

# THE PARROT



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

## Sayed Sadat: A Student Helping Students

**The Parrot:** Could you tell me your background and how did you come to ARC?

**Sadat:** My name is Sayed Nafe Sadat. I immigrated from Afghanistan to the United States around three years ago. My wife and I decided to enroll at a college. Then, we found out that a college is near us, which was American River College.



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From there, we started our educational journey; now we are studying at this great college.

**The Parrot:** What is your future career, and how are you planning to achieve it?

**Sadat:** The field which I chose is communication, and I would like to pursue my higher education at the Ph.D. level. Then I would like to be a university professor or a college professor teaching communication.

**The Parrot:** I changed my tie multiple times before

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American River College  
4700 College Oak Drive  
Sacramento, CA 95841  
(916) 484-8001

International Language Day

p. 12

"Love is like the wind, you can't see it but you can feel it."

Nicholas Sparks

## Amanda Gorman Captures the Moment, in Verse

By Alexandra Alter

Published Jan. 19, 2021 - Updated Jan. 21, 2021

*The youngest inaugural poet in U.S. history read "The Hill We Climb," which she finished after the riot at the Capitol. "I'm not going to in any way gloss over what we've seen," she says.*

Two weeks ago, the poet Amanda Gorman was struggling to finish a new work titled "The Hill We Climb." She was feeling exhausted, and she worried she wasn't up to the



monumental task she faced: composing a poem about national unity to recite at President-elect Joseph R. Biden Jr.'s inauguration.

"I had this huge thing, probably one of the

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## Student Chirpings

### A Nice and Cruel Day in My Life

It was a beautiful morning and the sun was shining everywhere. We started a nice and calm day, but at the end everything turned opposite. That beautiful day changed to be a terrible day for us and we were really afraid at the end. We were stopped by two armed men and I got a death threat. I still remember and I won't forget that day in my life.

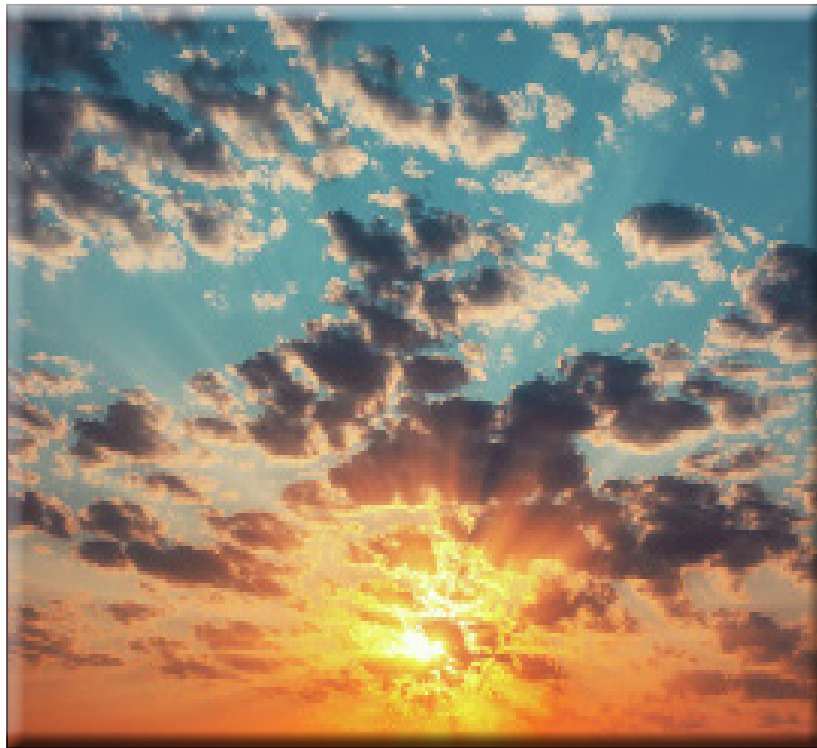
It was on Friday. Fridays are the weekends in my native country Afghanistan and the people have one day off a week. We decided to have a picnic on this beautiful day. We

got prepared as soon as we could. On our way, we stopped and bought something that we needed for our breakfast and lunch. We drove on a small and tiny road between the nice and big mountains for 40 minutes. We got there and reserved a place close by the small river.

After getting there, we made breakfast and enjoyed ourselves a lot. On that day, my aunt and my uncle's family joined us too. We played cards, music, and then we swam. Everything was going as we expected. We had barbecue and we made kabob. After lunch, we felt that we were being observed by unknown people and my cousin told me they were following us. It is still usual and common in my country. Anywhere people can be killed for known or unknown reasons. My wife asked if we could leave the area.

We collected our stuff and left the area. It was afternoon and the other people were still there,

having fun. We started driving on that nice and tiny road. In that situation, the road and mountain didn't look beautiful and nice to us. We were really afraid. In the middle of our way, we were faced with two armed men. Their faces were covered. I still remember them; one of them was tall with black local clothes and the other armed man was shorter with dirty white local clothes. They stopped our car and told me to get out of the car. My wife and kids were crying. One of the gunmen told me, "I will kill



you now," and asked me why I was working for the US army. He was right. Many people were killed by insurgent groups in my country because of their support for the international and U.S. forces. In my good luck, another car was coming to our side, and it was a police car. The armed men declared, "If you love your family and yourself you must leave your job or you will be killed next time." My kids were shocked and

they weren't old enough to talk. My oldest son was just about five years old. I was really scared and my hands and feet were shaking for the rest of that day.

I will never forget that beautiful and nice day with a cruel and unbelievable ending. I was lucky and I need to say thanks to God because he gave me a new life. I will pray for those people who live there in Afghanistan in really bad and unsecure situations.

*Ahmad Fahim Haidari*

ESL W50

*Narrative Essay*

## Dreams and Goals in the USA

The United States of America is a dream country for many people. Some of them think that only in the USA they can become famous or highly educated. Others dream about freedom, big business or new opportunities for their lives. Most people expect to change not only a country, but their dreams and life goals, too. However, my dreams and goals didn't change a lot when I came to America, but now I have new opportunities to pursue them. Let me explain.

My family and I are from Russia. When I lived there, I had several dreams and goals. For example, one of them was to move from our northern and quite cold city of Yaroslavl to a sunny and warm part of Russia. The next dream was and still is to have confidence in the future for my children. But the most important dream for me is freedom, however, not just freedom in general. My family and I have been Jehovah's Witnesses for over twenty years. All this time, the question of religious freedom in Russia was and still is open. At a certain point, it became worse, so over four hundred of my spiritual brothers and sisters were persecuted by the Russian government. We decided to change our life and immigrate to the USA. We moved on March 20, 2018.

The day we immigrated to America was very interesting, difficult and joyful. We understood that it would change our life completely. Actually, it was my second time to leave Russia forever. The first time was in 1991. I was twenty years old and wanted adventures in Germany but nothing seriously. However, this time was very serious. The plane took off from Moscow. The flight was really crazy. I couldn't sleep because thoughts and feelings overwhelmed me. Over a hundred children were among the passengers. I

checked our documents over and over. Finally, the plane landed in New York. Our youngest son, Tim, met us because he came to America seven months before. And our daughter was waiting for us in Sacramento. We had not been together in over three years. It was a very joyful time for me and my wife, Valentina.

Now we live in California, in the USA. My dreams and goals are still the same, and I even have one more. First, my family and I can worship Jehovah God without the persecution of Russian government. I can without any fear read the Bible, and speak with people about God's promises when I preach from house to house. I can smile when I see a police

officer or a police car. Second, our two children are here, and we can support each other. Moreover, we are expecting that our oldest son will someday be together with us, too. We hope their future is truly confident especially with the worship of Jehovah God. Next, we live in sunny city of Sacramento, and that is important for my wife's health.

What about my new dream? I am studying English at American River College, and I expect the time when I will speak this language fluently. Every day I try to use my new speaking skills, and I see that people understand me and I understand them more and more. Honestly, before I came to America, I never dreamed of speaking English. Now it is my reality.

Indeed, the USA is a country where dreams can come true. Of course, everyone will face new problems, too. In my opinion, our decision for immigration was right. As you can see, my family and I continue to pursue our old goals and use opportunities to make our new dreams true.

*Evgenii Maslov*

ESL 47

*Descriptive Essay*





## The Curiosity

Could curiosity that arose from any accidental event make a person be bold or even brave, and would it turn the person's life into a full breathtaking adventure? I believe that an event that suddenly happened in life is able to turn a predictable life into something interesting like it happened with the main character, Mrs. Harmon or just Bunch, of the story "Sanctuary" by Agatha Christie. To follow the story, she is a vicar's wife and has been living in a town, Paddington, and working at church. One day, Bunch finds a dying man in the church. He was injured and soon he died. Before he died, he only said

"sanctuary" and some words Bunch didn't understand. Then, Mr. and Mrs. Eccles introduced themselves as the man's siblings. This meeting made Bunch think that this story is not so simple, and she starts to do her own investigation. So she goes to her godmother, Miss Marple, and tells her the whole story full of oddities, and also she shows her a cloakroom ticket that she found in the dying man's coat. Miss Marple and Bunch create a plan and get the dying man's suitcase from the cloakroom which was delivered to Miss Marple's house, and Bunch

brought another suitcase from the cloakroom that looked like the original one and went back home. However, she was attacked at the platform. After Bunch was in safety, she got information from the police officer that the dying man's name was Walter St. John, and he escaped from Charrington Prison. Also he arrived in town to see his daughter, Jewel. As it turned out, Jewel had lived in Paddington with Mr. and Mrs. Mundy who were very ill and were going to go to the infirmary. It was the main reason why Walter went here. He worried about her future because Jewel would be alone. He wanted to transfer Jewel her mother's jewels which were in the suitcase. The whole story is imbued with secrets and arouses interest. The

event that related to the dying man was a reason for Bunch to begin her own investigation to know who he was, which made her feel courage and experience a rush of adrenalin, and also this event gives her adventure, which turns her life into something truly interesting and exciting.

This extraordinary event calmly came into Mrs. Harmon's life and made her feel courage and experience a rush of adrenaline from this dangerous adventure. At the beginning Agatha Christie shows that Bunch is an ordinary woman, who lives in a small quiet town. She was a vicar's wife, and her duties were

to work in the church. There is no turmoil or rush in this calm flow of her life, but one event unexpectedly entered it and excited her. One fine morning, Bunch accidentally met a dying badly wounded man in the church. She with Dr. Griffith tried to help him, but he died. Later she found the cloakroom ticket in his coat which, for some reason, was sewn up in its pocket. When she met with his relatives, the Eccleses, Bunch doubted this situation

was simple. This situation created a lot of questions, so she decided to solve the mystery. As a result of her curiosity, her life turned upside down, and the vicar's wife became a detective. In this extreme situation, she showed herself as an intelligent and bold woman. The situation on the train platform represented her bravery because it was clear that she might be pursued by criminals that killed the man and could kill her, too. However, her curiosity helps her overcome fear, and she just follows the trail.

The second effect from this unusual situation was an adventure, which turns her life into something truly interesting and exciting. Calm and comfort surrounded her. The usual and monotonous life could



be boring for her. I think she secretly dreamed of having an adventure life, and it had made her follow her investigation. The passion to know transforms Mrs. Harmon's life into something interesting and not boring. As a result, Bunch plunges into this story by living and breathing a detective life where she can use her intelligence and creativity. She gladly took in any information and analyzed it. If she did not check the watch of the dying man and see the name Walter written inside it, she would not know that the Eccleses were lying that they were not his real relatives. Also to follow her curiosity, she checks the pockets of the dying man's coat; she finds the cloakroom ticket, a clue for Walter's case, and creates a plan with Miss Marple like detectives. Thirst of breathing adventures pushes her not to give up. Mrs. Harmon really enjoys time when she does her own investigation; as a result, her ordinary and predictable life of a vicar's wife turns

into something extraordinary.

Agatha Christie showed us Mrs. Harmon was one of many ordinary women, but throughout the whole story she suddenly proved herself brave, smart, kind, and attentive to the details. She has overcome fear in a dangerous extraordinary situation that was the case of a dying man with the mysteries and secrets of his past and the reason he was here. It made her feel courage and experience a rush of adrenalin and also this event gave her adventure, which turned her life into something truly interesting and exciting.

*Tatiana Shuvalova*  
ESL 315  
*Cause & Effect Essay*

## Favorite Place for My Family and Me

My family and I have lived in Sacramento for two years. During this time we have visited many large and small parks, and in our opinion the best park is Jan Park. This park is very nice, quiet and very comfortable.

First, Jan Park is very beautiful. I remember when we the first time accidentally attended this park, and we were surprised how amazing this park is. There are many beautiful old trees. Near each tree are information plates that tell about the name and age of the tree. The first tree was planted there at the beginning of the last century. Also, there is the huge always green lawn, which is located in the center of park. On hot summer days in the evening, my family and I often come Jan park just to lie on the green grass and look into the beautiful California. The wonderful feature of this park is that it is located on a hill, and from it we can see beautiful views of the surrounding area. To illustrate, a beautiful California



sunset opens from the height of this park. We often come here by sunset to enjoy the beauty of the setting sun. We enjoy Jan Park a lot.

Second, Jan Park is very quiet. This park is located in the old part of our city, and mostly old people live there. When we come to this park, we can meet lonely lovely couples who walk slowly and smile sweetly at us. This park is small and only locals know about its existence. Therefore, in this park it is almost impossible to meet noisy groups of people. Only in this park we have a great opportunity to immerse ourselves in an atmosphere of peace and quiet. We love to enjoy the silence in this park.

*Kostiantyn Dososhenko*  
ESL W40  
*Opinion Essay*

## The Path Blessed by God

Marriage is an important event in a person's life. It affects the lives of not only those who are married, but the entire society in which they live. Therefore, much attention is paid to marriage in various social institutions, including religious organizations. In the cultural and religious diversity of the world's population, we meet with different marital traditions. They can differ in order, duration, solemnity, and much more. However, their goals are the same: to give the marriage union legitimacy and share the joy of creating a new family. In Christianity, there is a special rite of creating a family wedding in a church. A church wedding is an important ceremony for newlyweds in the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

First, newlyweds have premarital counseling with a pastor. The purpose of such meetings helps newlyweds reevaluate their relationship and protect them from serious mistakes. They meet with the pastor about seven times. Usually, at the first meeting, a pastor tells them about the goals of marriage in the Bible. At their next meetings, they talk about human psychology and physiology. Certainly, they discuss finances and responsibilities in marriage. These meetings are important for newlyweds because they help them better understand themselves and their future marriage partner. Sometimes, after such meetings, the newlyweds decide to end their relationship. However, most consultations end on a positive

note. After many prayers, the newlyweds announce their engagement in a church.

Second, newlyweds start preparations for a wedding ceremony. This is a common prewedding routine, but these details create the overall festive atmosphere. Newlyweds choose a preacher for the wedding. He should be a good speaker, be inspiring



and preach not for long. Also, they hire a band. Their music and songs attune participants to the ceremony and dispose the guests to listen the word of God. A few weeks before the wedding, the pastor announces in church the date and time of the upcoming celebration. Anyone can attend the wedding because it is a big celebration for the whole church. The dress rehearsal is organized a few days before the wedding. The latest suggestions and adjustments are made. Now

everything is ready and frozen in anticipation of the most important event in the life of the newlyweds.

Finally, the happiest day comes. Today, the newlyweds will become spouses. The temple is full of guests. Women wear elegant dresses and hold flowers. Men dress in formal suits. All present are with joyful faces. The parents of the newlyweds sit in front of the stage. They have tears of joy in their eyes and anxiety frozen on their faces. What will be ahead for their beloved children? Will they be happy in marriage? On the stage, next



to the pastor, the groom waits and worries. The music sounds solemn, and the bride enters the temple arm in arm with her father. "Wow, look, her wedding dress is nice", the words of the young ladies fly through the temple. "Oh my God, she is beautiful", the groom thinks. "O-O-O, my daughter is too young", whispers the bride's mother. "Love her as I love her", says the bride's father and puts his daughter's hand in the groom's hand. The band performs, and the pastor begins his sermon. "Do not forget your Creator all the days of your life, and your marriage will be blessed." It is the main thought of all wedding sermons. The newlyweds believe the pastor, and in the presence of the church, make a promise of loyalty to each other. "My dear beloved, I set apart myself for you and promise to love you in joy and sorrow, wealth and poverty ... until death do us part". Much tenderness and strength are in these simple words. The hall rises for a prayer of blessing. The most crucial moment comes. The pastor and the newlyweds kneel. The newlyweds put their hands on the Bible, and the pastor raises his hands above their heads. "Look and listen carefully," the mother says for her little daughter. "Dear Lord, please bless this new family and give them love and fidelity, health and happiness, long years of life," the pastor prays. The Lord bless you and keep you...the Lord turn his

face toward you and give you peace," the pastor says the words from the book of Numbers at the end of the prayer. After a loud "Amen", the pastor is slightly agitated and in a solemn voice loudly says, "By the authority given to me by God and by the church, I declare you husband and wife. What God has united, let no man separate." Again one family is formed. Two more people decided to start life together. See how happy they are. Around sound beautiful words of congratulations and wishes. The new family has a long way ahead to find the path to serve each other and develop their love.

You may visit Seventh-day Adventist churches around the world, but you do not meet two wedding ceremonies that are the same. Each wedding is a separate and personal story. However, one important detail unites them. On different continents, in different cultures, different in their education and social status, newlyweds in the Seventh-day Adventist Church begin their family journey with blessings from God.

*Aleksandr Khanchevskii*  
ESL 47  
*Process Essay*

## My Personality

My name is Arpine. I am right-handed. I sometimes draw with my left hand. I mostly use my right hand. All my friends and my parents are right-handed. I am a feeling and artistic person. I am very punctual. I like punctuality, kindness, hospitality, and devotion. For me, that most important thing is human honesty.



I think all subjects are possible in human life. It is a general development. I don't have a problem with my hands because I can use both my hands equally.

*Arpine Petrosyan*  
ESL 47  
*Descriptive Writing*

## My American Dream

How does America help people make their dreams come true? What do you do to make your dreams reality? America is a dream country. When I arrived in America, I started dreaming more and understood that if I work hard, then all my dreams will come true here for sure.

When I lived in my country, since my childhood I dreamed to study, work, live, and see the big blue ocean in America.

In addition, I wanted to become a pilot of the Dreamliner. I tried hard to realize my dreams. However, my parents did not understand or support me in realizing my dreams. I chose the profession that my parents wanted which was an economist. Later on, when I was 20, I got married and forgot for a while about my American dream, due to housework, family concerns, and kids' birth, but after reading about the Green Card on the internet, I was thinking about my dream again and imagined myself many times walking on a beach of the blue ocean. After talking with my spouse, we started to register for the Green Card application, and we did not lose our hope for 9 years. Honestly, the last time when we tried, my husband registered on the site not believing that we could win, but in our last attempt, we were lucky, and I achieved one of my big dreams.

When we lived in Uzbekistan, our life was simple for me and my family, since we always had good goals and results in our life and profession, but our life seemed to be becoming less and less interesting. In those days, I dreamed of traveling a lot, and I wanted my children to study in a good place. I really wanted to see the blue ocean because I had

never seen the ocean in our country. Sometimes, when I told my close friends about my dreams, they did not believe me either, but at that time, I prayed to Allah and asked sincerely. When your dreams come true over the years, you will be in a state of indescribable excitement. I also felt very happy when one of the biggest dreams of my life came true and I thanked Allah many times.



On October 2018, my family and I were thrilled to talk to the American Embassy officer in Uzbekistan. It was the first step we took to make our dreams come true. We submitted our documents and passed medical examinations as well. A few days later, we were given our visa to come to America. I was so happy, and I felt like I was flying in the sky. Then, after we got our tickets to America, we packed our luggage and headed to the airport. Saying goodbye to my parents was the hardest part. On the one hand, I cried because I was sad, and on the other hand, I was happy because I was on my way to my dream.

My family and I flew for 3 days long, and after a long journey, we arrived at San Francisco Airport. Our relative met and took us to his home in Sacramento. I couldn't sleep that day because I really wanted to see what America was like. In the morning, after breakfast, we walked around the city, but there were no big buildings like the ones I saw on TV. Still, what amazed me was that the place was clean, and people smiled at each other and seemed open. After that, we went to the ocean, and another of my dreams came true when I saw the ocean for the first time. My heart was pounding when I heard the sound of the waves of the ocean. It was such a big endless, blue beauty. At that time, I thanked Allah again with tears in my



eyes because I had another dream come true in my life.

A few days later, we rented our own apartment. At that time, we had nothing in our house. In the early days, my family and I slept on the floor with no bed, and ate in the kitchen standing up because we did not have any table, chairs, or enough money to buy any. However, we walked towards our dream patiently. I looked for a job for a while and got one. My husband also found a job in a few days and we worked together to equip our home as we wished. Gradually collecting money, we bought a car, and we really enjoy living in America. My life has been filled with more fun and new dreams since I came to America. One of them is to get my children a good education, to have a big house with a beautiful garden, and to have flowers in the garden that I would like to grow. One of my biggest dreams, for

now, is to have a baby girl with curly hair and big eyes. I also wish to graduate from college and find my dream job.

I realized that if I work hard in America, we could achieve in a few weeks what takes years to do in our native country. I always think a lot about my dreams so that my dreams come true, as I ask and pray to Allah when I face difficulties and it helps me a lot. If a person sincerely dreams and wants his dreams to come true, he should always wait patiently without giving up quickly to the difficulties in the path of his dream.

Shoira Atabaeva  
ESL 47  
Descriptive Essay

## Letter of Thanks

### The Parrot

#### To The Parrot Editor:

Thank you so much for publishing my writing in *The Parrot*. I felt proud when I saw the piece of my writing and my name in *The Parrot*. I wasn't familiar with *The Parrot* five months ago, but after, Professor Joye introduced *The Parrot* for us in the class, and I read some pages then I was interested in *The Parrot*. I usually read the writings of ESL students in case to find their mistakes and improving my English. I would like to see more of my writing in *The Parrot* in the future.  
Sincerely,

**Wahidullah Sarem**



#### To The Parrot Reader:

We are glad to hear that from you. Proudly, we are so excited to receive more and more essays from you and ESL students. Who knows, you might be one of our Parroteers in the future.

**The Parrot**



*Continued from page 1*

most important things I'll ever do in my career," she said in an interview. "It was like, if I try to climb this mountain all at once, I'm just going to pass out."

Gorman managed to write a few lines a day and was about halfway through the poem on Jan. 6, when pro-Trump rioters stormed into the halls of Congress, some bearing weapons and Confederate flags. She stayed awake late into the night and finished the poem, adding verses about the apocalyptic scene that unfolded at the Capitol that day:

*"We've seen a force that  
would shatter our nation  
rather than share it,  
Would destroy our country  
if it meant delaying democ-  
racy.  
And this effort very nearly  
succeeded.  
But while democracy can be  
periodically delayed,  
It can never be permanently  
defeated."*

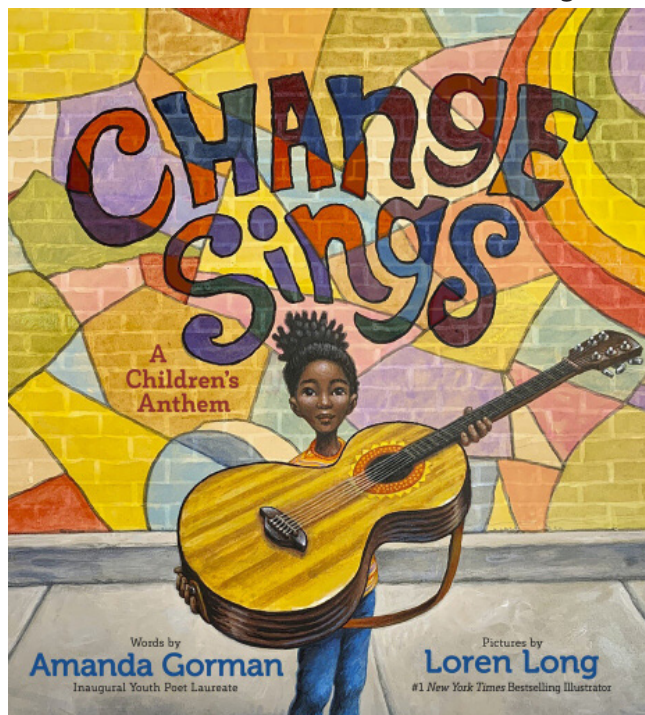
At 22, Gorman is the youngest inaugural poet ever in the United States. She joins a small group of poets who have been recruited to help mark a presidential inauguration, among them Robert Frost, Maya Angelou, Miller Williams, Elizabeth Alexander and Richard Blanco.

But none of her predecessors faced the challenge that Gorman did. She set out to write a poem that would inspire hope and foster a sense of collective purpose, at a moment when Americans are reeling from a deadly pandemic, political violence and partisan division.

"In my poem, I'm not going to in any way gloss over what we've seen over the past few weeks and, dare I say, the past few years. But what I really aspire to do in the poem is to be able to use my words to envision a way in which our country can still come

together and can still heal," she said. "It's doing that in a way that is not erasing or neglecting the harsh truths I think America needs to reconcile with."

On Wednesday, as she recited "The Hill We Climb," in front of the Capitol in the bright sunlight, her voice animated and full of emotion, Gorman described her background as a "skinny Black girl, descended from slaves and raised by a single mother," who can dream of being president one day, "only to find herself reciting for one." She spoke about the weight of loss that the country has endured, in verses that reflected the fragile state of the country.



*"When day comes, we ask  
ourselves:*

*Where can we find light  
In this never-ending shade?  
The loss we carry, a sea we  
must wade."*

Reading lines that echoed the theme of the inauguration, "America United," she spoke of the possibility of unity and reconciliation.

*"And yet the dawn is ours  
before we knew it.*

*Somehow, we do it.*

*Somehow, we've weathered  
and witnessed*

*A nation that isn't broken, but simply unfinished."*

Gorman fell in love with poetry at a young age and distinguished herself quickly as a rising talent. Raised in Los Angeles, where her mother teaches middle school, she would write in journals at the playground. At 16, she was named the Youth Poet Laureate of Los Angeles. A few years later, when she was studying sociology at Harvard, she became the National Youth Poet Laureate, the first person to hold the position. In a year that's beginning with a major milestone, with her appearance at the inauguration, Gorman is set to reach a much larger audience with her work. In September, Viking Books for Young Readers will release her debut poetry collection, also titled "The Hill We Climb," which is aimed

at teenage and adult readers and will include the inaugural poem. Her debut picture book, "Change Sings," with illustrations by Loren Long, comes out on the same day. After the inauguration, Penguin Young Readers said it would also publish a special hardcover edition of the poem on its own this spring, with a first printing of 150,000.

Still, while she has been in the spotlight before, Gorman had never performed her work for a televised audience that likely numbered in the tens of millions, as a prominent part of a lineup that included Lady Gaga and Jennifer Lopez.

"No pressure," Gorman said with a laugh.

Early reviews of Gorman's performance were glowing. On Twitter, former President Barack Obama lauded her for writing "a poem that more than met the moment." Accolades poured in on social media from the poet Jericho Brown as well as Oprah Winfrey and Lin-Manuel Miranda, whose musical "Hamilton" Gorman has said she listened to for inspiration.

Biden's inaugural committee contacted Gorman late last month. During a video call, she learned that Jill Biden had seen a reading she gave at the Library of Congress and suggested Gorman read something at the inauguration. She wasn't given any explicit guidelines about what to write, she said.

"They did not want to put up guardrails for me at all," she said. "The theme for the inauguration in its entirety is 'America United,' so when I heard that was their vision, that made it very easy for me to say, great, that's also what I wanted to write about in my poem, about America united, about a new chapter in our country."

At the same time, Gorman felt the poem needed to acknowledge the dark chapter in American history we are living through.

"We have to confront these realities if we're going to move forward, so that's also an important touch-

stone of the poem," she said. "There is space for grief and horror and hope and unity, and I also hope that there is a breath for joy in the poem, because I do think we have a lot to celebrate at this inauguration."

Gorman began the process, as she always does, with research. She took inspiration from the speeches of American leaders who tried to bring citizens together during times of intense division, including Abraham Lincoln and the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. She also spoke to two of the previous inauguration poets, Blanco and Alexander.



When she asked Alexander for advice, "she just basically told me, 'The poem is already written, it's already done. Now, it's just up to you to bring it to life as best as you can,'" Gorman said.

To prepare for the event on Wednesday, she practiced reading the poem over and over, to the point where she felt confident that she

would not stumble over the words. "For me, that takes a lot of energy and work," she said. "The writing process is its own excruciating form, but as someone with a speech impediment, speaking in front of millions of people presents its own type of terror."

Gorman took comfort in something that Blanco told her when they spoke, when he said that "it's just not one of us up there, it's a representation of American poetry."

"Now more than ever, the United States needs an inaugural poem," Gorman said. "Poetry is typically the touchstone that we go back to when we have to remind ourselves of the history that we stand on, and the future that we stand for."

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/19/books/amanda-gorman-inauguration-hill-we-climb.html>



# Stop “Um-ing” (and Using Other Fillers)

Ummmm...

Like....

Well....

What are filler words, sounds and phrases, and why do we use them?

In short: fillers are empty words that pad your sentences without adding any additional meaning.

They can distract your audience from your message, and leave you looking uncertain of what you are saying.

Public speaking experts strongly recommend eliminating these words and phrases completely, keeping your talk clear and succinct — without distractions.

What are the filler words, sounds and phrases, and why do we use them?

## Filler Sounds, Filler Words, and Filler Phrases

This article uses the collective term “filler words”, but this is really a convenient shorthand for three speech fillers: filler sounds, filler phrases, and filler words.

## Why do we use fillers?

More often than not, we use filler words and phrases such as “um” and “like” because we’re thinking or we’re uncertain of what to say next.

Perhaps you are searching for the right word, or trying to formulate your next sentence.

Here are some of the most common reasons we use fillers:

- We are searching for the right word. The filler word is the sound of your decision-making process. Using a filler sound allows the speaker to indicate to the audience that there is a delay in the flow of speech.
- We are speaking about a difficult or abstract topic. During lectures, humanities professors use filler sounds 4.76 times per hundred words, which is substantially more than professors of natural sciences who use them 1.47 times per hundred words. It is believed that this is because it is harder to express abstract ideas. If you’re

## Fillers

### Filler Sounds

- um
- uh
- ah
- er
- hmm
- mhm
- uh huh

### Filler Phrases

- I think that
- you know
- what I’m trying to say is
- you see
- I mean/you know what I mean?
- at the end of the day
- believe me
- I guess/I suppose
- or something
- stuff like that
- kind of

### Filler Words

- well
- okay
- so
- like
- basically
- actually
- literally
- seriously
- hopefully
- probably
- possibly
- quite
- relatively
- reasonably
- fairly

speaking about complex, abstract topics, your filler words will probably increase.

- We are lacking confidence in what we're about to say. Often speakers will use more filler before responding to a question, especially when they're not 100% sure about their answer. People have a tendency to use fewer fillers if they are confident that their answer is right.
- As placeholders to let the audience know we're going to continue speaking. While this is more common in conversations, often people will use fillers to make sure they are not interrupted. It is a social cue that you are going to continue talking.

Your specific reasons could be different from someone else's, but here are a few general tips that can help you minimize your use of fillers.

### 3 Ways to Stop Using Filler Words

#### 1. Notice them: listen to yourself

Listen to yourself talk, and try to figure out which filler words you are overusing.

Here are three ways to raise your awareness when it comes to filler words:

- Download the Ummo App. Most people use filler words like "um" and "ah" when they are speaking, but when on stage they can be very distracting to your audience. Download the Ummo app to get a handle on your "ums" and "ahs". The app records your speech, then generates a transcript highlighting where you used filler words, so you can work on omitting them from your future talks.
- Listen to an audio or video recording of yourself, keep a list of the common filler words, sounds and phrases, and then mark each time you use one. Figuring out which fillers you use the most is the first step in working towards eliminating them.
- Have a friend, colleague or mentor listen, and watch out for each time you use fillers. They can let you know in real time by raising their hand every time they hear you use one, or by tallying and feeding back to you which ones you overuse.

#### 2. Pause, think, speak

The number one way to get rid of the filler words is to take a couple of seconds to think about what you want to say. These short pauses of complete silence can serve two purposes: they will help you begin powerfully, and it will help you avoid using a filler word.

When you are transitioning from one idea to another, take another pause. Think about what you want to say, then say it. Don't make these pauses very "heavy" (save longer pauses for more impact) but a two-second pause will help you reduce fillers. Don't begin speaking until you are ready. Remember: Pause, think, speak.

While we wouldn't suggest practicing your speech over and over until you sound robotic, if you are struggling with distracting filler words, practicing your speech will help reduce the fillers.

The better you know your presentation, the more clear the words will be in your mind, and you won't need to use the fillers in place of searching for them. This will result in you using them less.

#### 3. Use short sentences, s-l-o-w-l-y

"There isn't any thought or idea that can't be expressed in a fairly simple declarative sentence, or in a series of fairly simple declarative sentences."

-E.B. White

Use simple and short sentences. The longer and more complex the sentence, the more likely you are to use fillers. Use more simple, clear sentences.

This will help you get your point across clearly, without leaning heavily on fillers.

Lastly, don't be afraid to slow down. When you talk quickly, your brain goes into overdrive trying to supply your mouth with the next set of words, and it becomes very easy to let fillers through.

If you slow down, you'll be able to catch and cut the fillers, with the added benefit of being more understandable.

Remember that even though you are on stage, the occasional "um" or "well" isn't going to drive your audience crazy. After all, the majority of people use them daily in conversation: it's how we naturally speak. Reducing fillers and keeping your language clean and clear is ideal, but coming off as natural and human is just as important to be relatable.

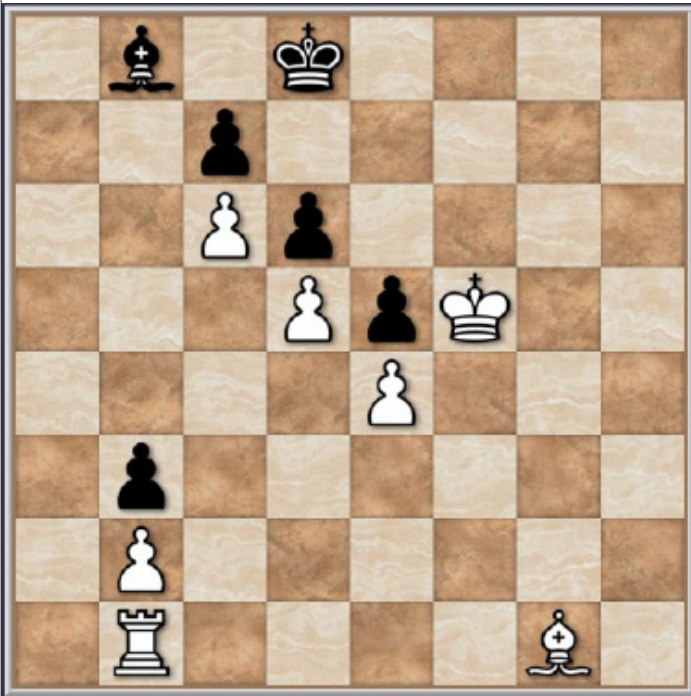
<https://speakerhubhq.medium.com/stop-um-ing-and-using-other-fillers-6a6cd85c30d>

# Some More Parrot Fun Stuff

## Interactive Chess Puzzles

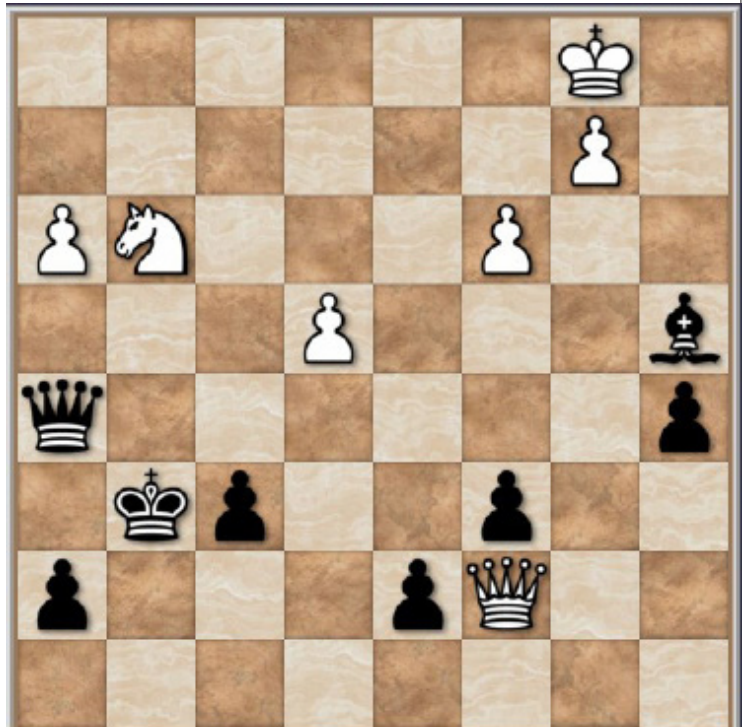
Easy Puzzle

White to move, mate in 4 moves



Medium puzzle

Black to move, mate in 4 moves





## Parrot Student Voices

Here, our students tell a story from their past. Their stories may be about happy days, or sad events... but the stories are always told in their own words.

### *A Typical Time in My Childhood*



"Hi, my name is Kateryna Kohutenko. I am from Ukraine. Today I want to tell a story from my childhood. I always remember that magic world of my native land where I grew up. My childhood was very happy and wonderful. I remember..."

*Kateryna Kohutenko*

Click on *Kateryna's* photo to find out what happened next.

"I am from Afghanistan. Today I want to talk about my typical day in childhood. So my brother and I are the same age. Just my brother is one year younger than me..."

*Almas Mehrban*

Click on *Almas'* photo to find out what happened next.



"I'm from Russia. I would like to tell you about one day of my childhood in Russia. I used to spend my summer vacations in a small village with my grandparents. The village was located in very scenic place..."

*Alik Sayfullin*

Click on *Alik's* photo to find out what happened next.



# International Mother Language Day

## February 21

The purpose of this day is to promote awareness of linguistic and cultural diversity and to promote multilingualism. It was formally recognized by the United Nations in 2002. **Mother Language Day** is part of a broader initiative "to promote the preservation and protection of all languages used by peoples of the world." The idea to celebrate International Mother Language Day was the initiative of Bangladesh. In Bangladesh, February 21 is the anniversary of the day when the people of Bengal fought for recognition for the Bangla language. It is also celebrated in West Bengal, India.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International\\_Mother\\_Language\\_Day](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Mother_Language_Day)

To celebrate the diversity of languages and cultures at American River College, members of our campus community shared some of their favorite sayings from languages they know. Thank you, ARC!

**Arabic:** " الوقت كالسيف إن لم تقطعه قطعك "

*Translation:* Time is like a sword. If you do not cut it, it will cut you.

*Meaning:* It is an expression of the importance of time and of using it well, and it also expresses the extent of your loss if you do not use your time well.

**Chinese:** 物以稀为贵

*Pronunciation in Chinese:* Wù yǐ xī wéi guì

*English translation:* When a good is scarce, it is precious. As a result, the value of the good increases.

**Dari:** پشت هر تاریکی، یک روشنی است

*English transliteration:* Poshta hart ariki, yak roshani ast

*Meaning:* Bad times will always pass and things will become better.

*Usage of Idiom:* It's always used in the time of sorrow and hardships. It gives hope that this is not the end and there is always happiness after bad days in life. There is always light after darkness.

**Dutch:** Nu komt de aap uit de mouw

*Literal Meaning:* Now the monkey comes out of the sleeve.

*Usage of idiom:* Used to express "now I see what is really going on." It's similar to English, "Now the cat's out of the bag."

**English—from the area of Manchester, England**  
**Would you like to spend a penny?**

*Key idea:* It means, "Do you need to go to the bathroom?"

**Hindi:** बचत करना भी कमाई ही होती है।

*English transliteration:* bachat karna bhi kamai hoti hai.

*Meaning:* A penny saved is a penny earned.

*Usage of Idiom:* This idiom is usually used in the time of financial difficulties to make the person understand that a penny saved during normal times is like a penny earned during hard times.

**Italian: "In bocca al lupo" which should be answered with "crepi il lupo."**

*Literal meaning:* in the mouth of the wolf.

*Key idea:* "In bocca al lupo" basically means good luck. It's used the way theater folks in the United States say "break a leg." The response, which is "crepi il lupo," is translated different ways such as "break the wolf" or "may the wolf die" and is similar to what in English might be translated as, "down with the wolf."

**Italian: "Prendere un granchio"**

*Literal translation:* "To catch a crab"

*How does it maybe sound in English?* prendere oon grunkeeo.

*Key idea:* to make a gross, glaring mistake.

*Cultural background:* This idiom is probably unique to Italian culture, and it is also very funny in Italian. In Italy a crab is not a staple that is particularly valued because Italians find that it doesn't have much taste. Italians much prefer crustacean such as

shrimp, prawns and scallops. Knowing this is key to understanding the idiom.

When fishermen drop the line and bait all the way to the bottom, it can happen that a crab takes the bait rather than a big fish. The crab shakes the line violently giving the fishermen the impression of having caught a big fish. They pull up the line and they find that they caught a crab instead! Big disappointment!

*How to use it:* A friend of mine tells me that she is traveling to Italy and that she'll stop in Florence to see the Mona Lisa. I would respond by saying that she is about to "catch a crab" because the Mona Lisa is at the Louvre in Paris, not in Florence.

**Pashto** د کلي و وڅخه ، خو له نرخه مه وڅخه.

*English transliteration:* Da Keli wowuza, Kho la nerkha ma wuza.

*Meaning:* You can leave the village but not your traditions.

*Usage of Idiom:* The love of traditions is more essential for a Pashtun than the love of the village they are born in. In some ways, it can be the equivalent of the old English adage "when in Rome, do as the Romans do," but the intensity and meaning of the Pashto proverb is quite different. It says that one can't give up the conventions of their village even after you move to another part of the world.

**Russian: говорят, что кур доят**

*English transliteration:* "They say they milk chickens."

*Meaning:* Don't believe everything you hear, especially if someone starts a phrase with 'they say' and offers no proof.

**Spanish: Sabe más el diablo por viejo que por diablo.**

*Literal Meaning:* The devil knows better because of its old age, than from being the devil.

*Key idea:* It means that the older we are, the more knowledgeable and experienced we are.

**Spanish: "Antes de hacer nada, consúltalo con la almohada"**

*Literal meaning:* Before doing anything, consult your pillow.

*Key idea:* Sleep on it. If you don't like to make rushed decisions, then this is a good expression for you.

**Ukrainian**

**Від гніву старієш, від сміху молодієш.**

*What might this sound like in English?* Veed gneevu stariyesh, veed smeehu molodiyesh.

*Meaning:* You will get older from anger, and younger from laughter.

**Ukrainian**

**Вчи жінку без дітей, а дітей без людей**

*What might this sound like in English?* Vchy zhenku bez deetey, ah deetey bez lyudey.

*Meaning:* Teach wife without children, and children without people.

**Urdu:** جنے پر نمک چھڑکنا

*English transliteration:* Jalay par namak charakna.

*Meaning:* Rubbing salt on someone's wound.

*Usage of Idiom:* This idiom is normally used when someone has a bad/difficult time and the other person is trying to make it worse.

**Uzbeki:** قىمىردەگن قىر دن آشر

*English transliteration:* Qimirdagan qirdan àshar

*Meaning:* A person who moves, will climb up the mountain.

*Usage of Idiom:* The person who strives to achieve something, will consequently gain it even if the first step is so small. In other words, every achievement is started with a small step/move.

**Vietnamese: Lấy độc trị độc.**

*Literal translation:* Use poison to cure poison.

*Key idea:* Diamonds cut diamonds.

It has three meanings. First of all, it means you use one kind of poison to cure another kind of poison (literal meaning). Secondly, you use bad people to discipline other bad people. Finally, you use the same thing or better way to correct someone by treating them the way that they treat other people.

**Gracias! Danke! Merci! Thank you to all of the ARC community members who contributed their idioms to help celebrate International Mother Language Day!**



# Franny Noetal

## Dear Franny Noetal,

My ESL teacher said that there may be as many as a million words in English! I thought, "No, way! That guy must have overdosed on some bad grammar books to think that!" But I Googled it, and found out that my professor wasn't making it up. I've seen the Unabridged Oxford English Dictionary in the library, and I think it had at least 26 volumes!! It took up a whole shelf!!! It scared me. Will I ever learn English well enough to be fluent? How many words do I really need to know to graduate from college?

## Weally Word Weary

## Dear WWW,



Well, an average Amazon parrot has a vocabulary of 300 words and can talk for hours on end, so maybe 300 words is more than enough according to BeakCraze.com, one of my favorite websites. But for a student hoping to learn English well enough to graduate from college? That's another question. I honestly have no idea how many words you need to learn if you want to be fluent in English or in any other language for that matter. I know it's actually quite hard to even define what a "word" is if you want to start counting words. Fortunately, some really good word counters at FluentU have thought about this a lot, and so let me share their answer to your question.

### How many words do you know, and how many do you need to know?

In general, we can describe levels of fluency in a foreign language with these rough word counts:

- **Functional beginner: 250-500 words.** After just a week or so of learning, you'll already have most of the tools to start having basic, everyday conversations. In most of the world's languages, 500 words will be more than enough to get you

through any tourist situations and everyday introductions.

- **Conversational: 1,000-3,000 words.** With around 1,000 words in most languages, you'll be able to ask people how they're doing, tell them about your day and navigate everyday life situations like shopping and public transit.
- **Advanced: 4,000-10,000 words.** As you grow past the 3,000 word mark or so in most languages, you're moving beyond the words that make up everyday conversation and into specialized vocabulary for talking about your professional field, news and current events, opinions and more complex, abstract verbal feats. At this point, you should be able to reach C2 level in the Common European Framework for Reference (CEFR) in most languages.
- **Fluent: 10,000+ words.** At around 10,000 words in many languages, you've reached a near-native level of vocabulary, with the requisite words for talking about nearly any topic in detail. Furthermore, you recognize enough words in every utterance that you usually understand the unfamiliar ones from context.
- **Native: 10,000-30,000+ words.** Total word counts vary widely between world languages, making it difficult to say how many words native speakers know in general. As we discussed above, estimates of how many words are known by the average native English speaker vary from 10,000 to 65,000+.

Well, Weally, I wager you won't want to work for a while after weeding this, but I hope it gives you some hope that fluency is within reach.

Wery Squawkingly Yours,

**Franny Noetal**

(Source: "The Numbers Game: How Many Words Do I Need to Know to Be Fluent in a Foreign Language?" by Jakob Gibbons at [www.fluentu.com/blog/how-many-words-do-i-need-to-know](http://www.fluentu.com/blog/how-many-words-do-i-need-to-know) )

## Reading for Beginners

### Preparing Food

Jack was hungry. He walked to the kitchen. He got out some eggs. He took out some oil. He placed a skillet on the stove. Next, he turned on the heat. He poured the oil into the skillet. He cracked the eggs into a bowl. He stirred the eggs. Then, he poured them into the hot skillet. He waited while the eggs cooked. They cooked for two minutes. He heard them cooking. They popped in the oil.

Next, Jack put the eggs on a plate. He placed the plate on the dining room table. Jack loved looking at his eggs. They looked pretty on the white plate. He sat down in the large wooden chair. He thought about the day ahead. He ate the eggs with a spoon. They were good.

He washed the plate with dishwashing soap. Then, he washed the pan. He got a sponge damp. Finally, he wiped down the table. Next, Jack watched TV.

#### Did you understand the text?

Please answer the following questions of understanding:

#### 1. What food was cooked?

- a. Rice                      b. Fish  
c. Pork                      d. Eggs

#### 2. Where did Jack eat the eggs?

- a. In front of the TV      b. In his room  
c. In the kitchen          d. At the dining room table

#### 3. What was the chair made of?

- a. Wood                      b. Stone  
c. Metal                      d. We do not know

#### 4. Jack cooked in a skillet. What is another word for skillet?

- a. Microwave              b. Pan  
c. Slow cooker            d. Oven

<https://lingua.com/english/reading/preparing-food/>

## Mysteries & Logic

### What Am I?



▶ The more you take, the more you leave behind. What are they?

▶ I have streets but no pavement. I have cities but no buildings. I have forests but no trees. I have rivers yet no water. What am I?

▶ I live where light is but die if light touches me. What am I?

▶ It goes up but never comes down. What is it?

▶ You may enter, but you may not come in. I have space, but no room. I have keys that open no lock. What am I?

▶ When I'm new, I'm tall. When I'm old, I'm short. When I'm alive, I glow. Because of your breath, I die. What am I?



*Footsteps, A map, A shadow, Your age, A keyboard, A candle*

## Eat the World!

*The Parrot represents students of many hues and sounds --- no news there. Indeed, birds of a feather flock together, right? They also eat together. The Parrot is proud to present Parrot fodder from around the world in this and subsequent issues. Squawk!*

### Steamed Sticky Rice Cakes with Banana to Celebrate the Lunar New Year



of the cooled rice in the center. Add a single piece of banana, followed by another tablespoon of rice (the banana should be sandwiched). Now fold the sides of the leaves over, as you would a parcel. Repeat with the remaining rice, banana and banana leaves. If you have softened the leaves properly, you won't need to use anything extra to secure the parcels.

#### **Ingredients:**

- 1 pound 2 ounces glutinous rice, soaked in water overnight
- 14 ounces coconut milk
- 7 ounces caster (superfine) sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon sea salt
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 4 large banana leaves, cut into 8- by 12-inch rectangles
- 4 ripe bananas, peeled and halved lengthwise, then crosswise
- (\*\*Add black bean as you wish)

#### **Directions:**

1. Drain the rice and place it in a hot wok or saucepan. Stir in the coconut milk, sugar and salt. Bring to a simmer and cook until the coconut milk has been absorbed and the rice is thick and sticky, 4 to 6 minutes. Stir in the oil, then transfer the mixture to a baking sheet and cool for 5 to 10 minutes.
2. Soften the banana leaves by holding them over a gas fire, heating them in a hot frying pan, steaming or microwaving them for a few minutes. Lay down 1 banana leaf. Place one heaped tablespoon

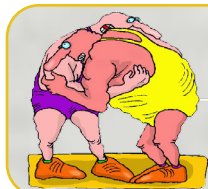


3. Fill a large steamer, wok or saucepan halfway with water and bring to a rapid boil over high heat. Place the parcels in a steamer basket seam-side down and set it over the pan of water. Steam for 30 minutes. Enjoy the sticky rice cakes hot.

Source: <https://www.cookingchanneltv.com/recipes/luke-nguyen/steamed-sticky-rice-cakes-with-banana>



# Parrot Warbling



## Grappling with Grammar

### Challenging Subjects

**Challenge 1:** In questions, the subject is often either after the verb or between parts of the verb phrase.

Example: Where are my slippers? Will we be going to the mall?

**Challenge 2:** In commands, the subject of the verb is always the unstated, "you."

Example: Raise your hand. = (You) Raise your hand.

**Challenge 3:** Inverted order: Sometimes for emphasis, writers will switch around the parts of the sentence. In those sentences, the subject is usually after the verb.

Example: Behind the bookcase is the door to the secret room.

The door to the secret room is behind the bookcase.

**Challenge 4:** If a sentence begins with *here* or *there*, here or there is never the subject.

Example: Here are your missing earrings. What are here? Earrings.

Your missing earrings are here. (In this case, here works as an adverb.)

The four o'clock train goes there. (In this case, there is an explicative expression.)

**Challenge 5:** Subjects followed by prepositional phrases

Sometimes a noun is followed by a prepositional phrase explaining more about the noun. It is easy to confuse the subject with the object of the preposition.

Example: The box of books belongs in the library. The box (of books) belongs in the library.

### Idiom--Attic when pigs fly

**Meaning:** something that will never happen or is impossible.

**Ex:** William will keep quiet only when pigs fly.



<https://www.theidioms.com/>

### B and P Sounds

The **P** and **B** sounds are often studied as a pair because both sounds are produced in the front of the mouth with the tongue in the same place. The only difference is that the **B** sound is **voiced** and the **P** sound is **voiceless**.

In the English language, we use many **voiced sounds**. That means that the vocal cords vibrate when you say that letter. You can hear a voiced **B** sound in words such as "back" and "cab."

The voiced B sound (**IPA symbol: b**).

**Example:** bring, bubble, boy, lab, rob, and bicycle.



The letter P is a **voiceless** sound because the vocal cords do not vibrate. Instead, we use a puff of air to produce the sound. You can hear the P sound in words such as "pack" and "cap."

The voiceless P sound (**IPA symbol: p**).

**Example:** jump, pop, top, puppy, purple, tip, and pray.

## Ode to My Dog

by Wordy Birdie

*An ode to my dog,  
Animal so true,  
Why must you go  
And chew up my shoes?  
You left them in shreds,  
Bits and pieces strewn.  
Boy, if you had shoes  
I'd chew on them, too!*

**Practice the key words from  
"Ode to My Dog" in the quiz below!**

### Vocabulary for this poem:

**Ode (noun):** a type of poem to show respect, love, or dedication for something or someone.  
Chew

**up (phrasal verb):** to tear apart using one's teeth.

**Shreds (noun):** small and thin pieces of something.

**Bits (noun):** very small pieces of something.

**Strewn (verb):** spread around a space in messy way.

## Rigoberto's Riddles

Red crab is 6 inches. Green crab is 4 inches. They are racing. Who will be the winner?



A: Green crab because the red crab is cooked.

## Silly Vasily's Chuckle Chamber

Fun at the Movies

Last week Ronnie Walsh went to the movies at the Rialto Cinema in Bristol to see "Slumdog Millionaire" but because of two women loudly chatting together who were sitting in the row in front of him, Ronnie was unable to hear the dialogue clearly. Ronnie leaned forward and said in a stage whisper, "Excuse me ladies but I can't hear." "I should hope not," torted the woman, "this is a private conversation."



## Let Us Practice!

Test your skills with the Practice Quiz below! Use one of the following words to complete each sentence:  
ode, chew up, shreds, bits, strewn.

1. My sister's room is so messy, she has clothes \_\_\_\_\_ all over the place!
2. My 3-year-old son can't eat a whole cookie, so I broke it into \_\_\_\_\_ for him.
3. The cat used its claws to turn the curtains into \_\_\_\_\_.
4. I watched the tiger \_\_\_\_\_ his dinner with his large teeth.
5. I wrote an \_\_\_\_\_ to my mom so that I can read it to her for Mother's Day.

Answers: 1. strewn 2. bits 3. shreds 4. chew up 5. ode

## GROUNDHOG DAY 2021: PUNXSUTAWNEY PHIL PREDICTS 6 MORE WEEKS OF WINTER

Pennsylvania's most famous groundhog emerged from his burrow on a snowy Tuesday morning on February 2 and saw his shadow, declaring there would be six more weeks of winter. Members of Punxsutawney Phil's "Inner Circle" woke up the furry critter at 7:25 a.m. to see whether he would see his shadow or not.



Pennsylvania's most famous groundhog emerged from the snow and saw his shadow and declared there would be six more weeks of winter on Tuesday, February 2, 2021.

The spectacle that is Groundhog Day at Gobbler's Knob in Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania went on but this year, it was all virtual because of the coronavirus pandemic.

Shortly after this year's prediction was revealed, one of the members of the Inner Circle shared a message he said Phil had told him earlier in the day: "After winter, you're looking forward to one of the most beautiful and brightest springs you've ever seen." According to records dating back to 1887, the Pennsylvanian prognosticator has predicted more winter more than 100 times. Last year, Phil predicted an early spring.

A livestream, which had more than 15,000 viewers at one point, played footage from previous Groundhog Day's ahead of the big reveal.

Then of course, the prognosticator of prognostica-

tors — assisted by his Inner Circle — emerged at dawn. The lore goes that if he sees his shadow as he did this year, there will be six more weeks of winter. If he doesn't, spring comes early.

The livestream from Gobbler's Knob, a tiny hill just outside Punxsutawney about 65 miles (105 kilometers) northeast of Pittsburgh, is made possible by the Pennsylvania Tourism Office's Holi-stay PA. The event there, always on February 2, dates back to 1887. Phil this year, like many years in the past, gave his



Groundhog Club handler A.J. Dereume holds Punxsutawney Phil, the weather prognosticating groundhog, as Vice President Tom Dunkel reads the scroll during the 135th celebration of Groundhog Day on Gobbler's Knob in Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania, on Tuesday, February 2, 2021.

forecast during a major snowstorm that hit the entire Northeast.

Jeff Lundy, the president of the Groundhog Club, told CBS Pittsburgh: "I've been doing this for a long time. I did not really understand the economic impact until now. And now I see it, because so many businesses they don't depend on on Groundhog Day, but it really is that extra income that you may not get so it has had a, it has had a...very negative impact on the community."

Source: <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/groundhog-day-2021-punxsutawney-phil-predicts-6-more-weeks-of-winter/>



## Interview with Sayed Sadat

*Continued from page 1*

the interview, so how many times did you change your major at ARC?

**Sadat:** Honestly, I didn't change my major. Before choosing my major, I looked at the entire ARC catalog; I found that they have a communication major. So, without blinking my eyes, I chose this major. I am continuing, and I love my major. It's worth mentioning that. This is the last semester for me, and I will get two degrees: one in social science and one in communication. I didn't change my major, and I will not change my major.

**The Parrot:** Will you briefly explain what the ELLIS club is and what it does?

**Sadat:** Yes, why not. ELLIS stands for English Language Learner and Support. The club's vision is to transform immigrants' and English language learners' lives through education and community engagement. I have been serving as the club president since 2019, and that is the time which the club was established. And I have been

leading ten amazing and great ELLIS members who are from different countries and who have different cultural backgrounds. They are from countries like Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, Russia, Ukraine, and many other Middle East countries. So, we established the club to help incoming immigrants and English language learners.

**The Parrot:** What motivated you to start the club?

**Sadat:** In the first year in college, I myself, as an immigrant, faced many challenges. I remember I had communication problems, especially language problems. I didn't know much about the educational system in the United States. And so, I have had some other challenges. Those challenges caused me sometimes to feel that I am hopeless and helpless. And even sometimes I was thinking of leaving college because of those problems. Later on, in my

second year, I thought I should bring some changes, you know, to other immigrant students' educational life. I thought, OK, I need to change something. That's why with the help of two dedicated ARC professors, Professor Erik Haarala and Professor Caterina Falli, we decided to establish the club. And since the establishment of the club, we have helped many students.

**The Parrot:** I heard from a little bird that you applied to UC Davis. What will happen with the ELLIS club after you graduate?

**Sadat:** So, before I leave, we would have someone in place. Especially, we are considering having a

woman lead the club this time because the last time I was the club president. So, this time we are getting the chance to have a woman.

**The Parrot:** Is the ELLIS club just at ARC? I heard it is expanding.

**Sadat:** It seems the little bird gave you lots of information. You have lots of information, even more than me. Yes, it is expanding. Our team

members are working on expanding it to other Los Rios branches. We believe that there is a high need for ELLIS in other Los Rios branches. Numerous immigrant students in these branches need help. That's why we thought we should expand. Once I transfer to UC Davis, I will try my best to establish a branch of the ELLIS club.

**The Parrot:** So, how is that going to happen?

**Sadat:** Actually, we contacted other professors at other Los Rios colleges and introduced the ELLIS club. We found that some interested immigrant students want to help with expanding and who want to establish the club there. We connected with them, and we are going to open new branches.

**The Parrot:** What is your favorite quote that you believe describes you?

**Sadat:** Yes. My favorite quote is from Friedrich



Nietzsche. Probably you heard it before. The quote is, "What does not kill me makes me stronger!" You know, if you were born in a country like Afghanistan, where I was born, you would have faced lots of difficulties, lots of problems. That's why you have to be tough in those kinds of situations. You have to be strong. This quote helped me a lot when I faced problems. I believe from my heart that if a problem doesn't end me, then it makes me stronger. Now, we

have this Covid-19 situation, and all human beings suffer from this situation. But, I still think after this situation, we are much more robust than the life we had before the situation. So, it helps us. We know that the problem would help us to be stronger. That's why I like the quote and always repeat it to myself.

**The Parrot:** If you had a chance to change one thing you did, what would you change?

**Sadat:** OK. Four years ago, I developed a personal life mandate. And that is "to learn and help others learn." That's my life mandate. If I had a chance, I would work harder to achieve this mandate. I want to inspire a vast number of people, students, to learn more. At first, I want to learn more and then inspire them to learn. So, if I have another chance, I will work harder to achieve that life mandate.

**The Parrot:** What do you do in your free time?

**Sadat:** Sometimes I go to a park and walk with my family, and sometimes I play with my little and amazing child. Sometimes I read books, and sometimes I go to the American River (the river is close to us), and I sit there alone thinking with myself and

about my life. So, these are things which I'm doing in my free time.

**The Parrot:** Do you have a favorite word you always say?

**Sadat:** Probably you heard it in this interview, and that's a kind of phrase, "Why not?" I like this one because I think there are many solutions to our problems and always, I use "Why not? Why not?" You shouldn't try new ways. Why not? We shouldn't

work hard. Why not? We shouldn't help each other. I like it, and I use it a lot.

**The Parrot:** How would you motivate immigrant students who struggle a lot in achieving their educational goals?

**Sadat:** As a new immigrant to the United States, I faced many problems, but I overcame those problems. I never gave up, and I believe I could achieve my educational goal. I am going to get two degrees this semester. I'm going to transfer to UC Davis. So, I believe if I can do that, other immigrant students can do that as well. And I'm asking all the immigrant students not to give up, not to be disappointed, not to stop. Please keep and please continue your education. I believe you can do it. I believe we can do it. I

believe everyone can do it. Please do not stop your education. And that's it.

**The Parrot:** Thanks a lot for your valuable time and words.

**Sadat:** Thanks for the interview.





## Around the World

### CHIANG MAI FLOWER FESTIVAL THAILAND

A flower festival is taking place this year in the city of Chang Mai in northern Thailand. In 2021, people who live or come to Thailand will explore the color of flowers in this festival. The Chiang Mai Flower Festival is celebrated on the 5th to 7th of February this year in Suan Buak Haad Public Park.

After a cool season, February starts the spring time with blossoms of many kinds of flowers.



People can enjoy the beauty of nature through flowers and demonstrate their skills at decorating. Thousands of floral enthusiasts gather here to show their skills through and demonstrate their skills at decorating. The judges will go around, visit all the



designs of decoration, and choose the winners in all different categories.

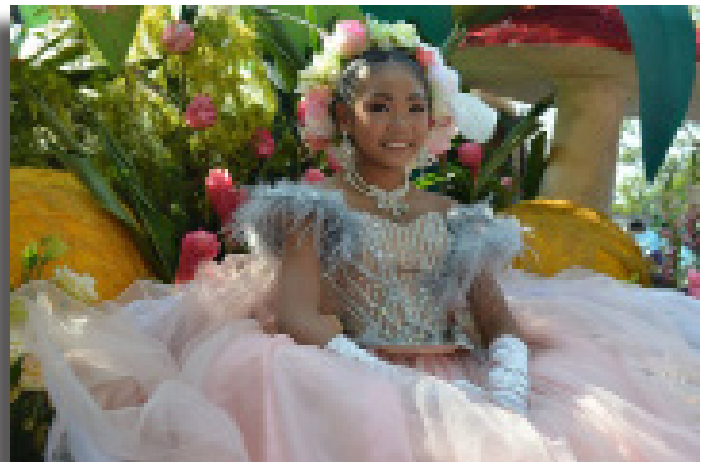
The main event of this festival is the Street



Parade. The Street Parade will go around some specific places in Chiang Mai city with many flower floats, dancers, and marching bands performing on the street. The parade will go slowly so everyone can enjoy everything if they can find a good spot.

There is also a Queen of the Chiang Mai Flower Festival 2021 contest. The candidates will not only show their beauty on the flower floats during the street parade, but also their skills of music performance.

*Tuyet Le*





## A Historic Day for Mountaineering!

*In the old days of The Parrot, there was Trail Mick. Mick has now given way to Alpine Alex.*

Hello ARC family! This time I would like to share the news that happened at the beginning of January. On January 16, at 17:00 local, Pakistani time, 10 Nepalese climbers for the first time in recorded history, stood on the summit of the 8-thousand K2 (K2 / Chogori, 8611m), a mountain that until now remained the only unconquered 8-thousand in the world during the winter. The 33-year history of attempts to climb the eight-thousander K2 in winter has come to the end. Chogori (K2) is the second-highest mountain peak on Earth after Everest (Chomolungma). It is located on the border of Pakistan and China in the Karakorum mountain range northwest of the Himalayas. K2 is only 239 meters lower than Everest, but many times more difficult to climb. This was our planet's last challenge for climbers.



Sona Sherpa on the summit of K2 on 16 January 2021



The gigantic shadow of K2 stretches over the Karakorum at sunset, as Nirmal Purja holds the British and Nepali flags on the summit.



Night falls as Mingma David poses at -40 on the summit of K2.



# Out of the Cage

## American River College



- Questions about college?
- Need more information?
- The ARC ELLIS Club can help!

The ARC ELLIS Club is a group of ARC students and professors committed to helping people transition into college and achieve success. Our focus is immigrants and English language learners like you!

Email us to connect with one of our club representatives: [ellis.club2019@gmail.com](mailto:ellis.club2019@gmail.com)

**CSAC CASH FOR COLLEGE** **WANT CASH FOR COLLEGE?**

Have questions about your FAFSA or CADAA Application? Attend the Statewide Cash For College Webinar followed by Cash for College Hotline!

**ALL STUDENTS WELCOME!**

**REGISTER NOW!**

<b>DECEMBER 15</b> 5:30pm-8:00pm	<b>JANUARY 14</b> 5:30pm-8:00pm	<b>FEBRUARY 11</b> 5:30pm-8:00pm
<b>JANUARY 30</b> 10:00am-12:30pm	<b>FEBRUARY 25</b> 5:30pm-8:00pm	

**REGISTER HERE**

Link to register:

[https://events.com/r/en\\_US/registration/csac-statewide-cash-for-college-webinar-student-registration-796699](https://events.com/r/en_US/registration/csac-statewide-cash-for-college-webinar-student-registration-796699)

**OVER \$200,000 IN SCHOLARSHIPS** to ARC students who:

1. Have a minimum GPA of at least 2.0
2. Completed at least 6 units at ARC (as of fall 2020)
3. Currently enrolled at ARC in spring 2021 for a minimum of 6 units
4. Must be working towards an AA or AS degree at ARC or transferring to a four-year university. (Students working towards a certificate are not eligible).

If you qualify, you may be eligible for **ARC Office of Philanthropy Scholarships**

Find ARC scholarships online starting January 2021 at <https://losrios.academicworks.com>

Search for a scholarship that's right for you!

Submit your application by 4:00 p.m. on Friday, March 5, 2021

Office of Philanthropy

Apply for Foundation Scholarships

<https://foundation.losrios.edu/students-and-alumni/apply-for-scholarships>

**SQUAWK!!**

## QUESTIONS/COMMENTS?

Student Editors: Alex Grynishyn, Alaa Shatat, Tuyet Le, and Dai Nguyen

Please let us know what we can do to improve "The Parrot." We appreciate any and all feedback you are willing to give us. Contact us by e-mail, call, or drop by. Professor Travis: Davies 370, (916) 484-4524, or [Travism@arc.losrios.edu](mailto:Travism@arc.losrios.edu); Professor Hoggan: Davies 334, (916) 312-3574, or [Hogganp@arc.losrios.edu](mailto:Hogganp@arc.losrios.edu). To see previous issues of The Parrot, go to

<https://arc.losrios.edu/academics/the-parrot-newsletter>