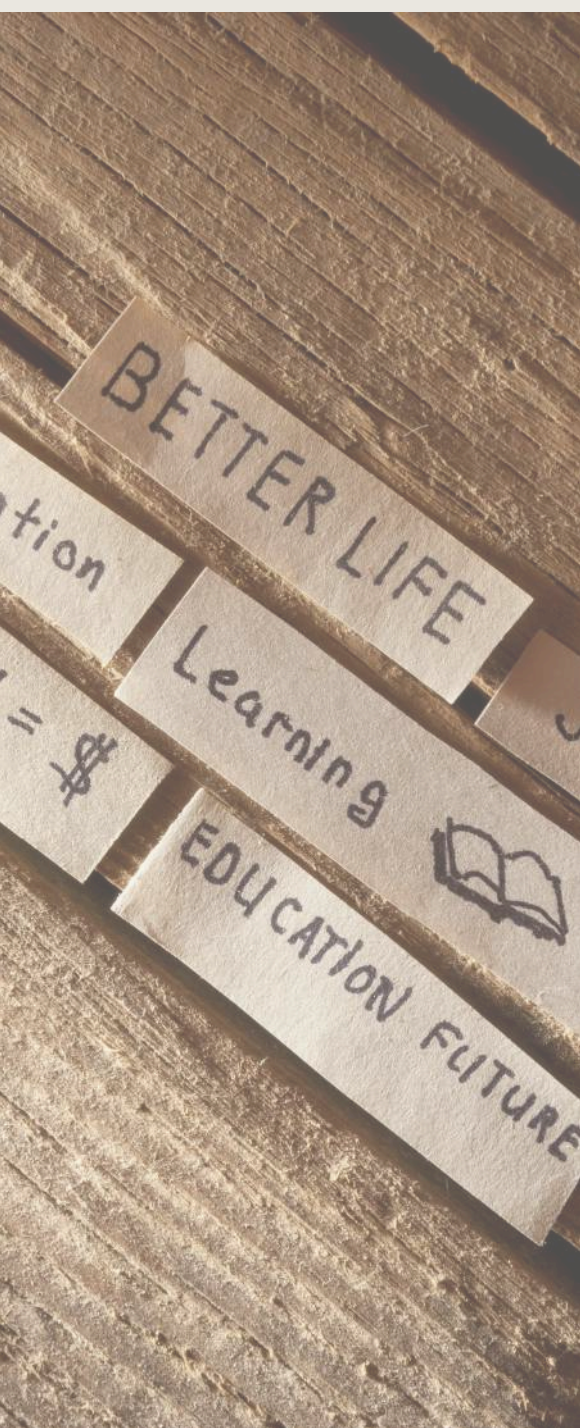


ENJOY



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A Winter Term Full of Creativity and Growth

The past few months of the winter term were both dynamic and enriching, marked by a blend of creativity and academic engagement.

One of the key highlights was an extensive conference Education in Motion that brought together experts, educators, and students for meaningful discussions about the current education reform in Slovakia.

A series of well-organized workshops provided a platform for students to explore new ideas, develop practical skills, and collaborate in innovative ways.

Furthermore, we had the privilege of interviewing our native-speaking lecturer Gregory Shaughnessy, who shared his experience and insights on language learning.

A special column in this issue includes the top works of art made by our students and offers readers a glimpse into the incredible creativity that flourished during this term.

We wish you a pleasant reading experience as you explore the columns in the latest issue of our journal!

Lenka Michelčíková
Editor-in-Chief

WINTER TERM IN PICTURES



Education in motion conference
(24. - 25. October 2024)

Xmas party
(11. December 2024)



**Authenticity
in ELT**

February 4
2025 3 pm by MARK ANDREWS



Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra
Faculty of Education
Department of English Language and Culture

Authenticity in ELT workshop led by
Mark Andrews, an esteemed
educator with four decades of
experience teaching and training
teachers across Central and Eastern
Europe.

WINTER TERM IN PICTURES



The **Art of Words** workshop gave the students an opportunity to delve into the world of unconventional, lesser-known literary genres and discover new forms of literary expression.

The **Short Story Competition** also allowed the students to showcase their storytelling prowess.

Check out the smiling faces of our winners!



IN THE HOT SEAT

More Than Just a Lecturer: An Exclusive Interview with Gregory Shaughnessy, Our Experienced Native Speaker

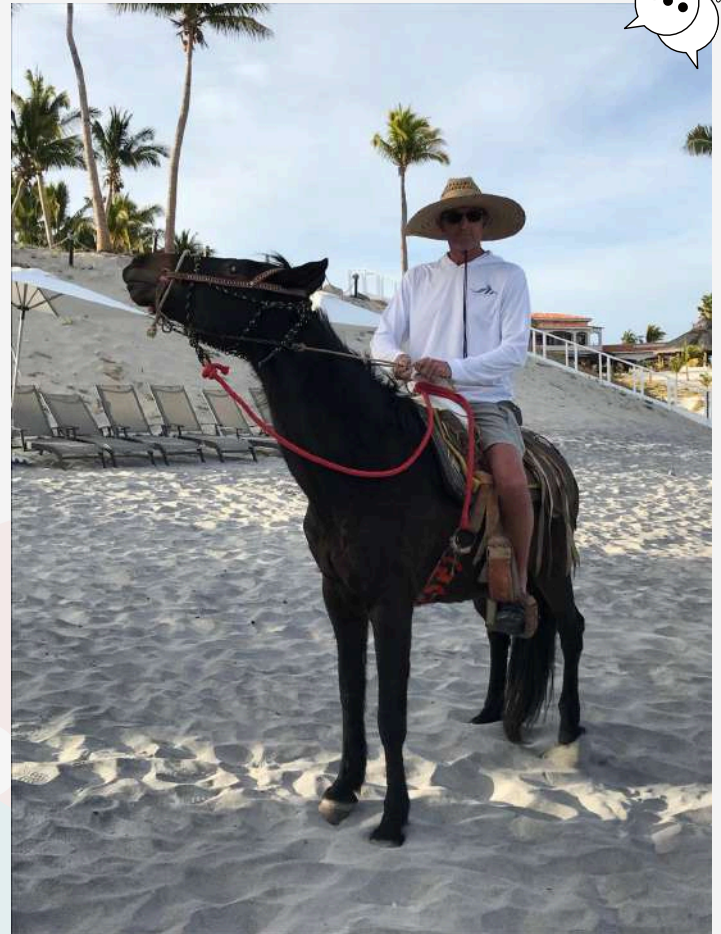
BY RENÁTA KUNOVÁ & MIROSLAV KOLAR

You've taught in so many different places —Massachusetts, American Samoa, Slovakia, Macedonia. What's been the most surprising cultural difference you've encountered in the classroom?

At all of those places, I was doing different work, so I wasn't always in a classroom teaching. In some places, I've been working for the Peace Corps, and there I was doing training, so I wasn't teaching in a classroom setting. I was mostly training volunteers to work in those countries. But all those countries are in my mind and in my memories with some different unique qualities. Maybe because I've travelled so much, I expect differences, especially cultural ones, so maybe I am not so shocked or surprised. Massachusetts was my first experience with teaching junior high school-age learners (7th and 8th grades), and this age was not the age that I studied to teach, so it was quite a challenge. And these were U.S. students in a Catholic school, which is usually disciplined under the influence of parents, nuns, and priests. But a lot of these students were kicked out of public schools for some disciplinary reasons, so I had to deal with that too. Over the years, I ended up teaching at all of the mentioned levels basically.

What do you think was the easiest type (or level) of school to teach at?

Nowadays, many young women compare themselves to online models or individuals. Isn't it odd? Every person is beautiful, yet it's common to see distressed girls. Why? It's about body image! Social networks inundate us with images dictating ideal proportions — slim, tall, toned, devoid of any fat. Consider this — Anorexia or bulimia? Nothing out of the ordinary, all for a photo on social media, often edited. Embrace yourself, prioritize health! I also taught at companies, so that was probably the easiest, specifically with one-on-one classes or conversation lessons with small groups of people. On the other hand, I also used to teach learners at a secondary grammar school who were ten years old, and these classes were very rewarding.



However, there were situations where one day the class was a huge success—the learners did the job, I got through to them, and they understood. But the next day, I felt like, “Oh my God, what a failure! What a disaster that class was.” You could go from one high to the lowest low. With younger learners, you really have to keep their attention every minute. But it was especially rewarding when I started with learners from zero and I could mould and shape their language skills. With older learners, you can come across situations where they already have some language background, they are ‘stuck in’ their mistakes, and it might be really hard to somehow correct them or change their habits. But with younger learners, you really go step by step.

How did your time in the Peace Corps shape your approach to teaching and training?

At the Peace Corps, we had TEFL training, and they only had one instructor, so we had to be together—Czechs and Slovaks. At first, we learned Slovak, and while you are actually in the country, it is much easier to learn the language because you are immersed. We did dialogues and role-plays, and as we did a role-play about the post office, they told us, “Okay, now, here is your assignment—you can actually go into the post office to buy a stamp or send a letter.” So we had to go out and immediately use the language. Sometimes it was fine, but sometimes, since we had practiced a sort of ABAB dialogue and then went to the post office, the clerk didn’t say what the B should say, and I thought, “Hmmm, now what?” (laughs).

But we were adults, learning these scenarios, and we wanted the answers. We had questions about the specifics because we could see the differences (in grammar, for example). Then the Czech group, which was learning the language in a much more traditional manner, came to visit us. We took them out to a restaurant, and when the waiter came, the other group was surprised that we could speak. Since they were focusing on all of the grammar specifics, they were so stressed to speak because they were afraid of making a mistake. On the other hand, we weren’t thinking about the specifics—we just talked (and probably made lots of mistakes), but it didn’t matter because we somehow managed. This was very influential for me. So I used this approach in TEFL as well. When you are first learning a language, you are acquiring and soaking up everything, and you learn naturally this way. So I always try to replicate that as much as possible in my classes.

The idea behind Peace Corps started with John F. Kennedy in 1961 as a form of financial aid. But instead of giving money to these countries—because you never really know where the money goes—they decided to send manpower instead. In the Peace Corps, there are basically three goals. First, you have volunteers who help the community in different ways (e.g., teaching programmes). Second, there is the ‘exchange of cultures.’ And third, a volunteer comes back home after two years spent in a foreign country and spreads new knowledge about that country. This is how we can fight preconceived stereotypes. Once the goal is achieved, the Peace Corps leaves the country.

I was sent to Slovakia as a teacher trainer to train teachers of Russian who were re-qualifying to teach English. I was sent to Banská Bystrica to work with teachers there.

As a trainer for the Peace Corps, I’ve spent time in Macedonia, Bulgaria, Romania, and Ukraine.

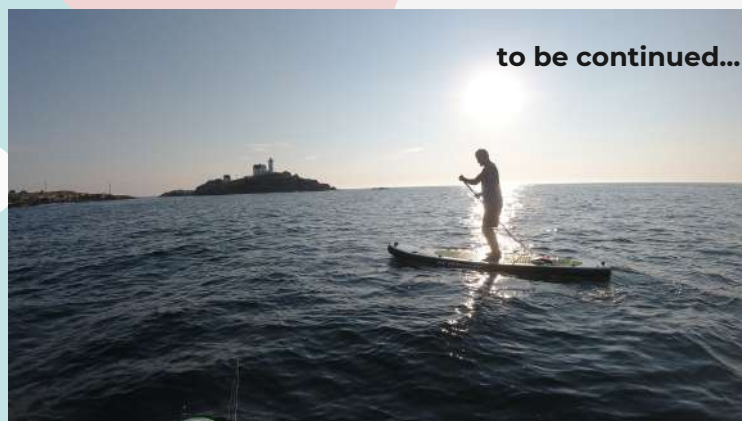
What was the motivation behind joining the Peace Corps? Were you mostly motivated to travel around the world?

I liked teaching and thought to myself, why not combine it with travel. I wanted to learn new languages, learn about new cultures. Maybe it’s just in my blood because growing up we moved many times. Before I finished high school, we had moved thirteen different times and not just small distances, I mean moving different to states. Slovakia at that time was unknown to me. I didn’t have a plan, initially it was supposed to be just for two years but now I ended up spending half of my life outside of US.



Was it difficult getting used to a new kind of environment?

When I first came here, it was very different from what I was used to in the US. So I can say that initially it was kind of a culture shock. But I can see a lot of changes compared to the time I came here.



ERASMUS DIARIES

EXPLORING NEW HORIZONS: MY TIME AT UKF IN SLOVAKIA

By Nahit Soner Börekçi

Allow me to introduce myself

My name is Nahit Soner Börekçi. I study English Language Teaching (ELT) at Mersin University in Turkey, and I am a 4th year student. Last semester, I came to study to the English Language and Culture department at Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra (UKF) with the Erasmus+ mobility program. I spent the summer semester there and would like to share my experiences with you.

Although I have been abroad to study before, it was the first time I had ever been to Slovakia, so I knew very little about the country, and Nitra. However, I have known UKF thanks to a visit to our university made by Doc. Mgr. Kováčiková, PhD. and Mgr. Sándorová, PhD. Their enthusiasm and sincerity were one of the reasons I wanted to study at UKF.

After arrival

When I first arrived, my Erasmus buddy (Adam) contacted me to help me with the practical issues. As he was also studying at the same department as me, he helped me with AIS (Academic Information System) and the course selection procedure. Moreover, as exchange students, we were contacted via email that UKF is also a member of the Erasmus Student Network (ESN). Janka from ESN UKF showed us around the city and tried to create a friendly environment as we all were strangers both to the city and the university. Her welcome and help about the school system and daily life in Slovakia were very supportive during the whole semester.



The courses start

I must admit that I found it strange to have seminars and lectures separately as at my home university we have only lectures, and following the timeline for both was a bit challenging in the beginning. Even the room numbers for lectures were sometimes problematic. However, my classmates were always helpful with anything that confused me. After some time, I found it quite functional to have them separately because seminars gave more hands-on experience with the definitions and concepts given in the lectures, and we were able to discuss more at seminars, which is great for the learning process. The classroom size was surprisingly low compared to my home university, so our teachers could communicate with us better. The variety of courses given for international students was quite good, I have experienced studying in another university abroad, and it is not always a certain thing that you will find courses both useful for you and fit for your learning agreement.

During the courses, it was nice to see that it wasn't all deductive, rather, we were able to see most of the subject by practicing. Also, the teaching practice starts earlier at UKF than at my home university for ELT students, it is only in 4th year that we start our teaching practices in Turkey. How few hours may they be, it is still early on, so that students can experience what they will face in their profession in the future. Also, it gives a more realistic understanding of the terms and approaches we study in our courses.

There come the exams

The examination system is maybe the most different thing than we have at my home university. Waiting for exam dates to be declared while the semester goes on was a bit stressful, also being able to take them three times was both advantageous and strange. In a semester, we are used to having mid-term exams (40 % of the total score) and final exams (60 % of the total score), which are both known before we start and only have one chance for each. However, being given an assignment instead of a mid-term exam and having the exam at the end of the period was a better experience as I think it enhances the learning process. Despite my liking, of course, we made some mistakes with it, as we were not used to signing up for each exam, but those mistakes fortunately were overcome by the help of our teachers and classmates.

Life in Nitra and Slovakia

It was different for me to see how life was calm in Slovakia. When I saw Bratislava for the first time, I was shocked at how few people were around the city. It was even calmer in Nitra. The nature was at its fullest. I think it was green as far as the eye can see which was very nice after living in a city surrounded by apartments. There weren't frequent traffic jams and crowded streets. I found it quite peaceful in the beginning. However, as it is in everything, there are pros and cons to it. When I was looking for a different atmosphere it was harder to get. Furthermore, the holidays were a bit strange for me, as almost the whole city was empty and stores were closed abruptly, and they stayed closed sometimes even after the holiday ended.



The solution for that was having the trip with friends. I must admit I wasn't expecting that many international and exchange students in Nitra. But as there are two universities in the city, there were a lot of exchange students with whom we had wonderful trips together both in Slovakia and abroad.

The biggest challenge about Slovakia, is obviously, not speaking the Slovak language, although many of the younger generation speak English very well, few from the older generation are willing to speak English or able to speak. So, sometimes in the market or at the train station, it was hard to find a way, but overall it was not something upsetting.



All things must come to an end

In the end, the semester went very fast. As you heard the expression, time is relative, when you are having a good time, it goes faster. I have enjoyed every lesson I have attended, met with great teachers and friends, and traveled a bit more than I thought that I would. It was a great experience to study abroad in Slovakia, and I didn't feel regret about it at any moment. I am glad that I have chosen UKF for the Erasmus+ mobility program, and looking forward to visiting it again.

ERASMUS DIARIES

MY LIFE IN SLOVAKIA

By Zilola Shodmonova

My name is Zilola Shodmonova, and I was born in Uzbekistan, specifically in Bukhara. I first attended school in my district, then completed academic lyceum. Afterward, I entered Bukhara State Pedagogical Institute, where I am now a senior student majoring in Teaching English Language and Literature.

One day, while browsing the “Opportunities Circle” website, I came across a scholarship opportunity: the National Scholarship Program of the Slovak Republic. I thoroughly reviewed all the requirements and realized that I met them, such as completing 2.5 semesters of education at my home university for bachelor's studies and gaining acceptance to a Slovak university. I began researching Slovakia, its universities, education system, and culture. I learned that Slovakia is among the top 30 safest countries for students.

Over three months, I prepared all the necessary documents and applied for the scholarship. When the results were announced, I was delighted to learn that I had been awarded the NSP scholarship. This gave me the opportunity to study at Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra for one semester, or five months. In the paragraphs below, I will share my cultural experiences, academic life, and personal growth in Slovakia.

As someone open to new experiences, I was excited to begin this new chapter of life in Europe. Traveling to Slovakia was smooth since, as a scholarship holder, I received ample support with the visa process and other required documents. I fell in love with Nitra the moment I arrived. The city's atmosphere and the weather were pleasantly familiar, resembling my home country's climate.



During my academic journey, I studied at the Faculty of Education at Constantine the Philosopher University. I took seven subjects and successfully completed all of them. I am deeply grateful to my teachers, including doc. Mgr. Elena Kováčiková, PhD, Mgr. Daniela Myjavec, PhD, Mgr. Gregor Vnučko, PhD, Mgr. Beáta Ďuračková, PhD, Mgr. Dorothea Bagalová, and Mgr. Lenka Michelčíková, PhD. Their lessons were more than just educational sessions; they were inspiring and transformative. Each of them taught me invaluable lessons for my career. If someone asked me who my role model teachers are, I would name all of them.

I learned a lot about student psychology, teaching methods for different age groups, flexibility in the classroom, and adapting activities to various audiences. For instance, Elena Kováčiková reignited my passion for teaching and motivated me to aim for excellence. Beáta Ďuračková's lessons opened my eyes to social topics and societal issues. Meanwhile, Lenka Michelčíková deepened my understanding of the history and culture of Great Britain, a subject I've always found fascinating. Gregor Vnučko's lessons were so engaging that I eagerly anticipated each one, hoping to absorb his knowledge and teaching style.

Some of the courses I took, such as Oral Performance and History and Culture of Great Britain, were not offered at my home university. This enriched my education with new knowledge. The lessons were delivered in a free, student-centered style, which I found very effective. Although the AIS system and selecting subjects initially seemed challenging, the teachers' guidance made the process straightforward. I appreciated that many students in Slovakia pursue double majors, which significantly enhances their career prospects. This differs from my home country, where we typically study one major for four years. The university library was another highlight, offering a cozy environment and all the resources I needed for my studies.

Before coming to Slovakia, I had some basic knowledge of its culture. However, experiencing it firsthand was a completely different and enriching experience. On my first day at university, the Erasmus Student Network (ESN) organized a welcome event for Erasmus students. They provided detailed information about Slovak traditions, rules, and celebrations. Throughout the semester, they hosted parties for various festivals, making me feel like a part of Slovak society. I also tried traditional Slovak food, such as Halusky, and instantly loved it.

Slovak people were incredibly friendly. I built strong friendships, including one with Alexandra Drevovala, who I consider a lifelong friend. She guided me through historical sites in Nitra, Bratislava, and Banská Bystrica, always offering support whenever I faced difficulties. Slovakia not only provided me with a quality education but also lifelong friendships.

Being an exchange student has given me confidence, independence, adaptability, and a global perspective. I've discovered that I'm capable of more than I ever imagined. This experience taught me resilience and the ability to overcome challenges. It also expanded my network, as I now have friends from countries like Madagascar, Hungary, France, Russia, Germany, and more. Living in Slovakia also allowed me to learn basic Slovak through language lessons organized by ESN. I am grateful to the Slovak government for providing excellent services for students, such as discounts at many places and free train travel—benefits I didn't have in my home country.

My exchange experience transformed me. It gave me new perspectives on life and education. I encourage all students to set clear goals, seek new opportunities, remain adaptable, develop research skills, stay open-minded, and build strong networks.

Living and studying in Nitra, Slovakia, helped me grow in ways I never imagined. I am incredibly thankful to the NSP program for this opportunity to study abroad and experience a different way of life. Slovakia is a country I will always cherish and hope to revisit someday.



ART CORNER

Short Story Competition Showcase!

We are thrilled to present the outstanding stories from this year's Short Story Competition. Every story submitted reflects the incredible talent and effort of our participants, and we are proud to share them all with you.

First, we present our top three winning stories, followed by all the creative entries. Can you spot what these short stories have in common? Each author was challenged to include five special words: ENJOY, ENGLISH, FUN, WATERMELON, and MAGIC. Dive into their creative worlds and see how they worked their magic!

Tunes Across Timelines

By Katarína Luptáková



Cold air blew through the antique library, where Sam and Elena found themselves once again. The heavy, oak doors creaked as the room settled into silence. Elena, a fiercely independent girl from 2093, and Sam, a curious teenager from 1920s England, had stumbled upon each other, thanks to a peculiar device—a silver pocket watch, with the power to whisk them to different times.

“Enjoy the quiet while you can,” Elena murmured, her American accent still strange to Sam’s ears. “It won’t be long before something chaotic happens.”

Sam chuckled, flicking his hat upwards. “With you around? Chaos seems inevitable.” They spoke only in simple English—a neutral ground, since their native idioms often caused confusion. Tonight, they found themselves in New York, year 2020, wandering through the busy streets, until they stumbled upon a tiny vinyl shop. The air smelled like old cardboard and coffee, and rows of records lined the shelves. Sam adjusted his bowler hat, eyeing the room. “This place has... character,” he mused, his English accent carrying a hint of curiosity. Elena smirked. “You mean... it’s chaotic.”

Sam reached for a bright pink vinyl with Harry Styles depicted across it. “What is this?” he asked. “Harry Styles. You’re in for a treat,” Elena replied with a sly grin.

Sam turned the record over, squinting at the tracklist. “‘Watermelon Sugar?’ Music about sugar and... watermelons? Peculiar.”

Elena laughed and grabbed the vinyl. “Let’s give it a try.”

At the back of the shop, they found a listening station. Elena placed the record carefully on the turntable, and the needle settled onto the grooves with an iconic faint crackle. She handed Sam one of the headphones and put hers on, showing him how the gadget worked. As the opening chords of Watermelon Sugar played, Sam's expression shifted to intrigued. The melody was bright and warm, unlike anything he knew.

"It's... lively," he admitted after a moment.

"Lively's one way to put it. Fun's another," Elena replied.

When Harry Styles crooned, "I want your belly," Sam raised an eyebrow. "What does that even mean?"

"It's slang," Elena said, giggling. "Pop music's about vibes and feelings, not making sense."

"Modern English is baffling," Sam replied, shaking his head, but as the song played, the carefree rhythm appeared to connect the gap of a hundred years between them. Elena caught Sam stealing glances at her, noticing how the soft glow reflected in his thoughtful gray eyes.

"It's strange," he murmured, "but... weirdly enjoyable. There's a certain magic to it."

Elena nodded softly.

When the song came to an end, a comfortable silence sat between them. Sam gently set the headphones down, his fingers accidentally brushing hers.

"Pop music may be peculiar," he said, smiling, "but I could get used to it... under the right circumstances, that is."

Elena felt her cheeks warm up, but she shrugged it off, "Haven't experienced anything like this in your timeline, huh?"

"Indeed, I have not," he replied, "but I'm glad to have experienced it with you."

It's the Most Nonsense Time of the Year

By Jasmina Adame



“... In size 38?”

“Sorry, can you repeat that?” I turn around to the old man.

“Do you have these watermelon socks in size 38? It's for my daughter” the man repeats.

“Apologies, if they're not on the rack, then we don't have them” I respond.

“Could you check in the back anyway?”

I look around the pop-up store. All we could see were stands full of socks and a desk with a cash register.

“Apologies but this is really all we have. If you want, you can check our online store—” I reach my hand for a leaflet, but he stops me.

“No need, I wanted to buy them today. It takes too long to order online.”

No way, José. It's Christmas Day and you didn't buy anything for your daughter, did you?

“You know, you should smile more when dealing with customers,” the old man says.

I give him the toothiest smile that doesn't meet my eyes.

“See, now that's better. We should celebrate the magic and joy of this holiday! Have a nice day and Merry Christmas”

I stared daggers at him until he left and went to finish my work.

Seriously, we live in this day and age when everything is digital and we even have AI, yet I still need to use pen and paper to write which articles we've sold?

When a new customer walks in, I immediately put on a fake smile and get ready to greet them. To my surprise, I know this person.

“Hey bestie, how's it going? Decided to visit you!” Laura bobs in.

“I thought you went home after taking that English test,” I retorted.

“Nah, I had to come see you at work today. How's it going?”

“Bad. The boss is spying on us to fire someone. Turns out we are not making enough, so no Christmas bonus”

“Oh, boo. Anyway, walk with me while I spill some tea...”

I took this job because I'm flat broke. I live in a shared apartment and gas prices went up. And my Favorite is hungry again...

I also just barely passed my finals while working (test at 8:00, opening the store at 9:00), and today I was substituting for a different girl. “I caught cold” my ass, she was too lazy to work on a Christmas Day. Well, sucks to be her, since it was a Sunday. I'll get double the pay for fewer hours!

Me and my friend pretend on cameras how I'm helping her choose socks while she tells me all the latest news from school. I even gave her my employee discount, because those 2€ really wouldn't help meet the store plan. Enjoy!

Later I was surprised by my boss when I closed the register for the day.

“You've been laid off” he didn't even greet me.

“What?”

“The sales will go down after the holidays, so we don't need that many workers”

It seems that the Christmas spirit doesn't exist.

On the way home, I stole the watermelon socks size 38 I set aside for myself.



Disco Requiem

By Rasto Macko

A siren's wail fills the morning. A gunshot ringing out somewhere in the city. Then another. A symphony of automatic gunfire bringing in a new day.

You wake, confused, embalmed in a cold sweat. A pain, all too familiar, splits open your head in searing agony. Your apartment, a nest of depravity, stares back at you. Your gaze is caught by a gray, uncaring box. An old radio. You recall a well known singer, an Englishman, singing ballads about dreams yet to be. Then, another comes to mind. Jacie Denŭr. A disco legend. There is a need in your body to turn the damn thing on, so you do. Creaking to life, the radio spits out a tune into the silence. It's a song you know well, Denŭrs magnum opus: Lovechild. The magic of the waves emanating from the radio is electric. Your legs start to move without you knowing. As you sway your body, a shimmer high above catches your glazed eyes. The contours of a disco ball are all you can see. Hanging from the ceiling, begging to be put to use. You flip a switch on the wall. The ball springs to life, pouring out its colors onto every surface in the room.

Isn't this fun ?

You peer at the hanging sphere. Its pull is magnetic. You put a chair right below the orb. You huff as you slowly climb on top of it. In that moment, you and the ball are one and the same. Entwined in a color-bathed embrace, like two lovers. Your only companion. The pressure of your body is overwhelming. The ball shatters into a rain of glass. There it is, that funny feeling. As if all enjoyment there could be has left. All that remains is a string that once held the shining object. You know what to do, you always did. The string circles your neck, followed by the chair crumbling to the floor.

A specter peers through your window. It gives a faint smile as you drift into a world of your own making.

The rope snaps under your weight and you fall to the ground. You finally take in a breather. The air is sweet, like a summer's first watermelon. Juicy and succulent. As the melody of disco music warms your mind, the corners of your dry mouth peek up ever so slightly. You laugh. It's as genuine as a laugh can be. Picking yourself up, you notice the broken pieces of the disco ball.

What is that thing looking at you ?

In the reflection of the shattered glass, a creature, vile and monstrous, stares deeply into your being. You are wretched, you can't stand the look you're giving yourself. This is who you are, and there's no changing reality. Your mind is finally clear. Tears pool in your eyes. You sob like a child losing its favorite toy. You take a piece of the glass and lead it over your wrists. Red. Crimson. Mors Ultima.

High school love

By Amina Cherid

SPECIAL
READER'S
AWARD

The seniors at Woodsborough High heard a lovely symphony when the last bell went off. The long-awaited time off - the summer break - had finally arrived. The yearly Watermelon Party, an event where all seniors would get together to say goodbye to their teenage years, was about to start.

The quiet, nerdy girl, Nicol, saw the poster in English class and hesitated. She was feeling excluded since she was newbie at Woodsborough high. She had been focused on her books and her thoughts through most of the year, melting into the background. It was scary to think about going to a party with people she hardly knew.

But then there was Patric, the popular jog. Nicol could not overlook the friendship between him and Hannah, the king and queen of the school, despite their love affair. The party lived up to the hype being fun, loud, chaotic, and energetic. She had a twinge of anxiety as Nicol made her way through the crowd. She immediately noticed Patric, who had a kind smile on his face. He introduced her to his buddies and drew her into their conversation.

The party decided to play a game of truth or dare as the evening took on. Patric dared Nicol to read a poem she wrote when it was her turn. He said: "Let us enjoy your work!". She unwillingly agreed. She started reading a poem on the power of telling stories, the magic of words, The surrounding noise calmed as she spoke, and her words charmed everyone.

The audience burst in cheers when she was done. Patric looked at her with amazement and affection. "I had no idea you were so talented," he said.

Nicol blushed. She said, "Thanks," in a voice that was almost unheard.

Hannah, who was watching from a distance, became jealous. The fact that Patric was focussing on anybody but her horrified her. She made the decision to ruin the special moment.

"Nicol, such a poetic soul," she said "almost as poetic as your crush on Patric."

Nicol's face became red. She was embarrassed. But Patric was outraged. Hannah had never acted with such cruelty against him.

"Hannah, that's enough," he replied. "You're being crazy."

Patric and Nicol were left alone as Hannah ran away.

Then Patric said "I'm so sorry about her," "This is not how she typically is. "

Nicol laughed and said : "It's all right. I'm used to it.

Patric took Nicol home as the evening was coming to an end. They spent hours discussing their dreams and hopes under the glow of the stars. Patric was more than just a popular jog, Nicol noticed; he was smart, kind, and truly interested in her.

Patric leaned in to give her a kiss on the cheek as they said goodbye to each other. He said, "I'll see you tomorrow," in a voice that was almost heard. Nicol smiled. She was impatient to see him again, her and Patric started to talk more and got to know each other so good they were inseparable. Patric broke up with Hannah night after the Watermelon party and eventually him and Nicol started dating and after some years they got married and live until death tore them apart.

LINES BETWEEN LINES

By Adam Billik

Suit texted Greybeard at 22:30 on Thursday, 14.11.:

"what's new, Greybi? they excluded me from Nexus, later of why."

Greybeard replied on Friday at 7:30: "What happened?"

Suit wrote right after, as he was walking:

"today we'll meet..., how's the ppt going?"

On Friday morning, Suit, now a non-active worker from Nexus, found himself helping two new foreign workers on the watermelon plantation past Borwood Park in the City of Old. Even though he was no longer officially member of the Nexus network, he felt needed since nobody from Nexus had offered their time.

"We're so glad you came, Suit :)" Brighto and Destino said, gratitude shining on their cheeks as they were waiting for melons to come.

"It's OK, I thought it should always be like this, you know, helpin' each other, offerin' emotional support, makin' the experience less stressful and little more fun..., didn't want to leave you alone..."

"Yeah, we are really thankful," Brighto added with a warm smile. "So..., what happened?"

Destino wondered with huge lines on her forehead.

"Hmm, not easy to explain. I need to check some information first. Shortly, I said something I shouldn't..."

"Oh, we see..." Destino softly and quietly answered.

Later that day around midday, Greybeard met Suit in a toilet room, since he was also at the plantation observing the cultivation of watermelons.

"What's up, my man? So..., why they kicked you out?"

"Sup, Grey, they kicked me out 'cause I told Mrs. Proxy and Beacon that CEO didn't financially support Nexus..."

"Fo' this bizarre thing, brotha?" Greybeard's eyes started popping out.

"Yep, but I'm over it now. I can finally focus on starting my English Pioneer work and raps!" Suit sighed, then went into more depth: "... apparently, Ms. Captain, probably under some magic spell, got a call from the Ambassador of Worlds that she heard bads about CEO from our Academy of Enjoy... I went there on Wednesday to give feedback to Mrs. Proxy and Beacon from a conference in the City of Castle. Also shared ideas about increasement of incoming and outgoing watermelon visitors, but ended up like a %*@\$ horse that shared some government-level secret..." Suit said being lost in his suit by shrugged shoulders.

"Graybeard empathetically added: "Lines between lines..."

"Yap, just gotta respect members' delulu fear and move on..."

"True.." "Btw, how's your Pioneer goin'?"

"I picked up the brush," Greybeard murmured. "...but my canvas remains full of unlimited possibilities."

Later that day, Suit visited his Academy of Enjoy:

"Good Friday afternoon Mrs. Proxy and Beacon. Excuse me, was there any effort to contact people around the CEO to help Nexus?"

"No, Mr. Suit, this must be some misunderstanding..." Mrs. Proxy said, in her firm tone.

"We're not in contact with those people and don't know even know them personally," Mrs. Beacon added.

"I see, thank you for clarifying. Yesterday, they... excluded me." Mr. Suit swallowed, followed by a little talk why...

Mrs. Beacon's last words were: "Mr. Suit, after hearing this, I would look around more closely at people I'm working with..."

Diana's kitchen

By Jozef Mutala

“Oh shoot”! I whispered to my myself after I stepped into puddle on my way to my favorite brunch place. On weekends, I like to get a little more sleep as I feel exhausted after the whole week of early waking up and I don't want to make food for myself. I am studying abroad so my mom can't cook for me either. Walking to this place called Diana's kitchen in my wet shoe was not the way I imagined it the day before. As soon as I came in, the whole stuff was friendly and kind as always. Maybe it is because every time I go there, I order the same and God I was there many times. I sat down at my favorite table. After these many visits of mine I feel like my body is made for that chair. Most of the time the food comes right to me without the waitresses asking me, as they know what I order every single time when I visit. Today was different. A young woman came by, so I realized it was probably a new waitress. “Oh, those angel blue eyes”. I was thinking in my mind while I kept staring at the most beautiful girl in front of me. “Hello, what can I bring you”? Even more beautiful and joyful voice said that to me. I stutteringly responded: “I'd like to-to have my English brea-breakfast and or-orange juice.” The young woman blushed, turned around, went to get my food and brought it to me with the sweet word “enjoy”. Little did I know before I came to Diana's place that I will meet the mother of my kids and the wife of mine, or at least that's what I hoped for at that moment. The whole time I was eating my food I was thinking about the one and only. It was me and her on the beach feeding each other with cubes of watermelon like in those movies. Having fun times together, laughing at stupid jokes and staring into each other's eyes laying on grass outside. Never have I ever experienced such feelings rushing through my body. Butterflies were flying all around my stomach. After I finished eating and went to pay, I left a small tip and asked this girl for her name. It was Diana, the daughter of the owner who this place was named after. I've never realized how beautiful name that really is. I managed to get her number and she even agreed to have a dinner with me the day after. I couldn't be more overjoyed for that. I came home and called my older sister asking her how it is possible. How it is possible that I stepped into that puddle, got my shoe wet and then I met her, it is so unreal. “Is that some kind of indescribable magic or some?”, I asked her. And she said something I will never forget. “It is magic, we call it love. It appears when we don't expect it at all and then we know that's the one we fight for.”

Doesn't It?

By A. C. Light

Once upon a time, there was a being, The Light-bringer. To some, he was a real historical person. To others, he was just a character from scary stories. But what happens when you look at the being and his deeds in a different light? Light sounds like right up his alley, doesn't it?

He was the one who said the first "Let there be light" and watched as the magic started happening in front of his eyes. He enjoyed every moment of it. One doesn't realise how much light unlocks. Imagine everything in black and white, no red or green, or yellow, or brown, or any other colour you can think of. Imagine your holiday soup without any taste, no sweet or sour, no bitterness or salty taste, or your summers without the sweetness of a cold freshly cut watermelon as everything around you is burning up in the heat of the sun. All of nature in the same tone. Sucks the fun out of life, doesn't it?

Now imagine languages without the most known writers because they couldn't draw inspiration from their everyday lives. English without Shakespeare, Russian without Dostoevsky, Italian without Alighieri, and many more. Those are just writers, now the musicians, the painters. Now let's leave art altogether. Black and white becomes a rather generous description, doesn't it?

The road was long and could be called tiring, but now it was also rewarding. All those ions being told he's behind all the evil in the world, him not being able to see the difference between what people told him and what was between the lines. He walked down a street and a person would come up to him to tell him he was to blame for their child's lack of contact with their parent because "he told them to follow their desires". He turned a corner and another person pointed at him saying he was to blame for their child's death because their "little girl cut off her hair" out of anger. Before he could recover from that another person would blame him for children's hunger and homelessness half across the globe because "he inspired someone to hoard rather than share". He didn't know any of those people or the people they spoke of, but he knew that one day he would meet them again. The world gets called small after all, doesn't it? And years later, he did, well only four out of six mentioned, but he did. The other two didn't do anything wrong and so he only hoped their lives were full of light like he always intended for everyone. And there the four understood that he wasn't the darkness and they weren't the light. He was the light-bringer. And as a character once said – the darker the darkness, the brighter the light. He had to be bright, he had to be the light-bringer because one cannot rectify one evil with another. The scale works differently, doesn't it?

Priceless Joy

By Alex Rusnáková

Once upon a time, there was a boy, a young man, really. On the outside, he seemed like he was enjoying school, or at least the breaks like any other student. But behind the smile were tears most of the evenings. He felt lonely even when he was with 20 more people in the room all laughing over something.

One day, the boy's smile and laughter faded as if someone had taken away his inner light. And the boy felt like that as well. Like a thick storm cloud was covering the shining of the sun and everything became blue rather than filled with the warmth of yellow. He thought the day would go by, nobody would try to talk to him and he would get to go home. But his English teacher noticed and she chose to talk to him rather than leave it to him and his mind's choice of mercy.

After the class, she called him over to her desk and he reluctantly went to her. It was the lunch break and he wanted some alone time. Everyone who feels down, especially as low as he did, thinks they want to be alone. But the teacher knew better than that. She knew that what he needed was company and compassion.

He just spent hours of listening to people around him having fun, talking about their plans for vacations, some at-home family time, going swimming or sunbathing, enjoying cold watermelons in the heat of the summer days. But not he, he wasn't planning anything for that summer.

She pushed him to talk to her knowing how much something like that could do. They ended up talking for the whole break and even a little into the next class, and by the time they ended the conversation, the boy seemed a lot better. Like there was someone else next to her, not the lightless student she saw during their class. He wasn't shining like the first bright star on a sunset sky, but the moon behind thin clouds as the morning's sun reached the horizon was a rather fair metaphorical description.

When he came to the next class, his classmates could see how different he was feeling just by his posture alone but his face was also visibly brighter. When they asked what happened he said "The magic of joy" referring to the teacher whose name was Antoinette Charmain. The boy knew how accurate the meaning of her name was, especially now when he got to experience her desire to help others from the darkness of their minds.

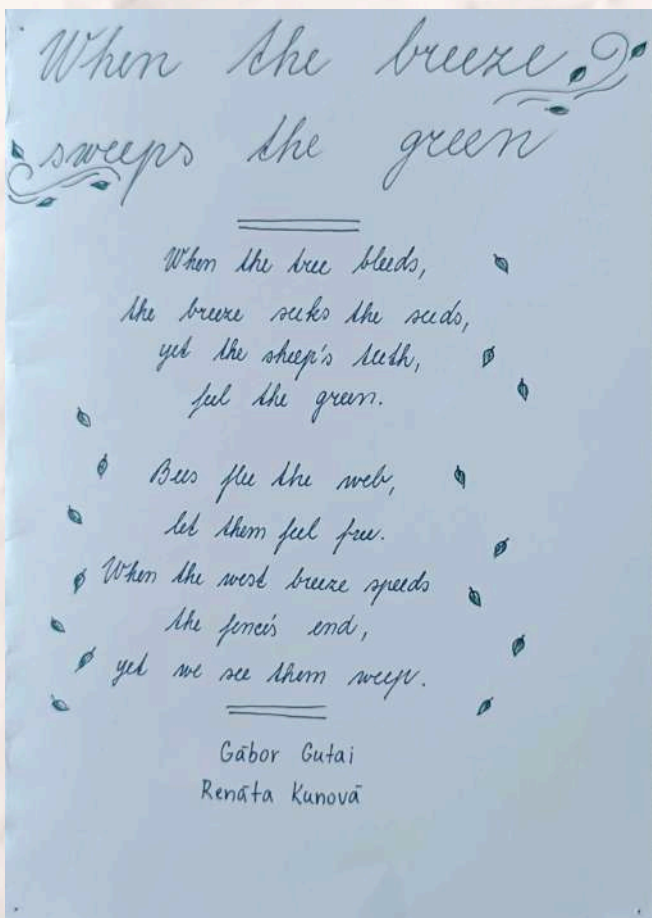
After that day, he started spending his lunch break with her to repay her for helping him and also to keep himself from reaching as dark places as he did then. Slowly he got better and could see where he wanted his life to go and what he wanted to do it.

ART CORNER

Exploring the Unusual

Creativity knows no boundaries, and this year's Art of Word workshop proved just that! Our talented students ventured into the extraordinary, experimenting with unusual literary genres that pushed the limits of imagination. Each piece reflects bold artistic exploration and a willingness to challenge the norms of traditional.

Enjoy the journey into the extraordinary!



Reverse-lipogram (lipogram) (also antilipo or transgram):
each word must contain a particular letter in the text.

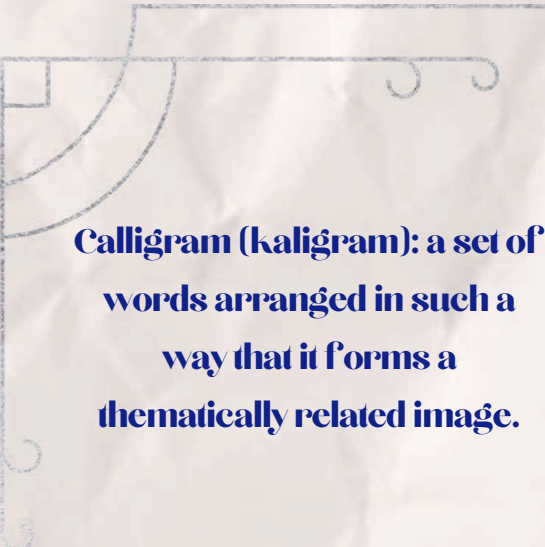
Acrostic (akrostich) – a poem in which the first letter of each line spells out a word, name, or phrase when read vertically



ART CORNER

A drawing of a dragon and a goblin-like creature. The dragon is at the top, with large wings and a long tail. The goblin-like creature is below it, with large eyes and a mischievous expression. The drawing is done in a simple, sketchy style.

us (abecedarius) (abecedary edarian): a special type of which the first letter of everyrophe or verse follows the the letters in the alphabet.

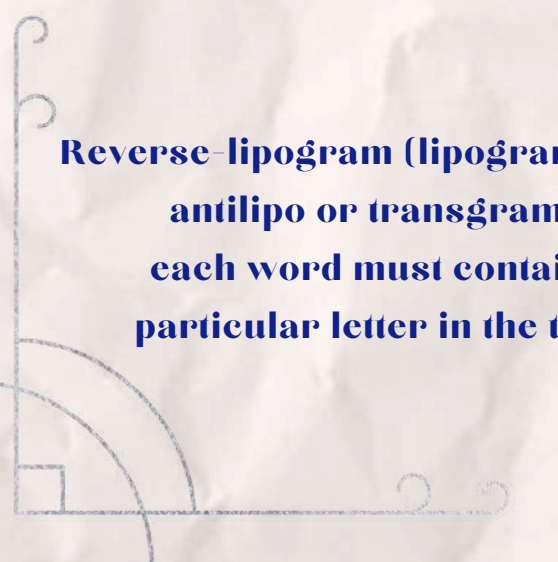


Calligram (kaligram): a set of words arranged in such a way that it forms a thematically related image.

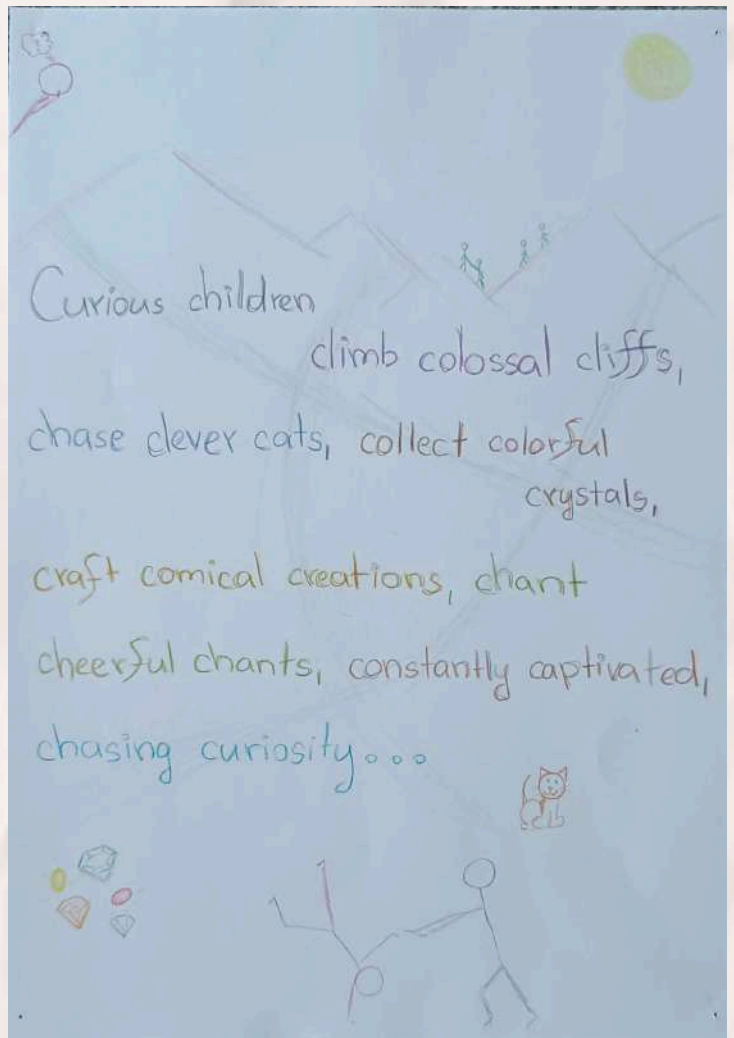
/♥/♥/
 Calligram - Kaligram
 ALICE IN THE WOODLAND MEMORIES OF FRIENDS MILK
 BREAKFAST HONEY FRUITS STEAM ENGLISH CULTURE
 BEVERAGE CUP LEMON TRAVELING HIGING FAMILY
 ENGLAND STRAWBERRY CLOVERBERRY BLUEBERRY MINT
 GLASS PORCELAIN SOUVENIRE ANCIENT TIMES
 LONG HISTORY COLONIES HISTORY EXPLORATION
 ADVENTURE! REST ENJOYMENT BEAUTY TEA
 LONDON ELIZABETH VICTORIA CHARLES TEA
 QUEEN SERENCE BOOKS BLACK TRAVELITY
 ROYALTY ROYAL FAMILY CEMEMORY TEARD

ART CORNER

ANOTHER
ANOTHER SEES ANOTHER
ANOTHER AMONG OTHERS
ANOTHER JOURNEY TO ANOTHER
ANOTHER PATHS CROSSING OTHER
ANOTHER SEES ANOTHER AMONG FRIENDS
ANOTHER WAITS FOR ANOTHER AND ANOTHER
AND IN THERE IS ALWAYS ANOTHER.



**Reverse-lipogram (lipogram) (also
antilipo or transgram):
each word must contain a
particular letter in the text.**



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