

*"True ease in writing comes from art, not chance,
As those move easiest who have learnt to dance"*
Alexander Pope

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DIFFERENT AND THE SAME -A CULTURAL APPROACH TO THE EUROPEAN DIMENSION

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**A School Magazine for
friendship and collaboration**

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GIVING STUDENTS A BOOST IN WRITING

During their English classes students work on the improvement of all skills, however, writing skills usually require more time, hence there is a constant need for the development of this particular skill. Students need encouragement to boost their confidence about the way they write and in order to do that teachers create various opportunities for them to “*build the writing habit*’, providing students with motivating, straightforward tasks to persuade them that writing is not only possible, but can also be great fun.” (J. Harmer, *The Practice of English Language Teaching*, 2007: 328). Therefore, this is the purpose of this magazine, namely to capture students’ attention and imagination, to give them *writing-for-writing* tasks (Harmer: 330) and have fun with them at the same time, as compared to the *writing-for-learning* tasks that they may be more familiar with from their English classes. The magazine comprises reviews of films, of video/computer games that students have seen or played, of places that they have visited, along with creative pieces of writing that students may read during classes or in their free time.

To conclude, we are grateful to our colleagues for their cooperation and collaboration, giving students an opportunity to put pen to paper and share this experience with a new audience, outside the classroom, with students from different schools, but with the same interests. Have fun with it!

By Violeta Chirea - English teacher, “Sf. Cuv. Parascheva” School, Smardan, Galati, Romania

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Inside this issue:

1. Cultural diversity
2. Snapshots of a teenager's life
3. Games, sports and television
4. Stories: imagination and creativity

Special points of interest:

- ☺ Developing multi-cultural competences
- ☺ Learning about teenagers' interests across Europe
- ☺ Sharing European values: tolerance, respect, communication.

1. CULTURAL DIVERSITY: TRAVELLING AROUND THE WORLD

1.1 SWEDISH HISTORY

In Sweden, the Ice Age lasted longer than in the other countries, so the people didn't come to Sweden for years, while the other countries in Europe were developing and started to get quite civilized. But then the ice started to melt, and people started to settle down in the south of Sweden, in the landscape that's called Skåne nowadays. The Neanderthals were the first people to live in Sweden and their characteristics were: huge and strange noses and blond hair. They lived by instinct. They were replaced by the homosapiens.

When the ice melted away completely, we were collectors, and that means we were in the Stone Age.

After that we developed and called ourselves Vikings. The Vikings were feared because of their merciless ways and fast boats. The Vikings are often pictured with horns on their helmets, but that's not true. They didn't have any horns, just plain, boring bronze helmets. I bet you've heard about

Christopher Columbus, the man who discovered America, actually it was a Viking named Leif Eriksson, who discovered it and scientists say it happened around year 1000.

The Vikings became Christians after a monk came to the north hoping to make the barbarians peaceful. If he hadn't succeeded we might not have the community we have today. After that, people started to make themselves chiefs over their villages, there were no laws and you could kill someone you didn't like and it was okay. We couldn't have it like this. So we got kings to keep everything in order and make laws. We had different classes in the community: peasants, freemen, priests and those with noble birth. The peasants couldn't decide anything and had it pretty bad. The freemen lived in cities and at least they had food on the table. The priests had power and could do almost whatever they wanted in "God's name". The noblemen had a lot of money



His Majesty King Carl XVI Gustaf of Sweden and Her Majesty Queen Silvia of Sweden

and land and could suggest laws to the king.

There were many kings and queens who failed during the centuries. We still have a king and queen and they're called Carl the sixteenth Gustaf and Silvia. But they don't have the power anymore, the parliament does. Our prime minister's name (the one who has the most power, kind of) is Fredrik Reinfeldt. Sweden is democratic, so we choose a politician to be prime minister every fourth year.

By Maja Anderson, from Lagmansskolan, Mjölby, Sweden.

1.2 MY SUMMER VACATION ON A CRUISE

On my last summer vacation I went on a cruise. It was so much fun and I wish I could go there again. We had three destinations; Jamaica, Grand Cayman, and Cozumel. We got to do a lot of exciting excursions at each place. It was one of the best vacations I had ever been on. The only downfall of this vacation was that it was a week long, and the first days spent at sea were very boring. I got tired of seeing the same people all the time. On the third day we finally saw land; our stop was Jamaica. It was humid and the people were just as you would expect them to be. We went zip-lining over waterfalls in a rain forest and got to try Jamaican “jerk” which we know as

“chicken”. I met an amazing tour guide and made some new Jamaican friends. The second stop on our adventure was the Cayman Islands. We swam with sting rays and played with sea turtles.

The sting rays were the best part of the Cayman Islands. I was so scared they were going to sting me, but they were actually friendly creatures. The turtles were the cutest sea animals I have ever seen. There were a variety of sea turtles from babies to monsters. The third and final stop was Cozumel, Mexico, where we went scuba diving and shopping. Scuba diving was my favourite part of the trip. I loved seeing all the underwater sea life, all the fish and coral; it was



beautiful. Then we went shopping which I loved to do. I had a blast on this vacation, and I recommend this cruise to everyone. It was a true adventure. I met great new people and tried amazing new foods.

If you love trying new things, this would be a great vacation for you.

By Neagu Denisa from “Costache Conachi” Highschool, Pechea, Galati, Romania

1.3 SUMMER IN ROMANIA

In Romania summer is short: about 3 months. The weather is very hot from 25 to 38 degrees C. Depending on the weather we do different things in Romania. When the weather is over 30 degrees C we go to the lake or a swimming pool and have a swim and try to get tanned and when it is 25 de-

grees C we ride our bikes or do other things such as: having a barbecue, going to the clubs where we enjoy dancing hip hop and socializing with new friends.

A lot of Romanians travel through the country. People like visiting big cities such as: Sighisoara, Piatra Neamt, Suceava,

Sibiu. There you can see the Festivals of dance and folk music, take part in the street carnival or buy interesting souvenirs.

If a foreigner wants to come to Romania he can do all these activities in June, July or August and never get bored.

By Albu Dragos, from “Costache Conachi” Highschool, Pechea, Galati, Romania

1.4 MY DREAM JOURNEY TO THASSOS

“Surrounded by the crystal blue waters of the Aegean Sea, near the northern coast of Greece, sits the island of Thassos. Here you can immerse yourself in a breathtaking natural environment and get to know a laid-back culture that warmly welcomes every visitor.”

This was the first thing I had read about the island of Thassos, the place where I spent a dream week with my family.

The journey to the Emerald Isle lasted about ten hours. After we checked-in, there followed a few hours of sleep.

After a refreshing shower we went down to the restaurant. Food



was one of the elements that made Thassos an extremely attractive destination. I found a variety of food in the menu. I decided to try a traditional speciality: Tatarka. It was a simple dish, its fresh local components gave it a glorious appearance and it was full of flavour.

After lunch, we went on the beautiful Golden Beach where we enjoyed the emerald water until the evening.

The first day in Greece was the most wonderful day I had spent with my family.

In my Thassos journey I joined unique celebrations and local traditions with the fun-loving Thassians, tasted some of the delicious local dishes, learned the island's history and folklore.

Thassos was the ideal destination for a holiday spent with family.

I was pleasantly surprised by the wonders of Greece.

*By Andreea Dragu from
“Costache Conachi” Highschool,
Pechea, Galati, Romania*

1.5 AN UNUSUAL CONCERT HALL



I am going to tell you about a place in Sweden. In Dalarna there is a stone quarry in the middle of the forest in Dalarna. The quarry is 60 metres deep, 400 metres long and 175 metres wide. The acoustical qualities are comparable to the best outdoor stages in Europe. It's the most famous tourist region in Sweden. It's called Dalhalla. It's a breathtaking place for opera, jazz

and choir concerts as well.

*By Adam, from
Lagmansskolan, Mjölby, Sweden*

**CULTURAL DIVERSITY:
TRAVELLING AROUND
THE WORD**

1.6 THE FORTIFIED “PRECISTA” CHURCH

„Precista” fortified church is the oldest building in Galati, being blessed as a cult place in September 1647 during the reign of Vasile Lupu.

The church was dedicated to the Vatoped Monastery from the Athos Mountain. At the building of the church, they used materials existent around that age: the stone from Barbosi, the wood from the forests on the Covurlui plateau, bricks and lime, sand etc.

The church architecture is Romanian and presents some specific elements: belfry- tower has parapet, could be used for observing the Danube Valley and, in case of need, it became defense fortification. The tower with two levels, has a secret room for hiding the jewels and valuable goods, with two parapets and an access door, maybe to the balcony. At the-



second level, there were windows and a parapet. Another defense element at 'Precista' is the consolidated bridge composed of two parts, one above the nave and the second above the altar.

The bridge has 28 parapets. In the brickwork, among the brick rows, it is used stone, unused technique at the other Moldavian churches built at the same time.

The 'Precista' church has gone through the time hostilities, being burned in 1711 by Turks, destroyed in the Austrian- Turkish-Russian wars from 1735- 1739 and 1769-1774. In 1821, the Turks de-

stroyed and robbed the church again. The church was rebuilt and restored in 1829 and in 1859. It was a restoration even between 1953-1957 and after that the church was transformed in a museum. During 1991-1994, the 'Precista' church was restored again and returned to the Orthodox cult. **"Precista"** Church is an ancient place, an emblem of Galati and is part of the national heritage of Romania.

By Vasile Raluca Teodora, 8th grade, „Constantin Gh. Marinescu” School, Galati, Romania

CULTURAL DIVERSITY
TRAVELLING AROUND
THE WORD

2. CULTURAL DIVERSITY: HOLIDAYS AND CELEBRATIONS

2.1 CHRISTMAS AROUND THE WORLD



Christmas is one of the few holidays celebrated around the world by people who are Christians and the ones for whom Christian history is not a big thing.

In Romania, on Christmas Eve, houses are beautifully decorated and perfectly clean and they receive their guests. *Colindatul* is a ritual with ceremonial texts (carols), magic formulas, dances and gestures, performed by groups of children and adults who go from house to house. They send wishes for health, wealth, and fulfilling wishes in the new year. This is the most well-known tradition in Romania.

In Cuba, the most important period of the year is Christmas Eve called “nochebuena” (Night of the

good). Traditional Christmas meal is for Cuban roast pork, black beans and rice served with traditional herbs (Yuca). Large families get together for Christmas and cold whole pig in a pit is dug in the ground and filled with coals covered with banana leaves.

In Iceland, considered the country of ice and snow, thirteen Santa Claus come to give presents! Thirteen days before Christmas, the first Santa Claus descends from the mountains, goes around each house and then puts sweets in children’s boots while they sleep. If they have been obedient, children receive sweets, mandarines, lottery tickets in an envelope, and if they were bad - a potato. The next day, and so on, until December 25, when the first Santa returns to his home from the mountains, 26 the second and so on until January 6, which is called “Thirteenth” and is considered the last

day of Christmas in Iceland, because on this day, the last Santa Claus returns to his home.

In The United Kingdom, Christmas is considered the most important holiday of the year. In the evening of 24th December, the British go to church. The traditional meal takes place on 25th December, and the British do not eat pork, but turkey. The day after Christmas presents are given in the family.

In all Christian countries, Christmas is the birth of Jesus Christ. In my family, we celebrate Christmas as most Romanians do: we decorate our Christmas tree, we have traditional dinner with pork and other traditional dishes, we give sweets to children who come and sing carols to us.

**By Batog Florin, 8th grade,
“Constantin Gh. Marinescu”
School, Galati, Romania**



2.2 HALLOWEEN PARTY



Halloween or Hallowe'en, a contraction of "all hallows' evening", also known as all hallows' eve, is a yearly celebration observed in a number of countries on 31st October, the eve of the western Christian feast of all hallows' day. It initiates the triduum of Hallowmas, the time in the liturgical year dedicated to remembering the dead, including saints (hallows), martyrs, and all the faithful departed believers.

According to many academic scholars, all hallows' eve is a Christianized feast initially influenced by Celtic harvest festivals, with possible pagan roots, particularly the Gaelic shaman. Other academic scholars maintain that it originated independently of samhain and has solely Christian roots. According to a Christian source,

Halloween has Christian roots and pagan roots.

Typical festive halloween activities include trick-or-treating (or the related "guising" or "trunk-or-treating"), attending costume parties, decorating, carving pumpkins into jack-o'-lanterns, lighting bonfires, apple bobbing, visiting haunted attractions, playing pranks, telling scary stories, and watching horror films. Because many western Christian denominations encourage, although no longer require, abstinence from meat on all hallows' eve, the tradition of eating certain vegetarian foods for this vigil day developed, including the consumption of apples, colcannon, cider, potato pancakes, and soul cakes.

The party was organized by our English and French teachers,

Daniela Ciobanu and Ionelia Calin. The topic of the party was "Film and cartoon characters on Halloween", so this was generous enough to make our imagination go crazy. There were a lot of students from our school who took part in the party, but my classmates were Mesu Alexandru, Manza Cristina, Vlasie Bianca, Vasile Raluca, Dima Silviu, Ionita Cristina, Samoila Andreea, Lupu Laura, Vacaru Nicoleta (Coco), and, of course, the undersigned, Breahna Gabriel.

By Breahna Gabriel and Vacaru Nicoleta, 8th grade "Constantin Gh. Marinescu" School, Galati, Romania



**CULTURAL DIVERSITY
HOLIDAYS AND
CELEBRATIONS**



dressed like Chucky. I chose this character because I think Chucky is strange, scary and funny. You all know Chucky, a notorious serial killer whose spirit inhabits a Good Guy doll and continuously tries to transfer his soul from the doll to a human body, mainly the body of a boy, Andy Barclay. I think that this activity was nice and funny. The most interesting part was when we presented the costumes to the audience."

These are some of the impressions of the students who were part in this activity.

*"Hello! My name is **Gabriel** and I'm 15 years old. That party was organized by the English teacher. There I was dressed like a zombie and my friends told me that I was pretty good in that role."*

*"My names is **Coco** and I am 15 years old I was dressed up as a clown because I am funny. I chose to dress like this because it describes me in a word. It is well-known that clowns bring joy to children and adults through the amusement they give, they are friendly, and always have been*

smiling so I've offered the smiles and madness that is needed on the night of Haloween. Moreover, I brought a friend with his guitar and I sang, in order to make the party more fun. What can I say? I'm proud of myself!"

*"My name's **Silviu** and I am a 14-year old boy. I participated to this Halloween activity with my classmates. The character I was in disguise was FRED from the famous cartoon The Flintstones." When I arrived there I introduced myself wearing a fabulous costume, just like Fred."*

*"My name is **Bianca Dima** and I am 14 years old. I was*

*"My name is **Raluca** and I'm a student of "Constantin Gh. Marinescu" School. For Halloween, we organized a little party. I dressed up in a witch costume and my partener, Gabi - in a zombie costume. The party was perfect. We had a lot of fun!"*

*"My name is **Alexandra Hirtanu**, I'm 15 years old, but at the party I was dressed as a princess – I think princesses are very beautiful and they make me remember my childhood."*



2.3 MIDSUMMER EVE

Midsummer is quite special because it's only celebrated in Sweden. From the start we celebrated it to welcome the summer and actually fertilization. With fertilization I mean they celebrated it so that they would get as many children as possible. Today we celebrate it because it's fun and because it has become a tradition.

On Midsummer Eve you dance different kinds of dances around a pole. The pole is pretty high and it's decorated with lots of flowers. Some people even have a type of crown around their head that's also decorated with flowers. The dances we dance around the pole are pretty weird. We got the frog dance in that dance you jump around the pole like a frog, then we got the pig dance in that dance you make the noise nuff nuff nuff and the musician dance and here you pretend that you play different kinds of instruments. As you can read (no I'm just kidding), the dances are very weird. That's why I don't dance around the pole or midsummer pole. It's more fun to watch someone else dance than do it yourself.



The typical dish on Midsummer Eve is salmon, potato, sour cream and salmon in different kinds of sauces. It can be mustard or tomato I think, almost anything. It's hard to explain it but that's the best I can do. But I still enjoy Midsummer Eve because it's a time of joy, everyone is happy and you do fun things on midsummer, meet your family and have a good time with each other, and you get candy. There are even competitions sometimes. I actually won one time. You were supposed to look for golden presents in the forest. There were three different pre-

sents, and I found the biggest one. When I claimed my prize I noticed that it was just a thing that you could have bought for twenty crowns. It was a boring price but it's fun to win.

I celebrate Midsummer Eve in Oland (Öland in Swedish). It's very hot there so it's nice to be there and I like it very much. If you go to Sweden you should do it during Midsummer Eve. It'll be quite an experience. I promise. But I can't say that you will like it. I think you'll be more like "what are they doing!?".

By Adam, 14, from Lagmansskolan, Mjölby, Sweden

2.4 MĂRȚIȘOR



In Romania this Amulet is a symbol of spring and joy. Exchanging them is a gesture of love, friendship, respect and appreciation. You can buy silky red-white threads (tied into a bow) and small plastic objects: flowers, horse shoes, leaves, bumble bees, animals, birds, tiny stars, red hearts, and many others. Specific to Romania is a small black chimney sweeper-an old symbol of good luck! Especially women and children wear these amulets on their chests. Men usually buy spring flowers called “snow drops” and offer them together with a postcard and the Amulet. It is the modern way to offer a wonderful surprise to your dear ones!

These are some legends about this old tradition

One of the old Moldavian legend says that once in a fight with the winter witch, that didn't want to give up its place, the

beautiful lady Spring cut her finger and few drops of her blood fell on the snow, which melted. Soon on this place grew a snowdrop and so the spring won.

Another legend tells that there was a time when the Sun used to take the shape of a young man and descend on Earth to dance among folk people. Now a dragon found out about this and followed the Sun on Earth, captured him and confined him in a dungeon in his castle. Suddenly the birds stopped singing and the children could not laugh anymore but no one dared to confront the dragon. One day a brave young man set out to find the dungeon and free the Sun. Many people joined in and gave him strength and courage to challenge the mighty dragon. The journey lasted three seasons: summer, autumn and winter. At the end of the third season the brave young man could finally reach the castle of the dragon where the Sun was imprisoned. The fight lasted several days until the dragon was defeated. Weakened by the wounds the brave young man

however managed to set the Sun free to the joy of those who believed in him. Nature was alive again, people got back their smile but the brave young man could not make it through spring. His warm blood was draining from his wounds in the snow. With the snow melting, white flowers, called snowdrops sprouted from the soil. When the last drop of the brave young man's blood fell on the pure white snow he died with pride that his life served a noble purpose. Since then people braid two tassels: one white and one red. Every 1st of March men offer this amulet called “Mărțișor” to the women they love. The red colour symbolizes love for all that is beautiful and also the blood of the brave young man, while white represents purity, good health and the snowdrop, the first flower of spring.

By Ina Jitca, Fantanele School, Galati, Romania



3. SNAPSHOTS OF A TEENAGER'S LIFE

3.1 SEARCHING FOR THE PERFECT IDENTITY

Concerns of young people in today's society are very different. Some of them, besides studying, are playing sports: football, tennis, athletics; some teens are preoccupied with reading, with excursions or simply listening to music. Their world revolves around family, friends, their hobbies and especially school.

Adolescence is the age when you discover yourself and start to worry about the future; during this time, you begin to shape your personality; therefore you must be careful when you choose your friends, because entourage is an

important factor in forming your behaviour. Also, you need to decide on what you want to become in the future and the school is the basis of your success in trying to achieve your dreams.

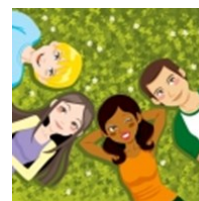
A day in the life of a teenager is divided in two. Half of this time consists in studying at school and doing homework. He devotes the rest of his time to leisure activities and nowadays, many young people choose to surf the Net, watch TV or listen to music, because it relaxes them. Many of them like going out with friends and classmates, but, despite all of

these, there are also teens who choose to handle their hobbies and passions in their spare time.

Teenagers are hard to understand. Sometimes, they think that everyone is against them. They put most value on trust, and they can get easily hurt. Love and friendship are everything for them.

Testing different types of attitude or look, they search for the perfect identity that suits them. Doing all these things, they prepare for being an adult, a grown-up. Sometimes, they make mistakes; but this may be the key to success.

By Maria Slabu from Fantanele School, Galati, Romania



3.2 MY HOBBIES

In my spare time I like taking photos, drawing, reading, being with friends, Scouts, listening to music and doing my homework. It's very fun to take photos, I can go out for a few hours and just find amazing sites. I especially like taking snapshots of nature, it's so beautiful and there are new photos everywhere! It is so annoying when the battery on the camera dies, exactly when I'm about to take the perfect photo. I become better every time I take a new photo, I can see photos in the ordinary things that my friends can't see. I'm happy

when friends and family, but also random persons tell me that I am good. at it.

On the Scouts we carve in wood, start the fire, play games, build huts and cook and sometimes we go to sleepovers in the nature. I am also going to "Tonår", Teenager, every other Friday there we sing, talk, and do fun things, like Laserdome and eating snacks. It's awesome!

By Hanna, from Lagmansskolan, Mjölby, Sweden

3.3 MY LIFE IN SWEDEN

Hi! My name is Andreas Wayne and I come from Stockholm, but recently I moved to Mjölby. I attend the private school Vasa. My family is pretty weird. My dad is a millionaire whose father helped NASA to build the first moon rocket Apollo 11. The only thing my father does is investing, that is his hobby. He recently invested 10'000'000 SEK (1'000'000 EURO) to the Mars One project, they are trying to build a moon base on the planet Mars. His name is Bruce Wayne, and if you like comic books you are probably familiar with that name, that is Batman's real name. My mom is the sister of Christian Von Koenigsegg, the creator of the automobile brand Koenigsegg. My mom, Christina Wayne is

currently working on saving the planet Earth's eco system. She recently attended UN's eco meeting. My brother is now training to become a JAS-39 Gripen pilot. That is a Swedish fighter jet. And that's pretty much my family. I forgot to mention that I have a dog Tarsha, she's actually not a dog. She's a black dire wolf mixed with a German Shepherd my father brought to me from South America. We live in a mansion we built 3 years ago. We



Swedish Air Force

have 27 rooms and a staff of 12. We have a huge wall around the house which is pretty nice, that makes us pretty independent. The wall is 4 meters high. My friend is Manfred whose father is Omar Zamora. He owns the company The Chileno Company. We are going to go parachuting this afternoon. We have been friends for a while since my father helped Omar with the finance of the company. When I grow up I want to become a soldier for the Swedish airforce. In my spare time I often go parachuting, playing cricket or I sometimes just go on a little roadtrip with my dad's Aston Martin. And I would love to hear something from you guys.

By Andreas Wayne from Lagmansskolan, Mjölby, Sweden

3.4 MY FREE TIME ACTIVITIES

Hello! My name is Oana Damian. I'm 13 years old and I live in Galati, Romania.

My favourite colours are pink, purple, red, blue and yellow. I like wearing fashionable clothes but if I go with my friends in the city I prefer to wear comfortable ones! My favorite clothes are jeans and T-shirts. My favorite footwear is high-heeled shoes, sandals and sneakers.

At the weekend I meet my friends and we walk and talk together in the park. I like going to the cinema, having a barbecue or going to a picnic with my beautiful family. I also like going to concerts, to parties or to the circus. I sometimes watch a football match or a basketball match. We often go bowling, cycling or swimming. I wouldn't like to go sailing! It is tiring to go by boat! That's pretty much my daily life!

By Oana Damian from "Sf. Cuv. Parascheva" School, Smardan, Galati, Romania

3.5 TEENAGERS AND HOW TO SURVIVE THEM

There is no doubt that parents tend to be overprotective when it comes to their teenage children. This might be a major source of conflict in a family, that's why going on a course on skills for adolescence may help parents to develop a harmonious relationship with their teenage children.

There are certainly some advantages to taking a class on how to behave towards teenagers. First, parents talk about the problems in their family because there is a discussion-based class. What is more, they learn how to manage / deal with conflicts since they share their own solutions to individual problems and get advice from spe-

cialists. Finally, parents are taught to talk to teenagers properly, not like little children. On the other hand, teaching parents has its difficulties. For one thing, parents often have little time and energy as they work very hard. As a result, they lack patience and they are very tired. Moreover, teaching them requires lots of tact, because they do not want to admit to problems. Furthermore, it is difficult to change an adult's mentality because they think they are always right.

All things considered, I firmly believe that being a parent is a learning process and a discussion-based class is very useful. Being a



parent is not only a matter of making rules and being obeyed – parents also need to learn how to get along with their children, and to develop a lifelong friendship. I feel they can only do this by admitting to problems and being open to changes and suggestions.

By Motoc Georgiana, Enache Florin and Butura Georgiana from Fartanesti School, no 2, Galati Romania

3.6 MY FAMILY,/ MY FRIENDS AND ME

Hi! My name is Lupu Nicoleta and I'm thirteen. I'm in the 6th grade. I'm a Romanian girl from Smardan, Galati. Although my native language is Romanian I also like speaking English and French.

My father's name is Claudiu and he's 47. He's a professional driver. My mother's name is Ionela and she's turning 45 next month. My brother's name is Florin and he's 21. He's a student at the Economics Academy. My favourite food is chicken breast with French fries which goes very well with orange juice. I also like eating a lot of fresh fruit and vegetables and I sometimes may treat myself with something sweet like a cake. I usually wear casual clothes like a pair of jeans matched with a T-shirt. I like going shopping and, in my free time, I usually like meeting my friends. I also like dancing, singing, listening to music and painting. My favourite colour is purple. I like animals very much and I love spending time with my little pets the rabbit or the kitten. My best friend is Oana.

And that's all about me and my friends!

By Lupu Nicoleta from "Sf. Cuv. Parascheva" School, Smardan, Galati, Romania

3.7 FRIENDSHIP

I cannot imagine life without friends. They are one of the most important aspects of life. We need them to share both our joys and sorrows. It's good to know that and to learn from time to appreciate them and keep them close. My best friend, Dragos, was always close to me. He is an amazing friend, he is always there for me, and he always helps me whenever I need, he makes me smile no matter what. He is a short boy with beautiful brown eyes, very funny,

and very talkative. He is a little cranky, but quickly forgets the problems.

Dragos is very smart, and his dream is to become a great actor. I support him whenever he needs me to.

One day I came to school very upset after an argument with my parents and I felt bad, so Dragos gave me some very useful pieces of advice. Then he began to tell me jokes that made me laugh a lot.

I am very grateful to him, and I



really want our friendship to last a lifetime.

By Stefu Geanina – Mihaela from “Costache Conachi” High-school, Pechea, Galati, Romania

3.8 COMICS

There is no doubt that reading comics is a wonderful experience, but if you are one of the many people who don't enjoy childish things, the solution might be for you to read science, history or beauty magazines.

There are certainly some advantages to reading comics. First, comics make people laugh because they present funny pictures/cartoons. Secondly, people collect them because they remind them of their childhood. Moreover, young kids read them



as they are about their favourite characters. (Superman) Finally, comics are funnier than books since they tell stories through pictures. On the other hand, reading comics is not without drawbacks. For one thing, reading comics may be bad for mind as the main character is often a „bad boy”. For the other, they might have a negative influence on children since some of them use a

violent language. Furthermore, kids and young adults may find comics more attractive than books because they have funny pictures and cartoons. Finally, reading comics might take up too much time since they are very long.

All things considered, I firmly believe that reading comics is ok for people of all ages since they are fun and full of action.

By Vlad Laura and Costandache Florin from Fartanesti School, no2, Galati, Romania

3.9 TEENAGERS, BOOST YOUR CONFIDENCE!

I would say, as a teenager, that this time of life is the most exciting but also sometimes the worst, and I don't think I am the only one who thinks that.



What I have learned so far is that you have to take up much responsibility, both in school and at

home. Sometimes I think we, teenagers, lay too much pressure on ourselves. We want to have good grades, we want to do our best for example in a physical activity like soccer, and we are scared to be judged by other people for the way we look or act. Actually, I am not one of those people who care about what other people think

about me, but I know that many teenagers have it really tough in their life. And to all of you who care too much about what other people think, live your life as you want! Because you know, you only live once. Be confident!

By Emma Piel, 14, from Lagmansskolan, Mjölby, Sweden



3.10 TEENAGER BOYS IN SWEDEN

In our town we have two football teams. They are rivals. I have been playing football in a football club in another city three miles from the city where I live in. Other stuff teenager boys do is playing video games and playing games on their iPhone. Popular games in Sweden are FIFA 14, League of

Legends, Call of Duty, Counter Strike, Hearthstone, and Minecraft. I am playing League of Legends and Hearthstone in my spare time. But I do not have time for that. I have football training programme four times a week and I study the rest of the time when I don't train. I can only play at the weekend. In

Sweden hockey is also popular. A lot of boys play hockey here. Our national team is good at hockey. They played the Olympic finals against Canada and lost with 3-0.

By Arvid, 14, from Lagmansskolan, Mjölby, Sweden

3.11 NEW AT SCHOOL—FROM BULLIES TO FRIENDS

In 2010 I came to a new school. My family and I moved to a little town in Sweden. The town is called Mjölby. The first day in my new school was horrible. The cool students annoyed me because I was "The new girl". They called me dumb things. When I came into the classroom for the first time

they all laughed except the teacher. The first lesson was horrible. I had to go in front of the class and tell them a bit of my life. It was tough but I made it.

The second week in my new class they started to talk to me. They asked me a lot of questions and we found out that we have the

same hobbies, especially a girl who was new like me. Since then we have been best friends. In the summer holiday we are going to USA together. We are going to spend a lot of money and have lots of fun.

By, Lovisa och Emilia 14, from Lagmansskolan, Mjölby Sweden

3.12 SWEDISH TOURIST ATTRACTIONS FOR TEENAGERS

Hi, my name is Sara, Sara Holmquist aka BeautyPearl16. I am almost 14 years old, and I live in Sweden. I've always wondered what people think about people living in Sweden. Do they think we are rich or poor? Do they think that polar bears or penguins walk on the streets, or maybe, they live like me? I hope I will be able to answer most of your questions. But trust me, it isn't that cold, and polar bears or penguins don't walk on our streets. I haven't seen any at least.

If you came to Sweden, you should go to Stockholm. It is our biggest city, and our capital city. There are a lot of museums, the Technical museum, the Vasa museum, the Aquaria water museum and many more. If you like all kinds of rollercoasters, then you should go to Gröna Lund, 'The Green Grove'. It is our second biggest theme park in Sweden. The biggest one is 'Skara Sommarland', which is a water park in the city of Axvall. I went there once. It was amazing! They have only 3 rollercoasters, but they have 40 different water attractions, so I



Gröna Lund



think that makes up for the lack of rollercoasters.

Maybe you just want to admire the beauty of the nature in Sweden. Then you should head to northern Sweden. Once I went to Abisko, which is a small city located nearby Torneträsk, Sweden's second deepest lake. My brother, mom and I tried to walk to the top of one of the mountains nearby the motel. I think it was about one and a half kilometer high. When we were just about 500 meters away from the top, my brother got too tired and wanted to walk back home. I told him that we were really close, but he really wanted to walk down again. We didn't know at that time how close we were, but when we got down, my mom

said that we only had a few hundred meters left. I'd got really mad at my brother, and wanted to punch him in the face, but I am too well-behaved to do that.

In my spare time, I love playing games on the computer or on TV. My favourite game is Minecraft, which is a building and survival game. I am also a YouTuber. I don't put too many videos on youtube. Only when I feel like recording you'll see a new video up. It can take a week or a month before there's a new video up. I think that this was everything I wanted to say. I can't think of anything else at least.

Well then, goodbye everyone!

By Sara Holmquist, 14, from Lagmansskolan, Mjölby, Sweden



Skara Sommarland'

**SNAPHOTS OF
A TEENAGER'S LIFE**

3.13 OUR FRIENDSHIP

Friendship is a relationship of mutual affection between two or more people. Friendship is a stronger form of interpersonal bond than an association. Friendship has been studied in academic fields such as sociology, social psychology, anthropology, and philosophy.

Friendship is one of the rare feelings met but once you find it, your life changes in the most beautiful way. I did not think that true friendship exists in real life. I

thought that tales were the only place where creatures are so strongly connected to each other. The most beautiful and innocent friendship is made at a young age when people are not familiar with envy and malice. So this is what happened in our case - two ordinary girls with big ambitions and different personalities. My best friend and me first met in the kindergarten, but at that time we did not communicate. Stepping into 1st grade we both realized that

no one could understand how we got along with each other, without talking. During eleven years of close, sincere and beautiful friendship we did not offend or stabbed each other in the back like other people did. The beauty of our friendship has not diminished, on the contrary, it has increased with every passing year.

By Alina Ciucur & Marlena Fluture from Fantanele School, Galati, Romania



4. GAMES, SPORTS AND TELEVISION

4.1 THE GREEN EMERALD GAME

When I was younger, about 9 years old,, my friend and I were playing a game called „Green emerald” which was the most popular game in those days. For playing this game you should have a green screen standing in front of your face or just a green rock. If you watch the screen for two minutes you can see a new world based on your imagination, each time you see the same world. My world was one of infinite forests, where it was always autumn so that I could play on a big carpet of leaves. My best friend’s world was one of corridors where he was running as if someone

wanted to catch him, but he imagined other world where a monkey was playing with him in the jungle leaping from one tree to another, playing „tag” –cool thing, playing a game in a game. I wish I had an imagination like his.

I wish you would play my game too, it’s very funny, but the problem is to find a green screen. I hope your friends have one and you’ll enjoy playing it. Just be creative!

By Sebastian Pastia from “Sf. Cuv. Parascheva”, School, Smardan, Galati, Romania

4.2 MINECRAFT—A GAME FOR IMAGINATION AND CREATIVITY

My name is lol761. When I started Minecraft I spent my first night in a mine. Then I came out of the mine and made a small house. It was 5 by 5 blocks. Under my house there were diamonds and I mined them, but a creeper blew up everything. I went there and looked for those diamonds. I found them, but they were in a hole. I made my way to them, then I stayed there for two days because I searched for: iron, redstone, gold, coal, Lapis Lazuli and emeralds.

Now, I'm making a castle and nobody can enter there, except for me, of course. GregX was my best dog, but he was killed by ten endermen. Now, his bones are in „GregX's Chest” and I promised



that he would get revenged. I did that by destroying endermen's house: the „ENDER”. Now let's turn back to the castle. In the living room, I have my throne and my diamond chest and my kitty, Lolly. I also built a kitchen with a cake machine and a fridge. I have also got a bedroom with a woolen floor, for which I had to kill 20 sheep, and there are two beds, one for me and one for my friend. I have got a desk, but I never use it for homework ☺, just for playing

computer games. I made for my desk a red stone lamp and it was hard because I had to go into the Nether to find Glowstones. Outside the castle, I put iron golems as guards.

I LOVE MINECRAFT because you can be creative and make everything you want like time-machines and things like that! I hope you like it too!

*By Leonard Mihai Chirea
from „Constantin Brancoveanu”
School, Galati, Romania*

4.3 BATTLEFIELD—SWEDEN'S MOST POPULAR FPS

Video games occupy most of my free time so I decided to write an article about them. The Battlefield series have been the most successful video game series of all time, boasting a physics engine that is able to make buildings collapse piece by piece and having beautiful graphics that look quite

realistic. The graphics and physics have been getting better and better by every release, but in my opinion the gameplay has been getting worse and worse. Sure, they are making more money than ever before. Millions of people still buy it and play it. Sure, they made a skyscraper destructible. But the truth

is, most players don't want the skyscraper to collapse, leaving only ruins and ashes as a battlefield. Even though it's pretty disappointing, it still has over a million active players and shows that Swedish things can become really famous!

*By Dennis
from
Langmasskolan, Mjölby, Sweden*

4.4 GAMING BY ANDREE AND FILIP



We are two guys who love playing video games and computer games. We mostly play Xbox 360. We spend very much time and money on gaming. We both have a SCUF Controller and an ASTRO Headset. If you are really into gaming and want good equipment, you really need to have a SCUF and ASTRO. It is really expensive but it is all worth it. Our favorite game is of course the Call of Duty series. But we most play Modern Warfare 2, Black Ops, Modern Warfare 3, Black Ops II and Ghosts. We also love playing other games such as Need For Speed,

Forza Motorsport and Grand Theft Auto. One of us plays mostly Call of Duty: Ghosts and Grand Theft Auto 5. His favorite weapon on Ghosts is: Vector CBR, SC 2010, AK-12, M27IAR, and Ripper. He is in 4th prestige and got 12 000 kills. In Grand Theft Auto he likes to drive with his 10 cars and do stunts and tricks with them. The other one of us plays mostly Black Ops 1 and Modern Warfare 3. On Black Ops he is in 15th prestige with knife only. Yes, he is a knif-

er. He's got 6000 kills with Ballistic Knife and 4000 kills with Tomahawk. He's got totally 36 000 kills on Black Ops. He plays mostly Modern Warfare 3 and has got 64 000 kills. He plays All or Nothing and has got 12 000 kills with knife only. He has got gold on 27 of 33 weapons. If you want to play with us on Xbox LIVE, send a friend request to us. Our gamertags are SpiZ TEMPZ and Cute Knife.

By Andreé Hultkrantz and Filip Andersson from Lagmansskolan, Mjölby, Sweden



4.5 FLOORBALL

Floorball is a really interesting and popular sport in Sweden. A lot of boys and girls play it, and we do it too, and we are two girls from Sweden. We play in a team called MIBK. There is not just one team in MIBK, it's a lot of teams of different ages, both boys and girls. If you want to play floorball you'll have to buy a few things, like a floorball stick, a pair of special glasses to protect your eyes, a pair of shoes that fit and a small

ball with holes in it. So when you have bought all of those things you just need a team to play with. If you can find a team to play with, you have to pay an annual charge. We promise you it is worth the money! When you play in a team you find many new friends, which is very fun since it's not very fun to play alone, or be alone. Sometimes we are doing funny things together. On April 4th we went on a cup. The cup is in

the spare time when a few teams play matches against each other, and if you win you will have a trophy. All trophies that the MIBK teams collect are saved in a special place, an apartment hired by someone, we don't know who. It's really fun to win trophies and we work like a team, we're nice to each other.

By Klara and Julia from Lagmansskolan, Mjölby, Sweden

LINCON: 3-DAY GAMING CONVENTION

I will tell you about a thing called LinCon. LinCon's a yearly convent in Linköping, a Swedish town. It happens from 29th of May to 1st of June, they have chosen this time of the year because we, in Sweden, have a holiday when we do nothing at all, but it gives us an extra day off which lets them have a three days long convent instead of just two. The thing people do on Lincon is just playing games, and I don't mean computer games I mean all kinds games, board games, card games, figure games, role playing games/rpgs and even lives even though it isn't really a game. I will now go through what all these types of games are:



Board games: Board games are games you play on a board. The boards can have different sizes, smaller once may not be bigger than a normal paper while the biggest once can fill a whole room. Because of the large variation of board games there is no special “abilities” that will make you win them all, even though luck and strategic thinking is good in most of them. Three famous board games are Settlers, Carcassonne and Risk.

Card games: Card games are based on playing cards, you are also often supposed to buy booster packs to get cards and build your own deck, and this is actually really expensive in most cases. They are often small but sadly they have big annoying boxes because the companies think that they can sell the games for a higher price if they look big. Three famous card games are Magic the gathering, Pokemon and Yu-gi-oh.

Figure games: Figure games are most often based on that players that move around very beautifully and detailed armies around a battlefield, in most cases the figures are painted by the players themselves. The games can be really different in size all from a square half-meter to room size. And the bigger the board the bigger the armies and the bigger armies the longer the games take. A famous figure game is Warhammer.

RPGs: Role playing games are not based on boards or cards, it is you and your friends sitting around a table playing, with one of you being the game leader. The game leader knows what will happen in the game and is basically the game itself. When for example a monster attacks all the players he says what they will do. The leader then rolls dices against the levels of the skills of the monster and depending on the roll anything can happen.

Lives: Lives are not really a game, it is more like people that run around and punch other people with rubber swords. The one live I have been in was like that, we were trying to bring down the more experienced players that were adults while we were kids and if you got hit like three times you “died”, also it was like one adult against ten kids at once, maybe not fair. That is actually what I know about lives and I am sorry about the bad explanation.

LinCon also has a kind of different thing called a gaming bar. You get to borrow a game and play it in the bar so you know if it's good and if you wish to buy it this is a great feature cause otherwise you can buy an expensive game and later at home play it and find out it is really boring. You can also, if you get hungry, go and stay in a, most of the time, giant queue to get a Lincon-burger; these are just like basic hamburgers except that they are huge.

By Elliot from Lagmansskolan, Mjolby, Sweden



4.7 ARCHERY

Archery is a sport of precision and it takes a lot of time to build a good archer. You have to try almost everything that people say, to get a good technique and perform well. It is hard to get what you want, but if you just try your best and believe in what you want, I can promise that you will come far. I am an archer, who has got much support from my family and other archers. I have got seven medals from the Swedish Championships in three years. All because of the other archers who are always there for you when nothing

works. People do not think that this sport is complicated at all, but seriously, you have to put your whole life into it by training and planning every year, to reach your goal.

I am training as often as I can, to get better and better all the time. Hopefully it will give something to my results. Actually, I am very proud of what I have done so far and I hope I can do so much more.

By Ellen Andersson, 14, from Lagmansskolan, Mjolby, Sweden

4.8 HANDBALL

Handball is a funny sport because it is a sport that is going very fast and I can play it. The sport is fun to watch and play because something always happens in the game. This sport is played on a 40 meter long and 20 meter wide court. A game of handball takes 60 minutes and there is a break after 30 minutes when the players talk strategy and drink some water. During a game you can take three timeouts but only two before 30 min and two after 30 minutes but if you take two before 30 minutes you can only take 1 after 30



GAMES, SPORTS AND
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minutes. I play for a team called Mantorp IF. We are a team of fourteen people and it is really fun to play and we train three times a week and play around two matches every weekend.

By Jesper Palm, 14, from Lagmansskolan, Mjolby, Sweden

4.9 TWO FRIENDS, ONE PASSION FOR FOOTBALL



Herman and I play football for the team Brommapojkarna (BP) and we are the best youth team in Sweden. We won the St.Erik's cup, which is the biggest cup in Stockholm. This year we are going to Madrid on a training camp and be coached by Real Madrid's youth team trainer. My father's name is Omar Zamora and he is very, very rich. He has his own company and it's called The Chileno Company. My father earns 1 billion Swedish crowns per year. My cousin's name is Felix Kjellberg on my mother's side. And he is PewDiePie. My father is a very close friend to the king here in Sweden. My father will pay the whole trip to Madrid. We love football!

By Manfred Zamora, 14, from Lagmansskolan, Mjolby, Sweden

My mate Manfred and I play football for the team Brommapojkarna (BP) which is one of the best football clubs in the world when it comes to creating good players from an early age. There are very many people that are pros today that grow up in BP. Our team won the ST. Erik's cup and that makes us the best team here in Stockholm and also in Sweden. This summer we are going to Madrid. Of course this will be expensive, but Manfred's dad will pay for everyone. Last year we went to England to play in a cup where we finished 2nd after a loss against Tottenham. Me and Manfred performed really good and I scored a total of 5 goals in 6 matches, while Manfred scored 2. Manfred and I came here to Brommapojkarna when we were just 5 years old. We practice 5-6 times a week so there isn't that much time for other things.

By Herman Ölander, 14, from Lagmansskolan, Mjolby, Sweden

4.10 FLOORBALL vs. BASKETBALL

After school every Monday and Wednesday I play floor ball. It is very funny and I really like it.. But now it has ended for this season. Some players are going to start in the ladies team, some aren't going to play anymore and then there are not going to be any girls left to play games with every weekend. I am going to start in the ladies team so that I have something to do after school. If you play floor ball games you have to be five people and a goalkeeper on the ground. I play left forward and have number nine.

By Olivia Mautner, 14, from Lagmansskolan, Mjolby, Sweden



Basketball is not so famous in Sweden but in the USA it is really popular. NBA is the national league in the USA. Basketball is my favorite sport after floor ball because I just love it, if you got nothing to do you can just grab a ball and find a basketball hoop and play it is so simple and chill. I think I should start playing basketball but I still just want to play floor ball. In Sweden there are not as many basketball teams. In basketball you need shoes, sport clothes, shooting skills and dribble skills. I've got shooting skills I guess... I nearly play basketball all the time.

By Tim from Lagmansskolan, Mjolby, Sweden

4.11 TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLE

I like Tmnt series because they are very funny, the characters are cute and the events, too. But, in fact the real story is a big drama about master's Splinter's (the turtle Sensei) family, and about the life of the turtles: they aren't accepted by the humanity because they are mutants.

I'll write the story of the episode 2 of the first season: *"A false friend"*. They were doing their everyday night squad. That evening, nothing was interesting. The aliens (who wanted to occupy our planet) stopped working for a while and Shredder, Splinter's enemy, too. They had nothing to do, so Raph was very upset. The turtles were sitting on a block of flats and suddenly, Leo heard something moving not far away from them. Leonardo is the leader of the group. He has dark-blue eyes and a mask of the same colour. His skin is dark raw-green, like a watermelon. He is the tallest after Donnie and the strongest after Raphael. All of them followed Leo and went to a safe place. The turtles were hidden after a wall. Everybody



was nervous because Leo said that he thought that it was a big wild animal. He attacked first, but they were in for a surprise: the enemy was a small adorable fluffy cat. Raph, always ironic, said to Leo: *"Don't worry, dude! You should have a little chance in front of this horrible monster!"*. Raph is the one with attitude in the team. In my opinion, he is the most handsome and the bravest. Raphael is my favourite teenage mutant ninja turtle. He is short and robust, but a little bit taller than Mikey. He has two beautiful light-green eyes, a cherry-coloured mask and a thunder on his shell. He is the angriest, but you can understand him if you think like him. Mikey is the smallest, and the cutest. In fact, he is super-cute. He is light olive-green with two light blue eyes and an orange mask. He is stupid and he loves pizza too much. He eats like a pig. He loves animals

and when he saw the little cat he wanted to bring it home. Suddenly, in a window, a man called it: *"Mittens! Mittens! Where are you?"*. Immediately Michelangelo wanted to bring the little cat to its home. His brothers tried to stop him, they ran after him but this time, Mikey moved too fast and, with the cat on his three-fingered arms, he went to the window and he said: *"Hi! Here is your...!"* But the man lost control of feelings and screamed: *"Aaaaa! An ugly mutant creature! And it's got my cat! Help! Mittens, on him!"*. When the adorable cat heard the man it turned into a beast and attacked Mikey. He ran away and the cat chased him for a while but Mike got tired, the cat jumped on him and started to bite and to scratch his shell. Mikey lost his equilibrium and fell off the block of flats. The other guys saw all the show, but Leo said: *"Let him suffer! It's a good lesson for him. He won't go close to people and their animals again!"* Mittens saw

Mikey's fall, it left him there and then it went back home.

Later Mikey met Chriss Bradford, a TV star, who wanted to know Mike as well. Every day, Mike went to Chriss. His brothers were jealous. Bradford taught Mikey some new moves. But one day, Raph and Leo were trying to do these moves, when master Splinter saw them and asked them very angrily from where they learned Shredder's moves. They realized that Chris was one of Shredder's students and shortly,

Chris would find out their address and tell it to him. Leo, Donni and Raph went to Chris' house and Mike was tied. Mike told them that he had just told Chris that they were living in the sword. They waited for Bradford and the Foot ninja clan also turned up, caught them and told them that this wasn't their address, just a trap for them. Chriss said very confused: "*So Mikey is not stupid..*" Raph said that he was, but not enough to tell them their address. (Obviously, a big lie.) Fi-

nally, Chriss escaped with a trick and disappeared. Master Splinter told Leo, Raph and Donni not to let Mike alone again...Oh, I forgot to describe Donni. He is the tallest and the smartest. He is a genius at every science. He is more yellow than green, he has red eyes and a light- purple mask.

I hope you'll love it as much as I do!

By Daniela Ionela Firicel from CN "Costache Negri", Galati, Romania

4.12 KING KONG—REVIEW

I think almost everyone knows who King Kong is. King Kong is a big, really big monkey. It is one old and one "new" movie of King Kong. I saw the "new" one in 2005. Not exactly new but the newest that has been made.

A girl named Ann has a job as an actress. But one day the theater closed and Ann didn't have a job anymore. She knew she had to get money for food, but she couldn't find a job. But then one day a man found her and wanted her for a movie, on a boat. Ann thought they were going to a nice place but

when they arrived...On this island there was a big wall, over 30 meters high. At first the island was very quiet. There were many dead bodies on the ground. Then the creatures killed some people from the crew. They took Ann and tied her up to a scaffold that dragged her inside the wall and left her to be eaten. On this island there were some dinosaurs and some really big bugs. But there was also a very large monkey, King Kong. At first Ann was very scared, but then the big monkey was very kind. I think it was because the monkey felt

very protective of her. Kong saved Ann from three dinosaurs, T-rexes. I don't think I should tell you more... so you have to see it yourself.

Ps. It's really good!

By Andrea Lybeck-Andersson, 14, from Lagmansskolan, Mjölby, Sweden



4.13 STAND-UP COMEDY WITH RICKY GERVAIS

He was born on the 25th of June 1961 in Reading, Berkshire. Ricky Gervais is one of the best comedians of all times. He is a writer and producer, known for his TV series 'The Office' (2005), 'The Invention of Lying' (2009) and 'Cemetery Junction' (2010). His trademark is humour about awkward social situations, an acerbic wit, a unique high-pitched laugh and my favourite part, he always has a beer with him on the stage when performing stand-up comedy. He used to work as a DJ on a London XFM radio station. He won the 2003 O.K. Comedy Award. He was in a music group in the early 1980s called Seona Dancing. He is the youngest of four sib-



lings. He has been married with his long term partner and producer Jane Fallon since 1982. His favourite movie is 'This is Spinal Tap'. He has a degree in Philosophy and his all-time favourite comedian is Woody Allen. He doesn't like Latins, he said: *"There's no excuse for turning up late for anything. I've never been late for anything in my life. I was actually born a week premature because I wanted to be early for my own birth. Being late is an insult to me."*

He considered himself a smart kid, he was the smartest kid in his class, he regrets that he was proud of that. He said: *"Writing and directing 'The Office' was the first thing I have ever tried my hardest at. The struggle is the only way you can be proud. You can't be proud of luck."*

Ricky Gervais is not just a great writer, actor and comedian, he's a great man and a model in life for me and others because I think that I was born lucky too and I need hard work to feel proud of myself!

***By Mihăița Sandu from
"Sf. Cuv. Parascheva" School,
Smardan, Galati, Romania***

4.14 JULIA ROBERTS - BEAUTY AND TALENT



Dear readers,

This article is about Julia Roberts, an American actress. Julia Roberts was born on October 28th, 1967. She has an elder brother Eric Roberts. Julia wanted to be a vet as a child. She also played clar-

inet in her school band. She became a Hollywood star after headlining the romantic comedy 'Pretty woman' in 1990. She won two Golden Globe Awards and the Academy Awards for best Actress for her performance in 'Eric Brockovich' (2000). Julia became one of the best paid actresses in the world because of her acting in

'Pretty woman'. She was named one of People magazine's "50 Most Beautiful People in the world" eleven times and she was also named one of the "100 Hottest Women of all time." I like her because she is both beautiful and talented.

By Fiorela Căuș from "Sf. Cuv. Parascheva" School, Smardan, Galati, Romania



4. 15 A STORY TURNED INTO REALITY

Angelina Jolie is born on June 4, 1975. She is an American actress. She made her debut on the screen as a child with her father Jon Voight, her first film was 'Lookin 'to Get Out', but she started her acting career 10 years later in a production with a lower budget 'Cyborg 2' (1993). Her first successful role was in 'Hackers' (1995). She also

starred in 'Gia' (1998), and got an Oscar for best actress in a role for the drama 'Girl, Interrupted' (1999). Jolie became famous because she played a video game heroine, namely Lara Croft in the film 'Lara Croft: Tomb Raider' (2001). She also starred in the movies: 'Original Sin' and 'Life or Something Like It', 'Kung Fu Panda' or 'The Changeling'.

She is married to Brad Pitt, the couple attracted worldwide attention. Jolie and Pitt have three adopted children, Maddox, Pax, and Zahara. They also have three biological children Shiloh, Knox Leon and Vivienne Marchelline. Brad Pitt along with his beautiful wife, Angelina Jolie, are the most beautiful couple in the world.

By Maria Varnale from "Sf. Cuv. Parascheva" School, Romania

5. STORIES - CREATIVITY AND IMAGINATION

5.1 THE CONTEST DAY

A beautiful Saturday morning...The Romanian language contest was on Saturday, as usual. Unfair, right? I had arrived at school before it started. I sat on a bench outside and my classmate, Ruxy, called me and we talked for a half an hour. After that, I put down the phone on the bench and I ate a sandwich. It was late. I went upstairs and I forgot the phone there. The contest started. I was reading the first text and the last phrase was saying something about how children lose so many phones every year, and I immediately realized that my pocket was empty. I told the teacher that I wanted to go to the bathroom (during the test, you aren't allowed to go outside) and then I ran faster than usual. I didn't have any

minute to lose because on the contest paper there were a lot of questions.

Downstairs I was running on the corridor and a woman was cleaning it. She was with the back to me and I ran straight past her very fast, so she got scared and, by mistake, she touched the alarm button. Finally, I went outside and, luckily, I found my phone. The fire alarm went off, so all the students were evacuated. 'What happened?' asked the teachers. Nobody found out who touched that button so I was very happy. We took the test again on Monday...

By Daniela Ionela Firicel from CN "Costache Negri", Galati, Romania



5.2 THE GOLDEN SEASHELL

Once upon a time there was a poor young man who lived all by himself in a small hut from the border of a village. One day he went in the village to buy some bread with the little money that he had. As he was walking, he heard some villagers telling of a certain golden seashell. On hearing their words, the young man wanted to learn more about the seashell, but, unfortunately, nobody wanted to talk to an ill-fated poor man like him. Thus, our young man had to go to the only person who valued his kind soul and who was always glad to talk to someone like him, the fruit and vegetable salesman across the road.

‘Hello, good sir!’, the young man said.

‘Hello to yourself!’, said the salesman. ‘What can I do for you?’

‘Well, you see, kind sir, I have heard about the famous golden seashell and I would really like to find it, but I don’t know anything

about where it is or how I could get to it’. ‘Do you, kind sir, happen to know anything of it?’, asked the young man.

‘Oh, yes!’, said the salesman. ‘I keep on hearing people talking about it in front of my fruit and vegetable stand.’ Rumour has it that this seashell can be found on the most precious golden beach. There are hundreds of golden seashells, but only one hides a tremendous secret. However, nobody has ever come back alive.’

‘And how does one get to this golden beach?’, asked the lad.

‘It is a very long way, but I shall tell you. You must pass through the Sugar Tree Forest, sail on the Crystal Sea, to finally enter the most perilous Mysterious and Treacherous Cave.’

‘Why is this cave alleged treacherous?’

‘Because this cave splits in two parts and nobody knows which one of them is the safe one. The legend says that if you happen to choose the wrong side, then you will have to face the worst things in the world. If you choose the right side, you will reach a golden



beach. If you choose the bad one, the entire beach will be terribly shaken and broken in two.’

‘Thank you, kind sir! I am off to finding the seashell!’

‘Most welcome!’ ‘But do remember: in order to find the good path, listen to the voice in your heart!’

‘And so shall I!’ ‘Good bye, now!’

‘Good bye!’

So went the young lad in his search for the seashell. He soon reached the Mysterious and Treacherous Cave. At some point, the cave started branching so he stopped wondering. ‘What should I do?’ He went on thinking until he remembered what the old salesman had told him: ‘Always follow your heart!’. A thought came suddenly to his mind. If he were to listen to his heart, then he would have to take the tunnel to his left because there is where the heart lies! And so he did.

**STORIES: IMAGINATION
AND CREATIVITY**

It was not long before he reached the golden beach safely. There were hundreds of golden shells, lying all over the place. The young boy was at a loss, not knowing what to do. He searched the beach and, right in the middle of it, he saw beautiful and huge golden seashells. A few steps further to the right he could see a tiny, ordinary and simple seashell, lying secluded from the rest of the other shells and he decided to choose this one. At that moment, the seashell turned into a beautiful young girl who told him:

‘As a reward for your humble choice and for your kind soul, I shall grant you three wishes. Even more than that, from now on I

shall be your wife!’

Rejoicing in his heart, the young man and said:

‘First of all, I want everyone to be healthy! Secondly, I want it to be peace on Earth eternally. Finally, I want to live in a large house, where I can offer shelter to the fruit and vegetable salesman in my village to take him out of his misery.’

On hearing the boy’s wishes, the girl said:

‘I shall grant you these three wishes!’

And so, the beautiful girl clapped her hands three times and the young lad found himself in a large house at the border of his

village, standing next to his beautiful wife and the kind hearted salesman. The story was soon heard by everyone in the village and the people found about the modest and kind hearted boy, learning how to behave with other people, regardless of their social status, and how to avoid judging a book by its cover.

*By Madalina Neagu from
“Sf. Cuv. Parascheva” School,
Galati, Romania*



5.3 THE BOY WITH DREAMS

Once upon a time there was a boy whose name was Lukas. He was born with one leg and he always wanted to run a marathon but his family was poor and couldn’t afford a fake leg. There was a TV program that Lukas always watched. It was about disabled kids with dreams like Lukas that got help with buying a surgery



operation. One day his parents called the TV program and told about Lukas. One week later they called back and told them to come to Hollywood to get an operation. After the operation the first thing Lukas did was to run a Marathon. There is always hope, just open your eyes!

By Oscar Bruce from Lagmansskolan, Mjölby, Sweden

5.4 THE MYSTERY OF THE “BRIDE’S BRIDGE”

GHOST STORIES have always stirred people’s imagination. True or invented, these stories make the subject of discussion during cold and rainy autumn afternoons when people gather around the fireplace and tell frightening ghost stories.

The story goes that, more than one hundred years ago, there was a tragic misfortune that happened at a wedding in Smârdan. Two young lovers set the date for their marriage on the 23rd of June. The wisest people of the village told them that it’s bad luck to get married on that day. ‘Nothing will set us apart’, they said. ‘Our love is

too strong and we don’t believe in superstitions,’ they said. However, before midnight, there fell a heavy fog upon the village and life seemed to have stopped still everywhere. The bride was hidden by the groom’s best-man under a bridge and was left there alone, until someone came to take her. Strangely enough, when the groom came back for her, she was nowhere to be found. Search par-



ties were gathered, and everyone looked for the missing bride all over the place...

The bride was never found and the bridge underneath which she was hidden is called the *Bride’s Bridge*. Rumour has it that she went through a *Gate* separating the *World of the Dead* from the *World of the Living* at midnight. Some say that in foggy June nights she can still be seen dancing on the bridge, in her white wedding dress *luring young people into the darkness with her magic*.

By Diana Moldovanu from “Sf. Cuv. Parascheva” School, Smârdan, Galati, Romania

5.5 MY STUFFED TOYS

My stuffed toys mean the world to me! They stand by me in my hardest times. In my bedroom, there’s a mini zoo housing 42 stuffed toys. Among them, there’s a teddy bear named She-Pinky. Whenever I cry, it’s there waiting to wipe my tears; whenever I’m happy, it’s there to hold it in my arms. The same does my stuffed bunny, smallish and pinky, a present from my father on the 1st of

March. I care a lot about my stuffed toys. Whenever I’m scared of the dark, I can hide under the blanket but they can’t and I feel guilty because I can’t do anything. Maybe we don’t realize it, but they mean a lot in a child’s life. I’m sorry that I can’t take them with me wherever I go, and, most of the times I miss them. Even if many people say that they cannot talk, I know that, at night, or when

I’m away from home, they come to life and talk with one another. I wish I could talk to them for real, but, unfortunately, I can’t. Even when you’re a grown up, you’re never too old to love your childhood toys because they make you feel like a five-year-old.

By Madalina Neagu from “Sf. Cuv. Parascheva” School, Smârdan, Galati, Romania

