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# ELI STUDENT VOICES

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## Happily Never After... (1<sup>st</sup> Place)

Lan Phung  
R/W 43

A long time ago, there was a beautiful girl named "Mariah". Mariah has a pure beauty like an wonderful smelling flower that can make any man's heart go round and round just concentrically. She has curly golden hair, azure eyes, coral lips and a dimple on her face. She has soft skin like a baby and always is odoriferous. Mariah not only has these about her. Mariah's silky words and her beautiful smile are like aqua fresh air and could make anyone's day. She was the only daughter of her parents. They live on a small farm with a happy life.

But a happy life was not enough to live. They were just a poor farm family, and they could not do anything without money. They needed money. That was why Mariah's parents owed money to the Snob, the richest squire in the town. The amount of money owed became more and more every day. Mariah's parents still had to repay the money. Of course her parents could not repay all the money; it was a large amount of money. The last day of June, Snob came to their farm with his henchmen. He said to Mariah's father: "My dear poor friends, today I have come here to let you know that your repayment date has passed. Now, do repay me. I cannot wait for you anymore!"

"But Mr. Snob, could you please give us one more month? I promise that I will repay all the money that I owe you, I'm begging you for mercy." Mariah's father said to Snob.

"No! I am not a smooth talker. My words were spoken and cannot be revoked. But you and your wife have 3 choices: One, repay all the money that you owe me right now! Two, I want to marry your daughter to my son. Three, you will lose everything you have if you do not pick one."

Mariah and her parents implored the squire, but the man was heartless. Snob asked his henchmen to give more than a slap on the wrist to Mariah's parents. She could not do anything because she had been blocked by two big henchmen. She was crying and begging the heartless squire: "Please, please do not beat them. I will agree to marry your son. You have my word. I agree to marry your son. Please let my parents go, they were very old, they cannot endure beatings anymore."

The squire finally got what he wanted, and he laughed at them and said: "Hahaha. See your daughter is a beautiful and smart girl, very worthy of my son. They will have a happily ever after. Your daughter will be staying with you one day from now. Hence do not play with fire! Do not make me want to crack someone up. Hahaha."

As he finished his last words, he told his henchmen to stop beating Mariah's parents then he left. That night, Mariah

and her parents stayed together the last time. Mariah's parents wanted to run away, but she did not want to see them beaten by the henchmen of the squire. She said to them: "No father, mother. Necessity knows no laws. This is my choice, I reap as I sow."

"We do not want to lose you forever. Blood is thicker than water. You are our only daughter. How can we live without you?" Mariah's parents said.

"So much to do, so much has been done. We have no choice. Please do not worry for me. I will be happy." Mariah told them.

They stayed together to enjoy their last time before she left.

The next day, the henchmen came to pick her up by carriage. While they were on the way to leave but not so far from Mariah's house, she suddenly heard many gunshots and she looked out the window.

"My house, my house is burning. What have you done to my parents? Liars. Let me go!"

She jumped out of the carriage and ran, but she got caught by a henchman. That man picked her up on his shoulder and took her to go back to the carriage.

"Why you are so cruel to us? Why did you kill my parents? They are innocent."

Mariah cried a lot and tried to kill herself many times. Better die a beggar than live a beggar. She did not want to live anymore. After Mariah reminded herself, she did not want to die in a meaningless way like this. Haste makes waste. So Mariah had to live an affected life with Brute, Snob's son. She was pregnant from him after two months. But like father like son, Brute was a dictator, he was always drunk and hit her whenever he saw her. No one loves her as she believed. However, Mariah has never stopped loving her developing baby. She gave a name for her baby "Sam". She imagined many beautiful things that she might have if she could run away from this place.

"Time is all we need, my baby. This is just the first step that counts. We will wait for our time, better late than never."

What goes around comes around. A month later, Snob died by a bite of a cobra on a hunting trip. His property has become less and less valuable every day. And it was in bankruptcy five months later. Brute did not want to live a poor life, he still believed that his father left lots of money for him. He went out every day to search for an invisible treasure. He became crazy and therefore became a madman. One day, he wandered in the woods and disappeared forever. No one cared about his missing, even Mariah..

Afterwards an angel was born and he was warming her heart. Her son really made her day. She was carrying her little

angel in her hands and she knows that Sam is now her whole whole world.

Sam was the most beautiful and meaningful thing that has ever come to Mariah's life. He brightened her life. As accordingly as she wants to give all good things to her son. Mariah decided to start her life over. She carried Sam on her back and came back to her parent's house. In the first place, Mariah came back with her happiness through Sam right where she left her parents with painfulness in her heart.

Sam is growing up as a strong little boy. He looks like Mariah's father when he was a kid. Sam also has the deep blue eyes of Mariah's mother and he has an intelligence just like Mariah. Like every woman, Mariah always wanted a good husband that gives her a happy life forever. Three years after, Mariah met Coward and she remarried with him. She thought her life finally had a happy ending, but no. It seemed like God wanted to play with her suffering. Brute, Mariah's ex-husband was a heartless man and Coward, her second husband likewise. Coward changed from a good man to a gambler and he accumulated a deep debt. He made Mariah and Sam run away from many creditors many times. Mariah could not let her husband go; she needed him because she did not want everyone to call her son "a bastard". She continued to withstand all the pain just because of her son. But, that cowardly man decided to leave them and runaway for his life. Even Coward lost his humanness, Mariah and Sam still implored him and asked him to stay.

Again, Mariah lost a husband and Sam lost a father. Coward left them without love and telling goodbye. That time was very, very difficult for Mariah and Sam. Their life was floating everywhere in England for 2 years. Then they came to live in the smallest poor-house of a slum in London.

Mariah had to find a job somewhere. Then, she found a job as a janitor in a primary school. Mariah usually had to let Sam stay at home alone. His childhood was so lonely and sad. But he knew that he would never do anything wrong to make his mother upset. Sam hurt, and he loved his mother ever more whenever he looked at his mother. He could recognize that Mariah was old. He hoped that he could help his mother and he would not let her work anymore.

Although his mother does not have enough time to stay at home with him, she still gave to him all the love as a mother has. And Mariah never forget to teach Sam every good thing to become a real man.

"Mother, why do you always have to bite off more work than you can chew?" he asked.

She smiled at him, she said: "To make your life better than mine!"

"When I become a man, I will have an axe to grind with all the people that made you cry, mother," Sam said.

"Baby, do not trouble trouble till trouble troubles you. Do not think too much, enjoy your beautiful life. Be a man! You will become the greatest man. And a great man never puts a chip on his shoulder," she told Sam.

In the blink of an eye, 20 years has gone by. Sam grew up over the time and became a young man. He was a pious son, an assiduous worker and also a kind-hearted person. God was so ruthless to Mariah and Sam when he wanted them not to live

together. It was a very cold day in September, when Sam was walking on a street of which almost arrived to his house.

Just like being hit by a ball with a million spikes, his heart was broken when he heard a neighbor tell him that his mother had fainted away on a street. He ran right away to his house. He arrived, he saw his mother was lying on her old small bed. Mariah's face looked very pale, just like she did not have any blood inside. He was worried so much. He wanted to take his mother to the hospital, because she got seriously apoplectic. But, they did not have enough money. He did not listen to his mother when she was trying to stop him to go to get some help. Sam had been going everywhere to ask for help from people.

Even as he always remembered what his mother taught him: "As a true man, do not ever kneel to beg to anyone".

He did not care about that anymore, Sam sacrificed his self-esteem. He had implored, and he had prayed to many people on many streets a whole day, but they just gave him a cold look. The sky was getting very dark and cold and it became too late. Sam had used all his energy left to run home; he worried for his mother.

"I am home," he had just arrived and said.

But his mom did not answer like usual. Sam got a bad hunch; he ran right to his mother's room. The room was very dark and had a strange silence. Sam turned on the light. And he could recognize right the first time that his mother had died. He never knew that his mother had just died. Meanwhile he was wandering around everywhere to implore people to give him a little money. He slowly walked with heavy steps to his mother's corpse. He hugged her and burned into tears.

"Mother, you cannot leave me here in this life alone. Please, please open your eyes. I cannot live without you. Please, I am begging you, please stay with me."

Suddenly, he ran to outside and screamed: "Godddd! Why did you take my mother far away from me? Why are you so unfair to us? ..Why?..."

The sky was thundering, and began a heavy rain. Sam was still standing and crying under the rain the whole night.

The next early morning day, Tom went to a wood and cut a tree. He started to make a coffin and a cross. Then he went to find a stone to make a tombstone for his mom and engraved her name on it along with: "Rest in peace".

When everything finished, he started to dig up his backyard as a place to bury his dearest mother. Mariah was the prettiest beauty to Sam. Thus he dressed her up, and he made up for her. He always wants his mother to be the most beautiful woman in this bad world, even when she died.

He looked at Mariah's corpse the last time in his life. "Mother, you are the only reason that made me smile, made me feel protected by your full loving heart. You are the apple of my eye. Now you are gone, you left me back at square one alone in this world," he said and cried. His every teardrop was a waterfall.

"Following this splintered heart, it is my damaged kindness," he said to himself.

After his mother died, Sam never smiles anymore.

Years passed. Sam woke up in a nightmare yesterday and similarly the following day, and go on. Sam succeeded in

his works and became a rich man. He is also a man who never believed the quote "One good turn deserves another". That was the most ridiculous words in the world that he ever had known. He has dreamed a lot, hoped a lot, and prayed a lot for a long time waiting. But nothing had happened to him. Sam changed himself. He changed his mind. He changed all the good things that he used to be and became a cold blooded man. Especially now, Sam would never bend over backwards to help other people. Now, that Sam might have disappeared forever.

It was a windy day of December. Sam talked on the phone while he was waiting for a bus. Suddenly, there was a very old woman who came and asked him to buy from her a bunch of flowers: "Please, please buy from me a bunch of flowers. I have not eaten for 3 days. I am starving. Please give me mercy."

Her voice sounded very exhausted. She looked at him with her imploring eyes. Sam glanced at her and he was remembering the time he was begging many people to help him but there was no one. He hated that time. He did not want to help anyone anymore.

"No, sorry!" he said and went away.

Then he suddenly felt guilty, but he forgot that feeling very quickly.

"If I help people, so who will help me?" a selfish thought fleeting his mind.

He was walking heavily step by step, and he heard the old woman's voice:

"Beautiful lady, please buy from me a bunch of flowers. My flowers are very beautiful, just like you. Please help me." an old woman asked a lady.

"Stay out of my way! Go home and throw your wilted flowers away. No one will buy them," the lady answered the old woman in a harsh voice.

Sam looked back and saw a girl who looked to be the same age as him. He felt discomfort and he waited until that mean girl was gone. He came and asked an old woman: "How much do you sell this bunch of flowers for?"

"\$2 for a big bunch of flowers," she answered with a happy voice.

Sam gave to an old woman \$50 and said: "I will buy all of them!"

"You buy all? Why?" the old woman was surprised, she asked him.

"I buy to give as a gift to my mother. But now I have to go to work. Could I keep them here until this afternoon? I will take them when I get back home." Sam answered her.

After finishing talking, he left right away before the old woman was able to answer him. For a moment, Sam was so confused about what he had just done. It had been a long time since he had helped anyone. But this time was different: he felt happy.

That afternoon was heavy rain, torrential rains. Sam was standing in the office, watching the rain rolling in the window glass and pursuing his vague thoughts. "Rain? I hate rain," he thought.

Suddenly, Sam looked down the tree which was fighting with the wind. He thought about the old florist woman.

"Ring..ring..ring..ring.."

Sam was startled by the phone ringer. He picked up the phone and talked. Then, he sat and started his work. Sam was not thinking about the old woman anymore. He had not seen the old woman who sold flowers for weeks. He also did not notice much. Sam was very busy with his incomplete works like a bee. The old woman was really forgotten in Sam's mind.

It was a Sunday afternoon, and Sam walked and sat on the park benches. Then he heard a voice of a boy asking someone to buy a bunch of flowers.

"Hi Mr. Handsome, do you want to buy this bunch of beautiful flowers for your beautiful lover?"

The florist boy reminded Sam of something but he was not remembered clearly. He rummaged his memory and when he realized that he forgot his promise with the old florist woman, he ran right away to the street where he met the old florist woman. But he did not see her. He waited until that evening but the old woman did not come. Sam came back the day after. He was waiting for her for hours. He got cold, very cold.

"A strong man like me still felt cold in this weather, how could an old weak woman like her sit here for hours?" He wanted to know if the old woman was waiting for him.

"Do you want to buy a bunch of flowers? I still have only one," the florist boy asked Sam.

"No, thank you. Actually, I am waiting for an old florist woman who sold flowers in here. Do you know who she is?" he asked the florist boy.

"Who are you? Why are you waiting for my grandmother? She died three weeks ago." The boy looked so sad when he asked Sam.

"She died? How could...?" Sam asked in a choke.

"She got an apoplexy. There was one day my grandmother sold a bunch of flowers to a man. He gave her \$50 and he told her he would come back in afternoon. But that man did not come. And my grandmother was waiting for him for whole day. There were some people felt poor for her and they wanted to help by buying her flowers. But my grandmother was determined to sell and kept waiting for that man."

"An apoplexy? Again?...", he said.

Sam was dumbfounded for a while. He got tears in his eyes. Unexpectedly he still heard the florist woman asking him to buy a bunch of flowers in his mind.

Maybe God gave to people who lived in half of this world a happy life ever after. And, he also gave to people who lived in another half of this world a life of grief ever after. Sam, Mariah and the old florist woman were the people who lived a life of grief ever after.

Nothing in this world could be more ironic, but life.

Sam walked on heavy steps, but with a hollow soul and broken heart.

**The End.**

## Scents Remind Me of Yesterday's Memories (2<sup>nd</sup> Place)

Rawan Blaisi  
R/W 45

Scents remind me of yesterday's memories. When I close my eyes while I'm sitting alone, I catch a scent that makes me start to cry because I smelled a scent that reminded me about a person, events or anything in the past. As you know I'm far away from my family, friends and my country so I miss every moment had a happy time before I come to United States.

Sometimes our memory forget what happened in the past, but once I smell scents I remember happy or sad day's .the smell of the beach reminds me of my Saudi Arabia home. I was born in Jeddah. I spent all my time at the beach, with my family and my friends. In addition to that, my grandfather was always sitting on the table in front of the beach, telling stories about his struggle until he became a significant person. That's why I love the smell of the beach, because it's reminds me of my childhood with my grandfather, friends and my family. The smell of the rain takes my memory back and reminds me of my brothers when we were children. When it rained we would always go out to the yard play with my brothers, running around each other under the rain drops. That's why I love the smell of the rain. Also, what reminds me of my little sister when were a child is the stone, in our yard there were a lot of stones. When we always have free time, I go with my little sister, start to paint with colorful painting. That's why I love the smell of the stone. It have a special smell that reminds me of my child hood.

A lot of smells reminds me of my mother. There is a strong smell that reminds me of her are first, the smell of Arabic coffee. She always drinks Arabic coffee with me in the afternoon and telling me a lot of different stories, about her childhood and how she was a very naughty child, when she was a kid. That's why I love the smell of Arabic coffee. Second, the smell of the pancake. When my brothers and I were kids, every night she cooked pancakes for us. I'm sure no one can make pancakes like my mom can it's the best pancake in the world. That's why I love the smell of the pancake. Third, the smell of lavender. I like to go to gardens a lot and try to find a corner which has lavender flowers because the smell of lavender flowers, remind me of my mother. She loves those flowers so much. Every week she brings lavender flowers and puts them on the table in the living room. Even in her room I always found between her stuff everything about lavenders like: body lotion, shampoo and perfume. When I smell the lavender my eyes start to cry because I miss my mom so much and its remind me of her.

There a lot of scents that remind me of my family home. I love the smell of aouda (kind of eastern perfumes) it has a strong beautiful smell. Aouda, it's my family home smell. My family always uses it every day. When I hug my mom and my dad they always smell of aoudad. Even when I sat on the sofa, I can smell it and its stuck on my body. In addition to that the flashback comes to my mind once I smell Italian food because when I was in Jeddah every Friday my mother cooks delicious Italian dinner and all my family were always together eating the

dinner and sharing the stories. I'm sure there is no one in this world who can make delicious Italian dishes better than my mother can. That's why I love the smell of Italian food. It reminds me of the time that will never come back again. The beach smell, the rain smell and the stone smell reminds me of my childhood in Saudi Arabia home. In other the Arabic coffee smell, the pancake smell and the lavender smell reminds me of my mother. Finally, the smell of aouda and Italian food reminds me of my family home when we meet together in the past. In my opinion, sometimes we forget what happened in the past, but once we smell scents we remember happy or sad days.

## Family

Abdulhadi Abdulwahed  
R/W 60

Family is a huge name that has many meanings. For many people, family is the secret that makes their lives worthwhile. It's like a critical cell in the human body. Without this cell, a person cannot survive. A loving family is a fact for many people; it is like the sun in the sky. This name has been engraved in their hearts. However, this name of family for others is just a name they use it on their ID cards. A family deserves more than that behavior because a family affects its members in many ways. The way that they love each other unconditionally, the manner in which they support each other positively with loving behaviors, and the future that families help create for each other are all important reasons that make families significant to all of us.

This life is very complicated, which makes it difficult to find someone who loves us without some benefits for themselves. Only families who love their members without any reason for personal benefit will love its members unconditionally. In these kinds of love, there is no need for romantic words to express these emotions. Helping and supporting each other are part of a family's love. It's a natural love and it is the only place that people can receive that unconditional acceptance. Sitting around the food table together is one of the many gifts that a family's members have. Many people miss that feeling, while some just do not have that feeling for their families

One of the things that impacts people's personalities is family. Families usually raise their kids to follow good moral values and show positive behaviors in their lives. Many fathers who smoke choose to not smoke in front of their kids because they know that will affect the children's behaviors. On the other hand, some parents fight in front of their off-spring, which affects those children's conduct in a negative way. These types of parents both allow and lead their kids to be rude to others. The family is the main center of and cause of kids' improper behaviors. This can be seen in the fact that many criminals blame their families for what they have done to be labeled criminals.

Many people believe that the family is like the air that they breathe every day. This important relationship with one's family was created for many reasons. One of them is that families help their children find good jobs. Parents do this

usually by encouraging their kids to study hard and help them to choose their future paths. One example of this is that a lot of mothers stay up very late just to support their kids who are also studying for exams.

Finally, as I have pointed out and the reader can see there is no price worthy of the true value of the family. Loving that all important family is the only way people can show gratitude for what such a relationship has done for them. A family's love is something people cannot find just anywhere. This love does not necessarily come from just people's parents, but people can discover this same love when it comes from their adopted families. In the end, people's behaviors are created by how their families raised them. Moreover, the family is the most important reason for the success of many people.

## Beautiful Cities

*Rashid Alhajery*

*R/W 45*

What are your favorite cities?" is a question that many people enjoy answering. Washington, DC is one of those beautiful cities you can visit; there are many places the people will excite when they visit them. On the other hand, I read about Denver Colorado. I've got information through reading about this city. DC and Denver have many differences, and they capture your heart when you go there.

Differences in the geographical location and weather between Denver, Colorado and Washington, DC are very large. Washington, DC is the capital of USA; it is located in the north-east. Washington, DC has beautiful weather; tourist can enjoy the summer, winter, spring, and fall. Because each season of the year takes 3 month, tourist will enjoy there. On the other side, Denver, Colorado is located in the central part of the US it has very nice weather in the summer, but in the winter, the weather is very cold, because it snows about 7 month of the year.

Secondly, DC and Denver have many differences in tourism. For example, in DC there are many attractions and important place the tourist can visit them like museums, the White House, the Congress, and M street. In DC tourist can use the metro; it is scary feeling when you use it for first time. In Denver, Colorado tourist can visit Rocky Mountain, and tourist can climb these mountains, all people enjoy climbing. Also, in Denver, Colorado you can ice skate because the ice cover this city for long time and this is one of the most famous sports in Colorado.

In another comparison between the two cities, tourist can see many differences on the people deal with others. In DC people are busy in their work; they don't find time to spend it with other people. But in Denver, Colorado the people are friendlier, and they spend more time with their friends and other people. In DC if people don't know you, they don't like to talk with you, but in Denver Colorado is different, because they feel happy when they assist others.

DC and Denver have a resemblance to each other in the winter. In DC you can see the snow, and the river with lake frizzy. Also in Denver, you will see the snow cover the mounts, it looks drawn from a single graphics artists. Beautiful weather

in DC and Denver can make you feel more relax; when you see the blue sky you feel these is not real may be it is dream.

DC and Denver, Colorado are the most important areas frequented by international students. They have universities and colleges on a high level with great ranking in US. For example, DC has Georgetown University; it is one of the best universities in the world. Also in Denver has University of Denver it is one of the most famous universities in Colorado, a lot of student from different countries come to study in these university.

One day, I read for the attention of citizens of Denver their health, they proportion of obesity have few. Also in DC, the citizens care about their health and they proportion have few. People are exercising daily, as well as organizing meals, and stay away from fast foods, that lead to obesity. For that Denver has less proportion in obesity in the US.

There are several differences between DC and Denver, in some respects, but this does not prevent the existence of similarities between them in other things. They differ in terms of weather, location, tourism, and people, and by another, two are alike in terms of snow, frequented by international students and keeping healthy. In my opinion you should visit those cities because they have a different style for live from each other. I think you will feel great when you go there. I love those cities and I want everyone to visit them.

## Compare and Contrast--Politicians and Idiots

*Suk-Hong Ryu (Ray)*

*R/W 44*

What is the most effective and fastest way to make someone stupid? The answer is power. People who acquire political power or any kind of organizational authority can easily become idiots. So, when they are exercising the power which signifies corruption, they rarely distinguish what the virtues and vices are. As a matter of course, they are called idiots by the people who elected them, ironically. Therefore, both politicians and real idiots have lots of similarities and differences and those can be separated by when politicians and idiots start doing stupid things, how they annoy people, and their conscience.

The first point of differences and similarities is when politicians and idiots start doing stupid things. For example, people regard both of them as stupid, however, the time they become stupid is different. Even though idiots usually get their mental disabilities when they are born, politicians acquire diverse vacuities in the course of their lifetime. Sometimes, some politicians look like that they were born to behave and make speeches ridiculously, but they have developed their own stupidity since they got political power. Therefore, both politicians and idiots are stupid, but idiots are naturally stupid and politicians acquire stupidities through social experiences..

Another part of differences and similarities between politicians and idiots is how they annoy people. By saying unintelligible words and behaving ridiculously, not only idiots, but also politicians irritate people. In general, people can understand why idiots do something ridiculous. On the other

hand, nobody can figure out politicians' behaviors. Furthermore, idiots annoy people by begging for petty money, whereas politicians irritate people by throwing away large sums of tax. This means that both of them annoy people, however, the differences are whether people can understand them or not, and whether the amount of money they acquire and waste is large or not.

Finally, politicians and idiots are different in their conscience. Even if every politician is not corrupt, lots of them are conscientiously corrupt. Although almost of them are living in splendor, such as wealth, authority and education, lots of splendors come from corruption. In the case of general idiots we can see frequently, they don't look wealthy, powerful and well educated, but their conscience is purer than others, commonly. To sum up, even though lots of politicians are corrupt conscientiously, many real idiots are externally shabby but conscientiously better than politicians

To conclude, politicians and idiots have lots of similarities and differences. They have lots of similarities as idiots, however, the differences are distinguished by when politicians and idiots start doing stupid things, how they annoy people, and the conscience. Although people call the politicians idiots, because of some politicians' ridiculous behavior, people always expect good policies and clear conscience from the politicians who are elected by the people. As representatives of people, politicians must behave correctly and conscientiously. That's the only way to remove the idiot title from politicians themselves.

## **Salary Cap System for Sport Pro Leagues**

*Gregorio Abreu Cuello*

*R/W 59*

The greatest fear of a sports fan is the termination of a collective bargaining agreement (CBA), especially in times of depression like the one we are facing these days. CBAs are contracts between player's unions and pro leagues that establish, among other things, labor conditions, salary cap systems and sports related income sharing. The reason why the termination of a CBA is so terrifying for fans is that leagues cannot function without renegotiating a new deal with the players, and when both sides are unable to reach an agreement, the situation could lead to a lockout. Within all the subjects discussed in CBA negotiations the most controversial by far is the salary cap system, because it not only involves money, it has a direct effect on how teams are built. Salary caps, or payroll caps as they should be called, limit the amount of money one team can spend on player salaries. In other words, it limits the team's payroll to an exact number that no team can surpass (Neil deMause, "Baseball Between the Numbers: Why Everything You Know About the Game is Wrong," 2006). Advocates of the cap system affirm that pro leagues need these restrictions for numerous reasons, but I personally consider that salary caps are no more than an unnecessary safety net.

First of all, salary caps are designed to protect small market owners who want to find ways to stop inflation of player's salary. Salary budget therefore takes away millions of

dollars of salary from the player because it limits the capacity of the teams to give their players bigger contracts. Big market owners don't care about salary caps because they benefit from having big names on their rosters, and their markets usually allow them to make the investment. If big market teams are forced to limit their budget for their personnel, their franchise's worth is being affected. On the contrary, small market owners fear that richer teams can easily offer more money to their franchise players and steal them to create All-star teams. The issue here is that sports is a business and the fight between team owners should not be fixed at the expense of the players. Players have the right to earn as much as possible, and look for the contracts that best benefit them.

Those who are in favor of the salary cap system argue that sports teams are spending too much on player salaries and with the addition of other operational costs the result is high ticket prices and franchises losing money. However, the players are not putting guns at the owner's heads to get those salaries. Teams are responsible for how they spend their money and they should find ways of making profit. In reference to the tickets prices, it would be naive to believe that reducing a player's salary would reduce game ticket prices. Andrew Zimbalist, who is a player's union legal consultant, referred to the issue saying: "An effective salary cap is too Draconian and unreasonable. If you're going to use a cap to drive down player salaries, you're just padding owners' pockets" (Cited in USA Today). What Mr. Zimbalist tries to explain with his statement is that the amount of income teams receive every year is not going to change. If the salary money does not go to the players it is just going to the owner's bank accounts.

But salary cap supporters do not only advocate for financial aspects, they also state that a salary cap can increase competitiveness. Once again they are addressing the situation the wrong way. Small market teams consider that teams with more money can pay superstar players and therefore have a competitive advantage over all the other teams.

Even though it is true that big market teams are capable of having multiple superstars on their rosters at the same time, there is no proven theory that endorses that having numerous star players on one team guarantees a team's success. For example, on one side, you have the 2003 – 2008 Detroit Pistons, who dominated the NBA eastern conference for many years without any superstars on their roster, and even winning a championship in 2004 against a Los Angeles Lakers' team that had such big names as Shaquille O'Neil, Kobe Bryant, Karl Malone, Gary Payton, Rick Fox and Derek Fisher. On the other hand, the New York Yankees, who have the biggest payroll of all sports, have only won one championship in the last 10 years. Moreover, The Oklahoma City Thunder is a new franchise located in a relatively small market, competing in the hardest conference of the NBA and they've been able to compete on a high level and dominate their division without overspending money on salaries. It is not a matter of how much you spend; it is a matter of how you build your team.

However, it is understandable that we are going through hard times. Player unions should consider the owner's point of view and give important concessions for their teams, like settling for fair sharing rates of sports related income.

There is a huge economic crisis and many leagues have new owners who have invested hundreds of millions of dollars to buy sport franchises. While old franchise owners saw their investment return a long time ago, new owners are fervent to find ways to ensure their investments and see some profit, but sports leagues should look for ways of helping the owners without affecting the player's salaries, either with revenue sharing or some other strategy.

In the end, the question is, should the player be accountable for the team's losses? And the answer is no. The players are doing their part, which is performing at a high level, and keeping the fans interested in the game. Franchises need to settle their economic problems in another fashion, and stop making excuses for financial decisions that they, and nobody else, are making.

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## Han Chinese in Inner Mongolia

*WenZhao Chen*  
*R/W 60*

The Elders always said, "You can't leave China by foot." That means China has a huge territory and a rich culture. As a Han Chinese, I am proud of my culture and traditions. Before I lived in Inner Mongolia, in my mind, the minority people of Mongolia lived in the grassland and were adept at riding horses. In addition, I never thought I would live in the Mongolia area and love this place, the people, the customs, and the spirit of real Mongolia. Actually, I am a Mongolian resident in China; not only does the census register me in Inner Mongolia, China, but also, I love this area and the Mongolians. Because of the unique culture, wide grassland, and friendly people, I love this place and am willing to become a member of the Mongolians.

First of all, the unique culture in Mongolia is great and attractive. Everything in here is amazing. The people live in yurts which is a kind of Mongolian house. On the other hand, the construction of the yurt is different from Han Chinese buildings. Here is the data from Wikipedia: "Traditional yurts consist of a circular wooden frame carrying a felt cover. The felt is made from the wool of the flocks of sheep that accompany the pastoralists. The timber to make the external structure is not to be found on the treeless steppes, and must be obtained by trade in the valleys below" ([www.wikipedia.com](http://www.wikipedia.com)).

Moreover, the food in Mongolia is all prepared in the BBQ style. The most famous food is roasting the entire sheep, which is usually used to serve only the most honored guests.

When the Mongolians receive a guest from a distant place, they will offer the Hada, a traditional ceremonial scarf used in Tibet and Mongolia, for a guest.

Secondly, Inner Mongolia's prairie scenery is the other factor that leads me to love this area. It is the third-largest province of China's territory about 1,200,000 square km or 12% of China's total land area. In the beautiful grassland, Mongolian keeps their conventions of riding horses. When you ride a horse in the vast Mongolian prairie, you will feel that you are tiny, but part of the greatness of nature. Such a feeling of national pride has the broad mind and bearing which gives the Mongolian people an essence that distinguishes them from the rest of the Chinese.

Third, the people are friendly in Inner Mongolia, China. I had already heard about their prairie nationality and hospitality. However, when I first arrived in Inner Mongolia, I truly felt like this in a friendly way. They always trust you and share their best food and wine with you. Although they like to drink wine all the time, but it is their traditional behaviors and drinking wine that helps them survive in the winter.

Finally, as you can see, the unique culture, wide grasslands, and friendly people have all combined to be the reasons behind my love of the area of China called the Inner Mongolia. In other words, my family's business is in Wuhai, the Inner Mongolia, China, and my family has obtained much success in Inner Mongolia's business. After living here, making money here, making contribution to this area, I find that I am a Mongolia now.

## Male/Female: Nature or Nurture

*Gregorio Abreu Cuello*  
*R/W 59*

The following story had a considerable impact on me: "A father and son are in a serious car accident. The father dies en route to the hospital but the son is rushed into the operating room for emergency surgery. The consultant surgeon is about to make the first incision but suddenly exclaims, 'Oh no, I think this is my son!' Surely, the surgeon is mistaken. Sadly, no. The consultant surgeon is a woman" (K. Boydon, "What are Men's and Women's Top Career Choices?", 2006). Society has programmed our brains to perceive man and woman in very specific roles. The stereotype of a housewife for female and an out-of-house worker for male is so attached to our brains that we subconsciously assign those roles without doing much thinking. However, is this role segregation a consequence of nature or simply a result of society's convenience? It has been decades since women earned the right to exercise any activity, and we still find clear preference of career choice for men and women that significantly represent their stereotypical functions. Obviously, thousands of years of division of work is not going to disappear that easy, and it is factual that women have diversified their range of career choices, but it would be unwise to discard mother nature as a considerable factor of the preference in career choice of both male and female. The truth is that both nature and society have a considerable influence in the matter, sometimes one more than the other depending on the

case, but I believe that if we analyze the female and the male population as a whole, nature has a stronger influence.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics the top career choices for men are “drivers/sales workers and truck drivers,” “first-line supervisors/managers of retail sales workers,” and “carpenters.” On the other hand, women top career choices are “secretaries and administrative assistants,” “elementary and middle school teachers,” and “registered nurses.” While men’s preferred jobs involve being outside, doing physical work, and are generally more sales and money oriented, women’s choices are more nurturing, related to teaching and staying inside. These job characteristics correspond for both sexes to the idealistic roles that they play in society. It is important to address that each sex dominates the sum of their categories by more than 85%, which means that these careers are not often considered by the opposite sex (K. Boydon, 2006). Still, even if we recognize the existence of a preference, we still haven’t answered the question of what is causing such disparity. Like we’ve mentioned before, for each person it’s different, simply because the decision of what career path is better for an individual is influenced by numerous factors, physiological and psychological, internal and external. Nevertheless, many studies can correlate physiological characteristics to the job preference of different populations of both men and women.

One of the strong arguments of those who believe that nature is more important than nurture in the role assignment is that this specific responsibility division can be found all over nature in many other species. In most species of wild animals the male has the responsibility of hunting or gathering food, while the female stays and takes care of the babies. In essence, these roles are the same for humans. Nowadays we see that the roles are becoming more and more blurry. Women are being more active in the working force, and the number of houses financially supported by women is increasing. In the case of the men, their role is also changing; men are becoming more involved with raising and taking care of the children. In nature we can see this occurrence too. Lions, for example, made a change of role to protect their cubs. The alpha male lion chooses to stay with the cubs to protect them from other lions, while the females are responsible for hunting for food. This change of roles was a strategy to adapt to a social behavior that presented a threat.

A recent study from the University of Chicago and Northwestern University showed that women with higher levels of testosterone are more likely to pursue a career in the business world than women with lower levels (2009). Money and finance related jobs are typically considered part of the man’s responsibility, and testosterone is the principal male sex hormone. If we consider that women with higher concentration of male hormones are more likely to make the crossover from their typical role to what is considered to be the man’s role, we can assume that nature is definitely a contributing factor to career choice. This study also concurred with another study of 125 individuals conducted at Pennsylvania State University. It was determined that women that were exposed to more male hormones in their mother’s fetus were more likely to be interested in male associated careers (2011). Both studies

determined that the same phenomenon did not affect the men’s behavior. Men with high and low testosterone levels had no significant difference in their career choices.

In the long run, we probably will never be able to respond to this question with total certainty. It can be seen as the metaphor of the egg and the chicken, who came first? Both our social interactions as well as our environment have major influence on our behavior and over the course of hundreds of year even make small changes in our physiology. Similarly, our physiology undoubtedly creates the foundations from which many of our social behaviors derive. In the end, the important thing is to study and analyze both cases. Knowing what aspects of our social environment influence our decision making as well as which characteristics of our biology are relevant will allow us to better embrace our path in life.

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## Use of Internet by Small Children

*Mehmet Talha Dulman*

*R/W 43*

The internet has become indispensable, so many people have internet connection at their offices or homes. People generally use the internet in a good way, but children may not do likewise. They need to learn how to use the internet in a way that is useful for their education, but they spend their time playing games or chatting. Parents should control children when they use the internet because children can be deceived by someone or something on the internet, children lose their thought skill and creativeness with too much internet use and the internet makes them have weak relationships with their friends.

First, children can easily believe in someone or some information from the internet. They can share information about themselves or their family. When someone talks with them, they believe and give information about whatever is requested. For instance, people want them to give their father’s credit card information to have a nice car with low cost. This is so logical for a child, and he/she shares this information. In addition, there are many advertisements on the websites, and they arouse interest in children. They click and click, so many viruses or hackers can reach their computers. Parents should warn children

about these people or advertisements, so they do not create big problems.

Second, when children spend a lot of time on the internet, they can't think well. The internet is the easiest way to get information; thus, children learn to choose this way. They can find out whatever they want to know, and the result is that they become mentally lazy. This is especially true when they do their homework by using the internet. They copy the information without any changes. Children do not have to think about their work anymore since someone thought before them. They can't create something new. Losing thought skill and being easily deceived are crucial problems for children who have internet connection.

Finally, children can't have good relationships with people by spending a lot of time on the internet, especially by playing games and chatting. Many children want to accomplish their goals for games, and they think about their games all the time. They just focus on the games that they play on the internet, and sometimes they do not eat regularly. They do not talk with people, so they can't learn how to communicate normally. This makes relationships worse. If parents do not care about these situations, the problem becomes irrecoverable. Similarly, children talk on the internet with people by chatting. They do not have real friends on the internet; therefore, it makes them live in a virtual world. When they face real people, sometimes they can't speak.

In a nutshell, internet usage has some undesirable effects on children such as they can be easily induced by tricks, they will not properly exercise creative thinking, and they will not develop good relationships. These challenges are so hard for children who use the internet too much. Parents should care about the internet usage of their children since children are the world's future. We should do whatever it takes to prepare them to be excellent citizens for the world.

## **A Long-Lived Argument: Women in the Army**

*Mufrettin Murat Sari*

*R/W 59*

Plato, one of the famous philosophers in the history of the world, defined an ideal republic in his well-known book "The Republic." According to this valuable dialogue, an ideal, strong and long-life republic must build on three main job groups: producers, rulers and soldiers. Since the first modern civilizations, soldiers and armies were considered as very important elements for republics. In parallel with this fact, the functions, qualities, quantities, structures and compositions of armies have been extensively argued and been under investigation. The "Women in the army" phenomenon constitutes a crucial part of these argumentations. In this controversy, I have always been on the side of "women in the army" supporters since I've joined the army.

Some people believe that armies only depend on physical strength of soldiers. According to their opinions, military jobs have a lot of difficulties that can be achieved using only physical power. Hard trainings including long-distance

walking and running, fighting with conditions of wild and cruel nature and, most importantly, fighting in real war requires a high amount of physical resistance. For instance, a woman in Vietnam, Afghanistan, in the middle of Iraq's extremely hot deserts can't be imagined. Therefore, taking part in the military is not a good idea for women due to the fact that they are not strong enough to overcome these difficulties.

Conversely, I think that the opinions about "women in the army" mentioned above are quite subjective and outdated ideas. Sometimes, sociological facts can change rapidly with scientific, technologic, industrial inventions or sociological movements. For example, some of the ideas commonly accepted fifty years ago, now may lose their validity. Trends in ideas should be observed carefully. Actually, these non-valid views about army and women are also results of incorrect perception about "unity" and "uniformity." Although pronunciations are similar, there are exact differences between them. To clarify the subject, first of all, it must be asked what we really want to be successful in society and what we need? Unity or uniformity? These have both physical and sociological meanings. Although uniformity represents a high level of symmetry and morphologic smoothness, unity symbolizes concord, harmony, conjunction and agreement. For example, any solid crystal has a super symmetry but there aren't any activities, efficiencies, life evidence within it. It has only uniformity. On the other hand, although rainforests are not symmetrical and uniform, they have high complexity, harmony and unity. According to the "unity" based point of view, every element in any community has specific, characteristic, not same, functions and the total efficiency, togetherness and synergy of these functions creates unity of that community. In fact, management trends in modern societies shift from uniformity to unity with the latest developments. However, for hundreds of years, all societies have aimed to reach perfect armies via "uniformity" and simultaneously running, moving and saying out loud. Extraordinary symmetrical, properly shaped and single-sex armies were considered as perfect and strong military organizations. However, in modern times, this approach is not completely true. Unlike the former ancestors, modern armies do not consist of combatant persons only.

Nowadays, there are several sub-classes in the armies. They have become highly specialized for each task. Becoming successful in the modern world depends on not only physical strength but also huge use of technology. Besides the combatant soldiers such as infantries, mechanized infantries, commandos, artilleries, tankers, fighter pilots, there are also combat supporter classes such as supply, quartermaster, ordnance, transportation, signal, engineer, computer engineers, special services, paymasters, medical service.etc. I claim that only males can achieve combatant action. However, it is not enough to reach victory. Without combatant support classes, it is not possible to fight a modern war, and also to reach and maintain long-term victory.

Furthermore, in modern times, warfare styles have undergone extraordinary development and combined with technological inventions. Nowadays, besides the conventional military action, there are too many new warfare styles in the world such as network centric warfare, effects-based warfare,

asymmetric warfare, etc. Conventional armies designed for and oriented in only a one-dimensional facade, cannot be successful in these multi-dimensional warfare styles. There is also a strong need for professional management, academic education, scientific research and financial investment for military purposes. It is not necessary to be only a male to study in these fields, and hence, in modern armies. Except for combatant tasks, women can easily participate in all other supporting units, and also, they can be successful in active tasks of new warfare styles.

Also, numerous people claim that an ideal army consists of a high level of motivation. According to their point of view, beside the other parameters, high motivation is proportional to the presence of same gender. According to them, participation or attendance of even a small number of opposite genders decrease and damage total efficiency and motivation level of soldiers. Generally, whether single or married, the majority of soldiers work far away from their families, hometowns, cities, and hence, their own medium. Also, they work in isolated media such as the Navy and Marines. In the presence of opposite gender, interest in the opposite sex is usual and it is expected that lots of sexual relations may occur. It is worse that sexual harassment cases and wrecked marriages may also occur because of human weaknesses of soldiers. This certainly effects motivation of soldiers, and hence, success of troops. Therefore, women should not participate in a powerful army due to the fact that members of it should not be distracted by this type of issues.

I state that advocates of this idea are quite subjective and far away from the scientific facts as well as “physical power only” supporters. Some applications, which exclude women from social life, may have been employed in former armies but such ideas are unthinkable in modern societies. Sexual harassment and other unpleasant behaviors that one of the partners never wants usually exist in not only the military but also in every job, business environment and every field of life. This is not a military problem. All these behaviors are fundamental issues that industrialized and developed societies are exposed to. Any qualified and highly educated person must have self-control and a certain domination on his own body. Any person who has not these qualifications should never become a soldier because soldiers, who have a very difficult job as fighting and killing, must never make any uncontrolled action. How can any soldier, who can't control himself against an opposite gender, keep his courage and cool-headedness in real war? I certainly point out that psychological testing of the soldier candidate must be seriously performed in order to prevent these unwanted events. Modern people should easily live and study in opposite gender containing job environment without any motivation deficiency. Also, he should never impose sexual demands and actions unless the opposite wants.

In the light of all these mentioned things, I claim that women should participate in the armies considering their physical capabilities. Also, except for difficult environments such as a submarine or warship, women should be located only in relatively suitable places of the military in the presence of legislations including deterrent measures and severe punishment for sexual crime. Actually, the majority of all

modern countries allows women in their military. It should be finally pointed out that success, strength and motivation of any army can unlikely increase even the participation of women in the case of organizing professionally.

## **The Arepa**

*Carlos Marquez*

*R/W 23*

Venezuela is a nation full of color and life. There are several essential elements that give Venezuela its richness. In my opinion, Venezuelan cuisine is a great representative of our culture. For example, one of the traditional dishes in every Venezuelan home is the *arepa*. The *arepa* is a type of flour tortilla (corn), which is baked. The *arepa* is round. Inside the *arepa* are different fillings, and it ends up like a form similar to a sandwich. The taste of this dish is full of flavor and it is served warm. The *arepa* is an excellent Venezuelan ambassador. Enjoy every bite of a Venezuelan *arepa*.

## **Building More Nuclear Power Plants?**

*Wei-Ting Chen (Terrence)*

*R/W 59*

Electricity, energy of electronic products, is necessary for the human in modern life. Within the last decade, the innovative technology has been growing rapidly as well as a great number of consumer products have been announced. To meet the demand, certainly, more and more factories are built to manufacture these commodities. Furthermore, more electronic devices that people have and more factories that are working simultaneously, the more electricity we need, causing an energy shortage. Therefore, how to generate greater power to balance the consumption is an emerging issue. One of the solutions that people propose is to build more nuclear power plants, because they think that nuclear power is a safe, clean, and efficient energy. However, is this the truth?

Some people say that nuclear power plants cause fewer accidents than traditional power plants, but, in fact, each occurrence is dreadful and seriously influences our life and environment. For instance, in 1986, the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant in Ukraine exploded. Therefore, a great amount of radioactive material contaminated many areas. More than tens of thousands of people were affected. Some people directly died in the explosion, and others were influenced by radioactive contamination. Another catastrophe just happened lately, the Fukushima Nuclear Disaster. There is no doubt that Japan is a well-known expert in nuclear power technology, and they further design a backup cooling system to avoid system heating. Unfortunately, the damage caused by the tsunami was ultimately more serious than they imagine. Finally, a great amount of radioactivity was released into the ocean and spread to the neighboring countries. To correct the problem, experts estimate that the Japanese government may spend years or decades to clean up the contamination. It definitely is a tremendous shock to our environment.

Others argue that thermal power plants liberate poisonous gas, polluting our environment, but, actually, the pollution of nuclear power plant is worse because we need to consider the nuclear waste. According to the Nuclear Energy Institute (2011), "A typical nuclear power plant in a year generates 20 metric tons of used nuclear fuel" (Nuclear Waste section, para. 1). Furthermore, it is shocking that these tons of material cannot be eliminated or recycled, so they can only be stored in some places. Even though we dispose of it well, it will still release fatal radioactivity for several decades and this consequence damages our environment a lot. Besides, you may find that most nuclear power plants are located near the ocean, because engineers use seawater to cool down reactors, preventing the reactors from overheating and exploding. However, this manner increases the temperature of seawater near nuclear power plants and destroys ecological environments. Certainly, it is not a clean energy.

Many claim that nuclear power is the most efficient energy. In reality, if you calculate the expenditure for building nuclear power plants, processing the nuclear waste from reactors, and cleaning up the contamination, nuclear power will not be a candidate for efficient energy. On the other hand, if you take your time to observe surroundings, you will obviously discover many alternative energy sources, such as bioenergy, wind, and solar. All of them come from nature, not artificial substances, so we don't need to worry about shortage and pollution problems. Furthermore, as the technology of transforming the energy into electricity is progressing quickly, transformation is becoming more efficient and without contamination and deficiency problems. That is the definition of an efficient and clean energy.

Humans spend all of the resources extravagantly to acquire a better life, but seldom examine whether this kind of behavior injures the Earth or not. As a result, energy shortage problems have caused a lot of controversies, but it also signifies that some people are still concerned about our environment. To summarize, nuclear energy is powerful, but humans are still not capable to control it. Maybe in the far future, humans can master nuclear power well, but now we should stop wasting the energy and keep working on developing sustainable energy techniques.

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## Alpargatas

*Euryn Quijada*

*R/W 23*

*Alpargatas* are casual shoes originally from Venezuela. They are very soft and cheap. You can find them in some specific places. They are simple and some persons use them for special events, for example, for folk dance. They are an invention created a long time ago. You can find these

casual shoes in whatever color that you want. In conclusion, *alpargatas* are comfortable and they are traditional shoes from Venezuela.

## Camel's Milk

*Eyad Al-Mudaifier*

*R/W 23*

The milk of camels, the most important product and main food of the Arab people, is not inferior to cow's milk, but is better in some respects. Camel milk is white and its flavor varies from sweet to sharp and salty. The taste depends on the age of the camel and the stage of production and the type of feed and drinking water. The milk foam is very delicious. Camel milk fat contains a low percentage of saturated fatty acids compared with cow's milk. Camel milk is rich in vitamin C. Also, camel's milk is easy for digestion and absorption. Camel milk is used in the Arab world and is a good product.

## The Cuatro

*Estibaliz Iza*

*R/W 23*

The *cuatro* is a musical instrument typical of Venezuelan music. Reduced in size, its shape is irregular. The *cuatro* is an original instrument and it produces a very soft sound. It has four strings. It is made with fiberglass and wood. The most popular instruments are made in the city of Barquisimeto in Venezuela. The *cuatro* is one of the key instruments of typical *Llanera* music along with the *arpa* and the maracas. The *cuatro* is the most important instrument of typical Venezuelan music.

## Mr. Irfan

*Abdullatif Al Makwa*

*R/W 45*

Thirty years ago, the education in Saudi Arabia was too primitive. There were not enough schools or teachers. In that time some students didn't have transportation to take them to their schools. An addition, the national teachers were too few to help many students that needed to study, but they couldn't for some reasons such as wrong background about the schools further they were worried about the punishment as they heard it from their friends. However, the government in Saudi Arabia has been eager to serve the education and provide a lot of money. Therefore, many teachers from Arab countries like Egypt, Sudan and Jordan came to Saudi Arabia to teach many students there. One of them, Mr. Irfan, was the best teacher who taught me in my elementary school.

Mr. Irfan was very patient with his students. He was eager to teach and help each student in his school without bore. For example, the number of students in my elementary school was too high because many families preferred their children in that school. Despite this, Mr. Irfan was careful to guide each person that needed. Add to that, he was patient during his class

with many students. He was supposed to stay in school around 5 hours, but he spent an unusual amount of time with many students when they needed help. Also, when he had break time, he listened to each student that had question, or a confused.

He was a professional in the teaching. He prepared his class well before he presented it. For example, in that time, my school didn't have projectors, computer labs and other things that probably help the teacher in his class, but Mr. was eager to help his students when he wanted to do his class. He was making many of the aids for teaching in his house before the school day. For example, he was teacher Arabic reading and writing. He made as letters from color papers to help him in the teaching further; he went out the normal class when he wanted to explain some words.

Some teachers have been eager to make strong relationship with their students' parents. They need to make positive effect for their students. On the other hand, some teachers don't care about that. Mr. Irfan was social. He had a strong relationship with the community in my city. He had weekly schedule. He met many parents every Friday. He discussed about everything about his students. He was like a second parent for each student. He was the first teacher that breaks down the barriers between the student and the teachers.

Finally, the teaching has not been easy. It needs patient teacher, jovial, and professional. I was fortunate when I studied with Mr. Irfan because he had many positive skills. I want to say thanks Mr. Irfan so much for everything that he gave me.

## **My Car**

*Estibaliz Iza*

*R/W 23*

My beautiful car is one of my greatest achievements, the best thing that happened to me. I care about my car and I enjoy having it. The gold car is small but practical. It fits only five people. The interior is black with red. It has a good sound system. One of the most important features of my car is the air conditioner because the city where I live is hot. It has a low overhead trolley and it is easy to handle. I love my car because I can go anywhere with my family and friends. My car is the best. I really love my car!

## **My Hometown**

*Fatimah Al-marzooq*

*R/W 45*

Alhassa now is more different than twenty years ago. Alhassa has more development than before. The government is working very hard to make definite change. They are trying to make beautiful places, so the people can enjoy the gorgeous views. Also, they spend a lot of money to rebuild the old building such as schools, houses, stores and malls. Saudi government is making huge progress in Alhassa especially in education, jobs and entertainment.

The education nowadays is more advanced than before. Now the schools and the universities have more

technology than before such as my high school "The Third High School". It has a computer lab. In addition, the school is changing the teaching method. In the past, the student was just receiving the information. Now, the student is sharing conjecture the information. The teachers nowadays are trying to use all the technology that they can in the lesson instead of just saying the lesson as a lecture. The government is changing everything related to the education to the best, and they are trying to improve the schools to fit in the twentieth century.

Now the government is working constantly to make more chances for the people to work. Before twenty years ago, the people had a difficult time to find a worthy job. Different from now the people can find job easily. For example, Aramco Company used to hire a lot of foreign people; now it started to offer jobs just for Saudi people. Also, the government established a condition that all other company should hire at least 90% Saudi people from their worker. As result, now there are more jobs for Saudi people than it was twenty years ago.

On the other hand, the government now gives more attention to the entertainment places than before twenty years ago. For example, Aloger Beach had no services in the past, but now it has restrooms, places for the kids, soccer field and places for the family all over the beach. Also, the government organizes and takes care of the historical places like Alkaisariah Souq. It is old mall. It was built in 1862. Now the government tries to keep the traditional style in this souq. In addition, the government used a big area to build a huge park called Alhassa Park. It has the biggest musical fountain in the world. All in all, Alhassa has more entertainment places than before.

In summary, the government is making a lot of development in Alhassa. They try to change the education by using the technology. Then they make finding jobs more easily than it was before by increasing the number of jobs for just Saudi worker. Finally, the entertainment places now a lot than before and more organize than before.

## **The Hanbok**

*Eunsaem Cho*

*R/W 23*

The *hanbok* is traditional and beautiful Korean clothing. It makes the woman wearing it look elegant and graceful. The *hanbok* has two parts: a jacket and a long skirt. The *hanbok* has a variety of colors. This costume has various patterns and colors that are well harmonized. The traditional dress keeps women healthy because the cloth of the *hanbok* is made out of natural material. It is light and admits air through it. The *hanbok* is also unique because it hides the flaws of one's body well. Lastly, there are many different types of *hanboks* to wear for special occasions such as weddings, parties, and funerals. In conclusion, the *hanbok* is very beautiful and special. Every Korean woman should wear a *hanbok* at least once in her lifetime.

## **Bread Flour**

*Andres Fuenmayor Pico*

*R/W 23*

Bread flour is my product, and it is from Venezuela. With this product, you can make *arepas*, *mandocas* and *empanadas*, which is typical food from my country. You can make *empanadas* with meat, chicken and beef inside and the taste is so delicious. The shape of the *mandoca* is like a pretzel and the shape of the *arepa* is a circle and they are so delicious, too. What is important is that when you smell this food you want to eat it because the smell is so attractive. You can find yellow or white bread flour in a rectangular package with a price of \$3. if you buy two packages, you only pay \$5. In conclusion, it is a good product because it helps to make different types of Venezuelan food that are economical and tasty.

## **Vergatario Phone**

*Cesar Rabottini*

*R/W 23*

The Vergatario phone is a cell phone made in Venezuela. It is economical and useful. It is small, agile, with 2mpx cam. It records videos; it has games and a capacity for 1,000 contacts. Also, it has a calendar. More than 10,000 persons have a Vergatario phone. All this is for only 20 dollars. To sum up, the Vergatario phone is an excellent, economic cell phone. Anybody can buy and use this high quality phone.

## **Kimchi**

*Junho Son*

*R/W 23*

Do you know about *kimchi*? *Kimchi* is a general name for Korean pickled vegetables. To make *kimchi*, salted vegetables are mixed with red pepper powder, garlic, green onions, ginger, and pickled seafood, and left out to be fermented. It is an excellent way to preserve vegetables for a long period of time. Therefore, *kimchi* gives us very many nutrients. *Kimchi* is one of the most nutritious foods in Korea.

## **Food Stands or Restaurants**

*Mohammad Al-Ghatani*

*R/W40*

How people prefer to eat at restaurant versus preparing their food at home? Food has much energy for the body. Some people believe that food was already cooked at home is healthier than restaurants. On the other hand they care about time and they won't be wasting time. Many people like to eat the food that comes from home, some people like to eat their food from restaurants. I would like to say the food that comes from home is better than restaurants.

Many people prefer to eat at home; they believe it's healthier than any food comes from outside of home. For example the food was cooked by the cooks at home makes the food for limit people around one to five person that makes him/her more careful about their food. On the other hand, the cooks who work at restaurants want to make their food fast and they cooks for many people that makes health issues because they use the same dishes that they don't change for many time. They like to eat at home to save more money.

Some people like to eat at restaurant to have more time to do many things. For example university's students always have work to do; they can't eat in class, so they eat when they have a break; always the break is short for the students, so they need to eat something fast to get in class early. Some people says restaurants are more delicious than home because restaurants have to do the exactly same meal which is on the menu every day. However, some restaurant's workers don't wear gloves which make the food being harmful.

Home is better than restaurant because in home the food will be over see. Home food which is house food is cheaper than restaurants. In fact vitamins are more important which is easy to buy them from stores and cook it at home with food. It is rare to get vitamins from restaurant because they cook fast food. I like to cook my food to learn about how to cook better.

All in all, many people prefer to eat at home and other people prefer to eat at restaurants but I prefer to eat at home. Eating at home is healthier than restaurants. As more as know the cooks will make relax for who receive the food.

## **Arabic Coffee**

*Waleed Alanazi*

*R/W 23*

We offer Arabic coffee for guests. Some people like to drink coffee while eating dates or sweets. Arabic coffee is a dark color and light in taste. Arabic coffee is one of the oldest types of coffee. The Arabic coffee taste is different in the Arab world in terms of mood. Some prefer black color and the others prefer a brown color. Arabic coffee is without sugar. Among the benefits of Arabic coffee, it reduces the risk of cancer and Parkinson's disease. Drinking more than six small ceps of Arabic coffee a day reduces the risk of diabetes. Arabic coffee is delicious and healthy.

## **A Great Place to Learn English**

*Julio Pazmino*

*R/W 45*

The English Language Institute (ELI) has been contributing to the learning of English language for non-native speakers since 1955. This institute at the University of Florida provides excellent methods to their students in order to have a great experience while they are learning English. The Institute has students from all over the world allowing all these students to coexist in the American culture while they learn with a lot of

fun activities. This program is well developed with great things for the participants.

The ELI evaluates new students and places them in different levels of three language skills: Listening & Speaking, Grammar and Reading & Writing. This is extremely useful because there are some students who have different levels in any of these skills. For example there are students who have a high level of listening; however, their level of Reading & Writing might be lower. The ELI evaluates all the language skills of the participants and located them in different levels. This placement helps the students to learn in the level that they need, so they will be in a high level class of Listening & Speaking, and in a lower level class of Reading & Writing.

The ELI is very concerned about the students and tries to hire the best candidates to join their staff. The professors are very prepared to teach all kind of students; however, the ELI doesn't stop there. Language Assistants are part of the staff of the institute that help all the ELI participants to learn from a more informal source. The ELI is always worried about their students, and how their progress is. The students have to take different exams in order to prove what they have learned during classes. These exams are not the only form to evaluate the participants; there are also several types of projects, work groups, and other numerous activities that professors use to develop their students' language skills, and to evaluate their students.

The ELI also gives to their participants a lot of extracurricular activities every day that help them to get involved in the society, and have fun while they are learning. Every day, the ELI has different activities such as coffee talk, soccer games, karaoke and some others activities. These activities give the students a break after all the studies. There are several trips throughout the semesters where students could participate. Many of these trips include going to places out of the city. However, many of the students don't have a car, so if any ELI participant wants to join these trips, he or she should sign for the activity first, and someone will give a ride. These activities help the participants to get involved into the community and the culture.

To summarize, the ELI offers a complete system to learn English for any level of students. It also provides several activities that give all the participants a great experience while they are learning English as a second language. It is also important to recognize the value of the human resource that the ELI has with their teachers and all the staff that helps all the participants feel well during the program. I will definitely recommend this program to anybody who is interested in learning English as a second language, and would like to get involved into the America culture and become a Gator. Thanks ELI and Go Gators!

## Dates

*Saliha Babair*  
R/W 23

The date is one of the most popular fruits in Saudi Arabia. It is a sweet fruit that comes from the palm tree, and

there are different colors for the dates, such as dark brown, red and yellow. The shape of the date is elliptical with a large seed in it. The date is good for human body. It has many advantages; a date

1. Prevents cancer because it has phenols and antioxidants.
2. Combats anemia because it has a lot of minerals and vitamins.
3. Treats chronic constipation because it has cellulose fibers.
4. Activates the immune system
5. Helps women because it has (Progesterone) hormone.

This is a sample the advantages that the date has. The cost of the date is approximately 10-20 dollars for two pounds. It has a great taste and is suitable for all ages. I recommend you and all people to try them. Dates are so healthy, delicious and sweet.

## Junk and Healthy Food

*Badr Alsoduis*  
R/W 22

What does usually people prefer to eat cheap or expensive food? Most of organic goods are expensive for low economic people level, so they are forced to purchase the low-priced food. But some people are preferred to buy junk food even if they are in well-being level. In this paper compare the differences between junk and healthy food in aspects.

Changing the **brain activities** is the first difference. In 2008, it was proven by Ball Gensone and Keny Ball on the study of children that junk food change brain activity. In fact, although the chocolate enlarges the electric energy on the brain, the children love to eat it more than bananas or apples. Junk food increases the electric energy that affect negatively on their brain activity; consequently, provide the aggressive behavior. In contrast, healthy food affect positively on brain where healthy food controls the electric energy. Can change what we eat, change how we behave. If we eat healthy food, our bodies can be pure and healthy. Therefore, good mind in good body, good brain lead to good behavior.

Another difference is **method of preparation**. Junk food is usually prepared and ready to eat. Since the junk food is fast, it relies on quick cooking methods; for example, heavy frying and foundry method that relies on a large amount of oils. During of this way of cooking all nutrients are being lost by excessive heating like microwave which stripped away the important nutrients for our bodies such as vitamins and minerals. On the contrary, the methods that used in the preparation of healthy food are roasting in the oven, boiling, and foundry simple or steaming. As a result, those methods rely on slow cooking, methods retain the properties of nutrients. Method of preparation for food affect on nutritional value.

Other areas of difference between junk and healthy food involve part of **nutritional value**. Junk food has narrow nutritional value and gives our bodies empty calories. Because junk food include high level of imbued fats, sugar, and salt, it's unhealthy produces. So, junk food is one of important reasons of obesity and heart disease. Determinably, it's limitable the nutritional rate which is destitute in the nutrients or groups of food, wherefrom body benefit from them. For instance, French

fries, fried chicken, soda, sweets, and artificial carbohydrates. In comparison, healthy food has a good calories that provides enrage to our bodies. In addition, healthy food has rich nutritional value which is assimilated in fruits, vegetables, milk low fat, grilled meet slice. Accordingly, healthy food is healthy produces, it decreases a lot of illness like obesity, arteriosclerosis so, healthy food extends age people and protect people as its highly nutritional value.

**Price** is last difference. If the person goes to the supermarket, s/he will find the price of healthy food is expensive. People don't eat healthy food, nor they do buy healthy food products. On the other hand, person love to eat or do shopping the cheap and fit to low economic level. Consumer didn't know the cheapest prices of junk food accrues to woeful causes. Whereas the biggest companies raise zootechny in pollution places and they feed their animals by corn not by plants and grass. And that definitely affects and causes botulin and pollution of the public health.

With those four differences between junk and healthy food, what is the similarities of this two kinds of food. First of all, both junk and healthy food are **attractive and tasty**. For example, when you are hungry and somebody gives you a choice between either hamburger or salad with a grilled chicken, you surly are going to have either one.

Second, both, junk and healthy food **without drinking water**; body won't use the fiber, and will not absorb minerals, also the fat need to water to get out of the body. Thus all the processes digestion, absorption, and metabolism be transacts, need to the water that is mediator for all biochemical interactions in the body.

Third, **rate of burn** transacts in both of them. Likewise junk food needs to speed up its burn inside the body, Healthy food can't transacts its burn without one meal . It had better distribute meals from usually three-meals to five-meals due to accelerate the rate of combustion in our bodies

The final similarity is that **appetite** for both of junk and healthy food stimulate the assorting of chemicals from our bodies that is responsible of feeling pleasure in the brain, it's called natural Balavionat. The same principle of drug addiction, is also thought to control appetite is done through a complex system of hormones, and other material produced by the body.

In conclusion, people love to pick cheap, fast, and quick food. When you are going shopping try to select healthy products. There is a difference between healthy and junk food about the nutritional value that has harmful influence on our bodies. Healthy food affects our behavior and the brain activities with positive impact.

## **Mandatory or Compulsory Voting**

*Luccia Dasburg*

*R/W 59*

Every year when the presidential election is close many points become a debate like arguments pro or con of presidential candidates, or the current voting system in the country. This is the case of the mandatory or compulsory voting. The mandatory voting is a system in which electors are

obliged to vote in elections. If the electors do not vote, the government can apply a punitive measure to the subject that did not vote. Some punitive measures that the government can apply are: fines, community services and imprisonment. Many people worldwide think that this system violates the population's freedom and governments should change this oppressive system. For this reason, I disagree with the mandatory voting and consider that the government should abolish it or change to less strict punishments.

First, some governments think that the system of mandatory voting guarantees a big quantity of voters and the winner will be a candidate that has been elected by the majorities. For example, Australia has the mandatory voting system. Since they have adopted this system they have increased their elections participation from 59 % to 91% "Compulsory Voting" (2011). However, free voting also guarantees a big quantity of voters. Many countries around the world prefer free voting because it supports the free participation of voters, such is the case of Panama that during the last elections had a turnout of 73.99% "Panamanian Elections 2009" (2011). This is a good turnout in a country that does not use the mandatory voting system. This means that countries should adopt the free participation system because it promotes freedom and guarantees high concurrence. Although the turnout will not be higher than countries with a mandatory system people will go voluntarily. The country will not lose the high participation of voters.

In addition, some people feel that if people have a mandatory election it will encourage them to find information about the different candidates and they will pay more attention to the debate and the different platform of each candidate. I totally disagree with this point of view because mandatory elections do not mean that people will change their interests about politics. If you do not like elections you will not research candidates, watch debates and read about the candidate's platform. In this kind of system the majority of the people will go to vote just because they have to and not because they like it. Some people will take their time to research candidates but not everybody will do it. If you have a free voting system the majority of the people will take the time to find information about their candidates because they like to participate in politics and they want to know more about the person that they are going to give the vote.

Finally, people that support compulsory voting think that this system does not violate constitutional rights because if population does not want to participate they might abstain from voting (Lever, 2010). On the other hand, this point does not show the reality because the freedom has been violated by this kind of system because there are several measures that the government can apply if someone does not go to vote. For example, in Australia the government has the right to put people in jail if they do not attend elections. This is the most extreme measure that Australia has in this situation. They also have fines, but what if the government considers that you must go to jail because you did vote? This is one of those situations that we should consider the punishment for not attending elections. These measures are not always applicable but they have the option to use them. The risk of going to jail exists and it is there

just waiting to be applied. This is not fair because if people do not like to participate in elections, why should they be enforced to vote with a punishment in their back if they do not attend. Some people do not attend the call for voting merely because they dislike politics or it seems risky for them to participate in this kind of event. Sometimes elections are considered a violent event because of the high rivalry that exists between parties and it has been marked with stages of violence in the past of many countries. We should let the people choose if they want to vote.

In sum, the arguments will continue because the system of voting depends on the government. It will be very difficult to unify a worldwide system of voting. It means that we will continue with the mandatory voting in many countries. I hope that in the future the mandatory system will be abolished. Going to vote should be a decision of each person, not a decision that the government makes for you. Everybody should be free to decide if they want to vote or not to vote. Democracy starts with the freedom of individuals to choose their future as long as it does not affect people around them.

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## Should the Space Program Continue?

*Harun Sesen*  
*R/W 59*

The space program of the West and the East was one of the most prestigious projects for both sides during the Cold War, but, when the Cold War ended, the future of the space program became more ambiguous year by year. Since the East did not have any more resources to continue its space program, many people began to ask why the West (especially the U.S.A.) should continue to spend money on “expensive toys.” Although this criticism seems logical and justified, I think it is not acceptable since the majority of recent technological improvements are dependent on the space studies.

Opponents’ first claim is about the costs of the space programs. They emphasize that the needs of humanity should always come first and while there are people on Earth who need help, the money should be spent for those rather than expensive space vessels. However, this idea is in contradiction with itself and it is illogical. Today, we all know that the technology behind thousands of common devices was developed with the help of the space program, including GPS, a number of medicines, many medical devices, and even the computers.

Moreover, the satellite systems, one of the indispensable devices of the modern world, is a result of the space studies and they have changed life and business activities with cell phones, global banking, international broadcasting,

natural disaster management, and intelligence. Thus, no one can underestimate the value of the space programs. Besides, no one can guarantee that the money saved from the space studies will be spent for the “war on poverty.” Although the budget of NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration) was just 18.7 billion dollars for 2010 (NASA, 2010), the budget of the Pentagon was 680 billion dollars in the same year (SIPRI, 2011). These figures show that money for “real war” far more exceeds the money for space.

Opponents also emphasize not only costs, but also the risks of the space exploration. They believe that manned missions to space impose great risk for the astronauts. However, this idea is not true. The NASA Astronaut Memorial Wall includes the names of 24 astronauts who have given their lives during the space programs and only seven of them died in aircraft accidents while seventeen of them lost their lives in space-related accidents. In addition to these, we know that eight cosmonauts also died during the Soviet/Russian space program (Aerospaceweb, 2011). Totally, 32 brave men and women lost their lives for the wellbeing of humanity since the Cold War.

However, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) Secretary Ray LaHood, 33,808 people died in traffic accidents in 2009 in the United States, and this figure was the lowest since 1950 (NHTSA, 2011). Thus, by the same logic we must ban driving, and stop spending money on highways, because driving endangers the human lives more than anything.

Furthermore, people on the other side consider that we can find something in the space that is lethal for human life. However, if there is a danger for human life in the space, regardless of being aware or not, it is there. Moreover, if we do not find it and take the necessary precautions to protect our lives, one day it may discover us. Thus, to be prepared for the possible dangers such as footloose asteroids, star bursts, or even alien life forms, we should observe and investigate space. Since we aren’t isolated from the universe, I think we should be aware of the environment.

On top of all these, I strongly believe that the human desire for exploration can’t be hindered. In my opinion, the history of the human being can be summarized with one word: curiosity. If the human did not have curiosity, today, possibly we could not have any modern technology. That curiosity discovered the American continent, invented the plane and space ships, and made many medical improvements. With the help of the space program, humans in fact satisfy their curiosity.

On the other hand, I believe that there is a problem justifying the space exploration. Most of the opponents of the space program insist on their positions because of insufficient knowledge. As Thomas D. Jones (2006) pointed out, if any institution can’t explain the reason of its existence, then the majority of the population questions the money spent by that organization. In this regard, I can say that governments have not made clear why we have to explore space and have institutions for space studies. Thus, a serious campaign is needed all around the world to explain the indispensability of the space explorations.

In conclusion, although some people object to the space program, governments should continue to spend money

on space studies, not only for commercial or military reasons, but also for the human wellbeing and curiosity. If a well-planned campaign is conducted in the world to explain the reasons of the space programs, I am sure the majority of the people will be strong advocates of the space studies.

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## A Special Birthday: Hwan-Gab

Sejun Oh

R/W 5

We have a special birthday called Hwan-Gab in Korea. Hwan-Gab means that people congratulate a person who becomes 60 years old. First, we prepare many foods and rent a hall. Second, we invite many people and congratulate the person who is turning 60 years old. Third, we prepare a cake, and the person who is turning 60 years old cuts the cake. Next, we talk with each other and enjoy time together. As you can see, Hwan-Gab is a special birthday in Korea.

## What Is Most Powerful Weapon of Democracy?

Sanghoon Kwon

R/W 60

Today most of the countries in the world are under democracy. After a long time of cold war, we can say that it's been proven democracy is much better than socialism or communism. But there is a problem which can fundamentally damage the root of democracy, and that is a low voting rate. Voting is very important and a critical element of democracy and is even called the flower of democracy. But as voting rate are getting less and less (According to *International IDEA 2008 Report*, the average voting rate of the world is not much higher than 50%), some politicians with a lack of ability are elected, without enough authority to represent the civil population. So some people insist that voting should be mandatory for citizens.

I agree with that. In democratic countries, citizens are the owner of the countries because they can elect their representatives through voting and politicians can be given the political authority so that they can do political activities smoothly and effectively. So for benefit of the countries and of the citizens themselves, voting should be mandatory.

As a first reason, as owners of the countries, people should elect their representatives correctly and legally. Politicians are representatives of the citizens. It means they should work for the citizens who elected them as representatives of the citizens. But if people don't vote, it's impossible to elect the people who will protect their rights. Imagine that a person, who doesn't have appropriate ability, is elected as president just because no one voted except his supporters. If he not only lacks ability but is also evil, what would happen? Needless to say, the result is obvious. So to prevent such a situation, people should select the candidates whom they think is the right person to represent them and vote for that person. "Heaven helps those who help themselves." (Proverb) If we don't vote for our own benefits, no one can protect our benefits.

In addition, through voting, politicians can do their political activities smoothly and more efficiently as they can gain authority. Voting is not just testing of who's going to get the more supporters. It shows that people empower politicians to do political activities as representatives of the citizens. So people vote for the candidates who they think will work for the people and through that the elected politicians can do their work with authority. Even if they are elected, they can't do their work unless they get the appropriate rate of support. (In Korea, many people arguing that elected politicians who just got small rate of supporting votes don't deserve to do political activities, and so in many other countries.) Politicians don't get the power by themselves. They are given the power and who gives them the power are the citizen.

Some people might say that even though voting is a fundamental element for the existence of democracy, it could be very dangerous and unfair to make the voting mandatory. But, even if we make voting mandatory of citizens, we don't have to make it too severe. It just needs some amount of fine. We can create law that make voting mandatory, but the law can mention that if people have reasonable reason not to vote, they can refuse to vote or if they have other important things scheduled, they can vote through using the internet or in other ways. Of course, we should make some ways to make it possible for the people to refuse to vote or to vote from a distance or vote earlier easily. We should not forget is what we want is for people to express their opinions through voting, not just to punish others. In other words, we want the consequence of increasing the voting rate. Everything should be done to help achieve that goal.

It is critical to vote to elect right representatives so that we give the politicians the authority to do their work. Unless there are unavoidable reasons, it is our clear duty to vote as democratic citizen. But to make it work more smoothly, we also should make the way that we can vote more easily and concisely, in order for voting to be the weapon and shield for the democratic people. Democracy is based on freedom and as a

proverb says “Freedom is not free.” Voting is the cheapest but most powerful weapon for democracy. If we give up that weapon, democracy will be collapsed and at the last, we will lose our freedom.

## Cartagena de Indias

*Mariela Castañeda*

R/W 20

If you want to have a very enjoyable vacation with your friends or family, there is a very good place in South America. Cartagena is a fantastic and historic city. There are fabulous beaches, old buildings, castles, places to party, good music, and excellent food.

Cartagena is a colonial city. During the day you can visit castles, such as San Felipe de Barajas, where you can learn about its history and how Cartagena became independent. You can also go to the Cartagena Gold Museum, where you can see many gold relics of the local culture. There are also old walls around the downtown area, and you can take a carriage ride around it. That place is called “Ciudad Amurallada”. If you like history, these are great places.

If you like going to the beach, you can take a yacht tour to the Rosario Islands or Playa Blanca. These places are fabulous. There are beautiful crystal beaches with many palm trees. On the Rosario Islands, there is an aquarium with different sea creatures. You can swim, play volleyball, and visit the aquarium.

When you go to Cartagena, you have to eat the local food, such as Patacones (made from plantains), Arepas de Huevo, and Pescado Frito (fried fish). You should also taste the local desserts. Many vendors sell a rich dessert called “Cocadas” (made of coconut). They walk around the city selling these desserts. In Cartagena, you can enjoy eating these delicious foods.

At night, people usually have parties with live music, like Vallenato, at the beach; so, if you want, you can go. These parties are called “Parrandas Vallenatas”. Vallenato is a typical music from Colombia, specifically the Caribbean region. Its instruments are the caja (a small drum), the guacharaca (a ribbed stick accompanied with a fork), and the accordion. You can also enjoy the Chiva. The Chiva is a typical bus where you listen to music and dance with the bus travels around the city. It’s a lot of fun!

Many people from other countries like to go to Cartagena because there are many fun things to do. You can go for a week and enjoying learning about its history and culture, viewing the antique architecture, going to the beach, having parties, and eating delicious food. Cartagena is a fabulous place in South America.

## Language and Signs

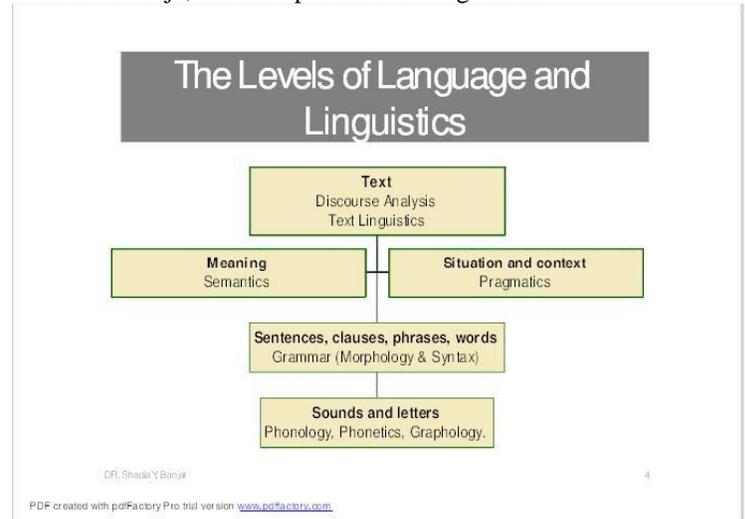
*Siham Al Haider*

R/W 50



Language is a very big field of many other sublevels of language and linguistics.

We have many different linguistic branches. The picture below summarizes the definitions of the linguistic sciences. It is by Dr. Shadia Y. Banja, assistant professor of linguistics.



The writer shed light on the pragmatics field. Pragmatics has different definitions according to the usage of the language. The word pragmatics derives from the Greek word ‘pragma’, which means 'matter', 'thing', but also 'action' (cf. Linke, Nussbaumer & Portmann(1996)). Pragmatics is defined as, 1: “Pragmatics is the study of speaker meaning.” 2: “Pragmatics is the study of contextual meaning” 3: “Pragmatics is the study of how more gets communicated than is said” 4: “Pragmatics is the study of the expression of relative distance” (Yule:2008). Pragmatics deals with three different aspects .e.g. syntactically, semantically and with signs and their users and interpreters.

We will tackle definition 4. Yule explained that pragmatics investigates the relationship between linguistic forms and their uses (purpose, goal, intention).

- Use of language for interaction = the interpersonal function
- Interaction usually has a communicative intention

cf. small talk; phatic function of language.

Pragmatics leads us to what we call sign language. What is sign language? Sign language is the language that is shown; acted by hands or gestures, language that is written on any sign whether on the road or anywhere. There are different sign languages all over the world, just as there are different spoken languages. For instance, English language has its own alphabets which are the English letters but in signs, numbers as well. Arabic has completely different sign language returning to the fact the Arabic and English are different, based on this all the sign languages in the world are different from each other. There are arguments on that topic, whether normal people need

to learn sign language or not. Some believe as long as you are healthy and normal you do not need to learn this language. They think it will be of no use, because all the people they may know are capable of communicating with them in the same oral language. On the contrary, others believe that if you learn a sign language you will be able to communicate with two kinds of people in two different ways; orally and signally. To combine two quality features above others, to be different and the most of all to help other person, you should learn the sign language. You do not have to be fluent in it. Deaf people can just benefit from it as it is a way of communication.

In 1880, there was an association called NAD (National Association of the Deaf). They took care of deaf people and invented a language for them to communicate with the spoken people. They named that language with ASL (American Sign Language). ASL is a complete, complex language that employs signs made by moving the hands combined with facial expressions and postures of the body. It is the primary language of many North Americans who are deaf and is one of several communication options used by people who are deaf or hard-of-hearing. The history of ASL arose more than 200 years ago; it was a mixture of local sign language and French sign language. Sign language is not a universal language. You find different language in each country. Even we have ASL and BSL (British Sign Language), they are different although they have the same core, which is English. So, ASL people cannot understand BSL people. NAD believes that non-hearing people are human beings just like normal. They have rights and they should have these rights in the society. They should not feel strange because they cannot hear. NAD suggests and encourages normal people to learn the sign language in order to help them as teachers or advocates. Sign language is considered as foreign language like if you learn French or Spanish or any other language. When you have many languages to speak or to show, you will likely have more opportunities to get jobs and to be somebody his/her race could not vanish easily. It is like extra credit when you are different and learn something differently from others.

Sign language could be sometimes, to some busy people, extra work to do. They do not have time to that and above all they maybe do not have need to learn it. So, this is out of their interest. They believe in deafness's rights but believe that maybe others do this job instead of them. This is, in fact, scores the majority of people. We always do not have enough time to study, to do homework, to work, etc. Time becomes another issue here. But if we just think and arrange our priorities in life and set our goals, the vision will be crystal clear.

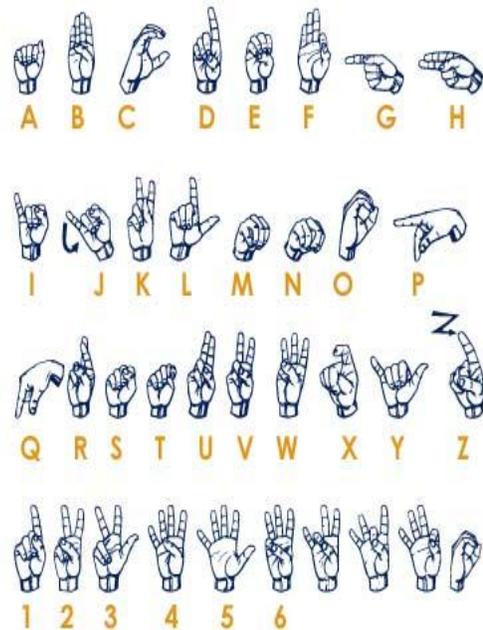
Clashes in our needs in life emerge the differences in our acceptance reactions. When you feel you need to do something you go and do that something and vice versa. This is exactly what applies here in sign language. We always think that sign language is far away from learning. It is only for certain people. The truth is that it is for everyone. It is very humane.

In 2000, in a piece of newspaper was found on the net, Leo. M Jacobs, a retired teacher, narrated his story with deaf parents. He described himself when he graduated from the high school that he was an oral ignoramus. He believed that deaf

people should be bilingual have ASL as conversational language and English as written language. From his own experience as non-deaf person living with deaf parents, he thought that coded signs; sign language; has so much conceptual power. He called the community not to separate hearing and non-hearing people in places. He brought Gallaudet University as an example. They taught all their students the two languages ASL and English. He said that this became a great facilitator of communication among persons with hearing problems.

At the end , we must always remember that we do not live alone on this earth. We have so many brothers and sisters, fathers and mothers to share our knowledge and emotions with them. NAD works day and night to support deafness. We should step up and hold each others' hands to work together for better community, for better society and for better world. As George Veditz , who is Preservation of Sign Language 1913, says:

“As long as we have deaf people on earth, we will have signs . . .”



## References

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## Good sites to learn more about sign language:

- [http://www.isadc.org/info/pdf\\_files/Sign\\_Language.pdf](http://www.isadc.org/info/pdf_files/Sign_Language.pdf)  
<http://www.nidcd.nih.gov/health/hearing/pages/asl.aspx>  
<http://www.nad.org/issues/american-sign-language> (NAD)  
<http://gallyprotest.org/jacobs.pdf>

## Celebrating a New Year in Japan

Naoyuki Yanagihara

R/W 5

Celebrating a New Year in Japan may be a little strange for people from other countries. This is how to spend a New Year in Japan. First, almost all Japanese people go to a shrine on New Year's Day. We go there to pray for the happiness of the family. Some people might pray for the happiness of lovers. Then we write our wishes and goals on a board called Ema, and we pray again to have a good year this year. Finally, we buy some food there, but we go home while eating it, because the food stalls are full of people who line up to buy food. This is how we celebrate the New Year in Japan.

## What Decides if We Are Family?

Sanghoon Kwon

R/W 60

What is your definition of family? It means that a group of people who are related to each other, like parents and children, are basically related by blood. But the definition of family has been changing through several decades, and the change is getting faster and more various. Many people might have their own definition of family, and so do I. My definition is so simple. If people think of each other as family, they're family. If people don't think of each other as family, they aren't family. In brief, I make the importance of people's recognition as what determines a family. And now I'll tell you why I think so. It's about what I have seen and heard.

First, there are many families which even don't deserve to be called family even though they are related to each other by blood. Unfortunately, we can see and hear the news about such 'families'. They don't care about their parents or children, what they do, what they like, where they are. Terribly, there are families who do more unbelievably terrible things to each other. Some parents rape their children, and some children kill their parents. In such cases, can we call them as a family no matter if they are related neither by blood nor by blood? Despite the fact that a proverb said "Blood is thicker than water," there is much blood which is thinner than water. They not only don't deserve to be called family, but also are even worse than people who don't know each other at all. This "Violence named family" can leave a lot of problems to a person (As written in Wikipedia "This problem includes sudden bursts of anger, poor impulse control, and poor self-esteem.").

Second, there are many families who are really happy and love each other deeply even though they don't have any relationship of blood. This kind of family is formed by adoption, remarriage, etc. For example Angelina Jolie, a famous actress, is also famous for her adoptions. She experienced a very hard time when she was young due to her parents' lack of caring for her. Since then she has thought that she could be like her parents so didn't deserve to raise children. But after becoming a Goodwill Ambassador with the United Nations concentrating on refugee aid since March 2011, she changed

her mind as she met a child whose name is Maddox (now Jolie's adopted son), in a Cambodian orphanage in November of that year. Now she has six children including three adopted children. This is just one example that shows although family has no blood ties, they can still be family and can love each other.

As I've seen such things so many times, I imagined that if I don't have any blood ties with my father, mother, and sister, then what could be happening. Well, I could agonize or argue with my family for a while.-just a while. And after that, I would accept that I love them, they love me, and that is why they and I are family. There is no reason not to love each other, just because we're not related by blood.

As you might know, I don't mean that families with blood ties are bad and families without blood ties are good. What I want to tell you is that the most critical factor which defines the family is that do they love, or not. Whether they have a relationship of blood or not, if they don't love each other they're not family and if they do love each other they're family. And my definition of family is there, in 'love.'

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### R/W 45

*Editor's note: In R/W 45, students were asked to write letters expressing their opinions. They could choose the recipient and the topic as long as it expressed a clear opinion. Here are their letters.*

To whom it may concern,

I am one of Starbucks' fans because I go Starbucks more than 5 times in a week. I usually go the store in Library West at UF. In my case, I need coffee before studying. If there wasn't a Starbucks, I couldn't concentrate on my job. So, thank you to your store. However, I want to give several suggestions in this letter based on my feeling when I visit there. As you know, it is a very accessible location, so it is very popular to UF students. Most students who have studied in the library could have visited your store.

Students, including me, go to libraries to study, but very often it wastes my time. However, your store is too small to fit those students. You don't have enough space, chairs or tables, and cashiers. For this reason, it is always very crowded and I have to wait in a long line for just a cup of coffee. Sometimes it makes me crazy. What do you think about it? In my opinion, you should make it more space or open another store very near to the library.

Lastly, you should be responsible for your work. You have to serve the best quality coffee and kindness of employers. You cannot deny you get fixed income from students, and most of them probably are Library West users. It is a default option to go your store. I mean, when students need to drink coffee in the library, we should go to your store. You probably get benefit from this fact. Please don't think students just as a source of your profit and your store is a special place because customers

are usually poor students. I will be very happy you keep in mind this aspect.

Sincerely,  
*Nakyung Jeon*

Dear Facebook,

I'm not sure if you are harmful to people but I can tell you that you are very famous. Do you know how many people are using you? Yes, a lot. Some people use you for convenience, but others just use you to gossip. It can be unpleasant that millions and millions of people look at each other's information and pictures. Why are all the people looking profiles of people who aren't their friends? Hasn't it happen to you that you are walking in the school and you hear someone saying, "Did you see the Anna's picture? She is crazy. How can she upload that picture?" At that point I would say: "It's her life, not yours! Let her live her life and start to live yours".

Also, all the time I ask myself: Why don't you have an "I don't like it" button?; I mean, I'm in the obligation of only like the stupid pictures or comments that people put on their walls? Why can't I show them that "I don't like it"? Yes, you enhance people's hypocrisy. I saw people that aren't friends and people that hate each other talking using you as if they are best friends. They put on each other's walls "I like this picture, I like it, so cute, I love you, XOXO" and I think, "What are they doing"?

I need to tell you that I use you a lot; you are very usefully. If my family or friends are in another country, I can talk with them using you. But also, you are one of the principal causes that people don't sleep. Do you know how many people don't sleep because they are gossiping? All my friends use you like if there aren't other activity to do. While they are eating, they are using you and gossiping. You are so popular these days and people love you, but you cause a lot of problems in couples and friends' relationships. For these reason you shouldn't be used for gossip.

Thanks for your time. See you when I have some free time.

Sincerely,  
*Leopoldo Gutierrez*

Dear Olive Garden Manager,

My name is Mauricio Rodriguez Chang; recently I ate at your restaurant and I would like you to know my personal thoughts about your restaurant. Last week I visited your restaurant with my family; the appetizer, the food, and the desserts were delicious. I would like you to reconsider the cost of many

dishes; the restaurant has exquisite food, but it is very expensive.

The environment of the restaurant is wonderful: the restaurant is always clean, the lighting of the place is perfect, and it has a lot of tables for the many customers you receive. Also, the background music is perfect because is not very high, the bathrooms are very clean and neat, the chairs are comfortable, the tables are large enough for all the dishes and drinks, the acoustic of the place is pleasant, the restaurant doesn't stink and the temperature of the place is very nice because you never get hot in there. As a result, this restaurant is a wonderful place to eat.

The servers of your restaurant are very good. They are always willing to help you, they are always polite, always willing to describe the dishes, very fast bringing the drinks, appetizers, food, desert and the bill. The servers usually have a nice appearance, they have a clean uniform. Thank you for taking the time to read my letter.

Best wishes,  
*Mauricio Rodriguez Chang*

My Dearest Family,

Mom, you are always in my heart and mind. You are also in my eyes. I remember you every day. Whenever I remember you, I feel different feelings. Sometimes I laugh a lot when I remember how much you suffered while combing my hair. I also remember when you pulled my hair until my eyes became just lines. However, I feel sad whenever I recall that I made you upset. I miss your nagging, your voice, and your smile. I miss my dad also. I remember my younger sisters and brothers gathering around him and playing with him. I miss our company around both of you sharing jokes and laughing. I miss the smell of coffee and the smell of Oud (a kind of Eastern perfume). I always recall my little brother Waleed drinking milk when he was sleepy and spilling half of the milk on the floor. I also recall him when he sleepwalked to the bathroom to wash his face and walk around the inside the house. I also remember Maram when she wore her clothes flipped and forgot her pack back. Hanan, the funniest sister in the world, I laugh a lot when I remember you complaining about the squirrel teeth that you have. I hope that your dream of having a Hollywood smile becomes true. I love your naughty personality and your tears that are ready to fall down from silly things. Omar, Mr. Car, I recall you telling me about the kinds of cars and your adventures to the auctions. I hope that I see you having the Ferrari that you dream of. Abudi, I remember how happy we got when my mom gave birth to you. I miss you so much. I also miss your voice while laughing and crying. I wish that I could go back early and give you the toys and the children books that you asked me to bring. Saad, my elder brother, despite the personal differences between us, we still have the soul of

brotherhood. I think also about my grandparents. I always get sad when I remember my grandfather suffering from Alzheimer. I remember him when he imagined unreal people, animals and things. I will never forget when he punched me in the face. I also remember my grandmother. I miss her voice and her prayers. I remember how much she defended us even if we were wrong. I really miss you, my dearest family, and miss every detail in our house. I hope to return and spend my whole life with you. I promise that I will do my best to make you proud of me.

Sincerely,

Your daughter

*Sharifh Alqahtani*

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Dear ELI manager,

I would like to thank the ELI from the bottom of my heart about the method of how they teach us. Everywhere has a institute to learn English, but the ELI is unique for teaching English. The best thing is, the majority of the teachers were born in the US or have lived in the US for many years, so we can get the actual accent as the native leagues. All the subjects you have given us so far are quite beneficial. I hear from some students ELI are pretty good but some students say that the LA hour doesn't benefit as much as other subjects; actually, it is beneficial if the student give more attention. I always recommend my friends who want to learn English to learn in at the ELI.

The majority of students have complained about far buildings; why don't we take classes in the own ELI building, even if it's not going to be big enough. There is another idea, which is rent another building close to the ELI. The gym, which is on Museum Road, is free for the UF students, except ELI students. I'm wondering why not; we are like UF students and we are taking classes around campus, we even have Gator IDs. We hope that if you could please talk to them and allow us to go free because we really need it.

Another issue, there are a lot of Middle East students in the ELI and that is difficult for Arabic students to learn English quickly. I suggest to put a limit for the Arabic's students. For example, allow only 50 Arabic students. If another student wants to register you should say "fully booked". There is a small issue, it is not quite problem. Parking. I'm one of the students who needs parking because I live in NW and there is only one bus rotate each almost hour. I own a car but I got more than 3 tickets because of the parking. I appreciate everything that ELI serves to us and really ELI is the best institute for learning English.

Sincerely,

*Yousef Shumsaddin*

Dear Blackberry,

I am writing this letter to you because you are evil and everybody knows that. You are very famous around a lot of Venezuelan people, most common in young people. You are very famous all over the world and a lot of people use you. I would like to know: "Why do you make people to use you all day long?" I mean, yeah you are useful and everybody loves to use the "PIN" application, but come on, it is not necessary to use you all day.

People used to have a life outside of the "PIN world". They used to talk face to face to each other. They used to call people and even send text messages. These days if you ask a 15 year old Venezuelan girl, who has a Blackberry if she uses the text message application, she would probably say to you something like: "What is that? I only use PIN with my friends" or maybe "I used to use text messages when I had no Blackberry". It is so stupid that nowadays a lot of people only love you because of the "PIN" (I'm included in that group). But when did the things change so drastically? You used to be used only by high executives, business men and people that needed you for their work.

You are evil and I am saying this to you because a lot people hate you. I mean, you make teachers, professors, moms, dads, families in general and even any person who is talking to your owner to hate you; you make your owner look like a disrespectful person. You should start to change, to be a good soul. It is necessary that you stop being so selfish to your owner and start to let it have a life.

Sincerely,

*Adriana Rabottini*

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*Editor's note: This final paragraph was written by everyone in R/W 23. Each student contributed one sentence to this in-class exercise on narrative paragraphs.*

One hot day in August, I arrived in Gainesville, Florida to attend the UF ELI, and I was so happy. I went to Norman Hall to check in. On the first day of class, I met many other students and teachers. At the end of the first day, I went home to sleep. However, my roommate was noisy. at midnight, the fire alarm went off. I was angry, tired, and confused. So, I went to the gas station nearby and I drank coffee. After returning to my apartment, I slept and woke at 7 AM. It was sunny outside! I became happy again, and I was ready to start a new day learning English.

**Thanks from the Editor**

Thank you for sharing your writing with everyone. I hope you enjoy reading your fellow students' writing. Also thanks to Megan Forbes and the University of Florida Bookstore for arranging the gift certificates, to Melina Jimenez for publicizing this issue of Student Voices, to the Reading/Writing instructors for supporting their students in their writing, and to Judith Strack, Karen Owens, Todd Allen, Tom Ratican, Stephen Carr, and Maya Shastri for reading and evaluating the entries.

Thanks everyone!

Steve Flocks



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