They tried to scare people and showed their creative dresses. We brought some snacks and foods to the party. This party was all young people. It gave me another feeling for Halloween. So I think American people love to celebrate the Halloween festival.

I think the Halloween is a good holiday and people love to celebrate it because there are a lot of symbols that try to scare or mimic the evil like mythology of witches and traditional activities like trick or treating, bonfires, costume parties, haunted houses (adult people love to go) and carving jack-o-lanterns.

The Halloween festival is a popular holiday for Western and American people. The beliefs about the boundaries between the world of living and the dead overlapping are the same around the world. However, these are present in different ways, different celebrations, and different names. It is the same purpose to have activities that associate with religious festivities and family. I had a good experience to celebrate Halloween in Florida with my international friends and involved to Halloween parties, Halloween traditional games like a trick or treating and the history of Halloween. I also love this tradition.

## **My Job**

*Naji Aldosary*  
*R/W Lo Int*

I worked with the Ministry of Agriculture in my country, Saudi Arabia. My position was interesting work with many responsibilities. I was the Assistant Manager at the Branch of the Ministry of Agriculture in my city, Al Aflaj. I was also the Director of the Government Farm Lands at that Branch. My responsibilities in that job were varied. I surveyed and measured the land owned by my government. I made a map of this government-owned land. My government gave this public land to farmers to grow their crops (for example: wheat, palm, corn, forage, vegetables, and fruit). I gave new information about agricultural systems to farmers in my city and I helped them to solve their problems. Finally I also represented the Manager when he was on vacation. My job gave me new knowledge. I learned how I can interact with strong farmers. I have good relations with my city's farmers. I liked my job because I liked to work with people and I liked to learn new information about agriculture.

## **Halloween in the United States**

*Jr-Jen Shiu (Carol)*  
*R/W 50-60*

On Wednesday morning, I saw that a teacher wore an amazing costume with a lot of colorful stars and skeletons on it. October 31st is the American holiday-Halloween. On that day, I saw every teacher wearing costumes or special hair bands. When the teachers would see you, they would say "Happy Halloween" and give you candy. Additionally, there were a lot of American students who wore costumes and made themselves up when they went to school. They infected me with their enthusiasm for celebrating Halloween. After class, I attended a pumpkin carving activity in a campus dormitory. We carved the pumpkins with a variety of tools, such as knives and drills. After we finished, we put candles in the pumpkins, and they were the most beautiful pumpkins I had ever seen. It's a very interesting experience to celebrate Halloween in America.

Since this is my first time in America, I am excited and curious about all of the holidays such as Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year. Halloween especially impresses me. In my country, I don't wear costumes and make-up on my face, so I think Halloween is a very funny and good

Holiday. Even through I didn't go to any parties, I saw that other people's expressions were cheerful and content. I think keeping this traditional festival is very necessary because good friends have fun together and meet acquaintances. Also, parents take their children to join activities or meet with their relatives. Halloween provides a great opportunity to get to know your friends better and also release some stress. As a matter of fact, I really like Halloween here, and I have already decided I will wear a unique costume next time!

## **The Importance of the Family in our Lives**

*Gaby Barbosa*  
*RW 40*

Since I was a child, my mother always said to me that the only thing that is important in our lives is the family. Now that I am grown, I think she was right. Some of the reasons that I think that family is important are that they teach us a lot of things and they support us in difficult situations. Also, the family is important because it gives us a sense of our place in the world.

First of all, family teaches the most important things about how to be a good person in this life. Also, they teach us the best way to behave in our lives. When we were children almost all of our parents taught values and principles like responsibilities, humility, respect for everybody, etc. I think that these first things that we learn help us to act in the right way and to do useful things in the correct form. The most important part of this is that, when our parents teach us things, we try to follow their teachings so as not to disappoint them.

Second, in difficult situations, we always need somebody who supports us and, in these cases especially, our family is there for us. Family in those moments gives us sympathy, affection and advice to make us feel more confident. The one thing that I'm sure of in this life is that, if I personally have a problem, my brothers, my mother and my father are never going to leave me alone and they are going to try to help me.

Finally, my family gives me sense of my place in the world. To honor my parents and my grandparents, I try to be the best person that I can be. Also, when they see that I obtain some success in my life or I act like a good person, I make them feel proud of me and they can see that they are leaving a legacy in this world. That gives me a sense of my place in the world, too.

In conclusion, we have to value our family and express our love to them. They are essential in our lives because they teach us the most important things. Also, they bring us support in difficult situations. Lastly, they give us the sense of our place in the world. These are a few reasons that make us think about why family is very important in our lives.

## **Halloween**

*Minji Kim*

*R/W 3*

Normally, we don't celebrate Halloween in our country so I've had a really good experience with a new custom that is part of western culture the last few days. On Halloween, all of my ELI class teachers dressed up and they gave to the students some chocolates and candy. My reading teacher explained about Halloween. That was very interesting to me, because I didn't know about Halloween. My roommate also dressed up and carved a pumpkin. I didn't go to any parties, but I really enjoyed this Halloween that was the first celebration in my life. I like Halloween and will celebrate it from now on.

I think Halloween is a good holiday because Halloween has lots of fun things to do and we can share that feeling with each other. Lots of people are looking forward to Halloween when they prepare their costume and some stuff for Halloween and then we all very much enjoy Halloween together. When we go to any Halloween parties, we meet lots of people then we spend a good time with them and we also make friends there. On Halloween, most of the home owners buy lots of candy for Trick-or-Treaters so Trick-or-Treaters are welcomed by their neighbors. They are all happy and have good fun together. This might be just an annual holiday, but I think Halloween is a good way to be sociable so I'd like to say Halloween is a very good holiday.

## **The Exciting Homecoming Weekend**

*Seyoung Yoon*

*R/W 40*

The Homecoming weekend was so special for me because I was able to enjoy many events on the UF campus and off campus. At UF, I went to the concert of Gator Growl and the football game. Off campus, I went to Universal Studios. All of these activities created great memories for me.

First of all, the event of Gator Growl was so exciting and impressive for me. It was held in the Ben Hill Griffin Stadium on Friday night and was one of events of Homecoming. There was a variety of performances such as the fireworks, the magnificent cheering and the exciting music. And there were many people who absolutely enjoyed it and there were famous people there.

Next day, Saturday, I went to the Gator football game. It was a kind of simple experience for me because I didn't feel tense and didn't worry about losing the game. But it was a fun time and the result was that I enjoyed this with my friends.

Then, on Saturday night, the pretty exciting next thing was waiting for us, Universal Studios. I went to enjoy the horror nights with friends. I expected a scary experience, but it was not so bad. However, although it did not scare me, sometimes it made me astonished.

All in all, these experiences impressed me. I especially enjoyed everything with my friends and I saw famous people such as the coach of Gator football, Urban Meyer. This

Homecoming was the first Homecoming in my whole my life. So I will never forget these memories, my feelings and my friends.

## **My Favorite Hobbies**

*Mi Sun Lee (Sunny)*

*R/W 40*

Many people have a variety of hobbies. They enjoy their lives if they do things they like. I also have many kinds of hobbies which I enjoy and which add a new dimension to my life. I usually do them when I have time. My essay will focus on my three favorites: sports, music, travel.

Do you like sports? If you do so, what kind of sports do you like to do? In my case, I like watching football games. When I watch football, I usually shout out loudly as my team gets the point. Football games make me thrilled. And the other sport I enjoy is tennis. When I was in Korea, I used to play tennis with my father. As I play tennis, it makes me feel energetic. I sometimes compete with my father. It makes us have a good relationship.

Another hobby is listening to music. Especially, I love to listen to classic, pop jazz and R&B genre. I usually listen to classical when I feel down or when I want to feel calm. Particularly Mozart's music makes me feel peaceful. Listening to music does refresh my feeling. It is always like my friend.

One of my other hobbies is travel. It gives me good experience. When you are in new places, you suffer from a new environment. For instance, I am now living in the USA. I came here for the first time. There is a completely different environment. I have to do everything by myself if I want to do something such as preparing meals, paying for something and cleaning house and so on. We can also meet different kinds of people who come from other countries. New experiences are good to help me learn new things.

In short, most people have their hobbies in order to enjoy their lives more. When I have free time, I usually like to do sports, listen to music and enjoy traveling to other places. In fact, these activities make me cheerful and refresh my energy.

## **Halloween**

*Sidi Mohamed Zaynab*

*R/W 3*

I have never celebrated Halloween before, but in my last school, when I was taking English lessons, we sometimes studied Halloween day and worked on celebrating the festival. After my arrival in the United States, a few days ago, I noticed that in the town there were some things reminding people of the approach of Halloween because of the plastic spiders, jack-o-lanterns, skeletons or other things referring to Halloween. All those things were also sold in every shop. That was how I understood that Halloween event was approaching and would be on October 31st.

Eventually Halloween has arrived, but I didn't do anything to celebrate it because I wasn't really interested. It is a

stranger holiday that has never attracted me. Even though, when I was walking down the street, I could see that the majority of the people felt concerned about this event: they were shopping for their costumes. Instead of their heads, we could also see some people with pumpkins. Others dressed up to look like vampires, mummies, skeletons, ghosts, witches, goblins, zombies, devils and all sorts of things like that. Some people wore costumes similar to Dracula or Frankenstein monster's clothes. I could also see orange and black everywhere which are Halloween traditional colors. To conclude, I would say that I did not really have a Halloween experience. I didn't meet drunk people nor children who were asking the famous sentence: "trick or treat?" I have just heard about it and seen things which were supposed to be terrifying as Halloween custom wants it to be.

On the one hand we can consider Halloween as a good holiday. Indeed, it's a way for people to gather and to have a lot of fun, to joke, and to forget problems. They can spend some time to organize the event by preparing the costumes they are going to wear, by making decorations like the classic jack-o-lantern and by making their house looking like haunted mansions, etc... Besides children knock at the door of people they don't know without getting any punishment and on the contrary getting candy for free. Kids enjoy this event a lot; it's a way for them to dress up and to look like what they dream to be just for a night.

On the other hand, this holiday may be dangerous. Kids are such innocent and they don't know what they do. Therefore when an adult refuses to give them a treat, they can make a trick that's not fun at all like for example break a window or something much more violent and dangerous. Furthermore, children can forget the real world and dream about the spirits world or ghosts, they might have nightmares about that and feel really terrified of that world which does not even exist. We can add that every year people get killed during Halloween day in an accident because they drank too much or they met someone who drank too much.

To sum up, I would say that Halloween can be classified as a good holiday but also as a bad holiday. I don't really have an answer for that question because if I said yes, that would signify that I appreciate the event but as I said previously it does not interest me; and if I said no that would mean that I do not like it but once again I don't mind.

## **The Halloween Holiday**

*Mario Ruiz*

*R/W 3*

This Halloween holiday, I actually didn't go to a party or anything like that, but I saw a lot of people wearing costumes since early in the morning of Oct. 31<sup>st</sup>; people of all ages, kids, teenagers and old people between fifty and seventy years old or more were wearing costumes. Some people wore like pre-made costumes that they bought in stores, others wore very creative costumes that they made by themselves, and some people wore just a fright wig or a mask for fun. In conclusion, I can say that my impression of the Halloween holiday in Gainesville, is that

people take it like a day to have fun and to wear costumes and stuff like that to try to scare others for fun.

I don't think that Halloween is a good holiday and isn't a bad one either, but my opinion is that Halloween is just a commercial holiday, and it is a commercial holiday because the main purpose of it is for the stores to sell costumes and decoration stuff that aren't really useful for other reasons that do not involve Halloween which only occurs once a year. Buying all this stuff is really expensive, if you do it for just one day. Also it is an opportunity for thieves to commit crimes and also some of the kids that go out trick or treating, make very bad tricks to the people that don't give them any candy. So, I'm not against Halloween and I don't really care if it's eradicated or not, I just think that it shouldn't be that important because it doesn't deserve that much attention.

## **The Agricultural Production**

*Khadim Sarr*

*R/W 1*

A good agricultural production needs the right steps. In the beginning, we must have good equipment, such as engines and tractors because without proper equipment, farmers can't work. Next, the farmers plant the seeds like potatoes, groundnuts, corns, millet, etc. Before planting, they choose only the good and the best plants, and discard the bad. Then, the farmers must irrigate the ground with water and give it time for seeds to grow. Finally, they need fertilizer for good agricultural production. In conclusion, a good plan is necessary if you want to have a good agricultural production.

## **Halloween**

*Hongseok Kim (Nomad)*

*R/W3*

I'm going to tell you about my experience on Halloween Day when I prepared my kids for events and went trick-or-treating to a neighboring village. First, I bought a Jasmine costume for my daughter who wanted to disguise herself as a princess from an Arabic folk-tale, *Aladdin and his Wonderful Lamp*. My wife helped my kids to decorate the room with wizards and pumpkins by using wrapping paper. Next, I went to a neighboring village for trick-or-treating that was famous for gorgeous Halloween decorations. The village people lit porch lights and welcomed the kids with lots of candy and chocolate. In particular, some houses were so decorated with cobweb, scarecrows, and tombstones that they looked like a real haunted house. After returning home, I allowed my kids to watch a scary movie to create a ghastly atmosphere. I had a great time with my family on the Halloween holiday.

Recently, some people have worried that the Halloween holiday has lost its original meaning and is getting commercialized. Also some parents criticize that Halloween events make them increase unnecessary consumption and even tend to encourage hoodlums to commit crimes. Do I think that Halloween is a bad holiday?

Despite these kinds of side effects, I believe that Halloween is a great holiday. First of all, the Halloween holiday gives an opportunity for having a great time with family members. While preparing Halloween costumes and decorations, children have a valuable sharing time with their parents. Halloween parties provide a chance for adults to gather and socialize. In an individualized society, Halloween events play a role to promote communication among adults. Besides, Halloween holiday gives a pleasure to everyone regardless of their religions and races. Finally, Halloween is a good holiday to provide great times and make people to get together.

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*(Editor's note: In R/W 60, we wanted to practice writing a timed essay, so we wrote these argumentation essays in 100 minutes. I wrote one too!)*

## **Birth Control**

*Juliana Cortes*

*R/W 60*

Birth control has been around since the beginning of time. In Egypt women wore a flexible device made with acid substances and lubricated with honey or oil. This helped kill the sperm because of the pH being alkaline. Asian women used oiled paper as a cervical cap and European women used beeswax. Later on after the discovery of sperm the condoms were invented. Today we find several birth control methods that are most commonly used by women. The controversy of birth control comes when religious women start using them. The reason for this problem is that Catholic countries see this method as sinful; however, this method would prevent child abuse because when children are not wanted their parents are more likely to abuse them.

The Catholics believe that any method of birth control is sinful. The first point of view is that people should only have sex when they get married because it is a sacred unity between two with the sole purpose of procreating and it is an act that should only be performed between people that will share their lives together. The second belief is that because people are married they should have a family. Therefore any kind of birth control is against the law of nature. The only birth control methods that are accepted in the Catholic Church are abstinence and the rhythm method. These methods are accepted because they don't affect the human body or interfere with the laws of nature.

However, there are some countries that are in their most part Catholic and in these countries we see a high rate of child abuse. As an example we have Colombia. In Colombia nearly two million of children are abused, 70 % of the abused cases reported involve a child. When people who do not want kids are forced to have one they will behave in two ways. They will be so resentful towards the child that they will hate him or her. They will not pay attention to them and will not treat them with love. These types of parents will do everything in their power to stay away from the child as much as they can. The child will run away from home and end up in the streets. In the

street they are destined to be used as a sexual attraction or they will be put to work on the streets, without shelter or protection.

Secondly, when children are not wanted in a home their parents will abuse them themselves, which makes it even worse. In Colombia, some of the worst cases of abuse are reported when their own parents do them. Hospitals have reported cases where children are burnt by their own parents. The kids show up with burns up to 3 degree. The consequences for these kids are not only physical but also psychological. They will grow up to be very disturbed mentalities and let's not forget these kids will be the future of our countries.

When it comes down to it, why would people be forced to have children if the only future that they are willing to offer is a future that will only harm them? It is clear that kids who suffer from abuse are 99% of the times growing up to be disturbed people who will only fill our streets with more crime and atrocities. The Catholic belief is that we should raise our children to have the same beliefs and faith as we do; how is it going to be done by parents who don't care about their kids. If using birth control is against nature's laws, isn't hurting your own blood against our beliefs and nature's laws too?

## **Show Off or Learn?**

*Cesar Augusto Idrobo Giraldo*

*R/W 60*

There are a lot of problems now in the American schools about the issue of wearing uniforms or not. It's a fact that wearing uniforms contributes to a better discipline, therefore for a better learning. For these reasons I really think that students should wear uniforms in the schools.

First of all, when the students wear uniforms, you will see in the school an environment of equality because everybody is wearing the same. As a director of a school, you won't have any problems with "pants hanging out" or ladies who are almost naked. Also for a student it is very hard to feel the pressure of his friends because they are wearing expensive brands, so the student somehow feels forced to look like them and here is when the problems come. When everybody is wearing uniforms this gives to the school a good look because it seems to be that everyone follows rules and has discipline.

This is an advantage for the parents whose children are using uniforms because that way they don't have to spend time buying clothes for school every year. With uniforms you don't have to go around thinking what are you going to use this year, you just go straight to buy uniforms. The children will feel comfortable because they see that their other friends are wearing the same clothes, so equality will come to the environment in the whole school where your skills are the ones that matter, not the latest fashion.

Some parents that are against school uniforms say that schools are violating their right of speech because the schools are requiring uniforms for students. However, if you go to a school, the main goal that all the parents expect is that their children would be educated and that the school will create a sense of discipline and responsibility. Wearing uniforms creates an environment of discipline and equality in the school. As a



result, your kids will be well educated and straight people because that's what the school taught them. The life in the school and the entire things you learned there would affect your future. That's why it is so important to have a good education because this is your base. The fact that the students are wearing uniforms doesn't mean you cannot express yourself.

In conclusion, wearing uniforms helps to create a better learning atmosphere for your children and also creates a better environment. The students won't feel bad and won't have stress because they'll be at the same level than others. The idea of the uniforms helps the school to raise well-educated people, the parents save money and time and the students will still have the right to express themselves but with uniforms. The school is not a fashion show; this is a place where you go to learn and shape your knowledge in order to be successful in life and also these experiences will help you in your university and even raising your children.

## Taiwan Never Ever Submits to China

*Pei-Li Chen*

*R/W 60*

Taiwan, a small island which is located under Japan and next to China, is an independent nation. All people in Taiwan have the right of vote to elect their own president, and it has a sound system of government to administrate the whole country. Taiwan, which only has 58 years, is not a long-history country. It was established in December 1949 when we lost the Chinese Civil War and relocated the government to Taipei, which is the capital of Taiwan now. Since Taiwan departed from China and became an independent country, China constantly tried to persuade Taiwan to give up its nationality and attempts to combine with Taiwan as a part of China. As a Taiwanese, I won't allow my country to accept the inscrutable treaty, even if we have to face the threats of military, economy, and international status of China.

If Taiwan accepts the treaty of one country with two systems, it will become just one of the provinces of China. Meanwhile, the citizens in Taiwan will lose the right of voting for our own president and have to admit the fact that Hu Jintao, who is the leader of China, becomes our president. While the mighty force in China keeps threatening the people in Taiwan, some citizens are afraid the second Chinese Civil War will occur in the future. They assume Taiwan will have failed in the war by that time and fear they will lose all property. They are willing to agree with the ridiculous treaty because they trust China will not change the present situation in Taiwan. However, those people forget the hard effort our ancient soldiers paid with their lives in several wars to remain a free and independent country--Taiwan. Meanwhile, Taiwan has persisted in the spirit of independence country for almost 60 years. We must not give it back again.

Another threat Taiwan is facing is the economy problem. In recent years, because the economy of China develops increasingly, many businessmen and factories have transferred to China from Taiwan. According to the economic need, China understands Taiwan's hope to trade more easily on

transportation between Taiwan and China, so China proposes some advantages about commerce to captivate people in Taiwan to fly or sail directly to land in China without transfer, and the only one rule is to admit China to be our country. Most businessmen want to utilize the goodness on their business so they do not oppose to sacrifice Taiwan. I am really ashamed of those people who would rather earn more money than live in a mother country. Although money is really important for most human beings, money can not buy the enthusiastic spirit of liberty. People should treasure the liberty in an independent country, not prostitute it.

The last threat is the worst effect in Taiwan—that is the international status of Taiwan. Because of the meddling of China, Taiwan presently has a few diplomatic relationships over the world. Besides, the name of Taiwan often is required to be called another name, the Republic of China, when we attend international contests. China always tries to stop any connections among Taiwan and other countries. Although we are in a poor relationship in the world, we will not be beaten at all. Taiwan will fight to the last moment, even if it has only one diplomatic nation in the world.

In fact, Taiwan has a powerful economy with high foreign exchange reserves. The industry of Taiwan produces most electronic components in the world, such as laptop, cell phone, and mps. Taiwan sets up the economic connection with many countries in the world, so people do not have to worry that China will deter the trade in Taiwan. I believe China also wants to increase their economy and will not prevent the business currency from Taiwan. On the other hand, although China holds the mighty force and constantly threaten Taiwan, the US and Japan are also powerful countries and the two countries will not allow China to attack Taiwan because US has the peace treaty with Taiwan and Japan understands if Taiwan belongs to China, China will certainly threaten them. Taiwan is not alone in the world. All people in Taiwan should trust their country and then Taiwan will become stronger and better in the future.

## Who is the Real Girl/Guy?

*Chun-Chin Li (CiCi)*

*R/W 60*

Nowadays, when we judge an issue, we are less likely to define the issue either black or white. Even though human beings have more power than animals do--they don't have their society--people still have many opinions about sex. Some people claim that we only have two sexes in this world; however, other people state that appearance is not the only judgment to assess sex because there are some transsexuals in our society. All in all, who is the real girl and boy is not only about appearance but also about mind.

If a girl considers herself as a boy, she is a boy. Because if she doesn't think she is a girl, how can people force her to be a girl? Such self-perception is a very important criterion. For example, one of my girl friends considers herself as a boy; she never has long hair or wears skirts. When people see her on the sidewalk, people may think she is a boy. Moreover, she never acts like a "girl" because she does the way

that most boys do; people can't find any femininity but masculinity from "her." On the other hand, a boy who considers himself as a girl, he is a girl. Even though he has great social pressure, he is more likely to become a homosexual if he can't be a transsexual. In a recent study, a researcher suggests that the reason to become a homosexual is more likely because of genetics. Therefore, to define a person's sex is not only appearance but also self-perception.

In addition, people create the word: a girl and a boy; they also create sex. Not only people but also society sets many rules for a human to be a girl or boy. The role of females has varied over time, and the sexuality of a human has become more general than in the past. Take a spectrum for example, if sex is the element in this spectrum, many people belong to both sides, which are males and females, and there are still some people in the middle; those people can't be judged at first glance. Furthermore, humans create society, culture, and differences, and that makes this world differ from the animal world. People are less likely to set the rules for female dogs about what they can do, so do male dogs; the only thing they learn is how to live in human's world. In short, people can create many things that include sex, but they can't set the only rule for sex.

On the other hand, Christianity or Islam may say that everyone is either a girl or a boy. Because of their religion, they believed no transsexuals exist in the world. However, this reason is too emotional because we do have transsexuals in this world even though they are minority. In addition, some people may say because we have such good rules, we can have a better and peaceful life. A few people, however, are very sad because they don't want to act the way they should act. They don't have the freedom to live the way they like; they are limited to express themselves.

To sum up, even though everyone has different opinions about this issue, a real girl and a real boy are people who have self-perception about the way they are. No one can force another person to act like a perfect model because everyone should have the freedom to show the way they really are.

## **Stop the Death Penalty**

*Veronica Ojeda*

*R/W 60*

The United States of America is one of the countries that has established the death penalty to condemn the people who act against the law, which has been imposed by burning, pressing, breaking on wheel, hanging, electric chair and nowadays by lethal injection. This capital punishment has been established not only in the United States but also in Afghanistan, Albania, Egypt, Singapore, Taiwan and Mongolia through time.

In the United States the death penalty is applied in some States and prohibited in others. The more common crimes that are condemned with death penalty are kidnapping, aggravated rape and murder, which are applied more often in

Florida, Oklahoma, Georgia, Idaho, Kentucky and South Carolina.

The death penalty has existed since the beginning of time; however, what seems to be strange is that in the 21st century, when people have passed a long path fighting for the human rights, the capital punishment still exists.

When we talk about the death penalty as a punishment we can't conceive that by killing a person for committing a crime we are going to make justice because, in general terms, the first objective of the law is to incorporate the prisoners into the society again as reliable and useful persons. Therefore, we have to teach the sense of the law and we can't teach it by killing someone, it is contradictory.

The death penalty has been an object of controversy for many years, and there have always been opinions in favor and opinions against it. One of the facts that has had more incidence is the cost of the convicts, because for some people the cost to maintain them in prison for the rest of their lives will be more expensive for the State than to apply the death penalty to them, but it is not really true because in most of the cases the legal process in which the death penalty is imposed lasts many years and requires a lot of procedures. As a result, it is cheaper to maintain the convicts in jail.

The death penalty, no matter how it is applied, is always going to be a crime because nobody, even the State can decide when the life of someone is going to end. This would mean that the life is not the primary right to be respected as it seems to be, so we have to be conscious that if the State wants to apply the law and make justice it has to take care of the lives of the convicts and to help them to get into the society again.

## **Censorship**

*Eddie Bae*

*R/W 60*

When you go to Virgin record store in New York City, you are supposed to see many two-words "clean version" in the hip-hop section. While you are listening to the CD, sometimes you hear some beep sound instead of the original lyrics. When you go to the movies, you see the different version of the movie: some parts had already been cut by somebody. Who has the right to decide this? Who decides what people can listen, see, or feel? I oppose the censorship because it may ignore other cultures and misuse.

Censorship would negatively affect various cultural backgrounds. We always contact with some culture whether we want to or not. Millions of songs and thousands of movies are being made each day by about a hundred countries. This means that we are floating on the waves of cultures. Some are familiar with you, but, unfortunately, some are not. In the unfortunate case, censorship enables this lack of familiarity. It cuts or blocks the unfamiliar culture and source by few selected people. The public doesn't even have a chance to judge about that. For example, Korea started to open to Japanese culture: songs, movies, some TV shows, and so on after 2000. Before that Koreans couldn't contact Japanese content legally. It is not still completely open.

In addition, censorship may harm society and the public by misusing it. When you contact any information via major media, you hardly get suspicious about that because it is known for its trust and accuracy. However, what if it is controlled by someone? What if it is modified? If it is, you get wrong information, and also it means you are already controlled. When a big political scandal happens, it is buried by another issue such as celebrities' cheating, death, and so on to hide the scandal. This is the case when somebody censors the information. Also, when people meet censored contents, they probably misunderstand the intent of the author. Often, one cut creates a whole bunch of misunderstandings.

In some cases, censorship could be helpful to reject some bad content; however, what is a bad thing and what is bad for whom? It just gets rid of a chance to criticize that. People are not stupid. They can censor the content by their own decision. Nobody can take the right to contest original opinions. And if parents take care of their children by guiding them to contest content, there would be nothing to worry about. Censorship could be just a tool for managing the public by high society.

To sum up, censorship might harm cultural diversity, cause misunderstanding, and prevent objective criticism. The people who excuse censorship like the government and media have to stop doing it. They have to open it to the public first. They must give the rights back to the people who are consuming the contents. If censorship continues, there's no chance to understand each other in the world forever.

## Hang up and Drive!

*Steve Flocks*

*R/W 60 instructor*

Recently in the news we read about several high school cheerleaders who were killed in an automobile accident when the young driver pulled in front of a truck. In the destroyed car, police found a cell phone displaying a text message sent by the driver moments before the crash, suggesting that she was using her cell phone at the time of the crash. This is not a rare occurrence, and steps must be taken to avoid this unnecessary loss of life. For this reason, I believe that cell phone use must be prohibited or at least restricted.

First, it is obvious that using a cell phone, like applying makeup, eating a Big Mac, or yelling at the kids in the back seat is a distraction to drivers. Recent studies have even shown that talking with someone in the car or even listening to the radio distracts drivers. Now, with text messaging, which requires the user to be looking at that tiny screen and searching for buttons, the distraction is multiplied. Laws have been enacted in five states prohibiting cell phone use by drivers. These laws should be enforced in all states in the U.S.

Not only is cell phone use a distraction, but it is also a physical hindrance to safe driving. I call this the "boat turn." When one hand (and ear) is occupied by a cell phone, a driver has only one hand to make a turn. Rather than making a safe, hand-over-hand turn, the driver is forced to make several, small, jerking motions to complete a corner turn or a U-turn. The

result is a very wide turn, like a boat makes. Just yesterday I saw a young woman on the phone in a large SUV actually drive through the bike lane and onto the sidewalk while trying to make a U-turn. Had a pedestrian or cyclist been in her path, a serious injury would obviously have occurred.

Opponents of this position might argue that, since cell phones themselves are legal, people have the right to use them when and where they want—even in a car. However, more important than your right to talk while driving is the other person's right to live! Surely a few minutes of not being able to communicate with another person about some trivial issue is worth a human life.

If people demand their right to talk on the phone and endanger other people's right to life, at least there can be some restrictions placed on cell phone use in cars. Several states require "hands-free" phones in cars. This is a step in the right direction and, though even hands-free phones are still a distraction, will save lives every day. Seventeen states prohibit cell phone use by drivers under 18 years old. Since automobile accidents are the leading cause of death for this age group, this prohibition would clearly save lives.

On many issues and controversies in the U.S. people on both sides of the argument often claim their "right" to do something. But a driver does not have the right to endanger other drivers, pedestrians, and cyclists any more than a murderer has the right to take the life of an innocent person, and both actions should be punishable by the law. I end by quoting a popular bumper sticker: "HANG UP AND DRIVE!"

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*(These last two essays are research papers written for R/W 60.)*

## Communication: A Challenge for Men and Women

*Cesar Augusto Idrobo – Giraldo*

*R/W 60*

Have you ever been tired of your mother or wife's advice because it is always too long and it is repeated several times? -- Have you ever been bored of your friend of the opposite sex because most of the time you cannot talk about the same topics? I have been in both of these situations. When I'm talking with my mother or my aunt over the phone, they spend most of the time talking during the conversation -- telling me about experiences and giving me advice-- while they are also complaining, I often hear a long list of details about the problem and I just acknowledge them. Men in contrast go straight to the point. A typical example for this is when you are at work. You tell your female colleague that you tired of your boss, she will say: "well . . . maybe you should consider other options" or she will ask you "Did you already find another job?" So we can see how females give long and complex answers but if you talk to your male colleague, he will say: "quit!" We can see clearly the difference in answers that you could hear from a male and a female.

The main goal of this research paper is to look for an explanation of male and female communication differences. I would like to explain; more specifically, the differences in conversation topics, conversation style, and information processing.

Somehow everybody is involved in one of those topics because we have relations and interactions with people of the opposite sex every day. Studying male and female communication is important because this is something that is essential to our social, business, and personal lives.

One of the differences between male and female conversation differences are conversation topics. According to the survey conducted in Reading and Writing class (2007), we concluded that most of the topics that both sexes talk about are focused on social issues. From this survey we agreed that males talk more about things that are in their surrounding, like cars, sports, girls, partying, politics and work. While females discuss about things that are indoors, like TV shows, celebrities, daily experiences, gossip, guys and fashion. In short, what everybody agreed is that males look the outside and females look the inside. You may ask yourself why males look their inside and females interiors. It is because that's how they were raised and it's where they spent most of the time. You can infer that their childhood activities. When you are a child, the boys always want to do activities with their groups of friends, like ride bicycle, play tag, hide and seek, experiment with nature, swim and play with cars. All those activities take place outside and it is one of the causes of why males look outdoors. The girls do more activities inside, instead. They also meet their group of friends. Females like to stay at home and play dolls, make up, jump rope, play house. All of these activities and games take place inside a house. Now we can see the difference in male and female conversation topics and an explanation of why they have these two different points of view. All these would have an effect on how both sexes manages their relations with others.

We also have differences in male and female conversation styles. Dr Luan Brizedine (2006) said that the common amount of words that women talk is around 20,000 words in a day while men just talk around 7,000 words. So, there is a big difference of 13,000 words. On the other hand Deborah Cameron (2006) said that depending on the place and the people who are with you, these will affect how much you speak.

These differences in the amount of talking of female and male conversation styles affect their way of communicating at work. They have different ways of expressing their ideas: where women go more in details and *break the ice* easily, men are usually blunt and focused. Ms Usheroff explained that "the fact that women are natural collaborators tends to make them seem less confident than their males counterparts, she continues. 'As a result, women in many hospitals or other healthcare situations, which are male, dominated often, develop feelings of futility.' She says. 'They say their role is not credible' " ("Bridging the communication gap," 2003, par. 6). Thus, we can see clearly that male and females communication styles are different and that affects their relations at work.

Now getting closer in personal issues in a marriage, the female likes to achieve consensus, share ideas, opinions and

make a decision with her significant other. In contrast, the man does not like to do consensus because he feels that he is asking for authorization, in order, to do something. Then the woman would feel that she hasn't been involved with somebody because the other person is not discussing anything and takes decisions by himself. This makes the other person feel bad because they are supposed to be a couple but not each their own. Doing things by yourself in this society of different roles is really important. In spite of the fact that Intimacy and autonomy is necessary for every person. Females have an inclination for intimacy and males have an inclination for self-government (Tannen, 1990).

Finally, another remarkable difference in male and female communication differences is the way both sexes process information that come to their brains. According to a study (2000) males just listen with half of their brains. When males are listening they use the left side of their brains and this is the part associated with the skill of understanding and language. Different from men, women listen with both sides. Dr. Joseph Lurito said that "women 'can handle listening to two conversations at once' "(Study: men listen with half of the brain," 2000, par. 3). Females have this ability because their brains have the skill to do it. In short, all these mean that male and females would process language in different ways.

In another study, scientists looked at their blood flow. The males showed activity in the left temporal lobe of their brains while women showed activity in both sides. From all these facts, we can infer that women's brain are more active in both sides when it comes to communication and processing information, than men do. But it doesn't mean that men are less intelligent or bad listeners; it's because they don't need to use both sides of their brain like women do. For example, most of the time, you will see in companies or complex of offices that the secretaries or people who handle a lot of paper work are females. They feel comfortable doing those kinds of jobs. That could be a reason.

Now that we are looking the brain of males and females another difference is that women have better memory for emotional events. The results of a study (2002) showed that feeling and remembering are more connected in women's brain compared to men's brain. It's easy for women to perceive and recall emotions because their neural responses are much more active in emotional events. Their brains have that ability to recognize, which means, it's better organized because the emotional experience and memory are integrated. Diane F. Halpern said that "women, in general have a better autobiographical memory for anything, not just emotional events" ("Study: women have better memory for emotional events", 2002, par. 10). One reason for this is that memorable events could have more meaning for a female. However males have memory and perceived emotions but not like a women do. Both sexes have different emotional responses to events because of their brains' structure and the way each one works. For example, in general, female teenagers feel more excited when the birthday of a close friend is coming while for a man, it is a special date but it doesn't represent such a big deal in contrast to the female friend. Females feel more emotion responses when these kinds of special events are coming or

when they are recalling some of them. however, men recall the events of their interest like a football game or sports and they feel excited when they are talking about how the team played in the game an all these.

On another level, while women have a better memory for emotional events, men are usually better at navigating in unknown areas and their brains work in different parts in order to find a place. (Men, women find . . . , 2002). There are some parts in the brain that men use while they are navigating, but women use other parts. Males use the left hippocampus. Conversely, women use the right prefrontal cortex, while men don't. These affect how males and females process information depending of their surroundings. In order to find a new place, women prefer to use landmarks to navigate; on the other hand, men like to use geometry and figures. We can see how the differences in brain structures affect the information processing methods in both sexes. These differences give to each of them singular abilities and characteristics such as a better memory for emotional events in females' brains but a better navigating skill in males' brain. But it doesn't mean that the opposite sex doesn't have a specific function. The point is that both sexes process information differently.

To conclude, let's examine the differences in conversation topics: while males talk about things that are outside, females talk about things that are inside; and their differences in conversation styles: men don't talk as much as women do. It just depends about the topic and environment, how these differences in style affect their relations at work. When it comes to make decisions in a marriage; communication is a big issue because women like to do achieve consensus, and finally the science has helped us to support our ideas and prove that there are innate differences in our brains. After studies, we know that men don't use the whole brain when listening, women have stronger memory for emotional events and males navigate better in unknown areas. In the end, these few ideas about this complex topic of male and female differences have helped me to find an explanation of why males and females communicate differently. The ways both sexes communicate say a lot about what we are made of. Everyone experiences these issues in life because despite the fact that males and females are different, communication is essential for human beings and it also plays an important role as when we are developing ourselves as persons. We need that for expressing our ideas, feelings and to persuade others. Even if our brains work differently we can still live together and look at our differences as positives points and advantages when we are communicating with people of the opposite sex.

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## Differences between Males and Females: Communication and Spouse Selection

*Maria Jesus Bragado*

*R/W 60*

Two days ago my 250 pound male friend asked me: "I have a serious problem. Why are kids scared of me?" At that moment, I couldn't breathe. I wanted to die. I worked up the nerve, and I said, "It's just your imposing presence." Suddenly, another male friend of mine yelled, "You're so big, that's the only reason." A strange feeling came to me; I agreed with him one-hundred-percent. Why didn't I say what I really thought? Wasn't I brave enough? Why did I avoid the truth? Tons of questions invaded my mind.

Men and women have known their physical and psychological differences since the creation of the human being. Contemporary research in the area of gender differences has given a lot of evidence to explain aspects of our lives such as communication or spouse selection among many other differences.

Communication is one of the best lubricants for oiling the machinery of human relations. Males and females relate to each other in very different ways on a daily basis. Of course, we must be careful to not stereotype and assume that all men and women will act a certain way because each person is a whole world. The evidence shows that males are extremely blunt; they say what they think without thinking too much in the people's feelings. In contrast, females beat around the bush – they prefer using white lies if they could hurt someone's feelings. According to a study, "Females are less willing to take risks in their communications" ("Bridging the Communications Gap," 2003, par. 9).

Modern research has shown some interesting gender differences. The feminine and masculine conversation style spread is huge. Men, it is said, are more straightforward, problem-solving, non-personal, sarcastic and so on, while women are collaborative, ironic and personal among others.

It's common to hear that women talk too much. What can we say? According to Dr. Brizendine, "Women talk three times as much as men." This study proves why girls are unsurprisingly more talkative than guys, indeed, "Women devote more brain cells to talking than men," the study says. Generally, women are victims of male chauvinist pranks. Defending from them, women argue that they're capable of talking about interesting things, and this fact is just because

they always have to repeat what they say to them – they don't listen!

We can say that females are good listeners, but what does that mean? It is clear that listening and hearing are not the same. Instead, hearing is actually just one stage of listening, which occurs when your ears pick up sound waves and transmit these waves to our brain. On the other hand, listening is a whole communication process. Active listeners can listen intelligently at up to 300 words per minute.

Another study suggests that when males are listening they don't use the whole brain. The brain scans show that "males use just the left side while females use both sides" ("Study: men listen with half of the brain," 2000, par. 2). Therefore, it appears logical that women can handle listening to two conversations at once. In fact, females can make another person more comfortable with them by selecting and emphasizing certain behaviors, they want to know what males think, how they feel and what they want. Meanwhile, males find it easy to go into mind drift-- thinking about other things while listening to someone.

There is also a remarkable physical difference related to listening – it is about nodding. When a woman nods her head she shows that she is paying attention or just listening, it has nothing to do with agreement. However, if a man nods it's telling the speaker to get to the point as conformity ("Bridging the Communications Gap," 2003, par. 8). The result of this divergence can produce important misunderstanding between each other.

Not only do we find many communication differences between males and females but we also see many interesting differences in spouse selection. The question is, What are we looking for?

According to an informal survey conducted in Reading and Writing class at the English Language Institute, men are looking for an attractive and intelligent girl while girls prefer to find an honest and focused guy. In this respect, the preference from both genders are totally opposed. Girls consider loyalty and fidelity extremely important when choosing a mate; however, guys set physical appearance as one of their priorities. The results of our survey in class are confirmed by scientific studies. According to the economist Fisman, who set up an experiment with three of his colleagues, "Men choose women on the basis of looks, while women are attracted to men with ambition, status, and brains" ("The sexes: Do gentlemen prefer bimbos?" 2007, p. 19).

Once I asked my brother some questions about guys. Why are guys so spoiled? Why don't guys think about commitment? His answer was clear and straight. Look at that article: "Seeing a beautiful woman triggers a pleasure response in a man's brain similar to what a hungry person gets from eating or an addict gets from a fix." ("New study: Men react to beauty, food same," 2002, p. 8A) The answer is there; we appreciate a girl like a steak – both things provoke in us the same pleasure! Men and women's expectations from a love relationship are far apart. The experience shows that commitment is a big word for men who habitually present themselves not ready for it.

What is the big deal about communication styles? Well, many females feel frustrated about wasting time, energy and resources when they try to communicate with males. Why is successful communication so important? With good communication, conflicting relationships can become productive, difficulties can be smoothed over and otherwise escalating problems can be "nipped in the bud." Effective communication works for those who work at it. These skills are essential for success in every relationship. Generally, females find feedback from males very important in order to confirm that they are actively listening.

Too often men and women see their differences between each other as a mistake, rather than appreciating them and trying to benefit from those differences. We must learn a lot about how women and men communicate, develop and grow relationships, and create their roles in our society. Our own personal experiences with members of the opposite sex offer us a rich education in these differences.

In short, we should bear in mind that the natural harmony between a man and a woman assumes the mutual supplement. A good example is the Yin Yang symbol where Yin symbolizes femininity, and Yang represents masculinity. The mastery of their interactions is the core, the idealized harmony of these forces – equilibrium between them.

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### **Thanks from the Editor**

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