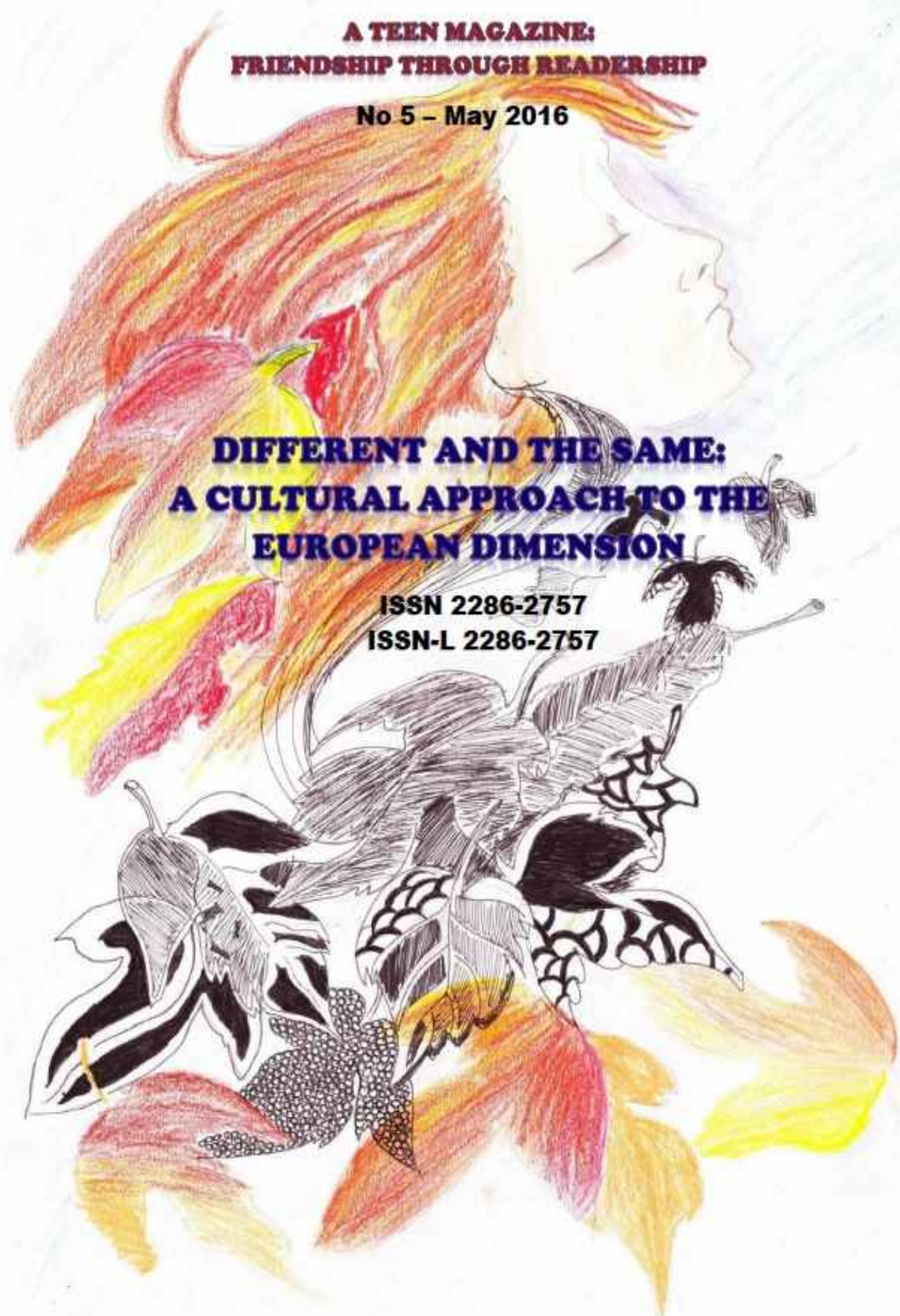


**A TEEN MAGAZINE:
FRIENDSHIP THROUGH READERSHIP**

No 5 – May 2016

**DIFFERENT AND THE SAME:
A CULTURAL APPROACH TO THE
EUROPEAN DIMENSION**

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EDITORIAL BOARD

For the fifth issue of this magazine, students, coordinated by a team of 15 teachers, wrote 83 articles and did 36 drawings, taking the opportunity to write and read in English, thus learning more about the European heritage: wonderful customs and traditions, tourist attractions, teenagers' school life and future prospects. Consequently, this magazine really gives students the chance of sharing the common European culture and, even more, of getting actively involved into the creation and re-creation of the European dimension.

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1. CULTURAL DIVERSITY: TRAVELLING AROUND THE WORLD

1.1 MY FIRST CULTURAL EXCHANGE



I had never thought I would go to a foreign country with two teachers and 14 high school classmates. Going on a school exchange to the Netherlands in November, 2015, meant my first airplane flight and my first trip to a foreign country. I was a little scared at first but towards the end of the trip I was impressed by the Dutch and their culture.

The family that I lived with for five days was very nice to me. We had a great time together. I loved the experience and I got a lot of beautiful memories. However, what I liked most was the way to school by bike. Every morning we went to school by bike; almost everybody does so in the Netherlands irrespective of the weather conditions.

Their school, Stedelijk Dalton Lyceum in Dordrecht, is impressive and

very different from ours. I liked the dining room, the music room and the theatre room in this huge school. Their education is very different from ours as well and I would like things to change in Romania. The Dutch teachers seem to be more lenient and preparing students for life seems to be their main concern.

The most special days were those when we visited the city centre of Dordrecht and the Efteling park, a real world of wonders. We could also visit what I think is the most amazing city – Rotterdam. All in all, we had a lot of fun with our Dutch friends, and parting was a touching moment. I would love to repeat this experience!

By Bulgaru Cătălina, 9th grade, “Al. I. Cuza” National College, Galati, Romania



1.2 MY ERASMUS EXPERIENCE



The end of January 2016 was the second time I got the amazing chance to participate in a project based on travelling to a foreign country. First time it was Italy. Mesmerizing views, paradise of the label clothes and original pizza recipe are only a part of the goodies Italy was to offer. Now we went a little further, setting foot for the first time on a different continent. 6 students from Liceul Teoretic “Emil Racovita”, Galati were offered the opportunity through the A.T.A.C. (Asociatia Tinerilor Activi Civic , Galati) and the English teacher Sabina Maria Hancu to take part in an Erasmus Youth Exchange (Discover Yourself With Sports, Adana, Turkey – 24.01 -9.02.2016).

Well, imagine how that felt as we passed by the indicator that showed we were no longer on European land. First thing to catch my eye were the mosques, something I

particularly enjoyed as I am a spiritual person. When I first stepped inside one, time nearly stopped. Everything was so clean, so quiet and so...at its place. No chaos at all.

In terms of sights, Turkey definitely has a lot to offer. But what makes the time more enjoyable are the people. It is worth nothing to travel to the most beautiful country in the world if you cannot feel like home or at least, similar to how you feel in your comfort zone. All Turkish people are very kind and open to new ideas, although you might think different about that. They embrace cultural diversity if it is needed and none of them cared whether you were Romanian or Scottish. We spent our time there with the volley ball team, as it was a sport-related project. We bounded fast and we are still in touch with each other, as we shared a lot of common interests.

So Turkey is indeed a country "to visit" if you are fond of breathtaking views, loads of history and making life-lasting friendships.

***By Cristina Tuluc, 12th grade,
“Emil Racoviță” Theoretical Highschool,
Galați, Romania***

1.3 BITS OF MY DUTCH EXPERIENCE



“Have you ever had the chance to spend a week in another country and stay at a family from there?” Well, I had and I'm so glad about it; I loved it and I would do it again if I could.

My family from The Netherlands were so nice to me and made me feel like I was a member of their family. We loved spending time together. They told me about their traditions, especially about Saint Nicholas, they talked in English when I was around so that I wouldn't feel bad about not understanding Dutch, even though they didn't have to do this. Also, the food I ate there is amazing! I really liked the stroopwafels.

The other people from there were nice as well - I got on very well with them and I miss them every day. We laughed together and spent a lot of time together even after we finished the activities included in the programme of the exchange. In our free time there we went to the cinema and they showed us around the city. I liked the big church we visited, Grote Kerk. I must say Dordrecht, the city we stayed in, is a very impressive one.

The teachers were very nice as well. I really liked the French and Art teachers – the latter is so funny. What else can I say? Dordrecht is such a beautiful city, I really enjoyed being there. It was very nice to experience a different lifestyle, to see how people of a different culture normally live. I loved being in The Netherlands and I will definitely go back there one day and I can't wait to see my friends from there again in April when they come to Romania.

*By Darie Camelia, 9th grade,
“Al. I. Cuza” National College, Galați,
Romania*

1.4 A NEW FRIENDSHIP

An experience is a new lesson always, through my newest experience I discovered a new friend, a new way to see people, a new way to understand them. In my experience I had to accept a complete stranger in my life for one week...to help her live and adapt in a Romanian family.

Her name is Chloe, she is from France and she is 16 years old and a really nice mate. When I introduced myself though my mind was full of thoughts such as...what am I supposed to say or what am I supposed to do, but I managed to make everything as I wanted – I saw that she was really nervous, so I did my best to make her feel comfortable. We had the whole week quite planned, but above the school's timetable I took her to my dance classes so she could see a really big part of me and we bought each other souvenirs / gifts to remind ourselves of this week together. I also showed her around the city – the city center, the Cathedral, the National Opera, the biggest city shopping centre – *Iulius Mall*...of course, and with her other classmates and teachers, we also went to the French Cultural Center and after we went to

Banatu Ensemble where they made a demonstration of traditional Romanian dances and the funny part was in the end, when they asked us to dance with them. On another day, it was actually a really nice evening, we went to the prom of our college, organized for our freshmen, and we had a lot of fun. In the morning of the last day, at my high school, in the Festivity Hall, there took place the Closing Ceremony of their visit / youth exchange...it was the moment when we had to say good-bye to our new mates and I danced with my crew for the French students and teachers, this being my best way of saying good-bye. Then we had a wonderful last lunch together and in the afternoon we paid a visit to the people of Prisaca, where we saw the bees and we ate honey...yummy!

On my way back home, I realized that I won a wonderful friend for life and I knew I would see her pretty soon when I'd pay her a visit...so, France here I come!

By Diana Dinu, 9th grade
“Henri Coandă” Technical College,
Timișoara, Timiș County, Romania

1.5 THE COOLEST HOTEL IN THE WORLD

Can you imagine a hotel that is entirely made of ice? Well, there is one in Sweden, but only in winter. In spring, the hotel melts away and disappears into the river. The Ice Hotel is situated on the shores of the Torne River in the old village of Jukkasjarvi, Sweden. Every winter, work starts on building a new hotel, involving 40,000 tons of ice and snow.

The first Ice Hotel was constructed in 1990. It started as a single room – now it has 64 rooms, as well as an Ice Chapel, an art gallery, a cinema, a theatre and an Absolut Ice Bar. Last winter, more than 14,000 guests spend the night at the Ice Hotel.

Outside, the temperature is -30C, but the inside is always around -5C. All the furniture is made of ice, including the beds, but nobody gets cold. The beds are covered with reindeer skins and guests are given



warm clothes and special arctic sleeping bags.

In the Absolut Ice Bar, the drinks are served in glasses made of ice, so there is no need for ice cubes!

Every year the interior of the hotel is designed by different artists from all over the world. It is described by visitors as “absolutely stunning”, “one of the most beautiful places I’ve ever seen” and “unique”.

By Ioana Suhov, 7th grade
“Gh. Marinescu” Secondary School, Galati



1.6 SCHOOL TRIP TO GERMANY



Some students went to Germany in January for a week. We were staying with German students at their houses, however, two first nights all of us slept in a hostel. In our time

there, we did a lot of activities like playing with the snow, dance or learn some sentences in German. We also visited the Mercedes-Benz museum and one of the most famous cities in Germany, Stuttgart. We were in Kirchheim School one day and then we did different activities with our host families like ice skating. It was a great experience because we learned a little bit more about his customs and lifestyle.

*By Eva Olivares and Marina Garcia
Escudero, IES Gil de Junteron, Spain*

1.7 MURCIA IN SPAIN



In the beautiful city of Murcia, in Spain, you can walk around the main square, you can eat some delicious snacks called “tapas”, and you must try meat pies, because this is a typical food in Murcia. You can go to the zoo where there are water attractions for all ages as well as some animals. The

name is TERRA NATURA. You can go to the Romea Theatre to see a play, a musical or a concert. You can go for a walk, run or go cycling by the river side. If you like archeology, you can go to the Archaeologic Museum, it is very interesting. And finally, if you like the sea and the sun, I recommend you go to Mar Menor. You can swim and practice lots of watersports while you enjoy nature in our great seaside.

*By Nerea Arce Carrilero,
IES Gil de Junteron, Murcia, Spain*

1.8 MY VISIT TO BASEL IN SWITZERLAND



Switzerland is a great country known for many monuments, museums and other tourist attractions like aqua parks, castles and a lot of modern sculptures. If you want to visit something while you are in Switzerland it is the town Basel that is worth visiting.

While I was there I was impressed in many ways. The people are always nice and kind to you. If you get lost and ask for some directions or information they always help you and they never treat you with indifference or arrogance.

Switzerland has a lot of top museums which include my favourite: The Toy Museum. When I was thinking of it, I

thought it would look like a gift shop or something like that, but when I saw it I was at a loss for words. It was as big as an art museum. No matter how long you stay there, you will never get bored. It is always something to visit and explore, even if Switzerland is a small country.

In spite of the fact that Switzerland does not have a seaside you can always go to the Rhine as people cross it every day as part of their daily lives. You see all kinds of people, from children to old people and dogs. Of course that's not the only way you can cross the river. There are a lot of beautiful bridges like Mittlere Brücke which was built in 1900.

In conclusion, I really enjoyed my visit to Switzerland and I'm looking forward to going there again in the summer.

***By Alin Andrei Arion, 8th grade,
“Sf. Cuv. Parscheva” Secondary School,
Galati, Romania***

1.9 MANNERS AROUND THE WORLD



Most of us were drilled from an early age in proper manners and etiquette. But once you leave your home country, things get a bit complicated.

In China, Taiwan, and much of the Far East, belching is considered a compliment to the chef and a sign that you have eaten well and enjoyed your meal.

Nowadays, crushing handshake is seen as admirable in the USA and UK, but in Philippines is a sign of aggression.

When dining in China, never force yourself to clean your plate out of politeness - it will be very bad manners for your host not to keep refilling it. Instead you should leave some food on your plate to show your generosity.

In Japan and Korea, a tip is considered an insult rather than a compliment.

In Greece any signal that involves showing your open palm is extremely offensive. If you do wish to wave goodbye to someone in Greece, you need to do with your palm facing like a member of the royal family.

Chewing gum might be good for your teeth, but in many parts of the world, in Luxembourg, Switzerland, France to eat in public is considered vulgar, while in Singapore most types of gum have been illegal since 1992 when residents grew tired of scarping the sticky gum from sidewalks.

These are just some of the good and bad manners. So keep your eyes wide open if you go to visit any country, because every place is different and has its own rules.

*By Munteanu Ionuț-Daniel, 4th grade,
“Gh. Marinescu” Secondary School,
Galați, Romania*

1.10 THE JOURNEY

Drawing by Cibotariu Melisa, 6th grade, “V. Alecsandri” National College, Galati



In 2014 my parents and I went on a trip to the mountains. We stayed in a cabin, for five nights. It was fun. It was cold, but we resisted! Anyway, we had fun and we became friends with other people then I played the computer with a girl. We played GTA 4. She was better than me in this game because she knew what to do.

In the first night, it rained very hard. This was the first day, the funniest we had. Next day, I left the cottage, up to a tourist spot. Specifically, the zoo. There I saw lions, monkeys, bears, peacocks, parrots, a flamingo, a rhino, an ostrich, a lemur, a crocodile and much more. I was impressed! There, I rode a horse, besides other riders. It was great! My mother and my father sat at a table and drank kiwi juice. On our third day

there, we went sightseeing by cable car. We rose very high, and I was very afraid of the height. My father was not afraid of anything. My mother was very scared... just like me. When I went to the top, I admired the scenery, and after all we came back by cable car. It was really and very scary for us, but at the same time, it was really fun! Towards nightfall, my father made a barbecue with the cottage owner, so we had a tasty dinner. This was the third day, when I found a place where only I could ... I mean ... to hide under the stairs. On the fourth day, I sat quietly as the other days were very tiring. And I say tiring because we walked all day long... I watched TV and ate popcorn. This day was very hard because I jumped on the bed, I ran in the yard and I made a new friend ... a cute fluffy dog.

On our last day there, we said goodbye to the owners, and I left the house at 4 o'clock in the morning. I slept in the car because I was very sleepy after the last day. So this was my last vacation, I lived it with my family!

*By Carp Sebastian Andrei, 4th grade,
“Gh. Marinescu” Secondary School,
Galati, Romania*

1.11 TRAVELLING THE WORLD

We live in a big world where there are a lot of countries. Each country has its culture and traditions. China, Japan and United Arab Emirates are different.

In China they speak Chinese, but there are other recognised regional languages like: Mongolian, Tibetan, Uyghur, etc. They also have different religions, three of which are the most important: Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism. They cook differently because for them food is therapy, not just food. They eat very healthy food: rice, noodles and fish. The most famous places to visit are: Beijing, the Great Wall of China and Shanghai.

In the United Arab Emirates they speak Arabic and their official state religion is Islam. What is interesting is that they have a dress code, which is part of Dubai's criminal law. Women are not permitted to wear sleeveless tops or shorts. They must cover their shoulders and knees. Their traditional food consists of: rice, fish and meat (lamb, mutton, goat, beef). They drink tea and coffee, which can contain saffron, mint or cardamom for flavour. The most beautiful

Drawing by Rotaru Ilinca, 5th grade, "V. Alecsandri" National College, Galati



places to visit are: Dubai and Abu Dhabi (the capital city).

In Greece they speak Greek and their religion is Eastern Ortodoxy. Their food is very healthy and they eat olives, feta cheese, fish, octopus, etc. It is a beautiful country with many islands. The most beautiful places to visit are: Athens (the capital city), Thessaloniki and Santorini.

There are so many places to visit, so many cultures to learn about. Our world is great and we must try to discover as much as we can. The only way to do this is by travelling.

*By Zamfir Dragoș, 4th grade,
"Gh. Marinescu" Secondary School,
Galati, Romania*

1.12 AROUND THE WORLD

Drawing by Olaru Larisa, 11th grade, "V. Alecsandri" National College, Galati



Cultural diversity is the quality of diverse or different cultures, as opposed to monoculture, as in the global monoculture, or a homogenization of cultures, akin to cultural decay. The phrase „*cultural diversity*” can also refer to having different cultures respect each other's differences. The phrase "*cultural diversity*" is also sometimes used to mean the variety of human societies or cultures in a specific region, or in the world as a whole. The culturally destructive action of globalization is often said to have a negative effect on the world's cultural

diversity. I went abroad only in Malta, Turkey and Netherlands.

In Malta, people are so polite because they are always smiling, they do not cheat and speak very nice. Their houses are made of stone. The culture of Malta reflects various societies that have come into contact with the Maltese Islands throughout the centuries, including neighbouring Mediterranean cultures, and the cultures of the nations that ruled Malta for long periods of time.

In Turkey all I have seen was luxury, men wearing on their heads turbans and smoking hookas. Women are dressed in specific clothes and have a ring in the belly button. When I went in the bazaar-shop they always want to negotiate with you, asking high prices. The culture of Turkey combines a heavily diverse and heterogeneous set of elements that have been derived from the various cultures of the Eastern Mediterranean (West Asian) region and to a lesser degree, South-eastern European, Caucasian, and Central Asian traditions. Many of these traditions were initially brought together by the Ottoman Empire, a multi-ethnic and multi-religious state.

In Netherlands, people are a little indifferent with their neighbours, and with tourists. The cities are beautiful, the streets are clean. The culture of the Netherlands is diverse, reflecting regional differences as well as the foreign influences built up by centuries of the Dutch people's mercantile and explorative spirit. The Netherlands and its people have long played an important role as

centre of cultural liberalism and tolerance. The Dutch Golden Age is popularly regarded as its zenith.

In the end, we are all people with same rights and equal under the sun, regardless of our national culture.

*By Radu Ștefan Andrei, 4th grade,
“Gh. Marinescu” Secondary School,
Galați, Romania*

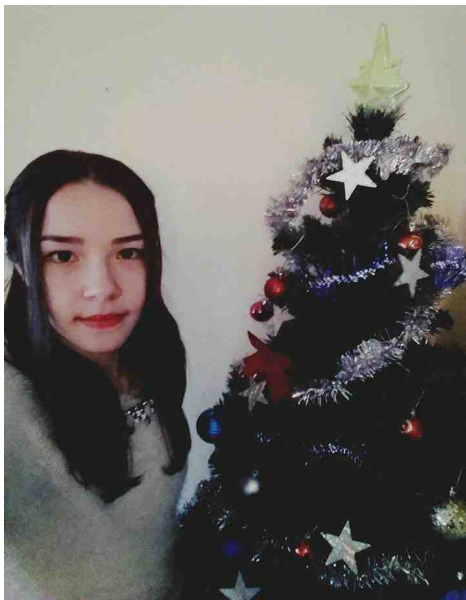
CELEBRATING DIVERSITY



*Drawing by Lupu Robert, 5th grade,
“V. Alecsandri” National College, Galați, Romania*

2. CULTURAL DIVERSITY: HOLIDAYS AND CELEBRATIONS

2.1 CHRISTMAS IN MY COUNTRY



I'll tell you about Christmas because it is my favorite celebration. I love it, because the atmosphere before and during Christmas is happy and makes us to be kinder with each other.

Let's start with the preparations for the Christmas which begin weeks before the event. People, in general, clean their houses because they will entertain guests. The mothers and grandmothers cook delicious traditional food like: sarmale (which is more a Turkish food), stock, chicken and other dishes. I think our mothers and grandmothers have the most important part of the preparations. They are our heroes. On

24th December we decorate the Christmas tree, which is 'the cutter' of the event, and in this night the children wait for Santa Claus to bring their presents, only if they were good.

In the Christmas morning, the anxious children break out the gifts and cheer more or less what they were given. Then, the whole family gathers around the table, where they tell jokes and everybody enjoys the food. And every girl takes a selfie with the Christmas tree and puts it on Facebook or Instagram with the status "Merry Christmas!!" (I'm one of these girls 😊)

In conclusion, these are the reasons why I love Christmas, but I think everyone loves it, because this celebration makes us happier and kind, right?

*By Ana Maria Gheorghe, 7th grade,
"Gh. Marinescu" Secondary School,
Galati, Romania*

2.2 MY FAVOURITE HOLIDAY: CHRISTMAS



My favorite holiday is Christmas because Santa Claus brings gifts to children. But if you want Santa Claus to come and offer you gifts, you need to write a letter. I like Christmas because I spend time with my family, I decorate the Christmas tree, I go caroling and it is very beautiful. I like when children come and sing carols and see the presents under the Christmas tree.

Christmas is in the season of winter, so I can play with the snow to make snowmen and snow angels. Even if it's cold, I like it. Sometimes I do not want gifts, just to be with my family in the magical Christmas night!

***By Bianca Barzic 5th grade,
"Gh. Marinescu" Secondary School,
Galati, Romania***

2.3 A CHRISTMAS EVE WITH TROUBLE

It was Christmas Eve, when every child from every house waited impatiently to receive the most wanted gifts from Santa Claus.

But Santa was very anxious because he didn't find his pants. The last time he saw them, they were on the laundry rope in the dryer, where Mrs Claus usually put the clothes to dry when the severe cold froze the water and made all the clothes like sheet.

He asked all his neighbours and he went to the reindeers' stable, but they swore on the Rudolph's nose that they didn't see his pants, not even their shadow. Feeling very upset, Santa Claus took Rudolph and they went to look for them. They've been through a lot. First, they went to his cousin, Saint Nicholas, who searched all over his house- 'cause he was old and it was possible to forget- but there were no pants. Then, Santa went to Tooth Fairy and to Easter Bunny and both of them searched in the "Little Tooth" palace and in the basket under the chocolate eggs. But there were no pants!

After many searches in every elves' houses, in the village-factory, where they worked hard, our hero and his brave

companion got to the house of the terrible, maleficent and scary Elf Grinch.

He took the plunge and knocked on the door. From the awful darkness a green face with two mischievous black eyes and a grave voice asked:

“How dare you come here?”

“I’m looking for my lucky pants. Here is the last place I didn’t search for.”

“I took them and I will give you back with one condition: I wish, for a day, I felt the joy that I’m seeing every year on the faces of all the people around the world. So, make me happy!”

“Ok, I’ll do it! So, I will have myself a Christmas with no trouble.

The Rudolph’s nose sparkled and, suddenly, a good and candid smile appeared on Grinch’s face. He started singing “Santa Claus is coming to town”.

Finally, Santa Claus got his pants back and Grinch, feeling ashamed for letting Santa freeze, offered himself to help him deliver the presents. The Christmas night was veeeeery long.

Fortunately, Santa was Jesus Christ’s best friend and he put a word to His Father, who froze the time with a blow and Christmas was saved.

*By Tăbăcaru Anca-Adriana 7th grade,
“Lascăr Catargiu” Secondary School,
Schela, Galați, Romania*

2.4 AN UNEXPECTED JOURNEY TO THE EASTER DIMENSION



It was the night before Easter. The Easter bunny was giving chocolate eggs to the kids. But, suddenly, there was an earthquake and all the eggs fell on the floor and he even dropped his magic eggs too! He quickly picked them up and put them in his basket and went back to the Easter Dimension.

The next day, all the children were searching for the chocolate eggs. But one kid, Josh, found a magic egg. It looked exactly the same as a regular chocolate egg. When he ate it, he got teleported to the Easter Dimesion. It was populated by Easter bunnies! One for each country. It was very colourful and it was always daytime. The clouds were made of cotton, the houses were very big carrots. But when Josh went to the houses, everyone was gone, except the London Easter Bunny and the Almighty Bunny. They took Josh and told him to stay at their Easter celebrations, because even if

they were different they all celebrated peace, goodness and generosity.

Josh watched how the bunnies celebrated Easter and it was strange for him, but he really enjoyed it. They were baking turkey meat, they were drinking liquid jelly and firing marshmallows out of a cannon!

At the end of the Festival, the London Bunny took Josh back to his house. It was the best Easter ever!!!

*By Chirea Leonard Mihai 5th grade,
"Miron Costin" Secondary School, Galați,
Romania*

2.5 EASTER TRADITIONS IN E-TWINNING PROJECTS



Hi! My name is Nicoleta. I am fourteen. I live in Smârdan, Galați, Romania. I have cooperated with Miriam Lidon Cascales from Murcia, in Spain, for three months now. We are part of an e-Twinning project: *"A Teen Team in a Virtual Search for Common Ground"*. We have been discussing about region specific customs, traditions and eating habits on different holidays and celebrations such as Easter.

In both countries, Easter is a festival celebrating the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, described in the New Testament as having occurred on the third day of his burial after his crucifixion.

At Easter, in Romania, we eat sponge cake, painted eggs and lamb dishes. At Easter, in Spain, they eat "La Mona de Pascua", "Torrijas", Easter eggs, truffles, hazelnut cream, ravioli with pheasant and pork sausages.

And because the Easter Bunny can speak all European languages and many more, each year, he visits both Murcia and

Galati and brings children chocolate eggs, chocolate bunnies and lots of happiness ☺.

In conclusion, Easter is a beautiful festival because we do a lot of nice things like going to church, eating special food and meeting our family and our friends. Also, it has been a pleasure to discuss with Miriam and to be in this project.

*By Lupu Nicoleta 8th grade,
"Sf. Cuv. Parascheva" Secondary School,
Smârdan, Galați, Romania*

2.6 SPRING FESTIVITIES IN MURCIA, SPAIN



The spring festivities are the most important celebrations in the region. They're the continuation of Easter. In these festivities, there are 2 important events: "Bando de la Huerta" ("Proclamation of the orchard") and "Entierro de la Sardina" ("Burial of the sardine")

The "Proclamation of the orchard" is a very important day of these festivities in Murcia. It's on Tuesday after Easter week. People go out in the street with the typical costumes. In 2012, it was declared Festivity

of International Touristic Interest. Before this day, they choose the Queen of the Orchard (Reina de la Huerta). The winner gets the Orange Blossom Crown (Corona de Azahar) and she has this honor all the year round. The party starts with a mass, with folk music in front of the cathedral and then there is a parade with the statue of the Virgin. In the afternoon the big parade of the proclamation of the Orchard takes place. This parade has music, dancers, giants, food and other elements typical of the orchard.

On Wednesday we celebrate “El día del pastel de Carne” (The Day of the Meat pies). At 8:00 p.m. they dispense traditional meat pies to all the assistants. This festivity is recent, it started in 2009.



The last festivity is “The burial of the sardine” which represents the victory of Lord Carnal on Lady Lent (like in Carnival). It is a pagan party of fire and mythology, and it’s a magic night in the city. It starts

with the “Llegada de la Sardina” (Arrival of the sardine), the statue arrives from one of the towns in Murcia to the city centre and meanwhile they celebrate parades. The second part is “La lectura del testamento de la sardina” (Reading of the Will of the Sardine). In the reading, they parody and laugh of all the problems in the city. The end of the spring festivities is “The Burial of the Sardine.” The burial takes us to pagan myths and it remembers the metaphoric victory of Lord Carnal on Lady Lent, it helps banish the privations in the Easter.



In conclusion, the spring festivities are a good choice to enjoy your holidays or have a good time with your family or your friends and of course learn about the traditions and history of our city.

***By Alba Martinez Reche, IES Gil de
Junteron, Murcia, Spain***

2.7 SUMMER TIME IN MURCIA, SPAIN



In the summer we make different plans in Murcia. We go to the pool or the beach in La Manga, San Javier, Campoamor etc. where we play volleyball and other water sports. We also enjoy being there with family and friends and playing cards together. The kids go to the summer camps where they play and have fun while their parents are working. There are music festivals where there are lots of people, lots of music and lots of fun. We love going to

festivals because it is a great atmosphere and you can meet new people from other parts of Spain.

At night the terraces of the restaurants are full. There are a lot of people drinking soda and eating dinner with their friends. We enjoy going out until very late in summer nights. In Murcia you will not be bored and you will make friends easily.

*By Monica Medina Esquivia,
IES Gil de Junteron, Murcia, Spain*



3. SNAPSHOTS OF A TEENAGER'S LIFE

!SEE IF YOU CAN CATCH THE TRAIN OF THOUGHT ...

3.1. FIGHTING FOR MY TOMORROW

As Henry Brooks Adams said: “A teacher affects eternity; he can never tell where his influence stops”, the person who motivated me the most is not a famous one or a renowned philosopher, but my English teacher. I can sincerely say that she made me be the boy I am today. She made me become more confident, more ambitious and aim as high as I can. Her passion for English culture and working with people became mine as well. In these last three years and a half, I realized that I want to be helpful; to become an example, a motivation, an inspiration for the other people around me, as my teachers; and the only way to manage this is to become a teacher.

Even from the very beginning, I was truly determined to get involved in every activity and project that took place in my high school in order to acquire enough



knowledge and experiences related to foreign people and not only.

In the 10th grade I had the greatest opportunity of my life to take part in an important project mobility to Poland called Comenius “Europe – Unity in Diversity”. I can’t describe the feeling of meeting new people, spending time with them, sharing ideas and traditions, because it could rather reduce its real importance. That was my first step of the career I decided to follow.

After that, I had a big pleasure to host three groups of foreigners of three different projects. It was a great achievement, improving especially my communication, leadership and organizational skills. I have also experienced volunteering in the charity events organized in the frame of the eTwinning project “Orphan kids are not

alone”, writing articles for “Echo School Club”, “Young reporters” and “Shakespeare School Essay Competition”. During all these school years, I didn’t allow myself to answer with



a NO to the requests or contests proposed by my teachers. I have done all my best in order to reach their expectations.

I extremely like the idea of travelling abroad and studying, the chance of meeting new people, both teachers and students. But more than that, the opportunities for gaining practical experience of teaching English language in local communities determine me to long more to become a teacher because I know that every single day will worth it and will lead me to the improvement I aim to. I am glad that, after four years of being inspired, helped and motivated by some of the greatest people I have met until now, I am able to carry forward this “gift”. I am able to feel properly how amazing is to teach

and change people’s lives in better; to help them find their own perspectives; to lead them to a better world, even beyond the borders of their countries

among foreign people.

I believe that studying teaching English courses at university abroad will improve my knowledge of English language and culture, which will be completely useful in my future career. I am eager to face every challenge I will meet in order to excel in the profession I long for. I have no doubt that I possess enough passion and ambition to succeed in becoming an exemplary teacher.

***By Mirel Munteanu 12th grade,
“Elena Doamna” Food Industry College,
Galati, Romania***

3.2. OUR LESSON

The word “adolescence” literally means “growing up” (from Latin) and it describes a distinct stage between childhood and adulthood, but often defines the “teenage” years, which also means experience. Being a representative person for my generation, I think that experience is the key-word which gives you the test before and the lesson afterwards. I am aware of the fact that I am not old enough to judge or to criticize my parents’ generation, but I also have a voice to be heard.

My generation has a lot of qualities which are not entirely “polished”. We prepare ourselves for a life whose course we know nothing of. Every adolescent possesses a unique perspective. It’s so easy for us to get caught in our desire to be successful, wealthy and famous. But that’s not the kind of recognition we seek in life. We just think about what matters to us and make sure we are doing things for the right reason and not to please our ego. We make sure that our intentions are healthy because we are following our intuition.

We believe in fairy tales. I know that it sounds hilarious, but we actually do. Fairy

*Drawing by Tudose Ana Corina,
9th grade, “V. Alecsandri” National College,
Galati, Romania*



tales are more than true. I can prove it. Not because they tell us the dragons exist, but because they tell us that dragons can be beaten. You know what the issue is with the grown-ups’ generation? Everyone wants a magical solution to their problems but everyone refuses to believe in magic. I also think that childhood is an extremely important stage in our lives. It has trained us to see the good in every situation and it could influence our spirit to be forever young and happy.

We are happy. Even if the only thing that makes us happy is the morning tea, for example. We live for that morning tea intake. We make it marvellous. We get excited about that. We just let that small happiness, whatever it is, become our

passion. It's what keeps us alive. We may say we are passionate.

We are good enough, smart enough, beautiful enough and strong enough. We believe it and never let insecurity run our life. We just go for it. Being vulnerable is not a weakness, being in tune with others is a superpower.

*By Silvia Diana Drăgan 9th grade,
"M. Kogălniceanu" National College,
Galați, Romania*

3.3. FLOWERS

The pigments of the rainbow fascinate me with their vivid and beautiful colours. My greatest pleasure is to observe the illusions created by nature's art.

The flowers are sprawling specks of dust and emotion that sweeten the wind and



*Drawing by Ciolan Georgiana, 6th grade,
"V. Alecsandri" National College, Galați*

paint the earth. These little fairies shine like magical stars rooted deeply in the green grass. They fly like coloured birds whose wings are the lyrics of an enigmatic love

poem. They are beautiful dreams that cross the forests and sing in my abstract mind.

Nature has its rules... It is painful to know their age, to know their deaths but it's spectacular to search their beginnings. They don't have time to live. I guess they are just changing shades of green for centuries. Their souls fly and go, disappear in the mist... and with their drained sorrow they are reborn from light and start another life. They hide the truth in a magical secret. They are immortal and mortal at the same time, dark and bright in the same prism, but always legendary mysteries of wonder in my eyes.

*By Păun Maria 7th grade,
"Al. I. Cuza" National College, Galați,
Romania*

3.4. HAPPINESS

“Happiness motivates me by the absence.” This thing is noticed by people day by day, but it is seen and perceived in different ways. Happiness is seen as love, innocence or beauty.

The children's mind is very frail, gentle and curious. Their eyes see only good things. Children will always have interests like games, friends and fun. The lack of happiness means being left alone, or not having someone to play with or losing a game. You shouldn't miss the happiness in the upbringing and education of a child, because once deprived of one of the most beautiful feelings, he will live his life without being happy and nothing will make sense for him.

Happiness is a reason that keeps us still alive. In the mind of a teenager everything is already changing. His eyes see only happiness through love, fun and new experience. At this age we do the most unusual things possible, and the desire to feel happiness flowing in our veins, becomes like a drug for us. Any stupid thing we did or said during that period will be followed by echoes of laughter. We, ourselves want to be a source of happiness, but we often fail. That's the thing that I find the most fascinating about people. How they try, fail and yet smile and try all over again, until they are able to fulfill their desire.

*Drawing by Cristina Muntean, 5th grade,
“V. Alecsandri” National College, Galati*



At one point things like qualities that we acquire, the people we love, begin to disappear and we remain alone, with mere memories that give us hope.

On the other hand the old mind is more complex and more rational. Happiness means being wiser and making positive choices.

Being happy with who you are and what you have, is a decision that has to be consciously made. Goals can help us, they lead to happiness. Finding laughter in life is important. But at the end of the day, a person needs to make a choice about happiness. They need it, deserve it, and have it. We can find happiness everywhere, we just have to look for it.

*By Munteanu Denisa Ionela 8th grade,
“Lascăr Catargiu” Secondary School,
Schela, Galați, Romania*

3.5 HOW TO OVERCOME ANXIETY

Nowadays, more and more people go through this state of never-ending stressness called anxiety, which is a serious medical condition that should never be ignored. What can we do in order to help ourselves or the others who have the symptoms of anxiety?

The first thing that should be taken into consideration is that, in most of the situations, anxiety is triggered by a major event that has happened, is going to happen in the near future or is already happening. What you have to remember is that you are doing the best you can and no one has the right to tell you otherwise. In hale and exhale deeply a couple of times, put a smile on your face and believe in yourself and in your powers to make everything okay. Although it may sound weird, eating something may calm you as well, since the brain cannot imagine the possibility of any danger nearby while you are enjoying your sandwich.



Another thing worth mentioning is the solution if you have an anxiety attack. Overwhelming panic, heart palpitations, trembling and the fear of losing control sound pretty familiar, don't they? The best thing you can do is to withdraw in a quiet

and isolated place, for example your room, if you are at home. There, you can plug your earphones and listen to the sounds of nature or maybe a piano. Close your eyes and try to think of your nicest memories and the feelings that you experienced then. Drink some milk or hot tea before you go to sleep, so you will wake up

feeling a lot better. In conclusion, it seems that anxiety is not such a burden if you know a few tips and tricks to control it. Always remember: Life is tough, but so are you!☺

By Mădălina Jireghe, 11th grade,

“M. Kogălniceanu” National College,

Galați, Romania

Drawing by Custură Anca, 5th grade,

“V. Alecsandri” National College, Galați

3.6 IN SEARCH OF MYSELF

I thought I had found myself, several times, even during the course of my short and exciting life...I do not believe I ever truly will. I am ever changing, my personality traits are somewhat controversial and I have trouble recognizing myself, severely affecting the quality of my life.

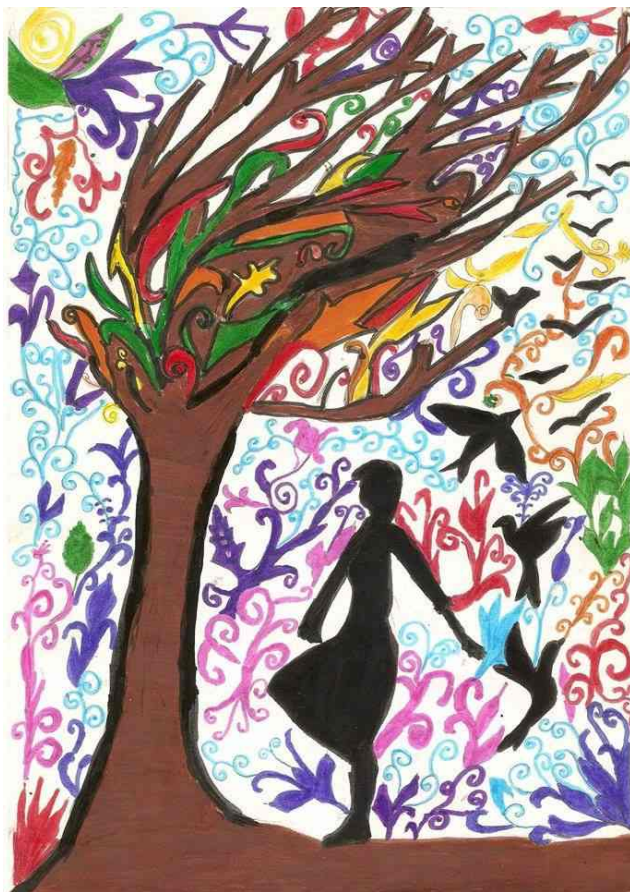
Truth be told....I am not sure what I even like anymore, a sensation of numbness

overcomes all positive emotions, unable to focus on the joy brought about by the simple things in life; I find myself drifting in ignorant bliss....I am tired, it feels as if I have already lived my life and there is nothing left for me to experience, tired of drifting, tired of this emptiness, tired of being unable to find a way out of this.

This essay is not about my search for a purpose and giving my existence any significance; this is an essay about how I lost any purpose, unimpressed by the grace of life and the importance of people. I am drifting once more.....

*By Cosmin Nanu, 12th D grade,
“Al. I. Cuza” National College, Galati,
Romania*

*Drawing by Bararu Diana,
5th grade, “V. Alecsandri” National College,
Galati, Romania*



3.7 THE MAKING OF ME

Since a very young age, I tried to create my very own identity and personality. My main goal was to be unique and different from everyone else, noticing that little girls had a tendency to conform to a group identity, losing themselves in mediocrity and anonymity. I wanted to have my own “fingerprint” in everything I created and designed.



I think this is why so many people found it hard to understand me, trying the same old clichés when they approached me. Now I understand why my group was always a small one, my friends remaining the same over the years, people who knew how to be true to themselves and to the others, that tried to find a deeper meaning in life and their existence, wanting to stand out, not through financial status or marks in school but through their way of thinking, their personality or their endeavour to mean something to the world.

What is my real purpose in life?...I am not certain about what life holds in store for me but this journey of discovery is part of the endless quest for myself, in search of true revelations and I will only be here to experience and strive to grow better and better every day....

*By Diana Gheorghe, 12th D grade,
“Al. I. Cuza” National College, Galati,
Romania*

*Drawing by Ioana Dima,
10th grade, “V. Alecsandri” National
College, Galati, Romania*

3.8 YOU AND I

Their meeting was like crushing two pieces that form an atom. They completed one another, they were like one. Their love and passion could easily be sensed in the air-soft fragrances of love, purity, even sanity. It was like a dream.

Entering the room...I could easily tell by the atmosphere that there was more to it than words could express. They would laugh, they would yell, they would lurch trying to kiss the cheek of each other's. A friendly touch was felt on my left hand

leaving scars-love proofs and I was fascinated when I woke up.

I was in a daydream. But now I look at you and you are real and we are face to face in a room with walls that have our story written, even your hands grow roses in ink with my name hidden and kept like a secret. Our love is endless, limitless.

*By George Neacșu, 12th D grade,
"Al. I. Cuza" National College, Galati,
Romania*



*Drawing by Condrea
Ana-Maria,
7th grade, "V.
Alecsandri" National
College, Galati,
Romania*

3.9 IN QUEST OF A PURPOSE

"Where am I right now?

Oh, I see! I am sitting on my chair,
In the English class thinking I've got one
more year to bear,

And I guess that's fine!

I've just got to make sure I attend lessons
and not cross the line
But where do I go next?

I have to get through a few more tests
But then what? I need to make a choice and
take my shot

A decision that will change my whole life

But after the storm I'll make sure that I'll
make it bright.

Make up my mind, thinking about it every
night,

Thinking about every possibility until I find
the light

*By Călin Anghel, 12th D grade,
"Al. I. Cuza" National College, Galati,
Romania*

3.10 IF I HAD MY LIFE TO LIVE OVER AGAIN

If I had my life to live over
I would watch more sunsets with the people
I love most
I would climb the tallest mountain and hope
that the view will be breathtaking
I would watch the series I have always
wanted to watch and never had time
I would spend more time with wrong people
so that I could learn from them
I would replay the funny moments spent
with my friends over and over again
Definitely I would make the same mistakes
even if I know the consequences
I would travel more, I would learn more

*Drawing by Căluian Diana, 11th grade,
“V. Alecsandri” National College, Galati*



I would replay even the saddest moments
because they made me the person I am today
I would listen to more music while driving
If I had my life to live over, like a bliss
I would write another poem like this.

*By Andreea Isaia, 12th D grade,
“Al. I. Cuza” National College, Galati, Romania*

3.11 DEFINING MYSELF

As you may know
My name is Ramona.
I have never really liked my name
But it's not me you'll have to blame.
I think we are all the same
We consider our names to be sort of lame.

I wouldn't like to be something else
Because Ramona and me really make sense.
My parents say it's girly and cute.
That's when I'd love to hear them on mute.

*By Ramona Iconomescu, 12th D grade,
“Al. I. Cuza” National College, Galati,
Romania*

3.12 IF

If I had to stay
Endure this hellish day
The fate I'd try to sway
Far with bloodied feet
I'd walk this endless way.

If I had to die,
I'd never question where or why
I'll watch the end of days go by
Far this bloodied face
I'd wash with guilt, refuse to cry.

If I had to start again
To be reborn, a whole new man

Drawing by Rogojină Ioana, 10th grade
"V. Alecsandri" National College, Galati



My former self, would I damn!
Far with these bloodied hands
I grasp at nothingness, my past again.

By Cosmin Nanu, 12th D grade,
"Al. I. Cuza" National College, Galati,
Romania

3.13 THE PATH TOWARDS REDEMPTION

Integrity – a personality trait, a moral value, a state of mind. “Integrity is doing the right thing, even when no one is watching” – they say. But what exactly, is integrity? Let’s try to look at it from another perspective, not the universally approached one of the personality trait that allows you to help others and remain loyal to them – not

that that isn’t important – but from a deeper, psychological point of view.

If you were to look up the definition of integrity in the Oxford Dictionary, I presume you won’t be surprised to find a noun defined as “the quality of being honest and having strong moral principles.” However, I am more interested in the

secondary meaning of the word: “the state of being whole or undivided/ the condition of being unified or sound in construction” – to be honest, it is most likely, about a building.

So why choose this definition, you might ask? Integrity happens when one understands that there must be no discrepancy between the body and the soul, between principles and actions, between mind and matter.

Wholeness, togetherness, discernment are the basic ingredients to a man who prides himself with a strong, un-deviated moral compass.

That’s why, I believe, it is safe to argue that integrity has indeed no need of rules. We are not talking about laws – fabricated artificial rules made by man in order to achieve social harmony – but about the rules of reason, the rules of logic, and the rules of nature. Even though, everybody else has travelled from the beginning of time down the same path, same old, familiar and safe road, when guided only by the voice of your judgement, you may overlook your own subjective whims and fears and, stand up for and translate your aspirations into reality, and shift the course of your own life

based solely on what your whole being is expecting of you. For people with integrity, rules will not be needed, for they carry themselves in accordance with their own moral code and with their wisdom.



The synchronism between desire and action, the upholding of principles in spite of the possibility of failure, the courage of being who you are instead of allowing yourself to be moulded and fitted into small boxes handcrafted by others – this is what I call integrity. It is the force that lies within each and every one of us to stand up straight, it is us not allowing doubt and insecurities to plague us to the bone, it is your soul being so in touch with your spirit and your mind that you remain loyal and true not only to others, but to yourself. It is a compass needle that, if laid on a plane surface of moral values, guides you towards redemption, towards achievement – it guides you home.

*By Stoian Bianca Denisa, 12th grade,
“Spiru Haret” National College, Tecuci,
Galati, Romania
Drawing by Negoită Ariadna, 9th grade,
“V. Alecsandri” National College, Galati*

3.14 PEACE – HOPE FOR A FUTURE TOGETHER

I'm just a kid!

One among millions! My path is long and it just begins! I have a lot to say but no one is listening to me: I'm just a little human among billions but I know that changing begins from us and with us! I have never looked for the meaning of the word „*peace*“. Maybe I have never considered it as a real word! *Peace* is a general state which we have to keep alive inside us, an instinct that nature gave us and which, if ignored, could lead to a total destruction of our lives //our personal wreck!

In my world, though, the world in which I learn to grow and to make a statement, peace is just a treaty between two states, an important prize or the resolution of a cruel and bloody war! So then, what does it really mean *to live*? What does it mean *being united*? For what reason are we so many in this world if not to live together and to make an indestructible unit?!

It's the terms of life, the law of living! Before gaining our consciousness and be able to control our attitude, nature teaches us to stand in solidarity. We breathe the same air, we avoid the same dangers, we

fight, apparently, for the same causes. But when one of us falls down, the others look the other way and they keep going on thinking that this is for „the best interest of the majority“. How wrong! Reality tells us that in a world dominated by humans, therefore by the sentiments, there is no majority or minority, there is only one immense ideal –WHOLE, which is clearly unattainable. This world „undressed“ us of our reasoning, of our wit and compassion. It has denuded inside us some strange mechanisms triggered by the survival instinct. The only ones that matter, and yet always together into a competition that wears us out, a marathon where only man eaters will win. We've lost ourselves, life is only a state, a game in which the defeated are silent!

Peace, this feeble feeling, which seems to be lost for centuries, must emerge from inside us, instinctually, naturally. Why was 17 year-old Malala Yousafzai (the youngest Nobel prize winner) shut at? She only wanted a *beautiful world* for herself and for her family... And she's just a recent example! Over the centuries we've killed

our heroes, the ones that have fought for peace, with peace!

Peace is not about the happiness and the silence we have in absence of the war. *Peace* means you have to dedicate yourself to your world, to fight against the ignorance of the others for a long lasting harmony. Start being kind, this is the first rule! Open your eyes wide and try to see beyond the walls of your fortress, a fortress that *you* have built!

Accept you're being selfish, forget the meaning of this word and learn the meaning of another one: ALTRUISM. Now get out of your shell! Learn how to feel for the others, to love them, to fight for them more than you do it for yourself!

Peace is a way of life! And yet it's the barrier between living and existing! It's crucial to see the difference: we all live

because we breathe and do various things but very few really exist! Because existing means that your experience should help your society to thrive, that your name should mean something for someone; you should be

a hand that helps, a heart that comforts, a fresh mind, alert and always opened to new things. To exist means to be human, one of the many, but indispensable to the world because you are part of the WHOLE!

Peace teaches us to live together!

And if that is *peace* I am ready to fight till the day I'll die. Change starts with us! I'm ready to change!

I'm not a kid anymore! I'm a fighter for *liberty* and for *peace*!

**By Mădălina Bianca Partenie, 10th grade,
"Spiru Haret" National College, Tecuci,
Galati, Romania**

***Drawing by Cibotariu Emma Elena, 9th grade,
"V. Alecsandri" National College, Galati***



3.15 ROMANIAN SCHOOL IN 100 YEARS' TIME

What will school be like in 100 years' time? In my opinion, school will be completely different and thus, students will be very pleased to learn and to participate in their own learning.

I think the new teachers' technique will look very different: they will give up marks, exactly like in Norway, in order to reduce students' stress and increase school performance. They will give up books and auxiliaries and these ones will be replaced by the online educational sites. In a classroom, the common students' desks will be replaced by round tables, for a better communication and for a better eye-contact. The science classes will take place in the middle of the nature. They will insist upon developing students' abilities and their emotional intelligence. The office-like teachers' way of dressing will be replaced by

o more casual one. The common blackboard or whiteboard will be replaced by tablets. All the educational materials will remain at school, in the classroom.

In each classroom there will be a water's sound hearing, there will also be a lot of perfumed and beautifully coloured flowers. Students will not have uniforms: girls will wear pink or purple T-shirts, and boys will wear green or blue ones. I do not like the idea of automatization of the Romanian learning, that is why school and teachers will offer every student the golden opportunity of free expression without criticizing them.

*By Stafie Ana Alexandra, 6th grade,
Secondary School No 22,
Galati, Romania*



Girls Uniform



Boys Uniform

3.16 THE SCHOOL OF THE FUTURE

I could say , a lot of things will be different and what now is just imagination will be real then.

Firstly, there won't be any teachers, only computers, robots and machines. Children won't go to school, they will sit comfortably in their armchairs and watch the lessons on TV.

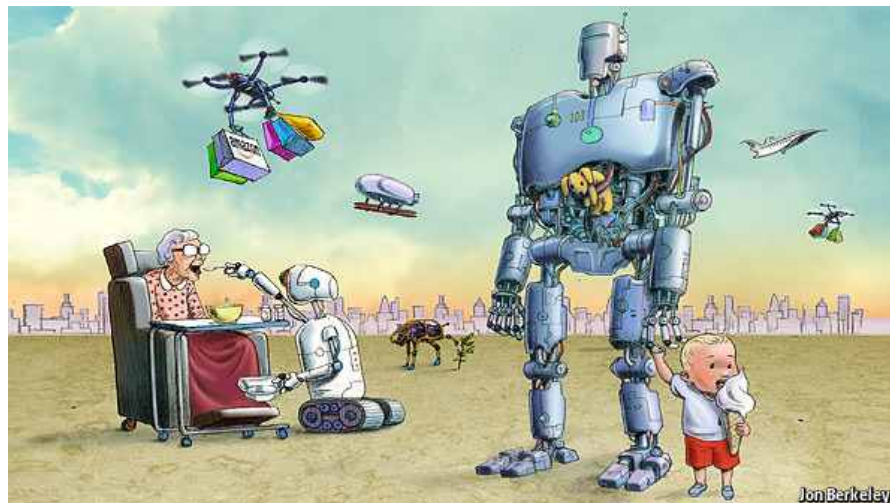
Secondly, there won't be any parents' meetings because parents will check their children daily on tablets.

In the future I think robots will help children with their homework so children will have more free time. I also think, a

mouse for the computer won't be necessary any longer because there will be oral commands for the laptop which will give answers in seconds.

However, 100 years is a long time and I hope only good changes will be for our schools because children need to know a lot of things about everything around them.

*By Stratulat Andreea, 6th grade,
Secondary School No 22,
Galati, Romania*



3.17 THE MOST EMBARRASSING MOMENT OF MY LIFE

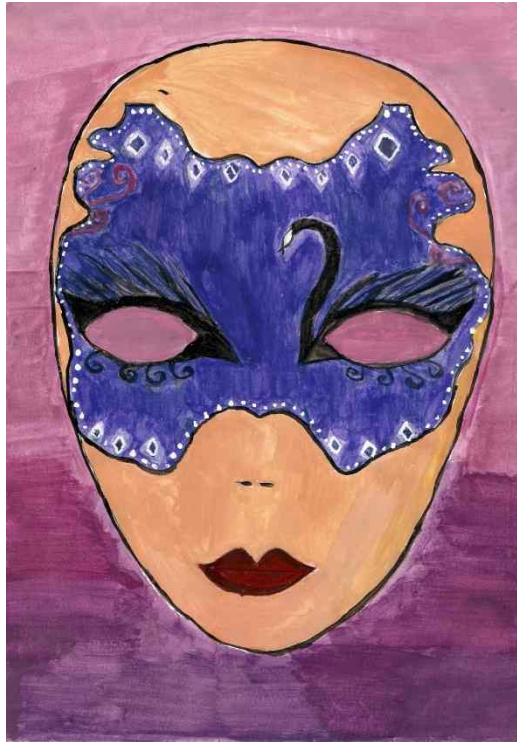
Public speaking competitions have always caught my attention. I enjoy watching some of my classmates speaking English fluently and stating their opinions with a lot of confidence. However, I was never courageous enough to actually be a participant in these competitions. The fear of forgetting my story, stammering during my speech or failing frequently haunted me.

But my English teacher advised me to try my luck at the district level public speaking competition. I was a little nervous at first, but after some encouragement I felt I was ready for this challenge. I practiced hard each day with the intention of winning at least a honorable prize at the competition. I did not want to give in to my weakness. Soon, I was on my way to the public speaking competition which was a stone's throw away from my school. My prepared speech played endlessly in my

head. I knew I had to pronounce each word perfectly. After some time, I started to feel a little more confident in my ability to memorize the story and was certain that I could take the first prize.

The hall I entered was filled with students and teachers, all of them looking intimidating. Looking up at my English teacher, she gave me a smile and advised me not to worry. I was the final contestant for my category. The waiting was like an agony as I watched each contestant make their painful exit.

Half an hour later, a teacher told me it was my turn. Without delay, I got up on stage. The large crowd made me tremble but I managed to begin my speech flawlessly. Into the third minute of my eight-minute speech, I started forgetting my lines. Tiny drops of perspiration began to trickle down my neck. My hands began to quiver.



Suddenly, I was completely blank and the words of my story began to disappear. As people started pointing and looking at me, I quickly ran off stage and into the car park.

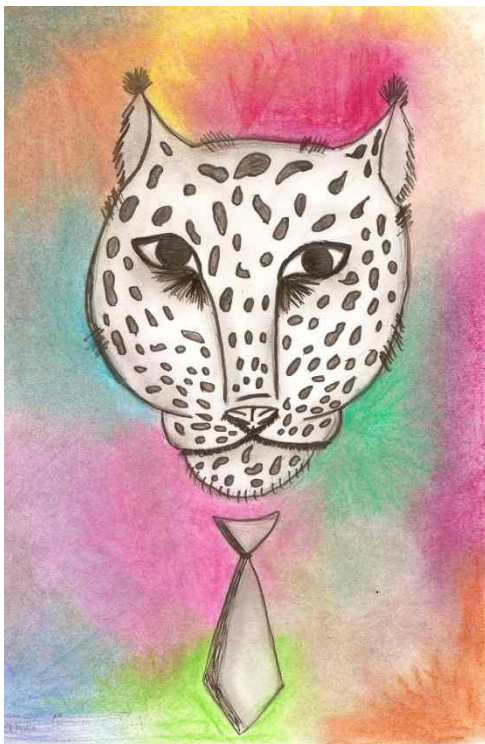
My teacher quickly rushed towards me and tried to comfort me. She told me that what had happened was not something unusual. Many students often go blank and freeze on stage.

However, I will never forget that moment as the most embarrassing moment of my life.

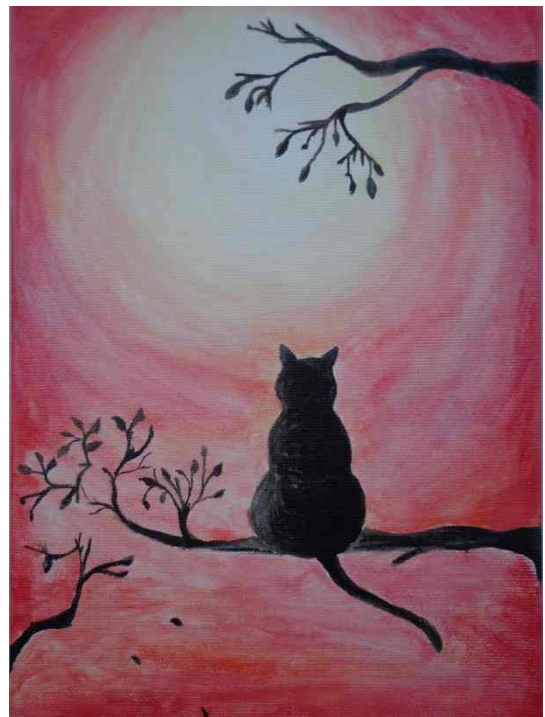
*By Potârniche Ramona, 8th grade,
“Lascăr Catargiu” Secondary School,
Schela, Galati, Romania*

*Drawing on page 42 done by Frandescu
Paula, 11th grade, “V. Alecsandri” National
College, Galati*

REFLECTING ON WHO WE ARE...



*Drawing by Rotaru Ilinca, 5th grade,
“V. Alecsandri” National College, Galati,
Romania*



*Drawing by Eni Bianca, 7th grade,
“V. Alecsandri” National College, Galati,
Romania*

4. TEEN ADDICTIONS: GAMES, SPORTS, FASHION, FACEBOOK... YOU NAME IT 😊

4.1. COSMOPOLITAN

This might be a delicate subject, but all of us know that today's teenagers are addicted to lots of things, such as: games, sports, music, fashion, social media and many more.

Lots of games from today are very addictive, like CS GO, LOL, GTA, DOTA 2, Medal of honour, etc. I know that because I have a lot of friends who play these games and when I meet them, we talk about that and we have fun. We sometimes even play those together!

Sincerely, I like Facebook. Facebook is my addiction and I stay everyday on it, like many other girls. This application helps me because I can talk with my friends and my sister when I need them. When I take a photo, I post it immediately on social media, because I like to share my experiences of life with other people.

Some teenagers like listening to music all the time, but others are addicted to sports like tennis, basketball or football. I'm

*Drawing by Ilie Maria, 9th grade,
"V. Alecsandri" National College, Galati*



not a sportive person, but I love fashion. I sometimes dress like I'm going to a red carpet event because I like Lana Del Rey's style, she inspires me and with her help, I become a creative and fashionable girl.

In conclusion, we are teenagers and we like to be sociable! Our addictions are very funny and we love what makes us happy! 😊

*By Sonia Bandrabur 7th grade,
"Gh. Marinescu" Secondary School,
Galati, Romania*

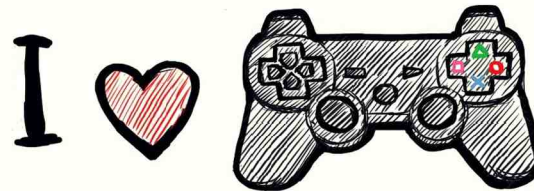
4.2. MY HOBBIES

A lot of teenagers prefer staying on Facebook instead of going outside. But I'm not one of them. My favourite things to do are: playing football, riding a bike, going in the park with some friends, and most of all playing video games.

Since I was eight years old, when I got my first computer, it was like magic. I discovered how to play online games, and then it all started here. I remember my first game. It was all about motor-bikes racing. Now, this game isn't cool for me anymore but, when I was a little kid, it was great.

But, as time passed, games evolved, and I was very excited to play them. Soon, I got a laptop and it was even better than the computer. Games have been criticised for making people more antisocial or depressed but they helped me to improve both my mind and body.

Computer games help me to release my stress, they also relax me from a hard and long day of school. Playing video games helps me to unwind and have a good time. One of my favourite video games from X-Box is HALO. This game is not like any other game. The X-Box allows the game



HALO to have up to four players, which makes the game more intriguing. This game is based on one person is trying to find the other and the only way you can win if you find that person first and shoot them, it's like hide and seek but instead of tag you shoot. This game is so basic but I love playing it. I also love this game because I used to have a similar game like that when I was younger and I used to play it with my older sister. This game brings back good childhood memories and it helps me to relax and have a good time whether I am playing alone or with someone else.

***By Rusin Vlad, 6th grade,
“Lascar Catargiu” Secondary School,
Schela, Galați, Romania***

4.3 MINECRAFT



I love
this
game
because

I can do everything I want and I can build a lot of things!!! Like my own house, a big house where my character, Zethnix, lives. The house has got four rooms. There is a bedroom with a bed and a torch in it. There is also a wooden wardrobe and a brown and black woolen carpet. There is a big bathroom with a toilet seat, a shower made of coloured glass pane and a sink.

There is also a living room with a sofa, a smart TV and a wooden table. In the kitchen, there is a crafting table made of four oak wood planks, a furnace made out of eight cobblestones, a chair and a dinner table.

I like this game because I can be creative and use my own ideas to build a new world. Plus, I play my game in English and learn new words all the time. I really love it! It's great!

*By Ciorici Dragoș, 4th grade,
"Sf. Cuv. Parascheva" Secondary School,
Smârdan, Galati, Romania*

4.4. MY TALKING ANGELA

Angela is a
beautiful and
small cat. She
can talk. Angela
has got a small
house. My
Angela has got
red hair and blue
eyes. She has got



black and white fur. She is
wearing a white and purple dress. In
Angela's kitchen there is a table, a fridge, a
cupboard and a chair. Every day she eats
biscuits, ice cream and vegetables. She
drinks milk too. In Angela's living room,
there is a green carpet, a pink laptop and a
magic book. In the bathroom, there is a pink
carpet, a bathtub and a mirror. In her
bedroom, she has got a pink bed, a purple
wardrobe and a pink lamp with yellow stars
on it.

I like this game very much because it
is colourful and funny! It's fantastic!

*By Bezmințeanu Oana Ștefania, 4th grade,
"Sf. Cuv. Parascheva" Secondary School,
Smârdan, Galati, Romania*

4.5 CHESS – A VERY INTERESTING GAME

I've always played many games, both indoor and outdoor games, and I still try to play whenever I get time. Among those games, I enjoyed playing chess more than others. Chess is an indoor game with two players. This game does not involve any major physical movements like other outdoor games but a chess player has to use his/her brain and make game plans to defeat the opponent.

I mostly play this game with my friends and cousins. Sometimes I play it with my father and senior relatives. Since playing chess requires only placing the board on a surface and finding a sitting

position for the two players, it is convenient to play chess almost anywhere. I mostly play it in our garden. I enjoy this game because I have had a fascination for this game since childhood and I really like the brainstorming involved in this game. It is a thought provoking game that gives the participating players the chance to use their brains.

A player can apply his/her strategy, and then allure the opponent to fall into a trap which is much like a real battlefield. It's not a game where someone should use the physical movements; the game requires a perfect game plan in order to find the opponent's weakness; it's a strategy battle.

This game gives you the feeling that you are the King of a country where you decide your countrymen's fate. For all those reasons, this is a very interesting and enjoyable game to me.

*By Dobrotă Cristina 5th grade,
“M. Kogălniceanu” National
College, Galați, Romania*



4.6 AIKIDO, MORE THAN A SPORT – A WAY OF LIFE

My name is Matei Mihai Muscă and I am 11 years old. I am pupil in the fifth grade at No 2 School - Gheorghe Marinescu. Four years ago I started practising aikido and now I have 7 kyu degrees and the honour to wear the orange belt in Aikido.

Aikido is a modern martial art founded by the „O Sensei” Morihei Ueshiba in Tokyo in the first part of the last century. The name Aikido means *“The Way of Harmony with the Ki” (life force)* and stresses the harmony between the mind, body and spirit.

O’Sensei Ueshiba is the man who transformed the deadly techniques of Aikijujutsu into a peaceful way of harmony; from a means to destroy one’s enemy into a means to resolve conflict. The old Aikijujutsu techniques had been born in an era of blood and violence; he worked to transform them into a way, or “do” (the way of harmony). “Aiki” took on a new meaning, moving beyond the notion of harmony with the energy of one’s opponent in combat, to embrace the notion of harmony with all



things at all times; harmony with the universe. When one has achieved such harmony, there is no longer any enemy. O’Sensei Ueshiba called his new study Aikido.

At its basis, Aikido is a martial art that focuses on the idea of reciprocity. When translating Aikido into English we find several meanings, one of them being “the way of combining forces”. The basic philosophy of Aikido is blending with the attacker’s movements so that the attacker’s actions can be controlled with minimal effort, effectively defending against an attack without disabling the attacker. O’Sensei’s personal philosophy was one of



reconciliation and universal peace. Aikido can be seen as a path to attaining utopia during one's life, extending love and compassion even on those who seek to harm others. However, do not draw the conclusion that Aikido is a martial arts form that teaches its practitioners how to "love" their attackers.

In aikido there is no competition but frequently demonstration. Nage (or tore) - the defender - is attacked by the uke the both executed the techniques. Then the two switch roles and tore became uke for the sole purpose to progress along the path of Aiki.

Nowadays the The Aikikai Foundation is the original aikido

organization in Japan. It is an incorporated entity in Japan since 1940. It is headed by the doshu, the living successor of the founder of aikido.

In Romania there are thousands of practitioners - aikidoka - in a few organizations: The Romanian Foundation of Aikido – Aikikai, The Romanian Federation of Aikido and others. Given its advantages, it is easy to understand why I started doing aikido.

"The Way of the Warrior has been misunderstood. It is not a means to kill and destroy others. Those who seek to compete and better one another are making a terrible mistake. To smash, injure, or destroy is the worst thing a human being can do. The real Way of a Warrior is to prevent such slaughter – it is the Art of Peace, the power of love."

The Art of Peace.

By Matei Mihai Muscă, 5th grade,

"Gh. Marinescu" Secondary School,

Galați, Romania

Drawing done by Negoită Ariadna,
9th grade, "V. Alecsandri" National College,

Galati, Romania

4.7 MY LIFE IN ONE WORD --- DANCE

The dance is a form of art, I am a dancer because this is what I know to do best...it makes me feel like the real me; through dancing I tell a story, my story...and by my movements I show my



feeling and above all I give to people the same feeling they get from a singer, but I don't use an instrument, nor my voice...I only use my body.

Dancing is like a white paper and my moves are the lyrics filling in the paper, because there is no greater feeling than being in sync with a rhythm. Something magical happens when you dance – for a moment, you feel totally alive. I started dancing 5 years ago, I am a street dancer and my choreographer is the best – he taught me everything I know today. I made plenty of friends...and you know how they say – friends who dance together, stay together...no matter what. In my experience so far I had workshops with great people

and great national and international dancers and I've been to TV competitions and a lot of events. So far I have been to an actually Hip Hop competition where me and my crew have won the second place / adults, which is the begging of a long and fascinating road from now on, because something I've learned in this past 5 years is that I should always choose my dream and not the competition because I am an athlete, an artist and also a dreamer. For my future I have big plans - I will train to become a dance trainer / instructor and to build and enforce my skills in this Hip Hop Nation.

***By Diana Dinu 10th grade,
"Henri Coanda" Technical College,
Timișoara, Timiș County, Romania***

4.8 PLAYING BASKETBALL

Basketball is my favourite sport and I really love it because it is a fast team sport which cultivates the fair-play and the respect for the others players. There are twelve players in a team: five on the court and seven on the bench. Each team has a coach.

I play basketball for the Sport Club “Phoenix” Galatz. Our team has a wonderful coach and I admire him because he knows how to encourage us and he trains us well. He is a kind and generous person who always manages to motivate us. He is a calm but strong man who gives us good advice when it is necessary.

My favourite basketball team is Golden State Warriors. I love this team because it has the best players ever. It has supporters all over the world. When they have matches, the atmosphere is amazing.

My favourite basketball player is Stephen Curry. I like him because he is fast and ambitious. Even if he isn't very tall, he is really talented. He is one of the most active players on the court. He is also very active on social media and he enjoys interacting with his fans.



Oh, I almost forgot to tell you. I began to play basketball when I was six years old. Last year I was in a lot of tournaments and I won a lot of matches. Why do I like this sport? Because it makes me feel happy, healthy and smart.

Sports are really good for our health and for our mind. When you play a team sport you make a lot of friends and you also learn how to co-operate and how to solve your problems by communicating.

I love this fabulous sport because it gives me a lot of satisfactions and that is why I could not live without it.

***By Ioan Vlad Cristian, 4th grade,
“Gh. Marinescu” Secondary School,
Galați, Romania***

4.9 PROJECT: OUR CLASS AND THE SPORTS WE LIKE

4.9.1 TENNIS

Tennis, or the white sport is a sport of discipline and intelligence. It represents a great way to stay fit. Playing tennis helps us to get a more flexible body. Tennis is also a game that helps you compete with other players and control your body physically, mentally and emotionally. It is also a popular sport.

I simply like practising it.

*By Boncu Petru, 5th grade,
“Al. I. Cuza” National College, Galați,
Romania*

4.9.3 BASKETBALL

Basketball is a wonderful sport. In this sport discipline and teamwork are very important. It increases your agility, precision and strength. I practised this sport and I think it is great for those who want to improve their team spirit.

*By Cosmescu Călin, 5th grade,
“Al. I. Cuza” National College, Galați,
Romania*

4.9.2 CHESS

My favourite activity is playing chess. Chess is also known by the name of ‘game/sport of the mind’. I think it develops people’s intellectual abilities and it can help us get good results at school. Among its benefits are: increased capacity of attention and concentration, anticipation abilities and the cultivation of patience.

I want to become a world champion!

*By Barbu Simon, 5th grade,
“Al. I. Cuza” National College, Galați,
Romania*

4.9.4 FOOTBALL

Football is the king of all sports. It is the most famous sport and the most loved one in almost every country in the world. And I think I know why.....It has simple rules and it is not difficult to play. The most important thing is to score and the team which scores most wins the game. The most famous players earn a lot of money too and this makes this sport even more attractive.

*By Crișean Dragoș, 5th grade,
“Al. I. Cuza” National College, Galați,
Romania*

4.9.5 MY FAVOURITE GAME

I like sport. It plays a great role in my life. Most of all I like playing basketball. I am the best player in my team and I take part in different sports competitions. Sometimes we win, sometimes we lose.

Basketball is a team game. You can play it in any season because you can also play it indoors. There are two baskets in this exciting game and only one orange ball. The players must throw the ball to the basket and get it into the basket to score a goal. There two teams with only five players.

Basketball is an active game. It makes people strong, healthy and energetic. I like basketball!

*By Ciurea Nicu, 5th grade,
“Al. I. Cuza” National College, Galați,
Romania*

4.9.6 KARATE KYOKUSHIN

My free time activity is going to karate classes. I like doing this because I can be myself. I feel I am strong when doing it. I couldn't live my life without karate. I have

been practising it for five months. I know.....five months is not a long time but I feel karate is already a part of me. I want to be the strongest girl in the world. I simply like doing it.

“I fight because I can!”

*By Tanvuia Iulia, 5th grade,
“Al. I. Cuza” National College, Galați,
Romania*

4.9.7 ATHLETICS

This sport is an exclusive collection of sporting events that involve competitive running, jumping, throwing a disc or a javelin...and walking. This sport is healthy and I think it is the key to long life and trouble-free physical condition. I agree with the Latin quote “Sound mind in a sound body”. In conclusion, doing sports can only help you.

*By Tanvuia Sebastian, 5th grade,
“Al. I. Cuza” National College, Galați,
Romania*

4.10 BEING INTO FASHION

Fashion is our changing to make the old clothing into a new one.

For some people, fashion is in fact just some models who walk on a catwalk. Well, they are wrong. Fashion is more than that. I consider fashion to be a way of inventing things again and again... I like doing this activity. I have always wanted to become a fashion designer. When I was very young, I tried to draw all kinds of dresses which I created. Last year I made my first dress. It was wonderful.

I always watch fashion programs for ideas and inspiration, I really like them. I have a lot of ideas for my new dresses. In my room, you can see on the desk different kinds of materials, tools, pieces of cloth, cotton, needles, scissors, accessories and drawings – very important! I put all my drawings on a map and I am very careful with them. I can say I am collecting them.

Fashion designers create designs for clothing and accessories and bring those designs to fruition, either sewing them on their own or overseeing their creation by employees or manufacturers. Each designer has his or her own aesthetic, and that



aesthetic evolves over time as trends and the designer's vision change.

Being a fashion designer involves more than just sketching a design. Designers often use special computer-aided design (CAD) software, they are skilled at sewing, and are familiar with color theory and the many different types of materials used to make garments and accessories. They must also be aware of the business side of fashion, including merchandising and marketing.

But fashion isn't the most important thing in our lives. We are so much more than fashion. I love fashion very much.

*By Mihai Maria, 4th grade,
"Gh. Marinescu" Secondary School,
Galați, Romania
Drawing by Căluian Diana,
11th grade, "V. Alecsandri" National
College, Galați, Romania*

5. BOOK/ FILM REVIEWS

5.1. CLOCKWORK ORANGE – BOOK REVIEW

Clockwork Orange is one of the best and most interesting books that I have ever read. Even literary critics classified it among the most beautiful masterpieces in the history of the literature.

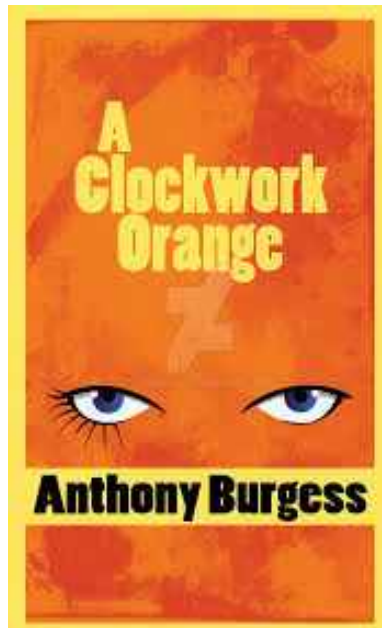
The story is absolutely fascinating and can be read breathlessly, being the book of reference of Anthony Burgess. Written in a spirit loaded with amusement, it captures the problem which mankind has experienced from the beginning: violence that takes the most dreadful forms: rape, knocking, strife, even murder. The story itself is tragic. Burgess was inspired by his own real life: his pregnant wife is attacked on the street, she loses pregnancy and dies little after that. This book is so controversial because it is an attempt to combat violence, to capture its tragic effects, not to promote, as some critics stated. Furthermore, Burgess was drunk while he wrote the book in order to be capable of using the comic spirit, to create intense situations, and to be able to face his

own stories.

Alex, the main character in the book (a possible participant in the attack the writer's wife) is fifteen years old, prone to violence in the first part of the book, the head of a gang of teenagers that terrorizes the streets of the city at night just for mere pleasure, without remorse or resentments, who imposes respect and intimidates all his friends, even his parents. It seems unbelievable what a group of young people can

do in the middle of the night, on the streets of the city: they rob shops, they beat people, they rape, they participate in fights between gangs and so on.

In spite of this behavior, Alex is somehow an intellectual, a complex character, a fight of the author against violence at the level of literature. Still, since he is involved in two murders, he is caught by the police and sentenced to 14 years in prison. After 2 years, Alex is chosen to



participate in a program which gives him the freedom in 2 weeks and the young man is decided to return and to take revenge against the members of the gang who betrayed him. At first, the program seems a blessing, but in a short time, everything takes a terrible and unexpected turn. He is eventually released, but he will be the victim of an attack against his body, his mind, his will and his heart.

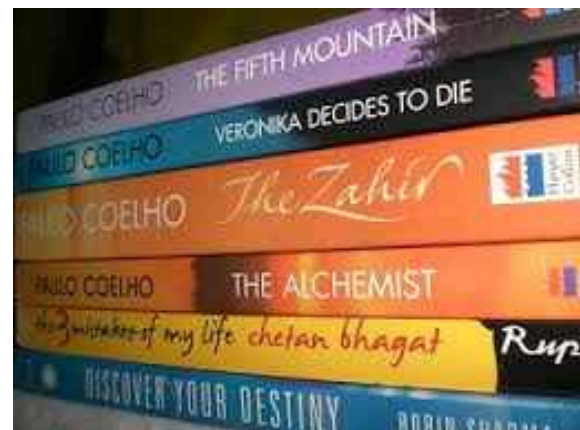
The book is indeed a literary masterpiece, a controversial and an exceptional book, with an intense action, interesting characters, written in both a comic and a tragic manner, a book which you will read breathlessly, which makes you understand things in a different way

*By Hodorogea Andreea, 10th grade,
“M. Kogălniceanu” National College,
Galați, Romania*

5.2 VERONIKA DECIDES TO DIE – BOOK REVIEW

The best book I have ever read is definitely “Veronika decides to die”, written by Paulo Coelho. It is a modern, psychological book, one that asks the riveting question “Why am I living?”.

The events take place in 1997, the main character being Veronika, a 24-year-old troubled woman who can't find a meaning to her life, so she decides to commit suicide in order to end her suffering. She takes a handful of sleeping pills, but fortunately she wakes up and her parents put her into the local mental hospital, Villette. Here, the doctor tells her that even though the pills did not kill her, they severely damaged her heart and she has only a few



days left to live. As the story unfolds, Veronika discovers herself through the patients of Villette and allows herself to feel things like hatred, fear and even curiosity.

The most impressive thing in this book is the great love Veronika develops for Edward (a schizophrenic patient), a feeling that cures her depression and makes her

happy with her own life. The love story between them makes Veronika decide to run away with him, living her last days in the arms of her loved one.

“Veronika decides to die” by Paulo Coelho is a work of art, which is definitely worth reading in order to discover the

absorbing and gripping story of a magnificent character who can't find a place in the world.

*By Jipianu Bianca, 11th grade,
“M. Kogălniceanu” National College,
Galați, Romania*

5.3 SNOW WHITE – MY FAVOURITE CHARACTER



I really like the story “Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs” because it has got a happy ending and the good always wins versus evil. My favourite character is Snow White because she is beautiful. She has pink cheeks, black hair and white skin, a yellow skirt and a blue shirt. She is hardworking because she cleans and cooks for the dwarfs every day. She is also kind because she feeds the animals in the forest: birds, deer, hares etc. The wicked witch gives her to eat a poisonous apple, but finally the prince saves her. She loves the prince because he is brave and handsome. They get married and live happily ever after

*Drawing by Nistorescu Mădălina,
10th grade, “V. Alecsandri” National
College, Galați, Romania*

*By Patache George, 4th grade,
“Sf. Cuv. Parascheva” Secondary School,
Smârdan, Galați, Romania*

5.4 LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD – MY FAVOURITE CHARACTER

My favourite character is Little Red Riding Hood. She is a little girl and her grandmother gives her a red coat with a hood. She wears it every day and because of that everybody calls her “Little Red Riding Hood”. Her mother is ill in bed and Little Red Riding Hood must go to her house to bring her some food. She sees the wolf and talks to him. The wolf goes to the grandmother’s house because he wants to eat her, but she jumps into the wardrobe. When Little Red Riding Hood enters the room, the wolf eats her, but the woodcutter saves her and they live happily ever after. I like Little Red Riding Hood because she is a nice person, she is brave and loves her grandma very much.

*By Roman Florina, 4th grade,
“Sf. Cuv. Parascheva” Secondary School,
Smârdan, Galați, Romania*

5.5 BARBIE FAIRYTOPIA –FILM REVIEW

It was a nice day. A fairy without wings was sitting on a flower of her fluffy friend, Bibble. The rest of the fairies were laughing at her. They were announced to go back in the magic clearing. It was their house there in a pink tulip. But there was a dark place ruled by a mean queen, Laverna. She controlled some fungus monsters and she had a magic potion that inspires that loose the power to fly. The new Elina was for the first time in the fairy city. Laverna gave her magic wings. Elina was very close to give Laverna all the fairy powers but she stopped in time and she broke the spell. And Laverna was stopped and she disappeared.

*By Ionița Florina.4th grade,
“Gh. Marinescu” Secondary School, Galați, Romania*



*Drawing by Necula Patricia,
10th grade, “V. Alecsandri” National
College, Galati, Romania*

5.6 OCHO APELLIDOS VASCOS – MY FAVOURITE SPANISH FILM

The main characters in “8 Apellidos Vasos” are: Dani Rovira, Clara Lago, Karra Elejalde and Carmen Machi. This film is a Spanish love-comedy directed by Emilio Martínez Lázaro. It is the story of Rafa a boy from Sevilla (south Spain) who met Amaia from the Basque Country (north Spain). They met on a night out with friends in Sevilla, but Amaia had to return to her village in the north. It all started as a joke but Rafa fell in love with her and followed her in a crazy trip accross Spain. In the beginning, she ignored him but after some adventures together - including those with Amaia’s dad - both of them fell in love and started a beautiful and funny love story.

It is a very good film because you can see the differences between the north and

the south of Spain and there are lots of funny moments with stereotypes representing two different lifestyles. We really recommend this film to anyone who enjoys love comedies.

By Miriam Lidón Cascales and Ana María Castillo Oltra.

*By Miriam Lidón Cascales and
Ana María Castillo Oltra, IES Gil de
Junteron, Murcia, Spain*



5.7 TOP 5 SPANISH CELEBRITIES

TOP#5: **Penélope Cruz**

Sánchez. She was born on the 28th of April of 1974 in Alcobendas,



Madrid. She has been nominated for some Oscars. She has 3 GOYAS. Her best movie is Volver. She has 2 children, the oldest son is called Leo Encinas Cruz and the youngest daughter it's called Luna Encinas Cruz.



TOP#4: **María Lucía Sánchez Benítez**

Her artistic name is MALÚ.

She was born on 15th March in 1982 in Madrid. She was nominated to the GRAMMYS LATINOS in 2011 on the category of the best album vocal pop female but she won the ONDA prize in 2015.

TOP#3:

Iker

Casillas

Fernández.



He was born on 20th May in 1981 in Mostoles, Madrid. His nicknames are "EL SANTO" and "SAN IKER" because he was the best goalkeeper in the world, he started his career at REAL MADRID.

He won with the Spanish national team the "EUROCUP" in 2008 and 2012, and the "WORLD CUP" in 2010.

TOP#2

Ramón

Melendi

Espina.



His artistic name is MELENDI. He was born on 21st January in 1979 in Oviedo. He is a Spanish singer, his music styles are Rock, Pop, Rumba. ALBUMS: Sin noticias de Holanda; Que el cielo espere sentao; Mientras no cueste trabajo etc.

TOP#1

Pablo Moreno

de Alboran

Ferrandiz. His

artistic name is



PABLO ALBORAN. He was born on 31st May in 1989 in Malaga, he is a singer and musician. He is very talented. Albums: En Acustico; Tanto; Terral.

*By Maria Alexandra Leiva Miranda and
Paula Franco Arce, IES Gil de
Junteron, Murcia, Spain*

6. CREATIVITY AND IMAGINATION

6.1 LOVE NO MATTER WHAT

On this day, but not only, I swear,
I love you, despite what you wear.
Your smile, your eyes, they're shining daily
And I couldn't love you more, frankly.

You'll be mine forever and ever
I'll hold you in my arms, even if you've got
a fever
My soul is tied to yours and thus
I'll never leave your side – I'm not a wuss.

Every day I wake next to you
I go to the kitchen and bring you a brew
Next to the breakfast, a healthy one
For you, everywhere I'd always run.



*Drawing by Prună Erika,
5th grade, "V. Alecsandri" National
College, Galati, Romania*

6.2 A SAILOR'S LOVE

Oh, my love, a beauty
When I'm in the line of duty
I write this letter thinking of you
Or even when I'm eating my stew.

You're in my heart, I so miss you
Even if they start laughing, my crew.
My love for you is without boundaries
Despite the places or countries.

6.3 ALWAYS BOUND

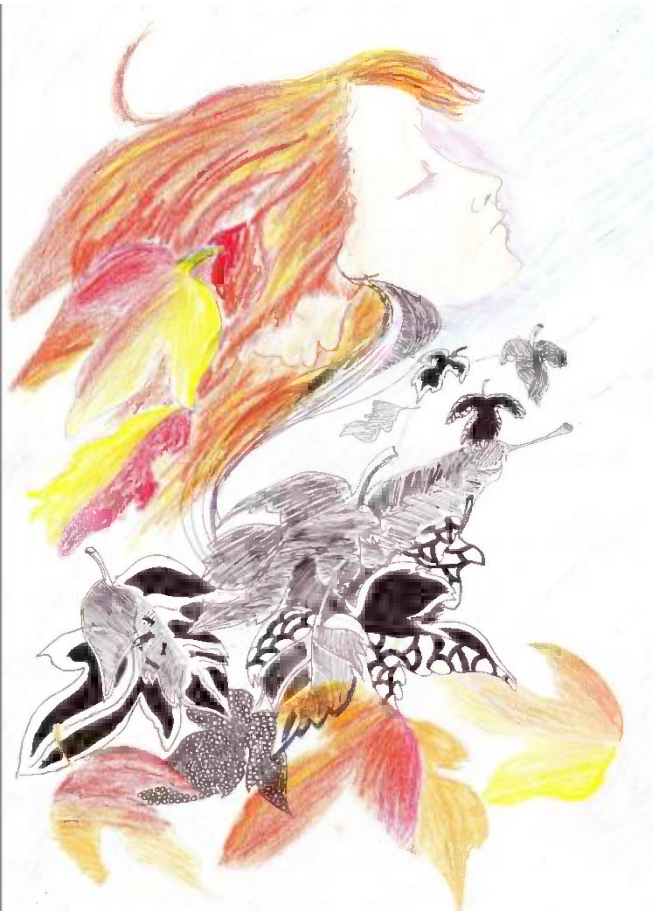
How could I not love you, my sweetheart
When I know you're all that I've got
And my heart pumps up more blood in your
presence
And I can't even finish my sentence.

But it's no worries, you always finish them
for me
You're the only thing, I don't want you to be
Anyway else than you are now, because
You love me too, even with all my flaws.

6.4 CAREFUL, CARELESS

Today was not the same,
When I met you, I just went insane
I want you, I don't know if you feel the
same
But soon I'll tattoo on my arm your name.

My lyrics are not flawless, I admit
But my heart keeps beating when I "spit"
It beats like the BPM on this song
I still don't know if it's right or wrong.



I will soon isolate myself from the rest
Of the people who stab me in the chest
I'm sick of these false people, I swear
I'm sick of you telling me what to wear

Sick of telling me how to feel, it isn't real
I really don't wanna hear
Anymore of your nonsense,
I swear, you're just grotesque.

I got attached to you too quickly
I really don't wanna feel for you deeply.
I'm sick of falling in love and get hurt
I'll "shoo" away my feelings, to seek
rebirth.

I'm gonna be a new person from now on
I'll just ignore all the mess that's going on
My feelings will disappear, begone,
It's time to be moving on.

*Poems 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.4 are written by
Perianu Cosmin, 12th grade, "Elena
Doamna" Food Industry College, Galați,
Romania*

*Drawing by Nastasiu Iana Iuliana,
5th grade, "V. Alecsandri" National
College, Galati, Romania*

6.5 ECHO



Walking slowly on the road full of leaves,
Foreign trails are seen beside leafless trees
Hit by the wind mace.
A shout can be heard
As if a stranger called me.
My heart starts beating
And I am running

Among brambles asleep by the evening melancholy.
I can't see any light
There is dark everywhere,
Around - hungry beasts' eyes
Brass owls flying over my head,
Bringing the hard sound echoes through
Light clusters are calling me to the forest's edge .
Intruding among my eyelashes.
At the brink of the abyss
The white wolf with the wild soul,
Is approaching me
And letting me caress him,
Starring at me with his icy eyes
Biting and pushing me, trickling down into the air
And then disappearing into the dark, dense fog.

*By Obreja Diana, 8th grade,
"Lascăr Catargiu" Secondary School,
Schela, Galați, Romania*

6.6 THE STORY OF THE AUTUMN

It was afternoon. I went out into the garden to read my favorite book. I sat in the shade of a cherry. It was such pleasant weather. The sun gave me its warm rays. Later I felt a cold wind. The sun was no longer friendly. A leaf was sitting on my book. It came up the apple.

“Where did you come from ?” I exclaimed.

“I belong to your world. I'm the first leaf falling down.”

I admired the leaf. It had reddish-yellow color. It was a sign ...

After several days I was in the orchard of a friend. It was a cheerful sunny day. We felt pleasant scents of ripe fruit. I took a stroll through the orchard because I was attracted by the multitude of colors.

I heard voices:

“Hey! Why don't take me from the tree?” cried the juicy apples.

“ Come to me!” cried a fuzzy yellow quince.

“Take me!” prays a brownish pear.

What happened? It was another sign

One weekend I was in the forest of Buciumeni. Several days later after the incident with those leaves I met with

*Drawing by Cibotariu Melisa, 6th grade,
“V. Alecsandri” National College, Galati*



thousands of leaves in the woods. There was a thick carpet. I went tumbling down over the leaves. I noticed many spots of color: green spots, yellow spots, brown spots, copper-colored spots.

“What wonderful painter made this corner of nature?” I asked.

The answer was hanging in the air...

On day when the sad sun stayed behind the clouds I saw migrating birds who left for warm countries. I ran into the garden to see the process.

After a while, a cloud began to cry:

“Pic! Pic! Pic! It's autumn!...”

Yes, falls coming. I felt joy and sadness. I caught a drop of rain. Autumn was had arrived and I realized its arrival...

*By Cocolici Adrian, 9th B grade,
“Spiru Haret” National College, Tecuci,
Galați, Romania*

6.7 WHEN AUTUMN COMES

It's autumn, more exactly October. The weather begins to get cold and I've dressed myself in warm clothes. I've decided to go outside, in the garden, to observe the surroundings.



Staying there, swinging in my swing, I've noticed that the landscape in my yard was quite sad. The leaves fallen off the trees were leaving the impression of an empty, gray sky, and a beautiful colored carpet on the ground.

It looked like a very peaceful, quiet place to spend your time and relax. I've started to look for some signs of movement, of action, but everything was a complete silence, like all the world around me fell asleep. But suddenly, a loud sound hit my ears, as I could see a large flock of storks flying above my head in a well ordered

triangle shape. The sky got even darker as the birds covered the sun in their flight.

It was an astonishing view and I've taken some pictures of it. After a while, they went on, flying further in the sky. My mum called me inside to have dinner and I happily went in my home, in a more cheerful atmosphere.

*By Crețu Iuliana, 9th B grade,
"Spiru Haret" National College, Tecuci,
Galați, Romania*

6.8 THE MAGIC BLACKBERRIES

Once upon a time there was a forest almost normal. Why I say almost? The story has a beginning 50 years ago. It all started on that day, 19 September 1966. Woodcutter Johnny went at his neighbor, Mrs. Jones.

"Good morning, Mrs. Jones", says Johnny.

"Good morning, woodcutter Johnny. Are you ok?"

"No, I'm not ok."

"Why?" Mrs. Jones says worried.

"My forest was destroyed. The bear attacked my forest."

"When?"

"Last night."

“Oh, do you want me to help you with something?”

“Can you help my forest?”

“No, but the village wizard is working on something new”, says Mrs. Jones.

“Thank you and good bye!”

“Good bye, woodcutter Johnny.”

On the road, woodcutter Johnny was thinking: "Does he have a magic potion?", but at the moment he sees the village wizard. He gave Johnny a magic potion. Woodcutter Johnny poured the potion on the bush with blackberries.

Overnight, the bear was to arrive. The woodcutter was hidden behind a tree. The bear saw the big and beautiful blackberries. He took more blackberries and began to eat them there. Suddenly he disappeared.

“You're kidding!”, says the woodcutter.

When he tasted the blackberries, he disappeared too. This is how the legend of the magic blackberries started.

*By Iulia Ciungălan, 4th grade,
“Gh. Marinescu” Secondary School,
Galați, Romania*

*Drawing by Abadgeru Sabina,
9th grade, “V. Alecsandri” National
College, Galați, Romania*

6.9 MY SWEET REALM OF CHILDHOOD

I've always dreamed of a remote kingdom of happiness where every child never grows up and no one worries about anything.



One night, I saw that kingdom in my dream. Everything was made of candy. There were trees full of lollipops, bushes of marshmallows and coloured cotton candy. The ground was so smooth and tasty that everyone could take a bite of it.

Then, I saw myself sitting on a throne made of fluffy and pink cotton candy. There were also a bed, a table, some chairs and a gingerbread house. My friends were swimming in milk rivers while other children were flying beautiful kites. The sun smiled at us and we all felt safe and happy.

I was having such a great time when my alarm clock went off and I had to wake up. Later on, I dressed up and went to school. I was so anxious to tell my friends about my dream that I ran as fast as I could. They listened to me and shared the same emotions telling that such beautiful places could be found only in our imagination.

We could make the world a better place if we brought a little imagination in our reality. I am quite sure that everyone has such an imaginary place to go to whenever she/he likes. Children, use your imagination and you will be happy!

*By Dorina Miron, 6th grade,
No.1 Frumuşita Secondary School, Galaţi,
Romania*

6.10 NO WAY BACK

It was one starry night. I woke up and I started looking at the moon. It looked like she was waving at me.

I said to myself “It can’t be cold outside since it’s summer...”, so I went out. Near the lake, the reflection of the moon formed a bridge that allowed me to reach the other side. Once I got off the bridge, I realized that I shouldn’t have gone there ... There was no way back...

Suddenly, a road opened in front of my eyes and the sky began to rain falling stars. “Shall I make your wish come true?” asked one



of the stars. “Could you transform yourself into a spaceship, so that I can reach that cloud?”, I asked. As soon as I closed my eyes, that star transformed into a magic spaceship that brought me to the cloudy far lands. But the magic didn’t last too long, because the falling star broke into thousands of little stars. There was no way back...

Stepping on the fluffy clouds, a flashing light appeared in front of me creating a golden staircase. “It might be another world up there...” so I started stepping on the chiseled stairs. The stairs disappeared in the dark and there was no way back...

My journey was the same as our lives: once you make a mistake, you cannot go back to repair it...

*By Delia Ana Maria Neagu, “M.
Kogălniceanu” National College, Galaţi*

*Drawing by Bichir Andreea, 5th grade, “V.
Alecsandri” National College, Galaţi.*

6.11 A GHOST STORY

When he woke up that morning he knew that his life would never be the same.....

John Hutchinson was a fourteen – year-old school boy. He walked to school every day and enjoyed the view of his neighbourhood. He never encountered danger or felt endangered in any way. That day, he knew that something would be different....

As he was walking to school, he enjoyed looking at the trees standing like signposts along the dusty road. The sun was shining and the birds were accompanying him with their songs. It was a beautiful day! He was thinking about skipping the class when suddenly, a little girl jumped in front of him crying out “ Don’t go there! It’s dangerous!” He was shocked because she looked frightened to death and he couldn’t understand where she had come out. Who was she? Her clothes were old-fashioned as if she were coming out from an eighteen century gothic story and she was still muttering something John couldn’t understand. What was it dangerous? What



was she talking about? At that moment, a four-horse carriage came out from nowhere and crashed into a tree. The girl shouted and collapsed. John ran as fast as he could to help her but when he reached the spot she had disappeared. He turned around to see if the carriage was there but it had also disappeared. He stood for a moment trying to play back the whole scene. He took his schoolbag from the ground and checked the watch, he was late for school. His colleagues would never believe him. They knew he did not believe in ghosts or haunted houses and pretended nothing could ever scare him.

He knew he could never tell anyone because they would never believe him.

***By Gabriela Tsilakidis,
teacher at No1 Frumușița Secondary
School, Galați, Romania***

***Drawing by Condrea Ana Maria, 7th grade,
“V. Alecsandri” National College, Galați***

6.12 THE DOOR IN THE WOODS

Jason and his dad went out hiking one day, and as they get into their car, with all their hiking equipment, Jason's dad turns on the radio. "Hey Jason, did you do something to the tuner?" "No dad, why are you asking?" "It doesn't work; the station changes by itself. I think I'll get it repaired then?" and they drove off.

Getting to the spot where they'll start their hiking trip, their radio tuner starts emitting a very loud noise, like a bell getting hit with a chainsaw rapidly. "Daddy, can you stop the radio? It hurts my ears." "I.. can't. It's best we get out of the car faster. I feel my ears burning." As they get out of the car rapidly with all their hiking equipment, they must first travel through a spruce forest.

Getting used to the sounds of birds and not radio clutter, they come across a door in the middle of nowhere. "Dad, why is there a door here?" "I don't know Jason. Anyway, let's mo- "and as he stops in fear he hears scratches from the other side of the door. Jason walks around the door in the middle of nowhere to find that there is no possible way the door would make scratch noises. "Dad, I'm scared." "Well why are

*Drawing by Miron Andreea, 8th grade,
"V. Alecsandri" National College, Galati,
Romania*



we standing here? Let's get a move on!" And just as they decide to run away, the door opens by itself. On the other side, there are a bunch of creatures next to lab equipment working on the other side of the door. The creature that opened the door did a small growl, followed by a squeak. At this moment, the father and son felt very scared, but surprisingly, the creature lets out a small chuckle. "Sorry for the scare, we weren't meant to make a portal to your universe. Go on with what you were doing, we'll close the door now and make it vanish from reality. Well, your reality, to be honest. We might've disrupted some signals on your planet, but rest assured that when this door will be gone, your signals will be back to

normal. Good day!" said the creature, as he closes the door, vanishing over a period of about 5 seconds.

Shocked by what happened, they decide it's best to go back home and to watch some TV. After all, they met a bunch of aliens from another universe: very kind aliens, mind you.

*By Petru Torlac, 7th grade,
"Gh. Marinescu" Secondary School,
Galați, Romania*

6.13 WISHES

This is the story of a 12 year-old boy, Mike Jacob, who was living with his parents in a small town. Mike was a nice kid and a good student. He had nothing to complain about his life.

One day something very unusual happened. As soon as Mike was done with classes, his father came for him with their car since it was raining at the time. "Hello, my little man!", his father greeted him as soon as they met. Mike was staring into emptiness with a long face trying to greet his father as he usually did. But he couldn't. He went into the car and the smile on his father's face suddenly fell. They both got

into the car in silence. He pulled Mike's seat belt saying "Safety first!" with a smile on his face trying to cheer him up. Mike didn't react at all. Petter realized that something was bothering his son, but it was never something that serious. He asked "Mike, what's wrong?". "I'm not in the mood for a talk right now..." Mark replied. "You know, it will get worse if you keep it for yourself...". Mike replied "Well, Tony is moving to another school.". "Wasn't he your best friend?...". "He IS my best friend. And now he will be gone." His dad quickly asked "Well, why is he leaving?" "He is moving because he and his family must move to a new place and that's outside this city. I can't even visit him..." then he looked away. Mike slowly started crying and he couldn't remain unnoticed. "What will I do now? There is no one that could replace him!" Without even realising they actually reached their home. "Mike, there may be no one that can replace him, but this is a case where we can't do anything. It's hard, I understand how you feel but you have to accept the reality. Come on, give daddy a hug. "Mike knew that he can't probably do anything, but he didn't want to accept it. He *refused*...

After slowly eating dinner with his family, he went upstairs to his room. He

didn't even want to go outside. His parents were worried, but Mike wanted to be alone for a little while. He was just laying on his bed staring at the ceiling. He was lost in a sea of thoughts. *"Why is this happening to me?...Can't I actually do anything?...Maybe I'm too weak... weak and alone... All I want is to have my friend back..."* He suddenly opened his eyes. He

wasn't in his room anymore. He was in a public park. He saw his parents. He saw Tony. He saw himself. They were younger and playing together. It was back when they were 5. *"Right, he was by my side since we were that young... I have to help him as his friend!"* *"But you can't"* he heard in his head. A shiny human-shaped light appeared in front of him. *"But if you could, what would you do? Think of something possible..."* What first came up into Mike's mind was *"I could stop his parents from moving out!"* In a blink of an eye, he was back in his class. It was empty. Everyone was outside. He rushed out the school and started seeking Tony with his eyes when he heard a familiar voice. It was Tony. He was talking to Mike. *"Is that me?Mike asked confused."* *"Tony, what happened to your clothes?"*, the other Mike asked. *"Well, my mom couldn't wash*

them since we ran out off water back home."

Flash Mike was now in Tony's house. Tony's parents had trouble with money.

They were both working at the same shop. That shop was burned down by an unexpected fire. Almost everything was turned to dust. They didn't find out other places to work but in another city. But they didn't

move out for a reason. *"Was that me?"*, Mike asked himself. *"Isn't that what you wished for?"*, said the light. *"But I didn't mean to harm Tony nor his family!"* The human-shaped light placed her hand on his shoulder whispering *"Sometimes when bad things happen to us they do it for a good purpose. His parents didn't find another job in your town, and they didn't move out because you wished them to stay...so what are you going to do now?"*

Mike woke up back in his room. It was all a dream. **Ring** A phone was ringing. It was his phone. Tony was calling him. *Sometimes the right thing to do is nothing!*

By Emil Antoniu Ștefan, 7th grade, "Gh. Marinescu" Secondary School, Galați

Drawing by Tîrîlă Ioana Antonia, 6th grade, Secondary School No 28, Galati



6.14 MISTAKEN LOVE STORIES

TIME: nowadays

LOCATION: Highschool No. 3 "LOVE AND HARMONY", THE FOREST OF MISTAKES, an isolated shop far away from school

CHARACTERS:

-EGO: RAY's older brother (a 16 year old highschool teenager)

-RAY'S: EGO's younger brother (a 15 year old highschool teenager)

-NOTTY: an evil SCHOOL MASTER (he rules the school)

-ROBIN: the former good SCHOOL MASTER

-ROSE: Robin's Daughter (a 15 year old highschool teenager)

-MIA: NOTTY's daughter (a 15 year old highschool teenager)

-GEORGE: ROSE's undercover (MARY's fake brother)

-MARY: MIA's undercover (a poor girl)

-JACK: the teenagers' best friend

-KIM: the teenagers' best friend

-DAVID: CUPIDON (a 28 year old policeman)

ACT 1

The large hallway of the highschool

EGO: Hi, dear brother! What has happened lately?

RAY: Well, I have no good news. Our headmaster is nowhere to be found. I am worried and concerned because Notty is our new master.

EGO: Do you really mean it? Or is it a joke?

NOTTY: Good day, folks! Why are you two mumbling around?

RAY: Eh, no, we... were just...

EGO: Going to our classes.

NOTTY: I thought you simply wanted to have a day off.

RAY: Oh, what? No...

Rose and Mia are slowly coming towards them. Suddenly, the boys began to smile. Here they are... the most beautiful girls ever.

MIA: Hi, daddy! What's going on?

EGO: Excuse me.. we didn't have the slightest idea ... Are you the headmaster's daughter?

NOTTY: Yes, now you know. Be careful what you do!

ROSE: Mia, let's go. Our classes have just begun.

EGO+RAY: Bye girls!

On their way to classes, the girls grasped the information regarding the boys' plan to find Robin-their kind master.

After a few hours...

ROSE: Mia, I have found out the boys want to leave and search for Robin.

MIA: Can we do anything to help them?

ROSE: Yes, I think there is something we can do but the boys should not find out our plan.

MIA: I am all ears.

ROSE: You should take off to the far away shop and pretend you are in charge of cleaning the market. In this way, when Ray and Ego stop to buy food you can find important clues about the plan.

MIA: It's a deal.

Robin, the good and gentle headmaster, ran away in the forest because he lost his position and being depressed he wanted to live alone in a little house. He needs time to recover and he doesn't want to make his daughter suffer so he thinks it is for the better to stay alone.

ACT 2

The girls disguised themselves as following. Rose is a handsome young man called George. George is Mary's brother. Mary is

Mia, the girl who cleans the shop. The boys search for Robin and stop in order to buy food and water.

EGO: Hello to you two! My name is Ego and this is my brother Ray. What's your names?

GEORGE: My name is George and she is my sister Mary.

Ego finds Mary attractive and starts staring at her.

MARY: The town is far away. Where are you heading?

RAY: We are looking for a man called Robin. He is tall, thin, dark-haired and green-eyed. He was our headmaster and now there's no trace of him.

GEORGE: Wait a minute! I've heard something about a man living in the woods. It's worth searching him there.

Ego, Ray, George and Mary are leaving towards the Forest of Mistakes.

ACT 3

Jack and Kim are the teenagers' friends. They are on a picnic in the forest, quarrelling over matters of no importance.

RAY: Hi there! We don't want to disturb you. We were just wondering whether you have seen a man around 45 years old.

Kim is upset but she notices George's kind eyes looking gently on her. She decides to help them especially because she wants to be near George.

George is a little bit confused he thought Jack and Kim were together as lovers.

Notty decides to leave school in order to look for his daughter Mia because he noticed her absence.

KIM: I have heard a few rumours according to which people in the area noticed a pale figure around the woods.

GEORGE+MARY: OK, thanks a lot! You may come too if you like. We would need an extra help.

They all leave.

Allerted by Notty, David-the policeman is already searching the area. There, in the distance, he sees a familiar face. It's Mia.

DAVID: Hei,Hei Mia...your father has gone mad. You haven't told anyone that you're leaving.

MIA: Well, well I'm Mary no more. Well guys, here I am. I disguised because I thought you wouldn't agree for us to come with you.

EGO: What do you mean by "us"?

ROSE: Hello, hello. Now, I am George no more. I hope you don't mind. We wanted to help you.

Kim understands the hilarious situation and thanks God for not telling Rose her feelings. She makes up with Jack.

Ego and Mia, Ray and Rose realise how deeply in love they are with one another.

NOTTY: My dear daughter, my life what are you doing here?

MIA: We are searching for Robin.

NOTTY: Oh, sweetie! I have just encountered him. He is a few meters away in a little house. A little while ago I made a decision. He should be headmaster again. He is right for this job and I know how much you love him.

RAY: There, over there, a shadow!

They run towards it and find Robin. They hug and kiss him. They return home and life is as it is supposed to be: happy, peaceful and filled with love.

And they lived happily ever after...

*By Dănilă Ana, 9th A grade,
"Spiru Haret" National College, Tecuci,
Galați, Romania
Drawing by Angheluță Florentina, 11th grade,
"V. Alecsandri" National College, Galați*



6.15 PAIN IS OVERWHELMING IN AUTUMN

It's autumn and I don't know how to handle pain. This makes no sense, right? Well, it makes sense to me. Autumn is my weak season. It's the season when I open my heart and just... feel. Because there's no better time for dying than when you have someone dying along with you. Or something.

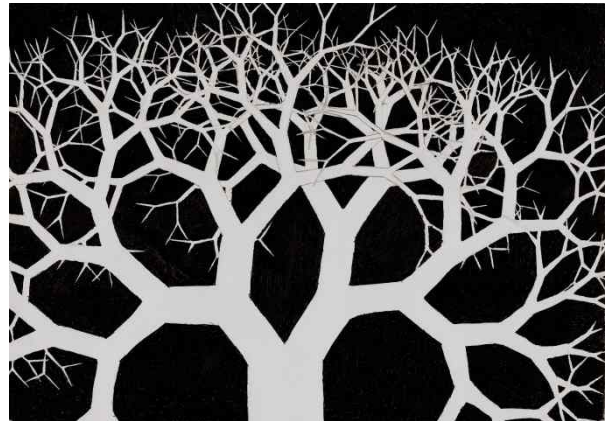
I put my ear buds in my ears and turn up the music. It's been ages since I was able to just walk around all afternoon with my favourite music blasting in my ears, ages since I allowed myself to feel all the things poking around at my heart.

After spending half of my life in a hospital bed, my muscles hurt like hell as I try to take a few steps towards my freedom. Wait. Not my freedom, just a few moments of it.

Every autumn is the same. September 1st, wake up, eat the crappy breakfast the hospital serves, take dozens of pills, do a round of chemo, spend a few hours trying to will yourself to leave your hospital bed which is not that comfy, but it's still your bed, then get dressed and go

Drawing by Pavel Cristiana,

"V. Alecsandri" National College, Galati



outside for a couple of hours to try and stop thinking about your problems. But because it is autumn, your thoughts just get louder than in spring or any other season, and you can't do anything but embrace them as the soft tunes of "Little things" try, but fail to soothe you.

Of course, you're not allowed to stay outside for more than a couple of hours, and they don't let you go too far, but every breath of fresh air you can get before you give into the illness is another step you take towards your victory, although it is always ripped away from in front of you before you can reach it.

September 15th, wake up, eat the not-so-crappy breakfast they serve for your birthday, take dozens of pills, do a round of chemo, then sit around in the gathering room with a fake smile on your face and pretend that you like being there, you're happy celebrating another birthday in hospital and you're not completely miserable. Between all the nurses trying to gain your attention and opening birthday presents like cups, personalized pens and muffins, you don't have much time left for thinking depressing thoughts, which should be a good thing, but, in fact, it just makes you more depressed, because while everyone is trying to make you forget all your problems, all they succeed in doing is reminding you more that you will never be normal and you will never get out of that place for more than a few hours. Also, every time you see a calendar you are reminded of the one good thing almost every child hates but you love now that you can't do it anymore: go to school. It is the first day of school for everyone but you.

"Enough with this nonsense!" I think to myself. "It's autumn and all these thoughts will make you even more depressed. There are lots of things to be happy about!" Even as I tell myself that, I

don't believe it. It's what I always think. It's what I always do: walk around with my hands in my pockets, humming softly to the tunes playing in my ears, thinking about all the aspects of my life.

You know, every autumn I get to live is lived in pain, and at the end of it, I only have two words to say: "Yay, life!" But I never mean it.

*By Dragomir Alecsandra, 9th A grade,
"Spiru Haret" National College, Tecuci,
Galați, Romania*

IN THE FOREST OF THOUGHTS...



*Drawing by Soloviev Mihnea, 9th grade,
"V. Alecsandri" National College, Galati,
Romania*

7. HAVING FUN: COMICS AND JOKES

7.1 COMEDY PAGE

- ✿ Can a kangaroo jump higher than a house? Of course, a house doesn't jump at all.
- ✿ After many years of studying at a university, I've finally become a PhD... or Pizza Hut Deliveryman as people call it.
- ✿ Son: I can't go to school today.
Father: Why not?
Son: I don't feel well.
Father: Where don't you feel well?
Son: In school!
- ✿ Pupil (on phone): My son has a bad cold and won't be able to come to school today.
School Secretary: Who is this?
Pupil: This is my father speaking!
- ✿ Teacher: Why is your homework in your father's handwriting?
Pupil: I used his pen!
- ✿ How do you know carrots are good for your eyes?
Have you ever seen a rabbit wearing glasses?



- ✿ Teacher: "I killed a person. Tell me this sentence in future tense."
Student: "In future tense: You will go to jail!"
- ✿ Teacher: "Harold, what do you call a person who keeps talking when people are no more interested?"
Harold : " A teacher !"
- ✿ "What is the bees' favourite singer?"
"Sting !"

(<http://www.shortfunny.com/#ixzz44lwEFP6B>); (<http://www.short-funny.com>)

By Iordache Octavian, Petrea Denisa

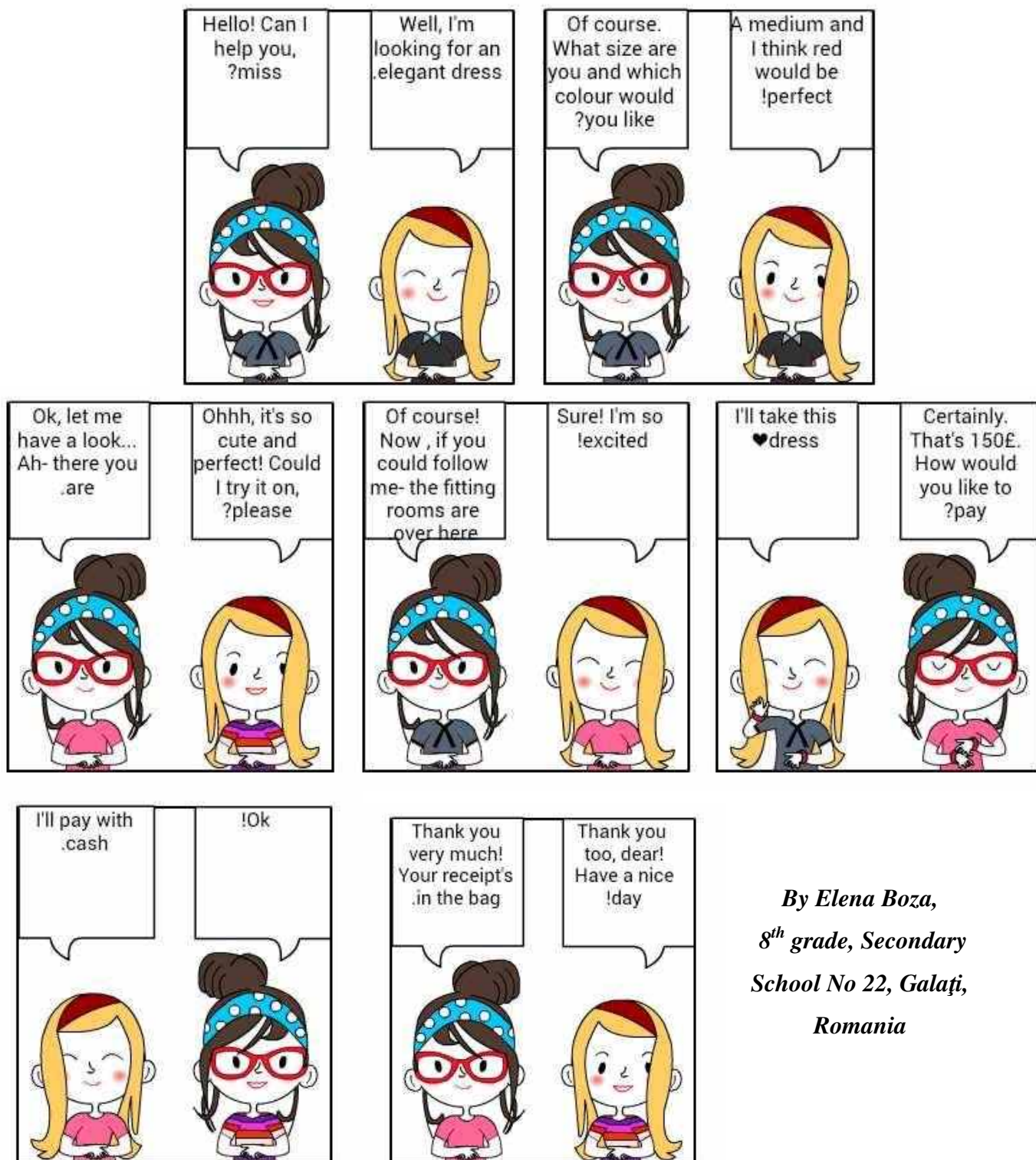
Gabriela, Smadu Sabina

5th grade, "M. Kogălniceanu" National

College, Galați, Romania

*Drawing by Rotaru Ilinca, 5th grade,
"V. Alecsandri" National College, Galati,
Romania*

7.2 I LOVE SHOPPING



*By Elena Boza,
8th grade, Secondary
School No 22, Galați,
Romania*

7.3 SHOPPING FOR A GIFT





By Bogdan Dochitanu,

8th grade, Secondary School No 22, Galați, Romania

8. TEACHERS' CORNER

8.1 TEACHING IN USA

Last academic year 2014-2015, I was teaching Spanish as a foreign language in the state of Louisiana. Secondary schools in the USA are divided into Middle School and High School. I was teaching in 2 Middle schools (6h, 7th and 8th grade): Benton Middle School and Greenacres Middle School.

Most of my students were beginners except for those in 8th grade. The lessons were basically focused on communication and integration of skills by means of different activities, games, videos and songs so that students approached at the same time vocabulary, basic grammar structures and culture.

Regarding school system, there are lots of differences from schools in European countries. I am going to mention some of the most relevant.

Schedules are tight both for teachers and students. Students spend time at school from 7 a.m. to 2.45 p.m. with only a short break for lunch at the school cafeteria at around 10.30.



Every school day starts with the “Pledge to the Allegiance” to the American flag and the school announcements either by intercom or a kind of news TV programme produced by the students.

All students have some mandatory subjects such as English, Maths, Science, History, P.E. and other electives like Spanish, Choir, Art, Year Book.

Schools uniforms are mandatory too, they consist on polo T-shirt or sweatshirt with school emblem always tucked in with belts, trousers /skirts and of course, the student I.D.

Discipline is very strict, those students who misbehave are given referrals (reports on inappropriate behaviour) and sent

to GASP room, where they stay during the whole day doing some homework. They stay there with a paraprofessional (not a teacher) isolated from the rest of the classmates.

Students are constantly being graded, they must have at least 2 grades per week in every subject and families get reports about that every 7 weeks. Those with best results are awarded in the Honours Awards Assembly with their families and school administrators.

In general, treats and rewards are very common in lessons. It is the method used to encourage students to keep working hard. There are state tests on different subjects at the end of the school year, and every school is graded according to the results of its students as A, B, C or D school. (A being top).

Sports are highly important in schools in the USA. Boys play football (American football), basketball and baseball and they also practice cross country and archery. On the other hand, girls play basketball, softball and they do cheerleading and pep squad (6th graders).

The greatest events for American teenagers are basically related to sport activities after school so they have to stay after the lessons for practice and games.



Before an important game, school organised a “pep rally” in which they cheer their teams and every single player for that night game.

I enjoyed a lot teaching my own language in the USA, however my feeling is that students lack creativity, spontaneity as well as free time to socialize with others. The Spanish class meant interacting and learning a foreign language in a playful way so most of the students enjoyed the classes and were willing to continue the great adventure of learning a foreign language.

My personal and professional experience of teaching in United States has been very enriching, I learnt how lifestyle and culture itself is included within the education system of a country and how a group of students may represent the values of the society they belong to.

By Isabel María Ballesta Águila,
English teacher at IES Gil de Junteron,
Murcia, Spain

8.2 E-TWINNING PROJECT: A TEEN TEAM IN A VIRTUAL SEARCH FOR COMMON GROUND

Being part of an e-Twinning project is a wonderful European experience for both students and teachers. “Sf. Cuv. Parascheva” School in Smardan, Galati is in a six-month partnership with IES Gil de Junteron School from Murcia, Spain, where the students’ activities are coordinated by their English teacher Isabel María Ballesta Águila. We fruitfully collaborated together during our previous Comenius project (2010-2012), and we have been working together ever since, thus proving the sustainability of our partnership as well as the friendship, interest and pleasure of being part of the same team.

Our e-twinning project (December 2015 – June 2016) is called “*A teen team in a virtual search for common ground*” and aims at creating a student-friendly environment for the teenagers to engage affectively in the activities so that their intrinsic motivation for conscious learning can be increased. Therefore, the objectives of the project are for teachers, students and the local community as well: to raise cultural awareness enhancing, at the same time, the European shared values; to develop



multicultural competences and adopt a respectful attitude towards the ethos of another country, to be tolerant and open-minded; to improve the use of English and language skills (reading, speaking, listening, writing); to develop communicative competences, especially related to media as Facebook, youtube posting etc; to improve IT skills using presentations, films, photo gallery, Word, Paint; to establish and maintain new relationships; to improve their interpersonal or emotional intelligence and acquire the basic-life skills to ensure their future success.

The activities are organized so that students can collaborate and communicate efficiently and effectively. Students are



divided into pairs and given topics for discussion such as: Weather and climate, Favourite films/games, Famous sportsmen and sportswomen, Fashion, Eating habits, Holidays and traditions etc. Their task is to analyse things through with their partner and then make a presentation or write articles, observing differences and similarities between cultures or teenagers' way of life in the two regions. Students, communicating on Facebook, have already created short films about Christmas, postcards, presentations and uploaded them on the e-twinning portal and also on the school's website (www.scoalasmardan.ro).

In conclusion, the results prove that the project is indeed a real opportunity for teachers' professional and personal development as it has been a privilege of working with wonderful, open-minded, reliable people. Students have, also, got the chance of practising English and talking about their daily activities, likes and dislikes, about music and films and it all happened on the Internet, therefore such a project creates an appealing utopian world

where students can learn and improve their skills by actually doing what they like and talking about the things that they are genuinely interested in.

By Violeta Chirea, English teacher at “Sf. Cuv. Parascheva” Secondary School, Smârdan. Galați, Romania

8.3 THE IMPORTANCE OF CULTURAL EXCHANGES

Between 15th and 20th November 2015, 14 students at Alexandru Ioan Cuza National College, Galați and their teachers Gaiu Mariana and Șoaică Sorina, went to Stedelijk Dalton Lyceum, Dordrecht, The Netherlands. This was the second visit of the Romanian students and teachers at CNAIC, part of a cultural exchange between the two schools which started last school year with a view to encouraging communication, cooperation and collaboration between teenagers coming from different cultural backgrounds.

As it happened last year, the Romanian students lived with their Dutch partners' families for almost one week, visited their school and attended French, Maths and History classes. They also

participated in other educational activities held at school, all of which relied on working in mixed groups (Romanian and Dutch students); the language of communication was, obviously, English- an opportunity for our pupils to express themselves in English and practise what they learn in school during their English classes. It was also an opportunity to get involved in collaborative activities such as writing a European newspaper and making Powerpoint presentations of the two countries, which were meant to increase the students' knowledge of the other participants in the project and their culture and promote understanding and tolerance.

One of the nicest and most interesting activities held at school was that in which both students and teachers met in a large classroom and worked together on a huge painting, designed as a huge puzzle, made up of 32 pieces, one for each participant in the cultural exchange. Thus, 32 small-sized "drawings" (or pieces) with black and white and, apparently, unrelated designs on them were coloured by those present using only the colours of the Romanian flag- red, yellow, blue. The final product of their joint effort outlined a number of Romanian and Dutch symbols.



Thus, on the same painting, we could see Brancuși's infinity column, the Romanian traditional blouse, the Dutch tulip and windmill, all of this being displayed in the hallway of Stedelijk Dalton Lyceum.

Our visit to the Netherlands also included a Tour of the town of Dordrecht, one of the oldest towns in Holland as well as a visit to Rotterdam, also known as Europe's New York, which made a great impression on us with its modern architectural style and cosmopolite atmosphere. However, the most interesting experience from our students' perspective was the day we spent at Efteling, a story-like theme park, a European Disneyland. They did not miss the chance of



experiencing unique moments and going on exhilarating roller coaster rides.

The final reunion and the last evening spent at school brought together teachers and parents of the Dutch pupils and represented a moment of educational impact on both students and adults. The final products of the cultural exchange were presented by the pupils, opinions and impressions were exchanged and wishes were made. Everybody present concluded that the partnership between the two schools was a great success, a true cultural experience which will be resumed in April 2016 when the Dutch pupils and their coordinating teachers will come to Romania and be accommodated and entertained by their Romanian partners. The moment we

had to say goodbye and leave for our country was a moving one with lots of promises to keep in touch and exchange e-mails and messages.

By Mariana Gaiu,
English teacher at “Al. I. Cuza” National
College, Galați, Romania

8.4 ERASMUS+ MOBILITY: THE IMPORTANCE OF TEACHERS’DEVELOPMENT

We live in a century which requires, more or less, opening our minds, ignoring the borders and becoming citizens of the world.

Erasmus + projects provide teachers with the opportunity to get equipped with a wealth of tangible achievements, while promoting the dissemination of different cultures and intercultural dialogue. This type of training activity focuses on mutually innovative educational exchanges of good practices; develops pedagogical approaches; enriches teaching methods and teaching techniques. The activity also responds to the need of staff members to exploit the full potential of ICT to improve their skills. This will further lead to students developing their

personal and collective initiative, creativity, autonomy and critical thinking.

Within the framework of Erasmus+ Mobility for School Staff and Quality Commitment for school education I participated in the training activity **The Creative Methodology** course organized by ADC Technology Training Ltd, London, the UK between 12th-18th July 2015. The main key competences addressed were: professional development through exchange of ideas, interactive language learning and creative approaches of the English classes; knowledge of the diverse cultural and linguistic patrimony of Europe; communication and socialization through the use of new technologies, online resources; creative methodology for team work, in collaboration with teachers in other European partner institutions; the introduction of the European dimension in the contents of the curricular areas involved

Starting from real needs of knowledge, comparison, cultural and spiritual enrichment as well as from a constant interest in the acquisition of additional methodological and relational experience, I actively got involved in all the training phases; I received tasks and contributed to the enrichment of the work

strategy when needed. By brainstorming sessions all the participants expressed their expectations and were able to individualize/adopt the learning strategies.

We worked in competitive teams with the aim of improving our competences and abilities, linguistic, digital or social skills. We worked under the teacher trainers' guidance, but we were autonomous to express our points of view, imagination and creativity, considering the training activity itself a space of development, formation and expression. One of the most interesting interactive methods I would like to put forward is **Dictagloss** which is a useful technique meant to encourage students to work together to extract meaning from complex text. Dictagloss is a very useful activity that helps students to use language in order to learn. A Dictagloss is an alternative way of getting students to learn note-taking skills, as they need to listen to a text being read and reconstruct it. It doubles as a listening and writing task and reinforces ideas such as key words, topic sentences and report writing. A Dictagloss also requires the students to consciously focus on their knowledge of the content and the relationship between ideas and words. Because students need to pool their key

words and understanding to complete the task, active negotiation of meaning between students occurs. Working together during the text reconstruction encourages students to vocalize and think through the grammatical choices they are making and assess the effects that each choice has on their text. Students are developing strategies for editing their work as they write, as they come to mutually acceptable decisions. Starting from this technique they can work on a given topic, for instance “Leading a Healthy lifestyle”, they can devise the “Corners” technique, bring pros/cons, debate or further create a virtual space on Bad/Good eating habits for meaningful communication.

One of the most captivating ideas to encourage communication is to get students to work in small groups, pick a topic and speak on that topic for one minute. Peer-peer work can be very productive as students who are not that confident to express ideas in large groups or in front of the teacher may feel at ease in this way.

The use of online resources in teaching offers a wide array of creative possibilities making our English classes more attractive. Online learning opportunities open educational ways in

which teachers can increase educational productivity. There is growing evidence that increasing the level of ICT resources in schools can have a positive effect on young children’s attainment. Therefore, students can be taught to create video and audio presentations in order to get actively involved in their own making of becoming proficient users of English.

Audioboom (<http://audioboom.com>) is free and can be used to design audio presentations.

Audacity, as well, (<http://audacity.sourceforge.net>) is a software tool which can be downloaded on your computer and used even when students are offline.

Voicethread is a site which teachers can use to upload images, texts, videos or record videos which students can use so as to carry out tasks and requirements even when they are at home. VoiceThread conversations provide an opportunity to reflect, resulting in higher quality input. The power of peer feedback and peer review is intuitively available to all participants in a VoiceThread conversation.

Many other useful teaching materials can be found on

Scoop.it (www.scoop.it/t/online-teaching-resources) and <http://goo.gl/1TzizO>.

To my mind, Erasmus+ training courses improve teachers' knowledge and skills on quality, school quality development, teaching and learning, class organisation, approach towards colleagues and personnel, human resources and as a result organisation will benefit from this acquisition by the added value of its staff members.

Another important aspect would be that the course broadens personal horizons, opening minds towards international cooperation and contacts, multiculturalism and foreign languages and this acquisition is to be evaluated through the implementation of follow-up activities.

My personal conclusion is that this type of training activity has been a great morale booster, offering me a real chance to diversify my methods and techniques in order to motivate my students to grow and develop themselves as well-rounded individuals.

By Alina Vlad,

*English teacher at "Al. I. Cuza" National
College, Galați, Romania*

8.5 RESPECT 4 ERASMUS EXPERIENCES



“Sfânta Maria” Theoretical Highschool started an Erasmus+, KA2 strategic partnership in September 2015. The project will last for 3 years and it gathers 8 partner schools from different European countries (Coordinator: Lancaster and Morecambe College – Lancaster, UK; Athénée Royal Chimay – Chimay, Belgium; Lycée professionnel Claude-Anthime Corbon – Paris, France; 38 Gymnasio Athinon – Athens, Greece; IISS "G. Peano - C. Rosa" – Nereto, Italy ; Lambertseter videregående skole – Oslo, Norway; Liceul Teoretic „Sfanta Maria” – Galați, Romania; Városmajori Gimnázium és Kós Károly Általános Iskola – Budapest, Hungary).

The name of the project is **RESPECT4 – Education Without Barriers**. As can be easily seen from the

title, the main theme of the project is to nurture respect for 4 main topics: 1. Respect4 Oneself and the Others; 2. Respect4 Freedom; 3. Respect4 Cultures; 4. Respect4 Environment.

During these 3 years all partners have to conceive 6 Intellectual Outputs (IO).

There will be Transnational meetings in all partner countries and 4 Learning Activities (3 students+2 teachers). So far there have taken place 2 transnational meetings and the first Intellectual Output (Educational Systems and State of Art in Europe) is done and work on IO2 (Poster Campaign), IO3-4 (Course on Soft skills and Scoll Mediation) and IO6 (Guide and Good Practice Manual for Counseling Classes) are in full progress.

The kick off Transnational Meeting took place in Lancaster, UK (25th-28th Nov. 2015) and it had mainly an organisational purpose for the first 18 months of the project. Three teachers from Liceul Teoretic Sfanta Maria (Mariana Arhiri – principal, Sabina Maria Hancu – project responsible, Laura Tau) participated. It was a wonderful experience as for some of us it meant



meeting friends from different Comenius projects or courses.

The second Transnational Meeting took place in Oslo, Norway (16th-20th Feb.2016) where 2 teachers from Romania took part (Sabina Hancu and Lavinia Crintea). It mainly meant the presentation of the IO1, logo selection, Poster campaign start and organizing the first Learning activity (Nereto, Italy – 16th-22th May 2016). This learning activity will gather 2 teachers and 4 students from each partner country and will mainly be a course in “soft skills” and conflict mediation. Looking forward to reporting it when we are back!

By Sabina-Maria Hâncu,
English teacher at “Sfânta Maria”
Theoretical Highschool, Galați, Romania

8.6 EMBRACING SOLIDARITY: BELIEF, CARE, SHARE

The project "**Embracing Solidarity: Belief. Care. Share**" was born with the aim of reversing the problems caused by the lack of global solidarity, community and also to educate the young people in a democratic spirit and unity. We aim to bring innovative ideas on the subject, capturing the attention of students involved in progressing through various methods of approach used in different activities. The strengths of this ambitious project are: sending our goals widest as possible through volunteering, humanitarian campaigns, debates and civic events; the use of any means of expression to draw attention on the effects of the lack of collaboration, also being connected with the public and local media; highlighting the magnitude of the problem and encourage a correct attitude, integral to one another and printing the idea of unity, of belonging to the same world and, not least, encouraging students to make international relationships, interethnic, and also to provide help and support unconditionally. Actions carried recruited a total of approximately 517 students (college) who were involved with interest in the proposed programmes,

participating actively with creative ideas, passion and team spirit. The target group to which we focused were firstly, students, children, because we can draw their education and also try to develop the sense of solidarity, which is our goal, but this does not mean that we limit ourselves here: we are open to anyone who wants to make a change, accepting that the change begins individually for the collective good, which is why we work with teachers and local personalities and authorities.

The objectives that we have proposed are varied, although they are part of the same area of enlargement. Firstly, we wanted to define the term "solidarity" to ensure that everyone knows its significance, and we show it by demonstrations. We recruited many students in our project and we focused to the current problems which the community is facing. We fight for communication, socialization, excluding technology, mutual aid and creative activities. We follow the capacity of debate on European issues, the active involvement of students in the current problems the community is facing with, increasing the

number of volunteers and finding effective solutions to eradicate poverty at the local, European and global .We educate children in teamwork, instilling a desire to help , to get involved. We want to fight the causes of division, to form a unity without caring about ethnicity, religion or nationality.

The results of our work for establishing an useful society, for developing team spirit, for help and cooperation, begin to appear. We managed to learn something to those who were willing to help us: the children understood how useful it is to work together and found the negative causes of discrimination, as exclusion and abuse in society. We learned that it is essential to begin the change from us and that we must treat the cause and not the effect. We offered our help where needed, through donations, but also through discussions and hours of play, which sometimes can be as desired. The interactive activities and discussions have developed the power of students to support their views and favored the formation of general ideas on the meaning of solidarity and how we can help. Many of us have realized, thanks to discussions and activities, the importance of active involvement and participation in community life.

The impact of the project was strong, primarily because it deals with a topical issue which affects us, directly or not, all. This project was for us a way of expression, exposure of ideas intended to change something, to correct the attitude of some of us, to strengthen relations between people and actively participate in the community, socialize and learn to give, to sacrifice for the good of others, to rejoice sincerely for others, to get involved, to fight ignorance or indifference, to fight for unity. In short, this project has given us from the start, the opportunity to become united, to appropriating this position, trying to recruit as many followers of this lifestyle promoted by humanity.

"Embracing Solidarity: Belief. Care. Share." is an innovative project of the plurality of diverse methods it proposes. We have not limited at the classic models of teaching, but we taught children through play, have given through charity and volunteering, we have proposed new ideas and novel activities, we intended discussions and interactive games for the progress to be sure and definitively. It is also evident the creative nature of the programs, in which students were encouraged to develop their artistic skills, willing to exploit our theme

to all criteria possible: The solidarity caught colour through paintings, it was shown in lyrics or music, and soon we made plays and movies with the same subject. The way we approach this project made us particularly focusing on the determination of students and teachers, creating this work.

For more details:

<https://www.facebook.com/Embracing-Solidarity-Belief-Care-Share-1620467304877578/>

*By Monica Iuliana Onica,
English teacher at “Spiru Haret” National
College, Tecuci, Romania*

8.7 ONCE EUROPEAN PROJECTS, FOREVER EUROPEAN PROJECTS

As I have been recently reproached that I like doing projects and dedicate a lot of time to it, I feel the need to say they are not just about travelling and having fun. They are opportunities that mean so much more than these two words.

I find it quite difficult to summarise my more than ten-year experience in this field. Thus, I think a good method would be breaking down the word '**Erasmus**', by assigning each letter a word that defines the

values of my Erasmus/ European projects experience.

- E for **Experience**
- R for **Respect**
- A for **Alliance**
- S for **Support**
- M for **Maturing**
- U for **Union**
- S for **Solution**

E for Experience

European projects are an experience because they are an intense period in which you will learn a lot about many different things, meet new people make friends that will last forever. They will make you grow as a person. You will get to know yourself, you will begin to see the world from a different point of view. You will gain a lot of professional experience, acquiring knowledge from colleagues around Europe.

R for Respect

Meeting so many people from different countries, having different values, and cultures, you will learn to respect the others as well as yourself. Cross-cultural education enables us to identify patterns that are common across as well as specific to cultures. If common patterns do emerge, they are more likely to be valid. And the culture-specific patterns must then be

studied and understood in their own right. Last but not least, a cross-cultural perspective promotes mutual understanding of positive self-conscious emotions among the world's peoples, a goal that humanity in general ought to strive to achieve.

A for Alliance

Erasmus is mostly about **friendships**. A very strong friendship can grow in a very short time as we all have the same purpose and we have to rely on each other. Projects are, normally, built on confidence that achievement is realized through leadership and cooperation. The alliance concept encourages a non-adversarial approach to relationships that reinforces the innovative thinking necessary to effectively reach the goals. As a result, the team is increasing efficiency and creativity for all participants, contributing to the long-term future of each project, and, potentially, developing new ones.

S for Support

In an European project there are new challenging things all the time during the 2 or 3- year period and as nobody ever knows everything we always learn from each other and offer support. It enhances the relationship between communities from a small level (among students, teachers,

parents) to a bigger level (students, teachers and parents, official authorities, NGO-s, etc from different countries).

M for Maturing

As stated above, being exposed to other cultures, you get a bigger picture of the world, as well as continuously learning new things. In this new world where we are increasingly exposed to a diversity of cultures, we need to have the capacity to become tolerant and open-minded.

U for Union

Through European projects, places are no longer a spot on the map. You start associating them with friends who live there and also having reasons to go back to, but also to worry when terrible things happen (floods, earthquakes, terrorist attacks, etc.). Therefore, in my opinion this is the greatest gain, as we really feel we are part of the European Union.

S for Solution

It is common knowledge that it is easier to work in teams and faster to find solutions to all the problems. But, if I were to extend it, I would say Erasmus programme is also a Solution to building the sense of belonging to this big family.

In conclusion, European projects are extremely complex and require a lot of time,

energy and experience. Thus, being able to rely on experts in European projects management seems essential to me; at least during a first experience. This is the very objective of this kind of project: gathering partners, thinking together about actions, answering the Commission's objectives and then entering the writing phase, the negotiation phase (notably on budgetary sides), etc. In the end, this experience is very rewarding and is worth trying. One should maybe expect to submit a project several times before the European Commission approves it. On the personal plan, this experience makes me want to start many new projects!

By Sabina-Maria Hâncu,
English teacher at "Sfânta Maria"
Theoretical Highschool, Galați, Romania



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