

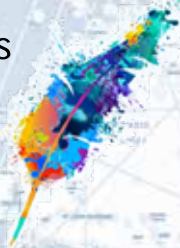
TELL US A STORY

Creative Stories from Language Students

English Translation

School of Modern Languages and Cultures

The University of Warwick



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Preface

This booklet is part of the project, 'YA-Tell us a story' which aims to foster community learning by creating and sharing stories drawn on the wealth of multilingual and multicultural resources at the University of Warwick.

The stories featured in this booklet are written by students in the SMLC (School of Modern Languages and Cultures), mostly those who were or have been on the YA at the time of writing the story. They were invited to write a fictional or journalistic account in one of the languages they were studying. There was no specific theme, but they were given some ideas to stimulate their imagination and creativity. Originally, the word limit of the story was set as 500 words or 300 words for beginner language learners, however, some stories well exceeded this limit because of the authors' rich imaginations, their strong desire for expression as well as their ability to navigate the language. As you read these stories, you can feel the authors' passion for the language and their understanding of the languages.

All the stories were proof-read by native speakers, mainly international students at the university who love to share their native languages and cultures with others. Authors had the opportunity to communicate directly with these proof-readers to discuss and negotiate ideas or languages in the story while keeping the authenticity of their own voice.

The project seeks to prompt language learning at primary and secondary schools by sharing these stories with students from KS2 to A level. Therefore, a group of language specialists in the SMLC has designed sets of questions for each story (questions that centre on language and/or intercultural experience),

targeting readers at different language proficiency levels, to stimulate further discussions among readers. Each story is also accompanied by an English translation so it can be shared with non-language learners. We would like to emphasize that this does not mean that these stories are only applicable to primary and secondary school students. We embrace readers at different ages and different language levels.

We hope you enjoy reading these stories and that you find these stories engaging, thought-provoking and inspiring.

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CHINESE

CHINESE



CHINESE



Angus Guironnet graduated with a degree in Modern Languages with Linguistics in 2021. He studied Spanish and Chinese.

1. Do you speak English? (KS2-5)

Angus Guironnet

Hello everyone, let me tell you a story. Before my second year of university, I went to Beijing with my friend, Rishi, from Chinese class. We were very excited because we really wanted to improve our Chinese and experience Chinese culture. We flew to Beijing together. London is far away from Beijing, so we were very tired when we arrived.

After getting off the plane, we took a taxi to Beijing Normal University. However, when we got to the university, we didn't know where to go.

We tried to find our dormitory, but we didn't know which dormitory building to go to. We searched for a long time and tried to ask Chinese students: "Where are the dormitories for international students?". However, our Chinese was not very good at the time, so Chinese students could not understand what we were saying. We found that the Chinese people's

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English was not great either. Confronting such a big communication barrier at that time truly left us puzzled.

In order to find our dormitory, we planned to try every dormitory building. We met a few students along the way. Before talking to them, we thought they were Chinese, but after talking to them, we found that their Chinese was not very good. They told us that they are international students funded by the Korean government. We were even more confused than before.

We decided to find the dormitory with our new Korean friends. We saw a westerner on the way, and immediately asked him "Do you speak English?" He replied: "对不起，我不会说英语 (I'm sorry, I don't speak English)." We were surprised and carried on asking him, "French or Spanish, can you speak?" He replied, "对不起，我只说汉语 (I'm sorry, I only speak Chinese)." We became more and more confused.

Later, we met many foreigners and asked them the same questions, but they all replied, "Sorry, we only speak Chinese." We were so confused. Why did the foreigners here only speak Chinese? Why were they unwilling to help us?

Some time later, the westerner to whom we asked the question before called us, "Come, I'll help you," he said in English: "I can speak English and I know where your dormitory is." "Thank you, thank you, but why didn't you speak English to us previously?" we asked him. He said, "Of course I can

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speak English, but my Chinese teacher is too strict. He only allows me to speak Chinese."

Later, we learned that every international student must speak Chinese in this university. This is a rule by which they must abide.

QUESTIONS:

KS2 & 3

- 1) Why couldn't the writer and his friend find their dormitory? What would you do in this situation?
- 2) Why were the author and his friend confused even more after meeting some students from Korea?
- 3) Why did the westerner come back to help the writer and his friend?
- 4) Why can international students only speak Chinese in this university?
- 5) What difficulties might international students face when Chinese is the only language they can use on campus?
- 6) Imagine you are the writer. Describe the first Chinese lesson you attended.

KS4 & 5

- 1) Why couldn't the writer and his friend find their dormitory? What would you do in this situation? 为什么作者和他的朋友找不到他们的宿舍？遇到这种情况，你会怎么做？
- 2) How did the author describe his increased confusion? Find these Chinese phrases. 作者是怎么描述他逐渐增长的疑惑的？找出相应的中文描述。
- 3) Why, when they met the first time, did the westerner tell the author and his friend that he could only speak Chinese? Why did he change his mind? 为什么在第一次见面时，那个西方人告诉作者和他的朋友他只说中文？他为什么又改变了主意？
- 4) What are the advantages of speaking only Chinese on campus in Chinese universities? 在中国校园里只能说中文有什么好处？
- 5) What difficulties might international students face when Chinese is the only language they can use on campus? 如果在校园里只能说中文，对于外国留学生来说，会有什么困难？
- 6) Imagine you are the writer. Describe the first Chinese lesson you attended. 想象一下，如果你是作者，描述你上第一节中文课的情况。

CHINESE



My name is Thaïs Fondeville. I am a Politics and International Studies with Chinese student at the University of Warwick. I am French, so English is my second language but, I can also speak Chinese and Spanish. For this project, I decided to talk about my trip to a Chinese minority group. It happened when I was living in China. I thought it pictured well the experience of a foreigner in the middle of nowhere. This trip was part of a project I had to do for the French baccalaureate. I am sure that as you read it, you will understand what it means to dive into the unknown.

2. Travelling late into the night (KS2-5)

Thaïs Fondeville

I have been to Guangxi before with two friends, and we did some research there. Dear friends, I want to tell you what it means to travel to China as a foreigner.

Our trip started at the airport with a three-hour flight, and then we had to change trains twice. In China, people always talk about foreigners behind their backs, so it was not surprising for us that people would stare at us, especially the children who were seeing a foreigner for the first time.

When we arrived at the second train station, everyone stared at us. Needless to say, our group was quite eye-catching. One of us was of mixed Swiss and English descent and a black woman, another was of mixed French descent, while I was

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French with a little Italian heritage. It was funny, but it felt strange to be stared at and pointed at by everyone in the station. Pretending nothing was wrong, we decided to buy some noodle soup to escape everyone's gaze, but the people's eyes were following us, and we could feel it.

Once we had arrived at the terminal, someone was waiting for us at the station already. The real adventure had just begun. We got in the car and were driven along deserted country roads. It was already midnight, and outside the windows it was pitch black... it felt as though we were in a horror movie. We didn't know where we were being taken, our mobile phones couldn't connect to the Internet, and we couldn't determine our location.

My friends and I all panicked, thinking we had been kidnapped. The fear reached a climax when we arrived at a riverside. I remember that we looked at each other in fear, our faces pale. Imagine, three young 15-year-old girls standing in the dark and being driven aboard a boat to cross from one side of the river to the other. After reaching the other side, we continued the journey, and after another hour, we finally reached the village in the early hours of the morning. When we got out of the car, our fearful expressions frightened the people who had come to greet us. Eventually, in no danger at all, we ended this eccentric adventure.

QUESTIONS:

KS2 & 3

- 1) As a foreigner in China, what would you do if people stared at you and talked about you behind your back?
- 2) Why did the writer describe the journey as an adventure?
- 3) What kind of place did the author and her friends go to in China? How do you know?
- 4) Imagine that you are one of the locals who is waiting for the arrival of the writer and her friends. Describe your anticipation, the scene the moment they get out the car, and what you would do.

KS4 & 5

- 1) In what context should the following phrases be used? Please explain the meaning of each phrase by working out the meaning of each character. 下面的词和短语在什么情况下使用？请逐字解释每个词和短语的意思。
指指点点， 扎眼， 伸手不见五指
- 2) Find the four-character idioms in the story and work out the meaning of them. 找出文章中用到的四字成语，并解释它们的意思。
- 3) Why in the last paragraph, did the author use the word 驱赶? 为什么在最后一段中作者用“驱赶”这个词？

- 4) As a foreigner in China, what would you do if people stared at you and talked about you behind your back?
作为一个外国人，当你在中国遇到有人在你背后指指点点时，你会怎么做？
- 5) Why did the writer describe the journey as an adventure? 为什么作者把自己的旅程称为探险？
- 6) Imagine that you are one of the locals who is waiting for the arrival of the writer and her friends. Describe your anticipation, the scene the moment they get out of the car, and what you would do. 想象一下，如果你是迎接作者和她的朋友们的当地人，描述你在等待她们时的心情。看到她们从车里出来时的表情，你会怎么做？

FRENCH

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I'm Sarah Smith, a languages student studying French with Italian. When I'm not studying languages, I enjoy playing badminton, writing stories, reading books and going for walks with my family. I come from Essex, a wonderful county with a nice mix of countryside, seaside and cities. My story was inspired

by the time I visited a French village called Le Touquet for a French trip in year 7. The theme of kindness that is woven into my story comes from the kindness that so many people have shown during the pandemic.

3. On the trail of an ice cream (KS2-5)

Sarah Smith

This is the first time I've been abroad and I'm looking forward to exploring as many things as possible on a sunny afternoon in the village of Le Touquet. I want to taste the croissants, I want to eat an ice cream, well I want to try everything! There is only one small problem - I don't know where to find the food shops. But that's okay, I can ask a local.

"Excuse me, do you know where I can buy an ice cream, please?"

"Yes, I do." Then he describes a detailed route, and I follow it straight away. I turn left, I turn right, I walk across the street. And, following the directions, I arrived at...

But no! It's a clothes shop - a real nightmare. Now I understand the situation better. I got lost. Nobody knows me here. Worse,

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I don't have any ice cream yet. Maybe the street next door will have ice cream shops... too bad, there are none. Maybe there is no such shop? After a breath of exasperation, I walk towards the beach. At least I can enjoy the sun.

I have just sat down on the sand when I see a small black bird. It has something in its beak... an ice cream cone. This is proof of what I have been looking for. All of a sudden it flies away, and I feel that I must follow it, that this event is not an accident. Or maybe I have been reading too many stories.

The bird perches on a plastic tree which is near a long queue, which finally leads to... an ice cream parlour, big and full of delicious ice cream! I'm really hot - I made the mistake of running in the summer. But queuing takes longer than I thought... much longer...

"Are you all right, miss?" a woman wearing a yellow dress and blue glasses asks me. I like the way she looks.

"Yes, I'm fine, it's just hot," I tell her, trying to take off my red jumper. I can't seem to do it.

"Let me help you," she says, and helps me take off the jumper. Then she points to a bench in the shade of a huge tree. I have just refused her offer when she holds up an ice cream in front of me. Is she eating it? No, it seems to me that she wants me to take it.

"Are you serious?"

"Yes. You need it more than I do."

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I'm too surprised to say a word, so I eat it. It's tasty, and even better, so cold. I had an interesting day today. I wandered the streets in search of ice cream and found ice cream and something else. Kindness. I'm glad when I go home that night.

QUESTIONS:

- 1) Where is the story set? Can you find it on a map?
Which region of France is it in?
- 2) How does the storyteller know that she will be able to find an ice cream?
- 3) What is your favourite ice cream?
- 4) Write about a moment in your life when you got lost.
Describe your emotions.
- 5) Is getting lost a good thing in life?
- 6) Do some research on the specialities of French gastronomy? Which looks the most tempting to you?

FRENCH



My name is Isabelle Hyde, and I am a third-year French with Japanese student. In addition to those languages, I can speak a little bit of German. This story was inspired by a holiday location in France that my parents and I have been to multiple times - the titular La Racou - that holds a special place in my heart. I always found the photos of the area absolutely stunning to look at, and the memories of how I felt at the time still stick out so much, that I wanted to try and replicate it in a piece of writing.

4. Racou (KS2-5)

Isabelle Hyde

Exhaustion rising, exacerbated by the evening heat – the likes of which my English skin was little accustomed to – I took a gentle sip from my wide glass, savouring the sharp tang of pineapple on my tongue, leaning back in my seat, finally pausing to take in the atmosphere of Argelès-sur-Mer.

The distant reggaeton tones from a tapas bar blending with a subdued serenade from the pizzeria next door, all but drowned out by a street performer stationed at the end of the marina. The orders barked by a cockswain aboard a quadscull boat completing its twelfth lap of the marina, became indistinguishable from the loud and drunken chatter of groups departing from one of the multiple other restaurants.

That was Argelès.

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A small beachfront holiday town, a stone's throw from Catalonia, and the south coast's crown jewel. In my humble opinion.

A sharp contrast to yesterday's outing on this well-earned holiday. The small hamlet of Maleville, along L'Aveyron river, where a family friend lives.

Compared to the liveliness of Argelès, Maleville was like something out of a fairy tale book. This friend lived in an isolated rustic stone cottage out in the middle of nowhere, surrounded by endless forest of all shades of green. A steady shallow river ran along the back of the estate, the occasional fish swimming through the refreshingly cool water, the smoothness of their scales against my legs contrasting the awkwardly strewn rocks at my feet.

From the glimpses I managed, the river led to a deeper chasm buried further into the woods – the friend says they frequent it for swimming during the hottest days (another Brit, they too aren't entirely adjusted yet).

Truly a mystical sight to behold...if not for the dirtied caravan next to the gate.

* * * * *

As the sun finally began to dip, I leaned back against the sand, the fine stones sliding through my fingertips. My coat, finally out of its bag for the first time in the whole two weeks, rested over my shoulders, the vanishing sun casting a sheet of ice over the air.

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I looked out over the horizon, watching as the iridescent bridge leading from the sun fully extended towards me. One last boat left a bubbly trail behind it as it steered towards no doubt the seaside village just over the border.

The distant ambience from the marina drifted in my direction, the jumbled hullabaloo of performers and drunkards still reaching my ears despite the distance.

A completely opposing force to the calm in front of me, yet somehow a fitting backdrop as I took in the last of the sun, the slither of red left behind entirely absorbed by darkness.

QUESTIONS:

- 1) Where is the story set? Can you find it on a map?
Which region of France is it in?
- 2) At what time of the day does the action taking place?
- 3) Where in town is the narrator having cocktails?
- 4) What are the differences between Argèles and Maleville according to the narrator?

FRENCH



Hi, my name's Ellen and I'm a third-year student, currently on my year abroad at the University of Strasbourg. I study French and English, but also have a passion for creative writing which is why I chose to take part in the 'Tell Us A Story' project. I wrote my piece when lockdown was starting to ease, and so the prospect of being able to go out and feel more alive again greatly influenced my writing. The setting for my short story is a particular street in Yvoire, a French town that I visited in 2018. I vividly remember the shops and flowers there, and the harbour at the end of the path was beautiful, which provided a perfect backdrop to write a short story about the gradual buildup of hopeful anticipation.

5. The Splendour of Yvoire (KS2-5)

Ellen Bell

A step on the cobblestones, feet a little shaky, but they get used to the new terrain. The stones stretch along the street, a great river that leads to small shops, whose weathered wooden doors tell their stories. The sun yawns and stretches its rays over the tips of the roofs; the heat does not yet permeate the air around me, but the cool breeze brings the caresses of anticipation of the summer season.

Under these spring shadows, the shopkeepers are busy with preparations before opening their little world to willing shoppers. The postcards stand upright, ready to twirl for the clapping and smiling onlookers. Meanwhile, the waiters arrange the tables and chairs where the sun has just dripped

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its rays. In a few hours, these proprietors will nod to each other and stand to attention to start their day.

I sway a little as I cross this Yvoire street and breathe in the sweet air that leads me to the large building at the end of the path. Fresh green leaves hang from the top of the wall and cascade down - bignonia - with little flowers that are ready to bloom. When they have bloomed, they will sound their trumpets and everyone will delight in their fragrance. The vines on the wall reach the shop on the street that sells glass objects: animals and jewellery, but above all vibrantly coloured glass flowers. The shopkeeper has planted them outside his window and the street is in full bloom with little wreaths.

It is as if the sun is encouraging the plants to grow: as I pass them, they reach out to me - their petals like outstretched hands. The little harbour I arrive at is home to boats of all colours - some entirely white, except for two thin lines of blue that encircle them - others are yellow with a tinge of gold as the water meets the boat's hull. Other boats are battered, but there are also those that have just come out of the shipyard. All of them dance on the water of this harbour which shelters them before they go to sea.

I bask in the warmth that radiates along the street and enjoy the lively setting. I think about how it is not always so easy to savour this simple, complex and subtle experience. I dip my toes into the water and a wave of pleasure grips me. The water feels like liquefied glass: clear, unblemished and thick as refined molasses. Now all my feet are immersed in the water, down to my shins, and I swish it around a bit with my hands, ending up spraying my burnt nose with droplets.

Translated with www.DeepL.com/Translator (free version) (adapted)

QUESTIONS:

- 1) Which season is the author describing in this short story? How do we know?
- 2) Would you like to visit Yvoire, the town in the story? If so, why?
- 3) Find out more about the town. Which part of France is it in? Can you find it on a map?
- 4) Why, in your view, does the author say that 'it is not always so easy to savour this simple, complex and subtle experience.' Isn't this a rather contradictory image?
- 5) Write an account of what you think might happen next in the story.



Hi everyone! My name is Ellie Mitchell, and I am a student at the University of Warwick, studying French and History. I speak English natively and am currently learning French as part of my degree. My inspiration for this story came from my parents and grandparents reading books to me as a child and the feeling of being transported to another world of excitement and thrill. I had a lot of fun writing my story and I hope you enjoy reading it!

6. A Parisian adventure (KS2-5)

Ellie Mitchell

<<Papi! Grandpa! Tell us the story! You know the one we like. Please?>> the children begged with their cheesiest smiles and puppy dog eyes. <<Do you really want me to tell you the story? You must know it off by heart by now! >> replied the old man with a friendly sigh. The children nodded and their grandfather hushed them with a silent yes and a twinkle in his eyes. He began the story...

It begins with Louis, a student at the University of Paris, who had a passionate attachment to the library and the knowledge it held. He spent most of his days exploring the seemingly endless shelves, immersing himself in a world between fiction and reality. Louis was particularly fascinated by history and could spend hours surrounded by weighty books solving mysteries of the past, captivated by the idea of finding solutions to his many questions. He knew the library (by heart), he knew every shelf and he noticed every detail. He began to spot a suspicious pattern where different people would enter the library at the same time, on the same day,

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every week as if on cue, and take the same book. Spying from several aisles, Louis would see them gently drawing in the margins before returning the book to its place and leaving the library without looking back.

Louis' curiosity grew over time and one day the mystery became too great. One day he picked up the book of the week and investigated the scribbles. He looked at the drawings again and again, turning the book over, holding it at a distance, checking it under the direct light but to no avail. Louis racked his brains for answers, grabbing every book he'd seen on weekly visits throughout the year. Spreading them out in a circle around him, he turned slowly as he began to understand. It was a map! It wasn't just a map of the city; it was a route through the ancient underground tunnels of Paris. After making this discovery, Louis just couldn't leave it alone. He was looking for more answers. Why were these people creating a map of the underground tunnels? Who were they? He spent nights dreaming of all the possibilities and how he could find answers to his glaring questions. Louis made a plan for the next night; he would wait until sunset to follow the map. Determination overcame his rationality and so he headed into the unknown without the slightest hesitation.

The tunnels were cold, dark and sinister, a strange tension hanging in the air engulfing Louis completely. He used his torch to keep walking, careful of the rough terrain. Louis approached carefully, turning off his light and walking as lightly as possible. The group stood in a loose circle, very focused on the argument ahead. Louis scanned their faces, quickly realising that they were recognisable. Alexandre Robert the world famous pop star. Adam Dubois the heart of Hollywood. He was almost out of breath when he spotted

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Victor Roux the President of the French Republic. Why were these people meeting in secret? Their family names were linked, Louis knew! His brain began to recall the hours spent in the library. Yes! Yes! That's it! The revolution, of course. Roux, Robert, Dubois and the rest of the group were the descendants of the survivors of the guillotine. The swift action of their families had saved their fate hundreds of years ago and it seemed that this time they were prepared to fight. His disbelief led him to drop his phone...

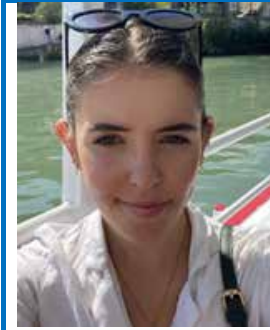
<<Papi! Papi! Finish the story please!>> the children desperately begged their grandfather. He replied softly with a wink: <<Not tonight children, you'll have to wait until tomorrow.>>

Translated with www.DeepL.com/Translator (free version) (adapted)

QUESTIONS:

- 1) Do some research on the guillotine. When did this machine come into existence? When was it last used?
- 2) Which section of the library would you like to get lost in? Justify your answer.
- 3) Do you think that the art of telling each other stories is being lost in the digital age?
- 4) Write an account of what you think might happen next in the story.

FRENCH



My name is Rachael and I'm a fourth year student studying French and Economics. I spent six months of my year abroad working in the south of France and absolutely loved every part of my life living in Salon-de-Provence. During this time I did a lot of running as I found it a great way to clear my head and discover the beautiful surrounding countryside without a car. This story describes the first race I entered during my time in

France and the hurdles I confronted due to the country's different customs.

7. It was worth it! (KS2 – 5)

Rachael Cannon

The day before my big race, I went to get my number. The sun was shining and I was happy to have a long weekend off. I arrived at the athletics club and nervously joined the queue. In my head, I stuck out like a sore thumb! The: all looked to be over 30 and very serious athletes. After waiting my turn, I headed for the friendliest volunteer.

"I'm here for my bib: Rachael Cannon," I said, after repeating the sentence several times in my head.

"Great!" smiled the woman in return, "it's good to see young women taking part. Which club do you run for?"

I panicked, imposter syndrome kicking in even harder.

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"I don't have a club, I'm from England," I replied apprehensively.

"Oh wow, you've come to Provence for the race! Do you have your medical certificate?" she beamed in return.

By then I was sweating and the race didn't even start until the next day! I was definitely not at the same level as the other runners, and I had no idea that a medical certificate was required for sporting competitions in France! When I told the lady the news, she just stared at me.

"But you can't run without a medical, you'll have to forfeit your place..." she said breathlessly. It was a Saturday, and without having signed on with a doctor it would be impossible to get an appointment before 8am tomorrow morning. Then, seeing the disappointment on my face, she intervened.

"Hang on, I'll call the race doctor, maybe he can examine you before the race tomorrow morning!"

I was overwhelmed, out of my comfort zone, but I couldn't turn down this generous offer ...

The next morning, I set off on foot to the race venue. With no car or friends available, the brisk walk was to be my warm-up. On arrival, I was taken to a disused changing room by the doctor, who gave me the green light to take part in the competition. Phew! By this stage, all the other riders were arriving, gathering in their clubs and enthusiastically discussing the possibility of qualifying for the French Championships. I'd come too far not to take part now, but seeing runners from all over the south of France made my

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heart beat faster and faster. Before I knew it, the starting signal was given and we crossed the starting line. Moments later, I'd run 9km and had just 1km to go. The adrenalin was pumping and I pushed on under the blazing sun, using all the energy I had left.

When I crossed the finish line, I was ecstatic not to have come last in this prestigious race! Before my long journey home, I decided to stretch and unwind while watching the winners take to the podium. And then I heard my name...

"First place in the under 23s, Rachael Cannon!"

WHAT?! I had won my age category! In spite of all the setbacks, I was first in my category! With the biggest smile on my face and tears in my eyes, I made my way to the podium and, as the crowd applauded, I knew that all the obstacles I'd had to overcome to get here had been worth it.

QUESTIONS:

- 1) In which region of France does the story take place? Can you find it on a map?
- 2) Why is the central character (Rachael) initially unable to enter a race?
- 3) What does the volunteer do to help her resolve this problem?
- 4) Do you play or follow a particular sport? Which one?
- 5) Do you think sport is a 'universal language'? Why (not)?

FRENCH



My name is Miki Krok and I am a fourth-year BA Modern Languages student, studying French, Italian and Japanese. I wrote this story inspired by my experience during my Year Abroad, when I went to study in Paris; at the start, I did not know anyone at the same university and this made the start a challenge, especially with regards to settling in. However, once I made friends and got to know other people, the experience was more rewarding and far more pleasant, and the initial difficulties disappeared. The Year Abroad is an experience which throws challenges and surprises, just like the surprise faced by the story character.

8. Where it all began (KS3-5)

Miki Krok

- Direction Pont de Levallois, next train in a minute.

It must have been the fourth time I heard this message during the fifteen minutes I was sitting on the platform of an unfamiliar metro station.

It was the day I had to go to my university in Paris to start three months of study in France, and from the beginning nothing seemed to go right. First of all, it was raining cats and dogs, and I was already soaked to the skin; I got lost in the city, and then I discovered that here they didn't use the word 'crowded' to describe a train, because you could always find a little more space in the carriage. I felt I was afraid of everything.

FRENCH

The metro arrived and I finally managed to get on, but I was followed by a huge crowd. Suddenly I found myself pressed against one of the doors. An inexpressible feeling. I had my rucksack between my feet, and I was staring at it the whole way so that no one would steal it.

Fortunately, the journey did not last long, and I soon arrived at the station next to the college.

The ancient building was elegant, but even though I liked it, I couldn't help thinking that it was like a labyrinth. All the corridors and rooms were the same; I didn't know quite where to go and as time went by I became even more scared. I knew that this was due to the newness of the situation, that it is normal when you are in an unfamiliar place, especially in a new country. But I couldn't get rid of this feeling.

But finally I managed to get my student card and my timetable. The first class was about to start, so I went to the lecture hall, where I found a little corner to wait for the class.

And suddenly I saw her.

She was standing by the door, chatting with two friends. Her blonde hair was perfectly slicked back, her smile was one of the most radiant I've ever seen in my life. She was wearing a cute dark blue jumper, a backpack, smart jeans and white designer trainers.

But I didn't know her. In fact, not knowing anyone, I waited for the class alone. I started looking at my phone.

FRENCH

After a few minutes, the professor arrived and entered the lecture hall; all the students followed him, and I guessed I had to do the same. It was a large room, with many seats, divided into many rows. I sat in the last row, took out my laptop, and naively thought I would be the only one there.

But suddenly someone sat down next to me. It was her, the girl I had seen outside the room. This time, however, she was alone.

- Hello - she said, still smiling.

And I didn't know what to do.

Translated with www.DeepL.com/Translator (free version) (adapted)

QUESTIONS:

- 1) At the start of the story, where is the main character?
- 2) Give an account of a moment in your life when you felt lost. Try to describe, in as vivid a way as possible, your impressions of the place you found yourself in.
- 3) The narrator gives a detailed description of the girl he can see. Write a detailed description of the narrator.
- 4) Write an account of what you think might happen next in the story.



My name is Michael, and I am a French and Economics student. As you can probably guess, I speak French alongside English and a little bit of Yoruba. The inspiration for my story comes from a conversation a friend and I had whilst I was on my year abroad. We spoke for hours about how time away from our homes had changed us, helped us grow and given us a different perspective on life and the things that encompass it. Seeing as they [my friend] studied art and fashion I thought it would be fitting if I conveyed our thoughts in an abstract way, paving the way for the extended metaphor you see within this piece.

9. Perspectives (KS 4 & 5)

Michael Ojetunde

The Prologue

Life is simple but complex at the same time. There is positive and negative. There is light and there is darkness. There is yin and yang. Life exists in duality...or so it seems.

Beneath the surface of this natural duality exists something as elaborate as it is beautiful. In a ray of light there is a spectrum of vibrant but distinct colours that can be as fiery red as they can be deep ocean blue. A word that defines these different experiences of what we see, hear and experience is the same word I found that captures all that my year abroad represents. A word that describes the journeys of a boy and a girl in the City of Light. A word I call - Perspective.

The perspective of a Butterfly

Imagine a caterpillar somewhere in a rain forest. A caterpillar crawling its way through the trees and the forest, looking for food wherever it can find it, with the sole purpose of eating and not being eaten. Despite this simple life goal, it is harder than it looks for this young creature to survive. It is confined by its size and its inability to eat more than one leaf at a time. But over time, this caterpillar continues to eat while managing not to be eaten. It grows larger and larger until it finally reaches the point where it can undergo its natural transformation into the beautiful butterfly it was destined to become. It emerges from its cocoon to reveal an amazing creature, which has finished its creeping and is ready to fly away.

The perspective of the canvas

Imagine an artist standing in a studio with an empty canvas in front of him. The canvas and the room are similar in size and shape to those on which the artist has been painting, and yet they are unfamiliar to him. The equipment in the room is different. The palettes are different shades of colour to those he is used to. The stencils are different to the ones he is used to filling. And the brushes look like they are painting different strokes than they are used to on the blank slate.

To the artist, the air was familiar even if the environment was unfamiliar.

And yet, in this environment, something magical was about to happen. As he pressed the tip of his brush to the canvas, bringing the lifeless page to life, streaks of colour began to appear where his brush had not yet reached.

FRENCH

The artwork responded. It was drawing with the artist. It was the injection of colour and hue that created patterns that the artist would use as inspiration to create better and more complex designs.

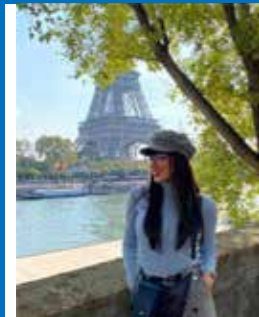
It was a partnership and mentoring as the artist created canvas after canvas. No two canvases were the same and no canvas was ever completely finished before a new inspiration struck and a new canvas was drawn. In this way, naming the artwork became a forgotten custom as new drawings and inspirations gave new meaning to older paintings.

The artist had found a new home, where he was always learning, always creating, always evolving his canvas as he himself evolved.

QUESTIONS:

- 1) Did you feel the need to express yourself creatively during lockdown? What did you produce?
- 2) In what ways has lockdown changed your perspective on life?
- 3) Why didn't the artist want to give a name to her works of art?
- 4) Which of the two metaphors do you like the most and why?

FRENCH



My name is Lavinia-Miruna Constantinescu and I am an English and French finalist at the University of Warwick. I have always been drawn towards the dynamic interplay between literature, linguistics, philosophy and bilingualism. Being Romanian, I am naturally at ease with Romance languages and strongly attracted to Germanic ones.

I am fluent in English and French, two languages I started learning when I was five years old. I also have working knowledge of Spanish and German. My year abroad in Paris, at the Sorbonne (Faculty of Letters, Paris IV) was a unique and valuable experience, which gave me exposure to a highly competitive and culturally diverse environment. I equally consider myself fortunate to have had the opportunity to live for one year in one of the most beautiful European cities. Even under the circumstances of the pandemic, the study placement in Paris has contributed to both my professional and personal development, and I do hope this story reflects how a Parisian setting has the unparalleled capacity to brighten any heart, any day, at any time.

10. Paris is a party (KS4 & 5)

Miruna Constantinescu

There is nothing more annoying than the silence of a blank page. The emptiness into which the contemplation of this infinite blankness plunged me was so profound that I decided to go out into the city to escape this unhappy state of mind.

Everything was an indecipherable enigma. I was absolutely sure that I had saved the document on my computer that contained my paper due next week for the French literature

FRENCH

class. Yet when I tried to read my work again, to correct any mistakes that had escaped my critical attention, I was met with the mocking absence of a blank page. Like all writers, I knew that every lost word was by nature irreplaceable.

Wandering the labyrinth of Parisian alleys in the Vth arrondissement seemed the only remedy for my despair. It was not the idea of having to try again that troubled me so much. The reason for my grief was the vanished trace of those words that had fit perfectly on the empty page, words that were now only echoes of silence.

The rainy afternoon was in keeping with my sadness, which stretched across Paris. It is strange how we always see the world around us through our inner joys or torments! My deplorable state of mind was briefly dispelled by the discovery of a small bookshop, located near Notre Dame Cathedral. I heard some cheerful voices speaking English worthy of Trafalgar Square, London. This little bookshop from where the intoxicating scent of leafed-through books emerged had succeeded in taming my sadness, which was suddenly replaced by the curiosity to enter.

"Welcome to the Shakespeare & Company," I heard the man working the counter say.

A book with a gold cover caught my eye. Paris is a party, I read on the front cover with the title written in calligraphy. The book looked more like a manuscript: there were ink stains here and there and question marks accompanied some sentences. Leafing through the book, I felt as if I were entering a deserted house, where the objects still bore the marks of the owner's fingers. Every turn of the page revealed a secret that

FRENCH

had to remain hidden. There was an elegance that enveloped the book's sentences in a pristine beauty. The words fell perfectly on the page, which followed the heartbeat of its author. The discovery of this perfect manuscript made me think briefly of my lost duty.

"I know that sorry look very well. I have often been the victim of words."

As I looked up from the book, I saw a man dressed modestly, but with a special charm. His velvety voice, his kindly gaze and the mischievous smile on the corner of his mouth made me observe him very carefully. I saw a few ink stains on his fingers that betrayed the writer hidden deep inside him.

"I was only 18 when I was sent to France as a war correspondent. I followed and sometimes even outpaced the Allied troops on their march to Paris. For a child who had recently reached the age of maturity that he had longed for, it was an extraordinary thing: to participate in the writing of history. Being there, even in the midst of the war, seemed infinitely better than still living in America, in a small town where nothing ever happened. As I breathed the breath of death, I saw men with beating hearts being reduced to corpses. The helplessness of warriors in the face of merciless death was everywhere. One day I went to a small restaurant with a friend. We needed to feel young again and to resist the atrocities of combat that were making us grow old every day. There, in that little restaurant, which refused to let itself be destroyed by military drones, I met the most beautiful woman in the world...".

FRENCH

At this point in the story, this man, hovering somewhere between maturity and old age, shed two large tears from the corners of his eyes. The tears, now resting on the corners of his mouth, turned his sadness into a smile. As he spoke to me, my mysterious interlocutor was reconstructing in his memory all the moments he had lived with this beautiful stranger whom he had met in a Parisian restaurant a long time ago.

"She spoke one word of English: yes, and I spoke one word of French: oui. It was the perfect relationship. Our eyes spoke and our mouths remained silent in the face of the great love cradled in each other's pupils, a love much more powerful than a thousand words. We learned each other's language together, but we still transmitted everything that was essential through our eyes. We got married a few months after living together as a couple. We had everything we wanted in the world and even a little more. My beautiful Cecile told me one day that she was pregnant. I got used to this extreme happiness, which is always a bad sign in life. Something horrible was going to happen and I knew it in my heart. We were too happy for mere mortals. Our little girl was three months old when she started crying incessantly, with nothing we could do to ease her suffering. We were desperate. One evening, after the doctor's diagnosis, our little girl breathed her last. After this unimaginable misfortune, our life together was marked by grief and remorse. We were no longer the couple that everyone admired.

One morning I found a small note on the bedside table. My wife had gone to her parents' house to escape from the house where we had lived and loved. Alone in this flat, I began to write. It was the only remedy for the pain that burst out of me every day. I wrote about the happiness of having met Cécile,

FRENCH

about those moments of joy that we felt before suffering robbed us of the ability to live and to love.

When I finished my manuscript, I went to visit my wife at her parents' house. I gave her the book, so that she could read everything that remained inexpressible after the death of our child. I returned to Paris alone, without a manuscript and still without a heart in my chest.

A few weeks passed in the solitude to which I had become accustomed. One day, Cécile returned to Paris, to our home, and suffering was briefly driven out of our flat. I hugged her tightly. I asked her afterwards what she had thought of my book. Red-faced, she realised that she had left the suitcase containing the manuscript in the luggage net on the train.

All that I had written, all that I had felt so strongly during those months spent in solitude was now lost forever. After this incident, I was consumed for a long time by the silence of the blank pages, by their mocking emptiness that deadened my thoughts. But the words always come back to us. It is people themselves who are carried away by their absence...".

Before I could say anything, the man who had spoken so softly to me fled. The only witnesses to our meeting were the pages of the golden manuscript that I held in my still trembling hands. Suddenly, my love for words was awakened. I knew that now I was ready to break the silence that had paralysed my imagination before my visit to Shakespeare & Co. The sorrow of war, the magic of first encounters and irreconcilable death were my companions during the few hours of my discovery of twentieth-century Paris through the voice of this mysterious man.

FRENCH

Is this book all you are buying today, mademoiselle? I replied: yes. This little word, a banal statement in everyday reality, would have represented for some, like the old man I met that day, a whole language of love. I marvelled at the power of letters and could only smile at my naivety in believing that a blank page would ever be able to silence the echoes of the human soul.

Paris was once again a party.

Translated with www.DeepL.com/Translator (free version) (adapted)

QUESTIONS:

- 1) Why is the narrator sad at the start of the story?
- 2) Do some research on Shakespeare et Compagnie. What kind of shop is this?
- 3) What do you think the man in the bookshop means when he says "I have often been the victim of words"?
- 4) What is the significance of books in the digital era?
- 5) Do you prefer to read a real book or to read on the screen?
- 6) 'Being there, even in the midst of the war, seemed infinitely better than still living in America, in a small town where nothing ever happened.' What do you think of this attitude?

FRENCH

GERMAN



FRENCH



I'm Dan, and I'm a third-year student studying German with Beginners' Chinese at Warwick. I am currently part-way through my year abroad in Germany, working as an English Language assistant in the Rheingau.

I felt that this project would be a good opportunity to try something new, whilst also practicing my German. My main inspiration for writing this story stemmed

from my own desire to travel, and feelings of frustration after being stuck indoors over various lockdowns with no opportunity to do so. As a result, I felt it could be interesting to explore these feelings from the entirely different perspective of a character living in Germany, the country which I desperately wanted to travel to at the time of writing the story.

11. Lockdown in Frankfurt (KS4 & 5)

Dan Richardson

Two years ago I was living a typical life. For twenty-three years I had been married to my wife, and although I must admit that I no longer loved her, our marriage was quite all right. My wife and I were more good friends than lovers. My life was not particularly exciting, but it was orderly and I was content.

But suddenly my world was turned upside down. In March 2020, Chancellor Angela Merkel announced a nationwide lockdown due to the imminent threat of the coronavirus. My wife and I lived in a small flat on the outskirts of Frankfurt. On the whole, we were quite content in our flat, but during the pandemic we were locked in for weeks and had no way to leave. The pandemic, the lockdown, the insecurity - all this put

FRENCH

a lot of strain on us, and all of a sudden we started arguing several times a day. It became quite simply impossible to sit together in one room.

But then our situation got even worse. Since the death of her husband, my mother-in-law had been living alone. She had sold her house and moved into a small one-room flat. During the pandemic, she could not visit friends and since we were her only relatives, my wife decided to invite her to live with us temporarily. We had a small guest room where she could sleep. I understood that my wife wanted to help her mother, but since our marriage, my mother-in-law had done everything possible to put as much strain on our marriage as possible. By inviting my mother-in-law, we literally brought the devil into our house.

One day, all three of us - my wife, mother-in-law and I were sitting together in our little kitchen. We were eating our lunch - tarte flambée - and apart from our slow chewing, it was as quiet as a mouse. Then, for no reason, my mother-in-law muttered: "Real German food! Not like the Turkish filth from that man at that stall on the market square! It's those foreigners' fault that we have this virus here in Germany! They" That was the straw that broke the camel's back. My mother-in-law was an AfD voter and thought foreigners were responsible for everything bad in Germany. I was fed up with the racist remarks around me: "I can't take it anymore! I've been sitting here for a fortnight and have to listen to your racist comments while my wife just nods in agreement. I just want to get out of here!"

My mother-in-law and wife froze. I left them in their shock and without a word went into the bedroom and packed a suitcase. As I opened the front door, I looked back into the kitchen

FRENCH

where my mother-in-law's spiteful eyes were staring at me while my wife just looked sadly into space. This sight haunted me as I wandered through the streets of Frankfurt. I had no destination in mind and didn't know what to do - but I felt liberated and free for the first time in years. That was good.

Translated with www.DeepL.com/Translator (free version)

QUESTIONS:

- 1) What particularly caused the relationship between the main character and his wife to change?
- 2) Do some research on the AFD. What is this organisation? Why does the principal character fear it?
- 3) Continue the story: what do you think happens next?



My name is Jess, and I am currently in my final year at Warwick, studying for a BA in German Studies. I have been learning German for just over 10 years now but undertook a Beginner's Course in Spanish during my first year. The inspiration behind my story was brought about after a very close friend of mine unfortunately passed away whilst I was on my Year Abroad in Würzburg, but the people who I had met were absolutely brilliant and helped me through this very difficult time. It was during October last year, when my friend took me to visit the local vineyards and I was absolutely blown away by it all. Being there, surrounded by all this beauty, I experienced a memorable moment of serenity and happiness.

12. The vineyards of Würzburg (KS4 & 5)

Jessica Woodward

"I've always liked the vineyards best in autumn."

In the late afternoon sun, my new friend Simone is the perfect picture of comfort.

"They are beautiful all year round, but in autumn they have a special charm."

I understand what she means, as the world around us looks simply magical. The vineyards of Würzburg are cast in an extraordinary and delicate light of scarlet, orange and gold, and the colours dance in the soft November breeze. I close my eyes and welcome the cool air as I breathe in the wondrous fragrance.

FRENCH

Perhaps for some people the autumn months are associated with the inevitable arrival of a dark, miserable winter: cold wet weather, shorter days, and longer nights. But for me, autumn is like a second spring, because the world is once again transformed into a rainbow of radiant colours.

The sky above is azure and brings a lightness to our steps as we walk through the fields. Every now and then we stop to take a photo, alternating between happy carefree selfies and dramatic panoramas of the fantastically beautiful city below. Simone could be a professional photographer, with her modern camera and strands of red hair escaped from her chic French béret, perfectly matching the rich, autumnal hues of the vineyards. Her camera clicks endlessly and her eyes radiate joy and passion.

I've been in Germany for a month and in the last few days life has become quite difficult: the endless worries as a result of the Corona pandemic along with feelings of homesickness and the loss of a good friend in England. Grief is an emotion I have never experienced before, and both my head and my heart felt overwhelmed by it. But the hardest part is having to struggle with these difficulties without the support of my family and friends, combined with the knowledge that I can't just go home. This is not to say that I have not managed to cope, because I have coped. I was very lucky to be surrounded and supported by my new friends and maybe we got on so well because we were all in the same situation. We lived abroad during extraordinary circumstances and had to make the best of it despite all the difficulties. These wonderful people kept me healthy. It was because of them that I managed to keep a clear head and get through those difficult times.

FRENCH

As cheesy as it may sound, I have never loved these people more than at the moment I am standing here looking out at the beautiful vineyards that surround Würzburg's old fortress. Here among the rustling autumn leaves, coloured like scarlet and gold, amidst the fresh November breeze and bathed in hazy sunlight, I feel at home. I feel comfortable and safe. I am full of hope and for the first time I have a clear head because I feel better. I know that everything will be all right in the end.

Translated with www.DeepL.com/Translator (free version)

QUESTIONS:

- 1) What is your favourite season and why?
- 2) Do some research on Würzburg: whereabouts in Germany is it situated? What is it like?
- 3) The story talks about the value of friendship. Can you give account of a time when you've had to depend on friends?



Hi! My name is Mubo and I study German and Economics at the University of Warwick. I have been lucky enough to learn many languages during my studies, including Latin, Spanish, Italian, Turkish and Korean but I can really only speak German and English. My year abroad in Cologne, Germany inspired this story. Cologne is the home of Karneval and I experienced many differences in cuisine when I was in Germany, therefore inspiring the pretzel bit. I hope you enjoyed my story.

13. Carnival in Cologne' (KS3-5)

Mubosola Olayinka

"Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to Germany, Cologne Bonn Airport, local time 7pm..."

I am finally in Germany. When I decided to learn German in fifth grade, it would never have occurred to me to simply travel to Germany for a few days. While I started out learning German lying relaxed on my bed, the Corona pandemic helped me understand that learning a language involves more than mastering vocabulary and grammar. It is equally important to understand the culture and people of a country.

Keyword culture: Germany is not only the home of sausage, chocolate and sauerkraut, but also the home of carnival!

"... On behalf of EasyJet Airline, I would like to thank you for flying with us. We wish you a pleasant stay!"

FRENCH

As if in a trance, I stepped off the plane and drifted with the crowds towards the exit.

The next day was the first day of carnival. Of course, I had heard about the famous German pretzels in my German studies. When I saw the first pretzel stand, I immediately joined the queue of waiting Germans to also buy one of the coveted pretzels. Meanwhile, the people around me were talking excitedly in confusion:

"Please Greta, don't run so fast! I have to stay with your brother, so please be a good girl".

"2 €, please."

"But mum, I want to play with the other children. Carnival is no fun if I have to stay with you, and I'm not a baby anymore!" -

Suddenly I was jolted out of my thoughts, "You there! Do you want to buy something or not? You're scaring away all my paying customers!" I had been so distracted by the conversations around me that I hadn't noticed that I was next in line.

"I'm sorry, can I have two pretzels? One with white chocolate, the other with cinnamon and sugar." He stared at me in confusion.

"I don't know if you've noticed, but we're here in Germany, not somewhere else, and in Germany pretzels are salted," the pretzel seller said with a slight roll of his eyes.

FRENCH

I froze and tears came to my eyes. After a few seconds, I felt a hand on my shoulder, gently guiding me away from the crowd.

"Are you all right?"

A tall figure stood in front of me, his entire face hidden behind a black Batman mask except for his dazzling auburn eyes.

"Um," I finally found my voice again. "Thank you for your help. This is my first time in Germany, completely alone here, and I already miss English politeness."

"Ah, I figured you were English because of your Queen Elizabeth costume." I blushed. "As for rudeness, I admit that English people are sometimes taken aback by German directness, but please don't pass your judgement so quickly yet," the mysterious boy asked me. He took off his mask. He seemed to be a little older than me. I was surprised. If I had seen him next to the pretzel vendor, would I have judged the vendor to be friendlier?

"My name is Joshua. If you would like, you could accompany my friends and me. It would be my pleasure to show you everything Cologne Carnival has to offer."

QUESTIONS:

- 1) What's your favourite pretzel flavour? What other street food do you like?
- 2) Do you think this story has a lesson to teach us? If so, what?
- 3) How does the author create a sense of atmosphere?
- 4) Continue the story: what do you think happens next?

ITALIAN

ITALIAN



ITALIAN



I speak English, Yoruba and I am becoming fluent in Italian! I guess we can call this story an intriguing or odd fusion of culture - kind of like me. I am always greeted with surprise (and even admiration) when I say that I study Italian, considering it is not as commonly taught amongst the modern foreign languages; and arguably the biggest thing of all, I am a Nigerian woman from South London.

This story is the beginning of an adventurous voyage for our protagonist. It touches on commonly diffused ideas and tropes surrounding travel such as airports being regarded as 'non-places' and even the romanticisation of home. The protagonist is in a foreign place finding their feet - and even possibly love. There are a thousand different possibilities for how the love interests meet but I imagine the mystery suitor says "Ekaasan, come stai?"

14. EKASAN, how are you? (KS3-5)

Yvonne Awotula

Without thinking twice, my parents bought me a plane ticket. I was on my way to the airport in - well, is it really important? All airports look the same. There aren't many differences. Lots of people - all in a hurry - large windows and bright lights. Large flying machines embellish the outer sky. In my opinion, this is the only redeeming aspect of this place (if we can call it that).

"This is the final call for gate 42, all passengers for Lagos, Nigeria". My flight. I didn't want to go but the choice had been made. I walked towards the gate to board the plane. With

ITALIAN

each step heavier than the previous one, finally, I had arrived in my place; after passing all the people staring, as well as the smell of coffee and all the way to the gate. 15E: that was my place. I slumped into the seat and closed my eyes; wishing, hoping, this was all a dream. The only thing that came to mind were the beautiful Venetian streets, the canals and the culture, the streets full of tourists and the scent of bigoli in salsa. Venice is a magical place and how much I wanted to go back. More images of the city flooded my mind. Then I remembered Bologna, the sweet Bologna. Last summer I went there with my friends. It was incredible, the landscape was practically all red, a city full of culture and a lot of history behind every portico.

"Excuse me, excuse me," whispered a voice tapping me lightly on the shoulder. To my right, there was a smiling young woman, she said to me "We' ve landed, didn't you hear the clapping? "

"No, sorry"

"Well, you can leave the plane now"

I was greeted in the arrivals section by a tall, dark man with smooth brown skin. "Hello, sewa?" What! I've never heard anything like it.

"Hello, how are you?" he repeated reassuringly, but this time in an understandable way.

After collecting our bags, we left the airport. Well, this was certainly not Italy. The sun was hotter than usual, the air was humid. Different smells, different textures - the whole atmosphere so different. The tall man put my bags in the car

ITALIAN

and waved me through the door he had opened. Right away, on a bumpy road, he started asking questions: "Are you excited to look after the family business?"

No, no, no, no, no. I was only here because my parents wanted me to take care of business. A decision made without taking me into consideration, and without giving me the opportunity to say no.

~ The second day ~

I decided to take a walk and get my head straight.

I saw a beautiful boy. It was a positive surprise. I didn't know how to talk to him or what to talk to him about. How wonderful! A boy with dark brown eyes, long eyelashes. Was it the sun beating so furiously on my chest, making me sweat? Or was this dangerously handsome stranger less than two meters from me? What I was sure of was that a second never seemed to pass, it seemed like an eternity. He walked past me without even taking a second look in my direction, as if I didn't exist, as if he hadn't just totally intruded on my mind. I blinked twice and the moment had passed much faster now, I turned one last time to take a sneaky look, but he had already vanished into the crowd.

QUESTIONS:

KS3 & 4

- 1) Where is the protagonist at the beginning of this story?
- 2) Is the protagonist of the story happy to make this trip?
- 3) Who is the person who welcomes the protagonist when he/she lands?
- 4) Why does the protagonist not understand immediately the words this person tells him/her?
- 5) Who is the boy the protagonist describes at the end of the story?
- 6) How does this story continue? Try to imagine how it goes on with the help of a classmate.

KS5

- 1) Is it a common feeling to travellers that places like airports seem all the same, and people travel through them as if they had no past and no future? Do you ever feel the same way as the character of this story?
- 2) Have you ever felt like the character in this story while travelling to a new place, knowing you were leaving behind something you felt really close too: not only the landscape, but also the culture that linked you to that place?

ITALIAN

- 3) 'Have you ever felt disoriented and out of place after arriving in a new place that is very different from what you were used to?'
- 4) The pressure our family puts on us is sometimes very unpleasant. How can we learn to say "no" firmly to really avoid doing things which are not part of our plans? How do we make our family understand our reasons for not behaving according to their expectations?
- 5) Sometimes people we do not know have a big impact in our life, and we get inspired by them. Has something like this ever happened to you?
- 6) How does this story continue?

SPANISH

SPANISH





My name is Sophie. I am a student at the University of Warwick studying Hispanic Studies and French. English is my native language, but I also speak French and Spanish. Over the last year I have spent time living in France and Spain, and it was my stay in Spain

which inspired this text. I found it quite tricky to settle when I got to Spain, but when I found this little café tucked down a side street, I was welcomed in with open arms (quite literally!) and I really started to find my feet in the new city!

15. Walking Off the Beaten Track (KS2-5)

Sophie Hurst

Living in a big city can feel a bit like living in a jungle. Each part of the city is full of life. But each and every citizen has their own life and does exactly what they need to survive in this ever-changing environment. Between the species of this jungle, there aren't any explicit interactions. There are groups who know each other, but in reality, the sense of a community can be difficult to find. So, trying to find your feet in this environment can be tricky.

When I arrived in my new city, walking through the streets felt like walking through a maze. Each shop was bursting with noises, smells which excited the senses and there were people everywhere. But trying to start a conversation seemed an impossible task. This was until I started walking down the side streets. The noises stopped and the people disappeared. But the shops oozed personality and at the end of the smallest side

street I found, there was a café. And it was there, in that moment, that I found the heart of the city.

Upon opening the doors, I was surrounded by friendly faced and I could take part in conversations, which I had only ever overheard before. To meet people, you only have to take a walk on the unbeaten path. I learnt that everyone has their place, even in such a bustling city. It's just a question of keeping on walking until you find it!

QUESTIONS:

KS2 & 3

- 1) Is this person living in a small or big city?
- 2) True or false, the sense of community is easy to find.
- 3) Where did the protagonist find the café?
- 4) True or False, the protagonist could have conversations in the café?
- 5) What did the protagonist learn you have to do to find your place in a new city?

KS4 & 5

- 1) What emotions do you think the protagonist was feeling when she was walking around the streets, before finding the café? Was she comfortable and happy?

SPANISH

- 2) Is it normal to feel like you don't belong when you first arrive in a new place? Can you think of a time when you might have felt like this in your life?
- 3) Having a sense of community can be very important when you are in a new place. When the protagonist found the café, how do you imagine she felt? Do you think it helped her or not?
- 4) Can you think of a time a stranger has been kind to you, or you have been welcomed in by a group, how did it make you feel?
- 5) What sort of conversations do you imagine the protagonist had in the café? Can you come up with an example?



My name is Bryony. I study Modern Languages and Linguistics at the University of Warwick. My native language is English, but I am working towards fluency in Spanish and Russian. I have recently returned from my year abroad in Spain and my experiences there inspired me to write this story. I wanted

to speak about some of the cultural shocks I experienced in Spain in a fun, light-hearted narrative because it was stressful at the time but now I look back on it and chuckle to myself.

16. A Walk of Cultural Surprises

Bryony Davies

After my first night in Spain, I wake up to the sound of screeching seagulls. It seems to be the usual sound of mornings in Alicante. I get out of bed and start my day. I leave the flat to take out the rubbish, but I can't see where to put it, so I have to walk through different streets trying to find the rubbish bins. The first cultural surprise: Spain has communal bins in the street, but I'm used to the private ones in England.

After taking out the rubbish, I decide to take a walk to explore my new city. My ears are filled with the local hustle and bustle and my nose with the smell of the bakery. I find some litter bins next to a restaurant. The people of Alicante are enjoying their drinks and food, but they are shouting and talking over each other. Are they arguing or are they friends? I'm not sure, so I keep walking and, as I pass more cafés and bars, I realise that this is the norm. The second cultural surprise: it is acceptable in society to talk loudly in public places.

SPANISH

It's lunchtime and the smell of the cafés has made me hungry, so I continue my walk to the supermarket. Three "Mercadona" within two minutes of each other? What a luxury! I need some food and some tablets because they might come in handy in the future. I walk through the supermarket admiring all the fresh fruit and vegetables and the Spanish food I haven't seen before, doing the English translations. I turn the corner and suddenly I find pig's feet hanging or lying on the counter. Yuck! The third cultural surprise: ham is cut in the supermarket and packaged there. So pig's feet are a popular spectacle - thank goodness I'm not a vegetarian!

When I recovered from this horrible sight, I asked the shop assistant where the pills were. The shop assistant knew immediately that I was not Spanish and directed me to the pharmacy. The fourth cultural surprise: pills are not sold in supermarkets as they are in the UK.

I finish going to the supermarket, take my things back to the flat and prepare food for lunch. Then I start walking again. This time to the tram station because it's time to explore one of the beautiful beaches on the Costa Blanca. Did you know that I can go all the way to Dénia (further than Benidorm) on the tram from Alicante? How wonderful! When I go to buy my ticket, I discover that I can get a pass for thirty bus or tram journeys for the great price of... thirteen euros. The fifth cultural surprise: transport is very cheap in Spain and also very efficient.

On one single walk I experience so many cultural surprises, but this is what I like about living in a different country. I see a different way of life, I can compare it with my own and I can adopt new cultural values. It is these things that inspire me to

travel, and I am excited about discovering more of the world's cultures.

QUESTIONS:

KS2 - 3

- 1) Why is the storyteller often surprised on her first walk through Alicante?
- 2) What are the two surprising things that the storyteller discovers in the supermarket?
- 3) Where is Alicante? Can you locate it on a map of Spain?
- 4) Roughly how far is it from Alicante to Dénia?
- 5) Roughly how much is thirteen Euros worth in pounds and pence? Do you think the tram trip is cheap or expensive?
- 6) What emotions do you think the storyteller is feeling as she goes on her walk?

KS3 – 5

- 1) Have you ever had to find your way around a new town or city? What did it feel like?
- 2) Imagine you have been asked to write a tour guide for someone travelling from the UK to Alicante for the first time. What information would you include? What might you want to explain?

IMAGE CREDITS

Chinese

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Italian

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