Welcome

Words from the Hillsborough Literacy Council President

Our mission at the Hillsborough Literacy Council is to help adults learn to read and to speak English, improving literacy skills for both native and nonnative English speakers.

Through our mission and efforts we hope to help others assimilate into our society by having the skills to become employed, active and engaged in their local and national communities. To that end, the HLC Board is committed to supporting the work of more than 300 adult students, and tutors as they meet and learn in the public libraries throughout Hillsborough County.

It is with heartfelt appreciation that we thank each tutor for the time and effort they put into teaching others. We are proud of the successes that each of our students achieve. It is our pleasure to work with people who strive to reach their goals.

We wish each tutor and student continuing success, and the satisfaction of seeing ever expanding horizons in their ongoing journey toward improved personal communications.

Lee Russell President

Words from the Tampa-Hillsborough County Public Library Director of Library Services

We live in a world of Words. They surround us and are an intimate part of our daily lives. It doesn't matter if they are the words on signs, job applications and instructions that help us function in society, or the words in the great stories that we read for enjoyment - words are important. Many right here in Hillsborough County struggle every day with words and basic literacy: 15% of our county residents - nearly 195,000 people - lack basic literacy skills; another 100,000 cannot speak English proficiently. Basic literacy not only affects the lives of those who struggle with words, but the prosperity of the entire community.

- In the United States, 7,000 high school students drop out daily, illiteracy is the primary cause,
- 70% of adult public assistance recipients are burdened with low literacy skills,
- 75% of prison inmates display low literacy rates or are illiterate,

Literacy is not only an individual concern, but the concern of all of us.

I admire the courage shown by adult students and new Americans in recognizing the importance of words and in seeking help with basic written and spoken English. Their efforts are remarkable and their stories here in the pages of Visions are truly inspiring.

I applaud the hard work and dedication of the students, tutors and Board members of the Hillsborough Literacy Council for committing to improve the lives of our citizens and the prosperity of our community. Your example serves as inspiration to others who would help bring the world of words to everyone.

Andrew Breidenbaugh Library Director
# The Hillsborough Literacy Council

The Hillsborough Literacy Council (HLC) is a nonprofit affiliate of Tampa-Hillsborough County Public Library teaching functionally and marginally illiterate adults to read and write through its Adult Basic Literacy program. In its English for Speakers of Other Languages program, participants learn to read, write and communicate in basic English.

HLC accepts adults 18 and over. Depending upon the student's level, learning to read can take a year or more.

HLC needs volunteer tutors and will provide them training and materials. We ask our tutors to commit to one year's work with their student(s).

HLC seeks funding partners and donations which will directly support the program by providing student materials and supplies for tutor trainings.

For more information, visit hillsboroughtacility.org or call (813) 273-3650.

## Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author/Translator</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To My Wife</td>
<td>A. Vinokurov</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How Good It Would Be</td>
<td>E. Millan</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christmas</td>
<td>P. Gonzalez</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Girls' Day Out</td>
<td>P. Cleveland</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My Sick Day</td>
<td>B. Watson</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wanted</td>
<td>J. Wang</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fly High Dad</td>
<td>A. Capecci</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christmas Holidays in My Country</td>
<td>M. Jurado</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karate-Do</td>
<td>M. Buitrago</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My Youth Will Never End...</td>
<td>N. Vinokurov</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I Had a Million Dollars</td>
<td>L. Corchado-Tavares</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Directions for Living</td>
<td>J. Rivera</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My First Time in Punta Cana</td>
<td>A. Areualo</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How I Learned to Focus</td>
<td>M. Spyke</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning English with My Children</td>
<td>R. Arcila</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My Daughter Did It the Hard Way</td>
<td>I. Acosta</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Book of Life</td>
<td>R. O'Tighe</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riding the Bus in Tampa</td>
<td>M. G. Rivera</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having Lunch Buffet is Good for Health on a Daily Basis?</td>
<td>R. Maram</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seasons of the Year in the United States</td>
<td>M. Repollet</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why Proficiency in English is Important to Me</td>
<td>K. Matamoros</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income Inequality</td>
<td>P. Damoder</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My English Learning Target</td>
<td>L. Ramirez</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEARNING: A Literacy Acrostic</td>
<td>L. Ramirez</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My Story</td>
<td>M. D. Perez</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Story of Something Funny of My Son</td>
<td>M. Morales</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Esther's Story</td>
<td>E. Pietri</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artem's Story</td>
<td>A. Medvedev</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My Husband in the Garden</td>
<td>M. Oquendo</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An Experience for the Rest of My Life</td>
<td>I. R. Santana</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In order to celebrate our students' learning stages, their essays have not been edited.
To My Wife

I still remember the first date
I was in such excited state
For you I waited at bus stop
Looking at faces coming up.
And you came out toward me.
Your glance had found me aside.
Your smile had flashed.
And a friendly tide
My heart had reached.
And later in the cinema twilight
Your silhouette was in my sight.
You glanced shyly in response
And looked down at once.
We later walked near the beach
And the noise of waves was in the reach.
You lyric verses softly told
About stars, ships lights and world.
And all this was like a ballad.
And blood in cheeks created flood.
Trees rustled with the leaves above.
In our life has entered love.

Submitted by Alex Vinokurov
Tutor: Janet Daggs

How Good It Would Be

How good it would be
If children of all countries
were protected by their parents
How good it would be
If teachers could developed principles and values to their pupils
How good it would be
If the bad drugs in the world
didn't create addicts
and disappeared from existence
How good it would be
If children were never abandoned
and were able to enjoy a happy childhood
How good it would be
If the governments of the world
didn't focus on their personal ambitions
and applied their power for the good of their people

How good it would be
If world hunger and other calamities
did not exist and peace reigned over all

Submitted by Ernesto Millan
Tutor: Carol Beckner

Christmas

This is an essay of comparison of the cultural differences and similarities of Christmas in the following three countries: Cuba, Puerto Rico and the U.S.A.

In Cuba for many years Christmas celebrations were frowned upon and in 1969 the Cuban government imposed a ban on this cherished holiday. On New Year’s Day Cubans like to party. The twenty fourth of December is celebrated with big family dinners.

The United States of America has many different Christmas traditions because of its multicultural nature. People in America like to decorate the outside of their houses with lights and sometimes even with statues of Santa Claus, snowmen and reindeer.

Christmas in Puerto Rico is like no other. The period of celebration is much longer as it extends from early December to mid-January. People visit family and friends in the tradition of ‘asaltos’ in which they go from house to house singing and partying.

Christmas is a special time for many people of these three countries. It is essentially a celebration of the Birth of Jesus. No matter, the celebration of this important event is so amazing that it causes rare and strange reactions in people. You see that traditions of Christmas vary in the countries of Cuba, U.S.A and Puerto Rico.

Submitted by Pedro Gonzalez
Tutor: Sr. Marcella Kiesel

The Girls' Day Out

On March 3, 2015, six girls went to the fair. We walked to the show tents. There we saw Dennis Lee, The Red Head Express, and Nathan Osmond. At the Deniss Lee show we had fun hitting a beach ball.

At the fair all of us ate strawberry shortcake. Can you guess which fair it is?

Submitted by Paula Cleveland
Tutor: Flo Stein

...my friends and family, who helped me get through it all.
~ Barrington Watson

My Sick Day

My belly hurts me so much. My belly gets big and fat. I did talk to my manager. Then, I went to the doctor. The doctor told me I need surgery because I have two hernias.

Six weeks after, I do my surgery, and my friend Kadean takes me to the surgery place. After I went there, the doctor takes me inside the room and puts me on a bed. There were drips on me to put me to sleep. KO!

When I came to my senses, I was in the recovery room. Six weeks later, I returned to work by doing light duty. One day, I asked my wife and kids, can they help me with some postcards? I made about 8 postcards for everyone who helped me with my surgery. I gave one to my doctor. He was very nice.

The surgery was very hard for me, but I thank God, my friends and family, who helped me get through it all.

Submitted by Barrington Watson
Tutor: Julie Tollen
Wanted

I am Janey. I was born and grew up in Beijing, China. I have always accepted the influence of Chinese traditional culture. I am honest, kind and filial to my parents. I fully took care of them in their older age. My father was paralyzed in bed and could not provide for himself. We did not have money to hire a nanny, so I did everything for him.

When I was a young girl many boys wanted to become my boyfriend and marry me. I told each boy, ”if you want to marry me, you must take care of my parents with me.” From then on, the boys went away from me. They were no longer interesting to me. Time passed fast. Ten years later my father died and I took care of my mother.

I never gave up. I believed I would find a good man to love me. A Chinese old saying: “Just do good things; don’t worry about your future.”

When I was 45 years old and still single in 2011, an American white man named Mark wrote an E-mail to me. His sincerity moved me. Every day, we wrote communications to discuss our outlook on life and values. We talked to each other about the happiness and sadness in life.

Ten months later, he came to Beijing to meet me. He said, “In person you are so much more beautiful than pictures.” We went to The Great Wall and other historical sites. We ate Chinese food I cooked every day. He was very happy. On the weekend, my big family ate dinner at a restaurant and met Mark for the first time. All my family liked Mark very much. I thought maybe this is fate. Mark told my brother, “I want to marry your sister Janey. I hope your big family all agrees.” Everyone was surprised. My aunt asked Mark, “Can you treat her well?” Mark answered, “Yes, I can.” Mark used his actions to prove “Love”.

In May 2012, Mark came to Beijing to meet me again. Our happy days were too short. After he left Beijing, my mother told me, “Mark really loves you, you have found a good man.” I was relieved. After a month, my mother died peacefully in her sleep. I grieved.

Waiting for K-1 VISA made long days. We were suffering from separation. Finally, I arrived in Tampa in May 2014. We got married on July 8. We didn’t have the luxury of a wedding, only commitment to each other and eternal promise.

Now, I am learning English in Tampa at HCPLC. I am very grateful to my teacher Sylvia. She patiently corrects my English pronunciation, listening and speaking. Although I am 49 years old, my memory is good and I have confidence to learn English well, to start my new life in America.

Submitted by Janey Wang
Tutor: Sylvia Covington

…I have confidence to learn English well, to start my new life in America. ~ Janey Wang

Christmas Holidays in My Country

On December 12 my husband and I went back to my country, which is Colombia, to celebrate Christmas and New Year’s and also to celebrate the birthday of my husband. His brothers prepared a surprise for him. The surprise was a big party with all of his friends and our family. He had a wonderful day.

On Christmas the neighbors closed the street and everybody cooked different foods, and also brought drinks and salads. Everybody met in one house to celebrate. There were many gifts for the kids and adults too.

The next day everybody cleaned the street and helped to put in order the home where we celebrated. After Christmas, between December 26 to 30, in the city of Cali the fair started. A committee was responsible for all of the shows, the Queen of the different cities in Colombia and all the animals and the orchestra for the dances. We went to all of the different programs.

On New Year's eve all the neighbors celebrated in their homes with all of their families. My entire family was very, very happy because it had been 14 years since we had celebrated with them.

The rest of the days we spent visiting with our old friends.

In Colombia we have a lot of friends. The last day in my beautiful country we went to the Pance river which runs through the middle of the city of Cali. It is hot and sunny from June until March. The river starts far away, high up in the mountains. In some places there are waterfalls that make natural pools for swimming. We stood under the waterfall and the water felt good and cool.

On January 7 we came back to New York. We enjoyed ourselves so much!

Submitted by Adriana Capecci
Tutor: Carol Bocknek

Fly High Dad

Family is the best thing we have in the whole world, and when you are far away from them, you wish they were close to you.

My father was always there for me is his own way. He loved me so much and wanted the best for me.

Today I feel sad because I lost him last week. It was all so sudden, I could not say GOODBYE.

I'm here in Tampa looking for a better life for my kids, and he was in my beautiful country Venezuela.

I cry for him everyday, but I know he is happy where he is, besides God.

Thanks Dad for all your love and support.

FLY HIGH.

Your daughter.

Submitted by Adriana Capecci
Tutor: Carol Bocknek
Karate-Do

This is one of the sports that provides fulfillment to the mind, body and spirit.

I am going to try to describe a Karate-Do class from the beginning and if it is clear enough hopefully you can draw your own conclusions.

1st. The class meets standing up in a military formation in a big room with wooden floor. Participants make a bow to the senior professor who is in front of the class. The professor, called sensei in Japanese, is almost always a black belt. Black belts have also different degrees of proficiency and expertise.

Then the sensei directs himself or through other subordinates to the class to start the warming up stage. The movements involved in the practice of Karate can be very demanding so the warming up is done for practically all the muscles in the body. This does not mean an exhaustive exercise but it is projected to get you ready for the next level. This warming up could last for approximately 20 minutes and every student should have gotten a good sweat by the end of this stage.

2nd. Class will be divided in groups according to expertise—probably by classification of belt colors. Beginners start with a white belt and from there they earn the following degrees shown in the belts: white-yellow; full yellow; yellow-orange; full orange; green; full green; purple; brown and finally black. The process of obtaining a black belt takes years and it is risky to try to state the number but it can be said that it would take approximately 5 years. Students are judged not only on physical dexterity but character and respect to everybody; self-control is paramount.

The groups then are directed to work individually or with partner(s) to learn stances, punching, striking, blocking, kicking, combination work and finally sparring. Sparring is generally allowed to advanced students since beginners tend to try to excel themselves and usually are easily frustrated by the expertise of older students. This is a process of character and respect formation. Sparring, kumite in Japanese, gives the student the opportunity to develop self-control and respect.

The class usually lasts for 120 minutes with varying degrees of light to strenuous exercises so that the students are getting a superb body and mind conditioning through concentration and physical chores. Before the end of the class, there is usually a demonstration of one or two katas, which are individual or group defense and attack movements carried out in a very coordinated and precise way. It could be called a dance which is made of very fast, fast, medium and slow steps. These exercises require a tremendous concentration and are to be done within standards of time.

All participants stand up in a military formation alike at the beginning. The sensei directs the class to kneel down and to seat on the floor (Once you have learned to seat on the floor having your legs crossed is comfortable, ja, ja). Then the sensei or an advanced student, usually another black belt, says aloud the principles of Karate-Do and everybody repeats after him or her. Among these principles are the following that for some reason I always remember:

"Courage without violence"
"Respect and courtesy towards mankind"

Submitted by Mario Buitrago
Tutor: Carol Bucknek

If I Had a Million Dollars

If I had a million dollars, I would do a lot of things. First, I would pay off my mortgage, and all my debts including my husband’s. Second, I would help my family and close friends according to their need. Third, I would buy a brand new car. Fourth, I would go on vacation. I want to visit India, China, Japan, and South America among other countries. Fifth, I would give some contribution to charities. Finally, if I still have some money, I would keep it in a savings account for my elderly years.

Submitted by Lillian Corchado-Tavares
Tutor: Kathy Mammenga

Directions for Living

Directions in how I spend my time. Most of my time is devoted to work. After work, spending time with my family is important. Maybe one day I’ll be in a place where I can spend more time with my family.

I give up Saturday mornings to read and write better. It is a slow process but I am making progress.

If I have more time to spend with my family I would like to travel and go on cruises and also spend time playing board games with my family.

Submitted by Jose Rivera
Tutor: Jessie Bush

My First Time in Punta Cana

Punta Cana is a very interesting island. The people are nice, the food is delicious and the beach is beautiful. My biggest surprise was in the airport, the architecture looked very tropical. And there was a band playing tropical music. The hotel was very nice and big it is five stars and the services is great. My favorite place in the hotel is the restaurant because the international food is delicious. The Island Punta Cana is a very good Place for vacation.

Submitted by Ana Arevalo
Tutor: Kathy Mammenga

My Youth Will Never End...

...Look at my daughter and her children, — My youth continues to glow on their faces!

Submitted by Nelly Vinokurov
Tutor: Janet Daggs
How I Learned to Focus

I used to get nervous and frustrated when I had to try to read. My heart pounded and my palms were sweaty. I did not want anyone to judge me because I could not read. I was so nervous that I could not see or hear. I wanted to run away.

But Tuesday at my job something new happened for the first time. I had to take a written test but this time I relaxed. I became calm. I breathed in and out and practiced my affirmations. That calmed my brain. All of a sudden I could remember what my teacher and I had studied in class.

I took my test and passed with a B. I got up with a smile on my face for the first time ever. My teacher was in my head. I thanked God that I wanted to read and spell.

Submitted by Mark Spyke
Tutor: Carol Godwin

It takes courage, perseverance, and strength to raise four good children... ~ Isabel Acosta

Learning English with My Children

My First lesson in English was when I got the supply List from my children's school. My skill for more help was the Google translator. Them, letter from the school help me to understating the written in English.

My hard challenger is to help my children in their homework. I learned math, science and different classes. The hour of reading before sleep make me improve my learning. Today my children speak English and I keep working on my grammar and pronunciation.

Thanks for English practice conversation and my family for their support and let me know every day that I can.

Submitted by Reiza Arcea
Tutor: Janet Daggs

My Daughter Did It the Hard Way

My daughter, Priscilla, just retired from the Navy after thirty years of service. Her career had three big challenges: to raise a family, to get an education, and to serve her country. During this time it was difficult for women to survive because the navy was a man's world.

When Priscilla was assigned to a ship there were only eighty women and twelve hundred sixty-two men. After two years in the navy, Priscilla was one of the first women to go to the Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland. After she suffered a bad injury, she returned to the regular navy.

Then she married and started her own family. A boy was their first baby in 1984. Then a beautiful girl followed in 1986. In 1987 her first marriage fell apart. After a few years she married for a second time to another sailor and had two more children.

It was extremely difficult for Priscilla to finish her Bachelor's Degree. It took her thirteen years. Why? Because she had to take one class at a time. Most of the time she was deployed far away from home, or taking care of her children and her husband's needs. This didn't leave her much time for schooling.

In her thirty years of service in the navy there was much gender inequality. There were few women and they were not given the same responsibility as the men. For women to stay in the navy they had to have a strong will and dedication. In her last assignment, in the submarine division, as the first female submariner she had to work hard to be accepted in a man's place.

It takes courage, perseverance, and strength to raise four good children, to get a good education, and proudly serve this country for thirty years. That's why our family is very proud of her because, she did it the hard way!

Submitted by Isabel Acosta
Tutor: Sr. Marcella Kiesel

The Book of Life

I been reading for three years. And my vision is to read the Holy Bible. At church they ask me to read part of a Scripture, and I'm happy to do it. It makes me very proud to do this. This is the first time I ever done something like this before. I always was afraid to speak out, and to say what I want say.

Now I have faith in God, to give me strength to write my story. I am working very hard to this. I just hope I can do it. Reading is very hard for me because they said I have a reading disability, I don't know what that really mean to me, all I know I have a hard time, I ask for help to read, and when I went to reading class I got frustrated and I quit going.

Then with the library's help, I got a teacher with lots of patience. She has been with me for three years. (I hope I don't say anything wrong, but she an angel from God.) She has a lot, a lot of patience to put up with me. At home I use my computer, and the dictionary. They are big help to me.

Reading has turn my life around. I always afraid to say anything to anyone because I was embarrass to let anyone know that I could not read. I could not find good job because of my reading. Once I was going to get a good job in drywall. They told me because I could not read the sign in the building, I could not do the job. They told me they was sorry because I was a good finisher. They said that they could not take a chance. Because of the materials, that has signed on the doors.

I made so many mistake in my lifetime, and now I am paying for them. I am asking the Lord to forgive me, for hurting him.

I am going to try to read the entire Bible. I call it the book of life. The Bible is a hard book to read, and understand, and it is going to be a challenge for me. But I'm going to do this.

Submitted by Robert O'Tighe
Tutor: Ariel Gunn
Riding the Bus in Tampa

One day, my husband and I went to a car-dealership. I looked up on internet the bus schedule and the route. We got into the bus and arrived at our destination on time.

When we got there, we saw a lot of cars, models, colors, etc. My husband was looking for a minivan for his sister, the salesman showed us one minivan, but he didn't really like it.

Once we decided to head back home, we crossed the street and waited for the bus. It was a sunny day and it seemed like we waited for a long time for the bus (I am not used to walk during hot and sunny days).

When I ride the bus to go shopping, to the library, church or any other places in Tampa, I search on internet and write down on a piece of paper – or take a picture if the route is complicated and I have to take two buses.

I like the city of Tampa, I’d like to know more places, but sometimes riding the bus can be exhausting, most of the time because of the weather: too hot, too much rain, etc. (the other day when I got off the library and went to the bus stop, I walked under the rain; streets were flooded, my shoes got wet, the wind was blowing pretty hard, my clothes started to get wet, even though I was carrying an umbrella.

In Lima, Peru; there are a lot of public buses (all different sizes), the traffic is terrible, it takes 5 or 10 minutes for the next bus to pass; in Tampa, we have to wait 30, 45 or 60 minutes for the next bus (depending of the route).

I don’t have a car, I don’t know how to drive either; I’m pretty sure that one of these days I’ll be able to say: “yes, I did it”

Submitted by Magaly Gonzales Rivera
Tutor: Carol Bocknek

Having Lunch Buffet is Good for Health on a Daily Basis?

Having lunch buffet is good for health on a daily basis? Now a days people spend more time to work and less time to cooking, restaurants has become a frequent option. Many people eat all three meals away from home everyday basis. That is not good for health.

Major consequence of eating buffet every day is excess calories consumption. Ditch your tray instead of loading up an entire tray with multiple plates of food, deserts and beverages, stick with just a simple plate. This will prevent you from over eating and excess calories consumption.

In long-term results is weight gain and obesity. What most people don’t realize is how quickly these extra calories add up, resulting in weight gain. Let’s consider the extra fat and calories that are found in the main dishes that are typically served in the buffet. A serving of fried chicken has 480 calories and 26 grams of fat in one dish. Like buffet having multiple dishes, causing weight gain and obesity.

Obesity includes Metabolic syndrome, Heart diseases, Diabetes and Cancer. Some people eat more than usual when they’re bored, angry or stressed. Over time, over eating will lead to weight gain and may cause obesity. Obesity also raises your risk for Coronary heart disease, high blood presure, Diabetes, Cancer and other health problems.

Lunch buffet isn’t good for health everyday basis. Next time on wards limit the number of buffet you eat each week. This will prevent your health.

Submitted by Ramadevi Maram
Tutor: Heather Farrell

Seasons of the Year in the United States

The seasons are periods in the year when climatic conditions are maintained in a region. The periods last about three months. There are four distinct seasons: Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter.

Spring is the most beautiful season for its greenery and color. It begins March 1st and ends May 31st. Temperatures and daylight hours increase gradually. There are greenish trees and plants and many flowers. The birds migrate and the people are happy because the cold weather is gone.

Summer is temperate. It begins on July 1st and it lasts until August 31st. People enjoy beaches and recreational parks. The days are longer and the nights shorter. Families gather in activities outside the home and more children are playing outdoors. Summer has flowers and trees are full of leaves and fruit.

In Autumn the woods are filled with many colors. The leaves on the trees change color to red, yellow, brown and eventually they will fall. The days are becoming shorter, temperatures drop a bit and it rains a lot. Some animals begin to migrate. Its period is from September 1st to November 30th.

Winter starts on December 1st and lasts to February 28th. The days are shorter, the nights are longer and the temperatures are very cold. The holidays are celebrated and this mark the end and the beginning of the year. People wear coats when there are heavy snowfalls.

The seasons have very important changes that people should know about. Spring, and Autumn have beautiful changes in plants and trees. They are important to me because they have beautiful and interesting changes. Of all the seasons, Spring is my favorite for all its beauty.

Submitted by Maria Repollet
Tutor: Sr. Marcella Kisiel
Why Proficiency in English is Important to Me

Getting to be proficient in English is the most important goal for me. This has been my dream since I came to the U.S.A. from Cuba. Becoming fluent would allow me to become a professional nurse. Also, I want to study to pass the test to be a citizen of the U.S.A.

The most difficult thing for me has been that I do not understand what people say. Sometimes I have a hard time making them understand me and this can be very frustrating. I know that language will be a barrier, so I started school as soon as I could, but I couldn't finish it. I try to learn by listening and watching TV in English. I really want to speak more confidently and understand better. Then, I can interpret the lyrics of a song by listening instead of having to read the words.

Having the ability to read, write, and express myself is going to help me go through my long way to become a professional nurse. It is important for me to improve my English because I know that I can have more job opportunities being bilingual. This may be the only way to enhance my life and to offer a better future for my little boy.

While I'm improving my English I want to study to pass the test to become a citizen of the U.S.A. I would like to do that because I know that there are many privileges being a citizen like; having freedom of speech, freedom of press, freedom of religion, and having the right to vote. Becoming a citizen of the U.S.A would be the best for my family because we are going to enjoy the privilege of living in a democracy.

Speaking English fluently is at the top of my wish list. But, I know that I have to work hard to get there. I think that is not going to be a big problem because I love to speak the English language. I'm going to do my best to become proficient in English because everything depends on it, such as; scaling a professional career, becoming a citizen, and having more job opportunities. Becoming bilingual would be fabulous!

Submitted by: Kenia Matamoros
Tutor: Sr. Marcella Kiesel

Income Inequality

Income inequality means how a country's income is distributed unevenly among individuals. Recent data shows 1 percent of ultra-rich owns 25% of countries wealth. They have almost half of the stocks or bonds. 80% barely manage their monthly rents, bills and other necessaries. There is a huge gap between rich and poor. The reason behind is great difference in income between poor or middle class vs rich like CEO's, celebrities etc.

There is a dangerous consequence in the society. Recent riots in few places attributed for the same reason. It showed us how dangerous it can be to a society. It is a big social issue not only in America but all over the world and it needs to be addressed soon. One solution for this problem is raising minimum salary.

Recent incidents in several parts of our country where a great extent of looting and vandalism happened were attributed to some other reasons like people got angered by law enforcement on their dealings with common man. Those were a kind of excuse to get a chance to loot for expensive goods. People did those things perhaps because they were unemployed. Even if they are employed they are paid less. It is a social problem attributed to income inequality.

Income inequality put tremendous amount of pressure on the economy. When large masses paid less then they spend less. It impacts other businesses particularly small businesses because they are completely based on their monthly revenues. Sometimes we see closure of big business houses as well because of people's low buying. It again creates unemployment.

Many times economists think that rich spends a lot of money and contribute to economic growth. It is not the case. How can they spend huge money because their basic needs are same as ours? They do need a lot of money on high end business entities like designer goods and overseas travels.

Every government should seriously think about this issue. It's true that the Government cannot force businesses to raise minimum salaries but it should try to make an environment by introducing good economic measures where everyone would have a win-win situation.

Submitted by: Prasad Damoder
Tutor: Heather Farrell

My English Learning Target

My English learning target is to speak English fluently. I'd like to learn idiomatic phrases and jokes too.

I was amazed when I came here and I heard speak English to my brother-in-law. He speaks clear, fluently and correct English. He went to the school to learn.

His girlfriend speaks English and she teaches him. 3 years took him to learning the language. He was around people who just speak English.

He never was afraid to speak what he knew. He listened to news, music in English and watch TV and movies in English. This is the clue to learn English.

My target is to learn English following the example that my brother-in-law did.

LEARNING: A Literacy Acrostic
Learn and read with passion
Exceptional books show writing throughout time
Anecdotes from each writer are printed in them
Reading each page in each book is like travelling!
Nothing compare to being there, but with the knowledge
In each subject, it helps you to talk about everything!
Nobody should be without learning
Gaining experience—each moment—is part of learning too.

Submitted by: Liliana Ramirez
Tutor: Lark Underwood
My Story

My name is Maria D. Perez. I’m from Cuba (a Caribbean Island). I came to this country eight years ago; when I was 62 years old. I think was too late to emigrate but I could not to do that before, because it is very difficult to escape from a communist country.

I felt happy to arrive to the USA, my two sons lived here, and this is a wonderful country, but I missed my relatives and friends in Cuba.

Is because that I think the peoples should emigrate when are young.

Right now I feel much better because I have new friends and I trying to learn this language and communicate with others persons.

Submitted by Maria Dany Perez
Tutor: Lark Underwood

Story of Something Funny of My Son

My son love ketchup, he put ketchup on every single meal, even in soup. One day on his birthday I took him to a restaurant to celebrate his birthday. At the restaurant Whispering Canyon Café they have a rule, when someone in your table asking for ketchup the waitress says loud “Ketchup” and everybody from the restaurant stand and bring the ketchup. When my son asked for ketchup and saw everybody bringing the ketchup he laugh and laugh, was so funny. We have a great time, good memory, never forget that day.

Submitted by Marta Morales
Tutor: Linda Holman

Esther’s Story

I’m Esther Pietri and I was born in Puerto Rico. When I was 18 years old I met a wonderful person who was born in Milwaukee, Wisc. And was stationed at Aguadilla Ramey Air Force Base, a town not far from where I was born. After 8 months of knowing each other he proposed and were married on Sep 23rd 1956 just after I finished Hight School. On 1957 moved to Milw. Wisc. Had 5 children And after 39 years of marriage he passed away at the age of 61. Nine years later I married a fellow from my home town who I used to go to the same High School that I did. We got to know each other & later on we got married, & we’re leaving a Happy ever lasting life.

Submitted by Esther Pietri
Tutor: Kathy Mammenga

Artem’s Story

In 2012, I, my wife and our two children became a happy Greencard holders. Had not become to delay the move, in June 2012 we found oneself in the amazing city – Saint Petersburg Florida. It is important to note that when we moving our English was limited to basic greetings and phrases. By 2015, we pull up our English little bit, but even so it remained below the required level. Persistent problems with mutual understanding in all areas of communication (medicine, taxes, housing, etc.). Decision decision has been taken. We need to find a tutor who would be able to help us to learn English. Thanks to our friends we met a wonderful man and teacher Frank Shideler. Today we have been learning English only two months, but thanks to Frank our level has become much better. It became much easier to communicate with ordinary Americans. Gradually being confusion that you do not know the language of the country in which you live, and plan to build the future.

It is remarkable that there is the opportunity to attend English language courses, it really helps a lot to adapt and integrate into American society.

Submitted by Artem Medvedev
Tutor: Frank Shideler

My Husband in the Garden

When my husband, Cefi, is in the garden he is very happy. He loves to plant seeds and care for them while they are growing. Every day he sprinkles water on his plants.

He grows papaya, passion fruit, tomatoes, cilantro, onions, and granules, (in English, pigeon peas).

He loves to share his fruits and vegetables with other people.

Submitted by Melba Oquendo
Tutor: Lark Underwood

An Experience for the Rest of My Life

The first time I thought about fly throughout Brasil I was really scared. I could not even imagine how my life would be without my family. When I seat down inside that airplane my eyes were completely full of tears. In despite of most people thing when arrive in North America, my only desire was going back to home. In that week was given the start to my challenges and I am inclined to argue the most difficult one was asking for food, once every time I did that I received a meal completely different, probably because my English was too bad!

A few weeks later I was welcomed by Tampa and I realized how wonderful it is. The weather and the food are simply magnificent. I met people from around the world as Haitian, Mexican, Colombian, Chinese, Vietnamese, Korean, Indian and South African. I learned uncountable things in my ESL classes besides English, as respect and different cultures. My ESL friends and I sang, played and learned together and I will never forget you guys. I also found amazing places as Town N Country Library which gave me pleasant moments while I was improving my English.

Now I am almost finishing my journey in Tampa and in a few months I will be back to Brasil. Again my eyes are full of tears however it is from happiness, because I had the opportunity to staying here and meeting extraordinary people. I will miss you.

Thank you Tampa and Tutors of Conversation Corner.

Submitted by Izamar Ribeiro Santana
Tutor: Carol Bocknek
**Special Thanks To...**

**Tutors Who Served Over 100 Hours**

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**Contributors**

Thank you to The Mosaic Company for their generous support of our annual tutor-student recognition ceremony.

![Mosaic Logo](image)

The Hillsborough Literacy Council, Inc. (HLC) is a volunteer-based nonprofit organization committed to helping adults achieve basic reading and writing skills as well as English comprehension and communication skills.