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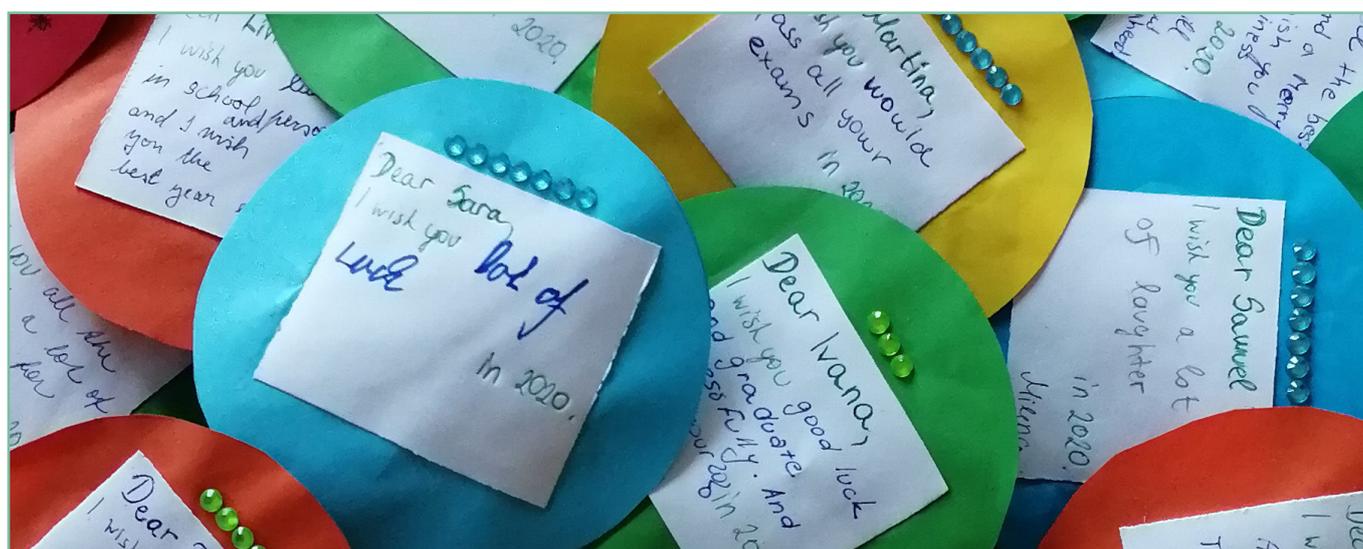
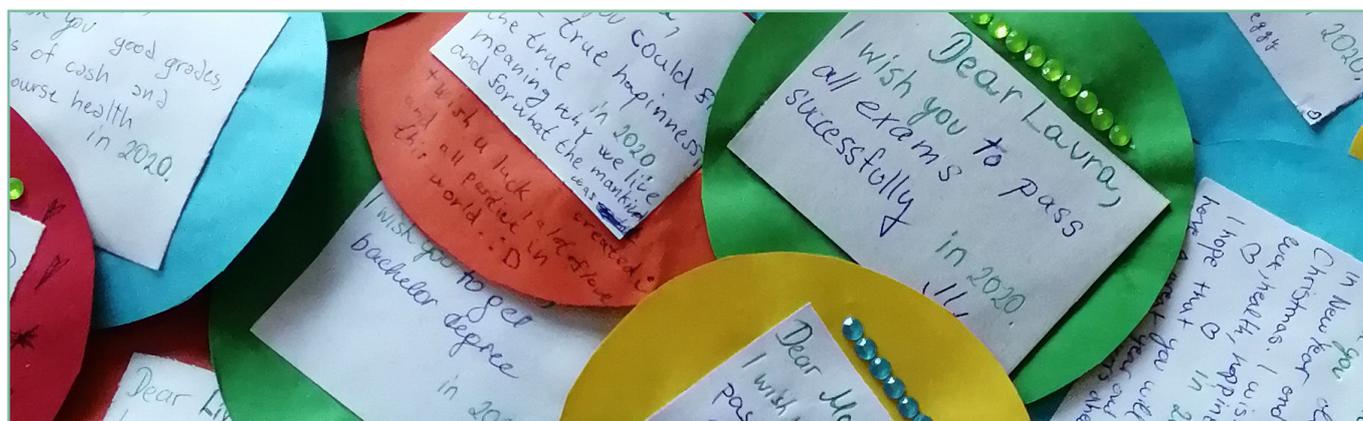
DEAR READER,

This term the Department of Language Pedagogy and Intercultural Studies has become truly multicultural. Slovak students together with students from Turkey, the Canary Islands, Russia, Ukraine, and Serbia share their individual opinions, ideas, and attitudes in seminars and lectures. At the same time, not only does our department welcome foreign students, but also Slovak students are participating in the Erasmus programme abroad.

Both Slovak and foreign students arrive at their host university with different expectations, ideas, and perhaps fears. However, present as well as former Erasmus students agree that their stay extended their knowledge in the field they study and enriched them personally.

This issue of the journal gives an insight into the positive and negative aspects of Erasmus life through the eyes of Slovak and foreign students.

Enjoy!



KURT VONNEGUT:

SLAUGHTERHOUSE- FIVE

All this happened, more or less. The war parts, anyway, are pretty much true. One guy I knew really was shot for taking a teapot that wasn't his. Another guy I knew really did threaten to have his personal enemies killed by hired gunmen after the war. And so on. I've changed all their names.

Kurt Vonnegut: Bitúnok č. 5

Preklad Kristína Bartóková

Všetko sa to stalo, viac-menej. Teda aspoň časti o vojne sú zväčša pravdivé. Jeden chlapík, ktorého som poznal bol skutočne zastrelený v Drážďanoch, pretože si vzal čajník, ktorý mu nepatrilo. Druhý chlapík sa skutočne vyhrážal, že najme ozbrojencov, aby po vojne zabili všetkých jeho osobných nepriateľov. A tak ďalej. Všetkým som zmenil mená.

Kurt Vonnegut: Az ötös számú vágóhíd

Fordította Kristína Bartóková

Mindez megtörtént, többé-kevésbé. Legalábbis a háborús részek többnyire igazak. Egy fickót, akit ismertem, tényleg lelőttek Drezdában azért, mert elvett egy teáskannát, ami nem állt tulajdonában. Egy másik ismerős fickó tényleg azzal fenyegetőzött, hogy felfogadott zsoldosokkal végezteti ki személyes ellenségeit a háború után. És így tovább. Mindenki nevét megváltoztattam.

ISAK DINESEN:
THE DREAMING CHILD

‘Who are you looking out for?’ Simon asked, to say something.

The girl’s face broke into an ecstatic, presumptuous smile.

‘For the man I am going to marry, of course,’ she said.

Something in her countenance made the boy confident and happy, he grinned a little at her.

‘That will perhaps be me,’ he said.

‘Ha, ha,’ said the girl, ‘he is a few years older than you, I can tell you.’

‘Why,’ said Simon, ‘you are not grown up yourself.’

The little girl shook her head solemnly. ‘Nay,’ she said, ‘but when I grow up I will be exceedingly beautiful, and wear brown shoes with heels, and a hat.’

‘Will you have an orange?’ asked Simon, who could give her none of the things she had named.

Snívajúce dieťa

Preklad Kristína Bartóková

„Koho tak vyzeráš?“ spýtal sa Simon, len aby reč nestála. Na tvári dievčaťa sa zjavil nadšený, trúfalý úsmev.

„Muža, za ktorého sa vydám, pravdaže,“ odpovedala. Vyžarovalo z nej niečo, čo urobilo chlapca sebavedomým a šťastným. Trochu sa na ňu zaškeril.

„To budem možno ja,“ povedal.

„Ha, ha,“ zasmialo sa dievča, „on je o niekoľko rokov starší od teba, to ti rovno poviem.“

„Veď,“ povedal Simon, „ty sama nie si ešte dospelá.“ Dievča vážne zakrútilo hlavou.

„Nie,“ povedala, „ale keď vyrastiem budem prekrásna. Budem nosiť hnedé topánky s opätkami a klobúk.“

„Dáš si pomaranč?“ spýtal sa Simon, ktorý jej nemohol dať ani jednu z vecí, ktoré práva vymenovala.

Мечтающий ребенок

Кулаковская Арина, Марийский государственный университет

(Arina Kulakovskaia, Mari State University)

Фоминова Татьяна, Мордовский государственный университет им. Н. П. Огарева

(Tatiana Fominova, Ogarev Mordovia State University)

- Кого ты здесь высматриваешь? - спросил Саймон, чтобы начать разговор. На лице девочки распалась восторженная улыбка.

- Мужчину, за которого я выйду замуж, само собой,- сказала она.

Что-то в её выражении лица обрадовало мальчика и придало уверенности в себе, он ей улыбнулся.

- Может быть, это буду я,- сказал он.

- Ха-ха, - ответила девочка. - Он уж точно на несколько лет тебя старше.

- Почему? - спросил Саймон. - Ты же сама ещё маленькая.

Девчушка важно кивнула.

- Ну да,- сказала она. - Но когда я вырасту, я буду необычайно красивой и буду носить коричневые туфли на каблучках и шляпу.

- Будешь апельсин? - спросил Саймон, который не мог предложить ничего из того, что она перечислила.

ERASMUS LIFE THROUGH THE EYES OF A SLOVAK STUDENT

Michal Fáber, Masaryk University in Brno, the Czech Republic

Katarína Fáberová

There are a lot of interesting articles about different views on education in various countries from the point of view of a teacher. But what does it look like from the point of view of a student? Michal, during his time at the university, tried the student's life at three universities. In the following interview, he will talk about the way to such experience, how it enriched his life and what benefits it brings along.

In how many countries have you been officially a student?

I am proud to say that I have studied at three universities. At Masaryk University in Brno – my alma mater, at the University of Porto in Porto, Portugal and twice at the Istanbul Bilgi University in Istanbul, Turkey.

How did you manage to do that?

My faculty supports students' mobility. It has agreements with universities worldwide and is happy to send its students to gain experience at their partner universities. I applied for the Erasmus+ study programme and that was where the doors opened for me.

What was your field of study? Did the universities abroad offer you the same or similar field?

My field of study was European studies. In Porto, the programme was called International Relations and we also had slight changes regarding the topics of classes, but overall it was the same as we had back home in Brno. In Istanbul, the field of study was the same and all my classes were in consent with classes at my home university in Brno. I also had no problems with credits at my home university which was a big plus.

What major challenges did you face while studying abroad?

Since Turkey is not a member of the EU, I had to apply for a residence permit in order to be allowed to stay in the country for more than 90 days. Along with it, I had to provide loads of documents and certifications. It all had to be done in the Turkish language. For me, this was the biggest challenge as at first, I could not speak the Turkish language.

How were the educational systems different from the Slovak/Czech educational system? Do you see a big difference?

It was quite similar to studying in Brno. During lectures, we mainly listened to the lecturer. During seminars, we mostly wrote essays and seminar papers for various topics.

We also prepared a few presentations but mostly it was led by the lecturers. At both universities, classes lasted for three hours.

Which country do you think had the best educational system? Why?

For me, the Turkish educational system was the best. The amount of curriculum was reasonable, there were no word for word test questions, therefore, memorizing by heart was avoided. The focus was on how the knowledge can be applied and it made the whole studying process way more interesting.

Have you encountered any language problems? How did you solve them?

In Porto, I had a slight language problem. I knew it would not be easy, but I love challenges and this was a huge one for me. I could speak Spanish before I went to Porto and thanks to that I was able to learn the language quite fast. At the end of my Erasmus stay, I could speak fluent Portuguese.

In Istanbul, the courses were in English, so it was not hard for me to study there. Since I love learning languages, I focused a lot on studying the language and with the great help from my Turkish friends, by the time I headed back home I could speak fluent Turkish.

What about the adaptation process?

At both universities, we had some welcome meetings where all necessities were explained. We got our classes scheduled and started right away. Since there were not many changes it was not that hard to acclimatize at either of the universities and given that I am a very outgoing person, I immediately

found friends in my classes and that helped a lot. If I needed any help, teachers were always ready to give a hand and I cannot think of one negative experience.

Have you been in touch with students from various countries besides the ones you were studying at?

Indeed, as an Erasmus student, I had various classmates from different countries. We had plenty of meetings, Erasmus programmes, for example, thematic dinners where everyone brought their native food. Thanks to this, I have now many many friends around the whole world. Besides Turkish and Portuguese, I had Brazilian, Pakistani, French, German, Saudi Arabian, Egyptian and Tunisian classmates who later become friends.

Could you give any advice to our readers?

Yes, if you have the opportunity to try studying abroad, do not hesitate. You will not regret a single minute and you will only gain – life experience, knowledge and most importantly friendships for life.

Was there anything surprising during your stays?

Well, there were many things that are not common in the Czech Republic or Slovakia. For example, in Istanbul, we had our school buses that were for free. We could also get to school by boat. We also had a great campus where we had restaurants and cafés. Above the restaurants, there were playrooms with PlayStations and Xboxes for spending free time between lectures. The university resides in the first power station of the Ottoman Empire with the museum

inside. Music concerts also take place here very often, and world-famous bands are invited, for example, Red Hot Chili Peppers.

In Porto, students wear Harry Potter-like school uniforms at the university – actually it was the university J. K. Rowling took inspirations for her book from. I also had the opportunity to study at the library where the famous book about Harry Potter was written.

As you can see, studying abroad really is enrichment in a student's life. Our university also offers its students' mobility programmes and if you are interested and want to follow Michal's advice, do not hesitate, go to our university web page and find a university that can offer you compatible education. You will have the time of your life.



SLOVAKIA THROUGH THE EYES OF TURKISH STUDENTS

Sinem Sezer, Semanur Eryegit, and Merve Keşli — Sivas Cumhuriyet University, Turkey

Dominika Krišková

What motivated you to go to Erasmus?

Sinem: The idea of visiting another country, seeing different culture and meeting new people was my major motivation.

Merve: I thought going to Erasmus would be great for my education.

Why did you Choose Slovakia?

Semanur: I chose Slovakia because there were not many other options I could choose from, so I did a little research and thought that Slovakia could be the right option for me.

Sinem: Everybody in Turkey was thinking about Poland. Me and my friends wanted to choose

differently. I've read some great things about Slovakia, so I went with it.

How do you like it here so far?

Merve: I actually haven't got used to Slovakia entirely, but I love it here. People here are really kind and helpful. I also like that the city is quite small and cosy. That must be my favourite attribute of Nitra.

Semanur: I like it here. People are kind and polite, I think I made a good choice.

Sinem: It's a great country and I'm happy to be here.



If you could pick one thing you like the most about Slovakia what would it be?

Semanur: I think that would be Marlenka dessert.

Merve: The people. I absolutely love the people here. So kind and helpful.

Sinem: Definitely Kofola! I will miss drinking it. It's going to be the main reason I will come back here for sure.

What University do you study at and what's your study program back home?

What University do you study at and what's your study program back home?

We study at Sivas Cumhuriyet University and our study programme is English Language Teaching.

How much English do you use on a daily basis in you school?

As we study English language, we speak English all the time. In classes and with our friends.

How much emphasis is put on English language at your university?

For our department English is obviously crucial. The first two years are mainly devoted to perfecting our English language skills and knowledge. The other two years we still use English but focus more on the teacher training.

Can you think of some differences between the Slovak and Turkish educational systems?

Merve: In Turkey, there are more students in classes. Lessons are shorter (50 minutes). Classes are not separated as seminar and lecture. We don't

use as much technology, books are used the most.

Sinem: University in my country takes 4 year. Our department is focused on English speaking skill the first two years and in the other two mostly teacher training.

How has your stay in Slovakia enriched you?

Merve: Staying in Slovakia has made me more of an open-minded person. I'm constantly learning more about your culture and people.

Semanur: I've got to know new culture, it's people and their lifestyle and tasted a lot of new, unfamiliar food.

Sinem: I'm definitely more open-minded and positive person now. Since I'm dealing with problem myself and speak foreign language on a daily basis I feel more confident and satisfied with my progress.

What are some challenges you stumbled upon?

Semanur: Since I don't speak Slovak, I've had some difficulty communicating with people who don't know English.

Sinem and Merve: I think food is the biggest challenge for us. Slovak cuisine is very different from the Turkish one we really miss it sometimes. Except this one, we didn't have much problems as our Erasmus body ESN members are always helpful. We are very grateful for them.

If you could choose all over again would you pick visiting Slovakia again?

Yes, we would. We love Slovakia.

WE LOVE SLOVAKIA



PHOTOS BY: Sinem Sezer, Semanur Eryegit, and Merve Keşli

ENGLISHMAN IN SLOVAKIA

Terézia Považanová

What do you think about life in Slovakia, compared to Britain?

Liam Hassett: I think the pace of life in Slovakia is slower, which I like. Slovakia is generally more rural. England, particularly the southeast where I'm from, is quite urbanized or suburban. So that's one of the biggest differences and probably the thing I like the most about Slovakia.

What do you like about Bratislava?

Liam Hassett: I like that Bratislava is small, yet there's everything here that you need in a big city. I know that not just myself but other people that I know that come from large cities, like London or Paris, enjoy the fact that Bratislava is small. And it's easy to get across town. There are a few problems like the traffic and stuff but generally the size is advantage.

You're from London, right? Where are the streets cleaner, in London or in Bratislava?

Liam Hassett: In Bratislava, for sure.

What part of Slovakia do you like the most?

Liam Hassett: I like the mountains and the forest areas. Because your national parks here, although they're smaller than national parks that we have in Britain, they feel bigger. National parks in Britain are full of villages and roads and everything is suburban even if it's meant to be a national park.

So, I like that the natural areas you have in Slovakia are quite pristine and they feel untouched. I think that's something Slovak people should be proud of and should take a notice when these areas are getting chewed up for profit.

What do you think of Slovak language, is it hard to learn for you?

Liam Hassett: Compared to English, spelling is easier but grammar is harder. I've been here for 11 years and I still don't understand grammar really. I can speak only from hearing things, so sometimes when I try to rearrange those bits that I know I make a mistake. So, grammar is difficult.

Since you have two kids, could you maybe compare Slovak and British school system?

Liam Hassett: From what I've seen so far and from talking to adults who have already been through the school system, I think that the education here is broader. What I learned in school was quite centered around

Britain, particularly subjects like history and geography and stuff like that. In that respect I think it's better to get a broader education. But it's hard to say about standard things like maths and languages. It's difficult to compare. Also, in every country there are good teachers and bad teachers and I don't think it's really fair to try to compare.

Is the British health system better from what you've already experienced?

Liam Hassett: Generally speaking, I would say that the National Health Service in Britain is probably a slightly higher quality than the average hospital or clinic that you go to here in Slovakia. There are some differences, like with your GP. Your main doctor in the UK deals with more things. I got the impression here that your GP here doesn't really help you resolve anything, just gives you a paper to go and see another doctor. Whereas, in the UK, if you have something common you don't have to be referred to a specialist, they just know what to do.

What was your first impression when you came here?

Liam Hassett: I noticed the architecture, obviously it is very different. But also the hills around. The scenery that we have in the southeast of England is very flat. I didn't understand any Slovak and I was a bit but nervous, so my first impressions were mostly visual, because I wasn't interacting with people too much.

Have you noticed some differences between Slovak and British people?

Liam Hassett: I think Slovaks are more honest, more direct. A lot of the manners and politeness in Britain is all about not expressing what you feel, or not trying the inconvenience. Slovak people are very hospitable. And in Britain, for example, when you're a guest in somebody's home and they offer you something to drink or eat, it is polite to decline. But in Slovakia if you offered them something and they want something they say yes. It's more about communicating directly. I like Slovak people.

Comparing standard of living, I like about Slovakia that life is a bit simpler than in the UK. There are some cultural things in Slovakia which are much better, like the importance of family. People spend a lot more time with their families. Also, they spend more time going out into nature and enjoying.

I mean, hard to generalize, I'm sure there are families in Britain that do spend a lot of time together but my impression is that what they call the nuclear family is important but people don't spend as much time I think with cousins, aunts, and uncles.

I don't want to generalize too much but British people don't really cook that often. They either eat out a lot, or buy lots of ready-made meals. That's probably one of the other things I enjoyed. When I came here to see people cooking regularly and properly from scratch.

Do you like Slovak culture, customs, traditions, music?

Liam Hassett: Easter's pretty good, more interesting than what we do in the UK. A lot of our traditional customs sort of disappeared. It's just about buying chocolate. But this tradition you have with the sticks and water this is a very old pre-Christian tradition.

I also like this folk music and folk dancing, because again, these kind of things are more or less dead in Britain. It's nice for me to see even on the TV or the radio or at some big event in town folk dancers or folk musicians. I think that's good because when these things disappear you can't really bring them back.

Would you like to go back to live in Britain?

Liam Hassett: No, I don't have any family there and there's nothing I really miss about life there.

AUSTRIA THROUGH THE EYES OF A SLOVAK STUDENT

Ruth Timková, Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra, Slovakia

Nikoleta Cvejkušová, Klaudia Koberová

What motivated you to apply for Erasmus in Austria?

I have always wanted to study abroad and Erasmus was the only possible option for me. Even though I had a lot of options such as Denmark, Belgium or Ireland, Austria was the most attractive for me because I saw a great opportunity to improve not only English but also German language.

What do you think are the main differences between the Austrian and Slovak education systems?

I think that the main difference is that they focus more on practice and communication.

What would you change at our university after all that you have experienced at the university in Austria?

More practice from the first semester. The reason is that I still feel useless and uneducated even though I got a bachelor degree. The second thing is regular communication in classes. Many of my classmates in Nitra or Linz are

great in classes but they are not able to lead a proper conversation with another person. People think how good they speak English until they are forced to talk to someone.

What about people in Austria and the other Erasmus students? Did you make friends there?

I met people from all around the world such as Scotland, Korea, Spain, etc. Some guys I am friends with come from Arabic countries and all my prejudice disappeared. People there were really friendly, kind and helpful. I am still in contact with some of these people and visit them regularly.

Have you experienced culture shock in Austria?

I would say they were a little bit shocked by my sarcastic type of humor that was not always understood but I think they got used to it. Anyway, I would not say they are completely different, however, many of them are just too conservative and reserved for me but I

was always lucky to meet people like me.

How did you like Austria? Have you been on any trips?

There was a special programme for Erasmus students. They took us to many different beautiful places such as Hallstatt or Gmunden which are very popular in Austria. We travelled a lot to Salzburg where we had some projects we worked on. Some trips to mountains were part of our special course for exchange students. There was an amazing trip to the mountains we spent with a group of Austrian students. They were very friendly and thanks to that trip I met two great guys who I'm still in a contact with. Also the nature and mountains were gorgeous. I'm more a city girl but I enjoyed these trips so much.

Do you recommend our students to apply for Erasmus and why?

It has been one of my best experiences. I improved my English and German, made new friends, got independent and responsible. It is

not really possible to describe how amazing it was, being one year abroad, and living my life on my own. I know students are not willing to leave their homes and study abroad. I was also a little bit scared and sad when I was leaving my friends and family. But every time it was even harder to leave the new place and come back home.

What was your favourite subject to study at the university in Austria?

Everybody knows how much I love talking. There was a course preparing students for their state exams and it was about giving a spontaneous speech on different topics we randomly chose. We had few minutes for preparation and then we had to speak from 3 to 5 minutes without notes.

In what way was the teaching of the English language different when you compare Austria and Slovakia?

Austrian students have to study and read a lot. What I really like is that they have a teaching



PHOTOS BY: Ruth Timková



practice from the first semester of studying which prepares them to be skilful in teaching until finishing the bachelor study.

Are you still in contact with some of your ex-classmates?

Every course I had was with a different group so I wasn't really able to made friends there. Our dormitory, uni events, or parties were the best ways to meet people.

Have you lived abroad previously?

I was in Australia 3 years ago where I spent the whole summer.

What is the longest period you've spent apart from your family? Did you suffer from any homesickness?

I was in Australia for 3 months. The only problem I had was that I didn't have so many friends there and I felt a little bit lonely. I never suffered from missing my family or friends because we were often in a contact. I would have never left the country if I'd had a chance

to lengthen my visa.

Was there anything you did not like about Linz?

The city was perfect for me. It was crowded, alive and also the party life was amazing. I felt always safe not only during days but also at nights. People were nice and helpful everywhere. I always love coming back there and try to visit it as much as possible. There was definitely nothing I hated about Linz.

What is one part of Austrian culture that you would like Slovak people have?

The only thing that comes to my mind is being less homophobic.



SLOVAKIA THROUGH THE EYES OF A RUSSIAN STUDENT

Arina Kulakovskaia, Mari State University in Yoshkar-Ola, Russia

Tereza Keherová



What do you study?

I study teaching of English and French languages at Mari State University in Yoshkar-Ola, Russia.

Why did you want to spend a term abroad and why did you choose Slovakia?

I've always wanted to study abroad to know whether I would be able to get my Master's degree over-

seas. I've chosen Slovakia, as its culture and language are pretty similar to Russian, so I'm abroad and also almost like at home at the same time.

What courses are you taking at our department?

I'm taking English for Specific Purposes, Listening Comprehension, Oral Performance in English, Special Language Seminar, Introduc-

tion to the Theory and Practice of Translation, and from the pedagogical ones it's the Introduction to Didactics of English Language and Literature.

You've mentioned that you're taking a translation seminar. How does it work for you when you don't speak Slovak?

Thanks to the professor, I can translate everything into Russian. And I

am not the only foreign student on the course, which is great.

Do you feel like you're in an international atmosphere at the English language courses here in Nitra?

Oh yeah. Most of the students are Slovak, of course, but there are also Hungarian, Serbian, Ukrainian, Turkish, and Spanish students. It's interesting to talk to them.

Have you ever had international students at your courses in Russia?

There are some international students at our university, but not that much. I am from a town that even though it's bigger than Nitra, for Russians it's still relatively small, and it's not very appealing to foreign students.

Do you have a funny story related to cultural differences? Maybe something with Slovaks?

Yeah, I have some. I don't know whether you guys have a greeting or a goodbye hug, but in Russia we do. We can hug our acquaintances and even people we've just met. So, it was surprising to us when some of our Slovak friends asked us why do we always hug each other. And when we were saying goodbye, they said: "no hugging, please".

What would you say is different between English courses at our university in Nitra and yours in Russia?

In Russia, we study the grammatical aspect of English thoroughly, also the phonology... but we don't have enough speech practice. Based on the courses I am taking, with this university it's the other way around. Slovak students are better at speech tasks than the students from my home university.

In Slovakia it's okay to discuss some topics that would be censored in Russia, like sexuality, for example. I'm personally fine with such topics, but at my university we would never talk about it in class.

Thanks to your exchange, you are a little bit more familiar with the university education system in Slovakia. How is it in Russia? Which one do you prefer?

There is a set strict curriculum in Russia. You get to a university and you must take the same courses with all your classmates. You have no free choice over the classes. We all start and finish together.

Not everyone can get a free education, and it can get really expensive. There is a limited number of places that are for free, and that's only for the best students.

Here in Nitra you never have classes on Fridays, but we sometimes have to go to our classes also on Saturdays – that's six days a week!

Also, the Bachelor's takes four to five years in my country. Then, the Master's is another two. That is very exhausting. In Slovakia you don't study for that long to get your Master's degree, although we can become teachers already with just the Bachelor's degree.

Overall, to say which one is my favourite is difficult, because each has its advantages and disadvantages, I guess.

Do you feel enriched by the exchange? What has studying in Slovakia given you?

First of all, now I know some words and phrases in Slovak, which is really nice. Also, I've met a lot of cool and interesting people from Slovakia and other countries. It was very educational to see how some subjects are taught here, and since I'm a future teacher, it's going to be helpful for me. Moreover, I think I improved my communicating and speaking skills – that's why I'm really thankful for this experience.



PHOTOS BY: Arina Kulakovskaia

SCHOOL LEAVING EXAMS IN SLOVAKIA VS THE WORLD

Barbora Jelenáková

In Slovakia, school leaving exam is something we all must go through. It's an inseparable part of our secondary school studies and whether we like it or not, a foreign language is included.

I picked some students from foreign countries to tell me more about their experience and how the exam differs from Slovakia. **Patricia Benítez Pérez and Laura Santiago Medina from Spain and Viktoriia Dzhuryn from Ukraine** were kind enough to participate. So let's have a look at their answers.

In your school leaving exams, is English compulsory or can you choose another language?

Patricia and Laura: 'English is compulsory, but you can add other languages like French or German.'
Viktoriia: 'Two years ago when I passed my school leaving exams English was not compulsory, but now it is.'

Do you also write an essay as a part of the exam?

Patricia and Laura: 'Yes, we do.'
Viktoriia: 'Yes, we write an essay on a given topic. It could be formal or informal and should include minimum of 100 words.'

Do you write written tests? Looking back, do you think they were difficult or easy?

Patricia and Laura: 'We only have this type of an exam. It was difficult.'
Viktoriia: 'We don't write the exam in our school. It is a form of Independent External Evaluation. It's really difficult because we are not given any topics or questions to prepare. We just learn everything. There are mostly multiple choice tasks, except of the last part where we must write an essay.'

In your country, is speaking as important as writing in a foreign language?

Patricia and Laura: 'Yes, but we don't speak as much as we should.'
Viktoriia: 'Of course. We speak a lot at English lessons, even more than we write.'

Do you also have speaking exams? If yes, explain how they go.

Patricia and Laura: 'We only have speaking exams in English class. It's similar to Oxford classes.'
Viktoriia: 'Unfortunately, we don't have speaking exams.'



WOULD YOU RATHER BE A STUDENT IN SPAIN OR UKRAINE?

How well did your school prepare you for your school leaving exam?

Patricia and Laura: 'They prepared us well with other practice exams.'
Viktoriia: '200 is the maximum score you can get. Our class got a score of 185 in average. So that school had prepared us really well.'

Do you think the grade you got was fair? If not, why?

Patricia and Laura: 'Yes, we do because we studied a lot and we had good grades.'
Viktoriia: 'For sure. Because my grade from the exam was the same as my grades I had at school.'

What part of the school leaving exam did you find the most difficult?

Patricia and Laura: 'We found the listening part the most difficult for sure.'
Viktoriia: 'I think it was the listening part, as we didn't pay much attention.'

If you could change one thing about the education system in your country, what would it be?

Patricia and Laura: 'In Spain we need the teachers to be more professional. The exams should be more difficult and challenging. They should involve other aspects, other than the exact same things we learn in class.'
Viktoriia: 'I think there should be more speaking involved and the topics for exams could be more specific.'

Now we know a little more about the school leaving exams in Spain and Ukraine. Being aware of other ideas is as important as expressing your own. So, what about you? Would you rather be a student in Spain or Ukraine?

Worthless

Matej Jelínek

Do you feel that life is worthless?
Do you feel sadness resurface?
From the bottom of your heart
The pain you feel tears you apart

You tried it, but nothing worked
Everything left you unmarked
You feel hopeless, want to end it.
Your time is over, yes, you spent it.

What's the point if nothing matters?
Your whole purpose seems to shatter
Into million tiny glass shards
Feeling helpless, left towards
An unending agony

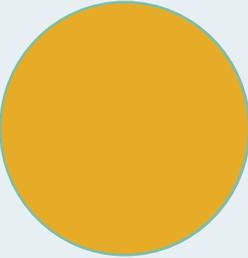
You look down from your balcony
Down to the street and ponder
How you're alive, it's a wonder

You made it this far, so don't waste it
Even if it doesn't seem fit
I believe the suffering ends
But I think it all depends
On how you look at this
So don't stare into the abyss

Look up at the sky, it's always there
Right above you, in the air
There are people begging God
praying to him, shocked and awed
Someone up there looks after you,
even if it may not seem true.

But the feeling still remains
The emptiness inside your veins
It feels like it's infinite
How can you just deal with it?
It takes time and lot of effort
It can be a hard endeavour
But it's worth it, don't you cry
It's not a time to say goodbye

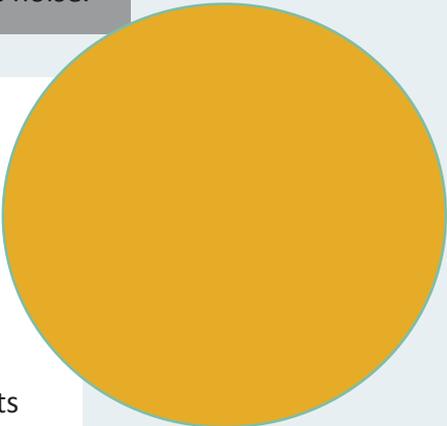
Live once again, tear a fresh new page
Let go of the frustration and rage
And welcome to your brand-new age



Limerick

Andrea Šarkezi

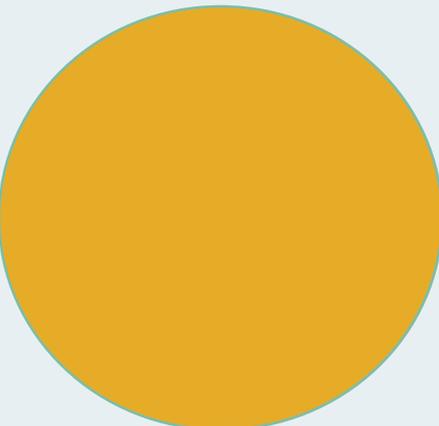
Some smalltown boys
playing outside with their toys
Clock strikes three
time for a nap, they all agree.
Once again, there was not a single noise.



H a i k u

Patrícia Šimorová

Christmas evening-
Children unwrapping presents
from the boxes...



H a i k u

Vivien L. Vitková

Free cracking sound
Hot chocolate safe and warm
Outside heavy storm

A p h o r i s m

Viktoriia Dzhuryn

Happiness is a triangle with three sides: faith, hope and love.

E p i t a p h

Lenka Horváthová

"It's just a headache, you'll be fine" ... they said.

You need to wait, there are more people with worse injuries than yours.

I'll die if those boobs are real.

Acrostic

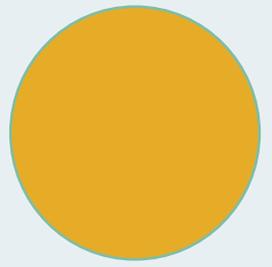
Patrícia Šimorová

Light in the dark

Over the moon

Which varies in examples

Eternal curiosity



Acrostic

Ivana Frandelová

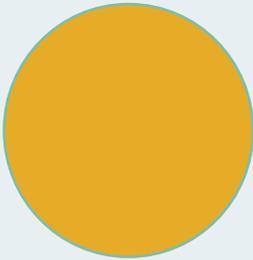
Silent, heavy, part of nature

Try to be strong as a stone

Only you can handle one of them

Never let them hurt you wrong

Emotions are strong as a stone



Acrostic

Karolína Solnokyová

Shining light coming through

Universe is full of you

Never enough of you

Karolína Solnokyová

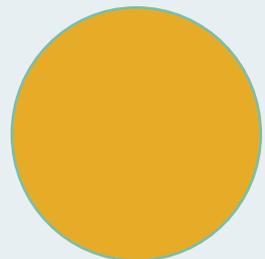
Acrostic

Lenka Horváthová

He is the one

I'll always love

My man with all I want



Phoenix II

Milena Čantrak

Working with the elderly and people who've dealt with discrimination, loss and depression, one single thought resonated deeply in my heart: no matter what kind of challenge we're battling against, there is a divine strength in us that can lift us in the moment we think getting up isn't a possibility. Here is a poem for you, a chance to speak to a challenge in your life and celebrate your victory and strength!

Higher and higher above the ground,
I shall arise dressed in all glory.
Bursting in flames of re-birth,
I shall breath life into this story.
From ashes I'll become fire myself
and turn my wings to the pain.
Everything I am is up in flames,
But I choose to breath and live again.
I look to the mirror and see Freedom
worth so much more than the pain.
Light to this heart. Love to these lungs.
I declare victory over the chains.
Higher and higher, above the shadows
I'll fly to the heights where I belong,
you'll never reach the life in me...
I am a phoenix, born to be strong.

HIGHER AND HIGHER,
ABOVE THE GROUND

HIGHER AND HIGHER,
ABOVE THE SHADOWS

The Value of a Humanities Degree

Kristina Kužiak

We live in such a world where the humanities always take second place. Many people are of the opinion that the study of the humanities is a waste of time and that more money and effort should be expected in teaching disciplines like science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. However, in my opinion, the humanities allow us to create non-material, spiritual, intellectual and cultural values.

I do not see any reason for a discussion on the humanities being any less important than the natural sciences. Every science has its own benefit from human development. Many people think the opposite of me. Nowadays, natural sciences are the most valuable because they bring specific earnings to the state and enable technological advancements. In addition, more and more young people decide to enrol in universities of economy, engineering and technology. Most people come to college with pre-existing beliefs, not because they actually believe them, but because they have adopted those beliefs from their family members. If your father is a doctor, then you must be as well. But it is your choice should you want to follow your dreams and do something you like or be unhappy with what you do. Individuals should be exposed to both the humanities as well as science and technology.

It is the humanities which we use to make sense of the world in which we live and also to record our experience. Humans have made sense of the world in which they live through religion, art, music, and history. In ancient Greece there lived three great men named Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle. These men were among the first and still remain some of the greatest philosophers of all time. They questioned our way of life and even the meaning of life itself. No matter if we live in a democratic world, we are returning to a path of socialism. In recent socialist periods a small number of people were educated for science, let alone the humanities. They would be employees in state services in which they worked as they were told. Other people were employed in manufacturing industries. Back then, they also did not understand the importance of the humanities. In Serbia, the older people would tell you a very smart thought — no bread without shovel — which meant that they would not see any income if they chose to study such subjects as languages or psychology. For them, these fields did not represent particular jobs which could assure one of a good life. People did not understand that the humanities were meant to be different, that they were not a car which you can make in a factory with the following instructions and rules, going through every check to make a valid vehicle ready for sale. No, the science of the humanities is more complex. Of course, they do not gain any points from the view of quantity, but because of their appearance they do bring some kind of growth in business.

I don't think it is true that any democracy we live in cannot stay stable if educated people do not lead it. Educated people deal constructively with acute problems. The humanities contribute to the functioning of a democratic society, for example when dealing with acute crises such as migration, human resources, terrorism, and freedom of movement. Many scientists from other disciplines and businessmen talk about the inefficiency and unproductivity of the humanities. They are overwhelmed by increasingly extensive administration so that they do not have enough time to think about other issues. When we talk about students, they fit into both types of science. Those students who lack a basic knowledge of grammar, who cannot read with understanding, and who do not remember what they presented a month ago, they choose to study natural sciences. These are only a few examples and, therefore the humanities must not vanish.

The ability to communicate and get along with people, to understand what is on another's mind, and to do strong critical thinking is very valuable and appreciated by everyone as important job skills. Slovakia is diverse and most jobs will hire you if you can speak another language as opposed to just being able to speak English. For example, I speak four languages: Slovak, Serbian, English, and German, and I also want to learn Spanish and Italian because I really like languages and I believe that they are like a bridge: they connect people together. The study of a humanities degree allows us to become more knowledgeable about cultures all over the world. There will occur a point in our lives that we will have to work with different cultures, whether it is for a client or just one of our peers in school, and that is why we must be prepared and educated for. People who graduate from a humanities degree can tell you what is happening and where this world is headed. Therefore we are slowly beginning to understand one another.

Martha Nussbaum, author of the book *Not for Profit*, says that we live in a time in which some kind of lack of education exists. Without the humanities society does not flourish but rather morally fails. I strongly believe that the study of the humanities is important because not only does it allow us to understand the world in which we live, but it also gives us answers on who we are as people, where are we coming from, and where we are heading to.

OSCAR WILDE: A WOMAN OF NO IMPORTANCE

Ruth Timková

I would like to introduce and recommend a book called *A Woman of No Importance*, which was written by an amazing writer Oscar Wilde. His life was even more interesting than any of his books. He was well known, not only for his literary works, but also for his controversial life that was very unusual for that period of time. But, maybe that was the way, how he wanted to become so popular.

There are many reasons why I would recommend this Oscar Wilde's work. He put a huge part of himself into this play where we can find a piece of his personal life. I really enjoy his style of writing and the play contains everything what I like, sarcasm, irony, and funny dialogues. As a sarcasm lover, I really appreciate this type of humour, which appears a lot in the play. Moreover, it seems Wilde criticized not only these snobbish rich people, but also indirectly himself, while he was a part of the British high class society.

Let me introduce the author. Oscar Wilde was an Irish novelist, playwright, poet, and critic at the end of 19th century. He was an important figure during the Victorian era, and one of the best playwrights in British literature. During his career he wrote nine plays, plenty of novels, short stories, and essays. He was known for his fabulous works such as *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *Salome* or *The Picture of Dorian Gray*.

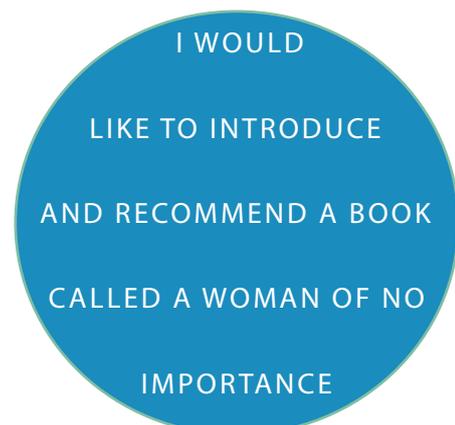
This short introduction shows that Wilde was a famous and successful man. But what really made him so popular? Maybe I should go deeper and also reveal the dark sides of his bizarre personal life.

Oscar Wilde got married and had two children. Despite of this fact, Wilde began an affair with Lord Alfred Douglas, nicknamed "Bosie". Not a long time of having this affair, Wilde was accused of homosexuality, and arrested. He was sentenced to two years of hard labour. Two years later, when he was released, he wrote about his experience from prison called *The Ballad of Reading Gao*, describing his trauma from brutal life experience, he had been going through. He went to Europe, where he lived in cheap hotels, filled his free time by wandering around and meeting

his friends and acquaintances until he died.

In the play *A Woman of No Importance* Wilde satirized the absurd attitude of a British upper class, and negative aspects of the Victorian era. The main focus was on the difference between men and women's status. Not only, different positions which women and men represent, but also inequality between men and women, which was very common during Victorian era. While men had more rights and no punishments for their actions, such as enjoying their lives and using women for their own pleasure, women suffered for their failures for the rest of their lives. The story represents a society of rich people that meet together, gossip about others, and judge their actions, while ignoring their own.

Everybody knew, Wilde didn't live a perfect "happily ever after" life; however, he always criticized the Victorian upper society by revealing how snobbish and hypocritical they were. Honestly, who was a real hypocrite?



ALICE MUNRO: A DAY OF THE BUTTERFLY

Patrik Kovács

“The Day of The Butterfly” written by a Canadian author Alice Munro, is a story which has perfect examples of how simple but also delicate children are. This story can be associated with what goes on in today’s society. The children can be related to the life of a butterfly, which is beautiful but not lasting forever. The story is especially about a young girl, Helen and her relationship with Myra. Myra is a girl, who does not have any friends, neither in school. Her only true friend is her younger brother, a boy with whom she spends a lot of time – Jimmy. This story has many similarities that compare and also contrast what can be seen in our daily lives. Throughout life, many people struggle to find who they really are or become a person they want the world to see. The battle with the “self“ is seen from the beginning to the end of the story.

No, you don't know what it's like when nothing feels all right. You don't know what it's like, to be like me, to be hurt, to feel lost, to be left out in the dark, to be kicked when you are down, to feel like you have been pushed around, to be on the edge of breaking down, and no one's there to save you, no you don't know what it's like—Welcome to my life.“
(*Simple Plan: Welcome to my life*)

You cannot judge the book by its cover. In this case it is true that you should not judge someone until you have walked a mile in their shoes. All this made a conflict in the story that Helen is faced with a dilemma of being liked by other girls, schoolmates or to have a real friend – Myra – who cares about more than being popular. We can see this hesitation of Helen in the story, when firstly she refuses to talk with Myra, either to walk with her to school, and this all because of her appearance and the behaviour by the other children in the school. However, there is a redemptive quality to Helen when she shares a box of Cracker Jack’s with Myra and this starts the relationship between them. Things can be easily replaced, but to find and keep on a true friendship is very rare nowadays, also in the story.

The main symbol of the story is related to the butterfly brooch and this later on represents the friendship between Helen and Myra.

“We were both surprised. We looked at each other; I flushed but Myra did not. I realized the pledge as our fingers touched. I was panicky, but all right. I thought, I can come early and walk with her other mornings. I can go and talk to her at recess. Why not? Why Not?“ (p.4)

Myra is a lonely caterpillar but after she meets Helen she breaks from her cocoon and becomes a butterfly. In other words, Myra has now a friend that she can talk to, and her friendship takes her out of her “self“. A good quotation on this is: “It was a brooch, a little tin butterfly, painted gold with bits of coloured

glass stuck onto it to look like jewels.“

This was important because it was the first time that any of the children in the school had done something nice to her without being forced to by their teacher. And if Helen had not made the first step to their friendship, then she would not have noticed the hypocrisy of the other students to Myra.

The theme of the story of “The Day of The Butterfly“ is that people do not always care about people unless they realise they are sick or the worst thing, dead. This we can see not just in the story, but in nowadays life, society, especially within the younger generation, where they are bullied, when they cannot bare the pain any longer, and believe that ending the life is somehow a solution for them. And when someone dies, suddenly all talk about him/her and they start to realize how amazing people could have amounted to so much. This thing happened to Myra, seeing how she was bullied, children made fun of her, but when they learned about her illness, they started to treat her differently and began to buy her gifts. Life is sometimes hard, but there is no need to treat and underestimate others, just because they are different.

In conclusion, Alice Munro wrote this story – “A Day of the Butterfly“ in a perfect way, with many examples of life of the younger generation. In other words the story can be related with the nowadays social life of society. Symbol of the Butterfly suggest the idea of a butterfly living only a short period of time, which fits for a story about Myra. The “Butterfly“ does not symbolize only friendship, but it is also related to freedom, beauty, and innocence. Sickness and isolation make the battle with the “self“ complete, when Myra struggles throughout the whole story until she finds the most beautiful thing - true friendship with Helen.

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