
ELI STUDENT VOICES

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The Devil's Lawyer (1st Place)

Nicolas Camus

R/W 3

"The best in the lawyer, that is he is here when there is nobody"
-Philippe Dumas.

We saw last week how the American Constitution protects the accused and states the right to have a lawyer, but behind this idea, there is an important question: is it possible to defend everybody?

I do like this question because it is a question which will arise in my job, but I want to try to answer this question now. There are two ways to answer this question: a general answer (society's answer) and a more personal answer (which everybody has).

The majority of our society (sometimes with dangerous exception) answers yes to this question. We can take, for example, the American Constitution or the French Constitution. All of these constitutions protect all citizens and give the right to have a counsel. It's very interesting to see the importance of this right. Besides, it is a very old right. Normally, the Constitution draws the general organization of a country. That shows the will of the Constitution's writers to explain that is an important aspect of freedom as the separation of the power. But sometimes, the answer of our democracy is not so clear. The Guantanamo prisoners are a good example. At the beginning, the American's Government didn't want to apply this rule of the Constitution (because they are not 'normal criminals,' but terrorists). The Supreme Court stated that the American Constitution must be applied, but after 7 years of jail for some prisoners. However, we can say now this principle has no exception even if some individual members of Government think the opposite.

Sometimes, after a bloody case, we see many people on the TV to say lawyer does a bad job, and they insult the defense lawyer because they think that defending this person is against the community's order. Does a lawyer who defends a murderer or a rapist work for the community? Yes he does. With the defense lawyer's intervention, we protect the accused from mistakes of justice. In fact, there is always a very small probability that the accused is not guilty, even if all evidence shows the guilt. Sometimes after 20 years of jail, a prisoner becomes free because we find the guilty innocent, or in some dramatic cases we see that after the execution of the prisoner.

A great French lawyer used a very interesting argument to defend a Nazi criminal (also, he received many death threats for that). He called two friends who are lawyers too, a black man and a Muslim, to help him to defend his client.

At the process, he said to the prosecutor: "You said that you are the representative of the humanity, but what kind of humanity? You are all white! See us, the defense, we are from each continent. You can't say that you are the representative of all Humanity." That shows the impossibility for a jury to explain that it represents humanity and justice. A jury can't be like a god. That is the reason that a defense lawyer is necessary.

A good argument to pose to the people who think we can defend everybody is that the process has a more important value because it is impartial. The criminal can't become a hero or a martyr because every rule was respected.

Answering this question with the personal aspect is more difficult. In fact, every time, in a bloody case, the opinion of the majority thinks that a lawyer isn't necessary and the lawyer is a criminal too if he defends the accused. One movie is a good example of this meaning: *The Devil's Advocate*, with Al Pacino. A great criminal lawyer goes to an important office in NYC, and he becomes really the devil's lawyer. At the end of the movie, God gives another chance to the lawyer who understands that he mustn't defend a criminal.

Besides, when there is a crime, at the moment everybody (probably me and you) wants that the criminal dead. That is like a reflex. It is the reason why it's more difficult to answer with a personal meaning.

We see that our society states that everybody must have a lawyer, but who does the job? The devil, a person without heart, a lawyer more criminal than the defender?... I don't think and the lawyer must be happy to defend a criminal and not defend him just because a counsel is necessary. There is a concrete reason: the most interesting aspect of the lawyer's job is the plea. Our judicial systems are very different. In France, the criminal case is one of the only cases in which the lawyer can plead; in other cases the procedure is written. When a lawyer defends a criminal, he must use all of his brains and all of his judicial knowledge. He must convince a Jury which before the beginning of the process is so sure that the defendant is guilty he must to the job of a lawyer: convince.

I want to pay homage and to take the example of Mister Robert Badinter, a very famous French lawyer. He 'saved' a criminal who killed a little child from the death penalty. Everybody knew that he was guilty, but with his plea, he convinced the jury not to apply the death penalty. He saved a man (one dead instead of two).

I think a lawyer who defends the worst criminal isn't immoral. He must be amoral, without 'the common morals'.

Terror on the Beach (2nd Place)

SukBae Ko
US Culture

Once, I went to the beach.
It was a stormy day, so there were rough sea waves.
I was throwing a Frisbee with my friends in the water.
They got past me.
When I swam to get the Frisbee and turned to go back,
I could not feel the sand beneath my feet.
I thrashed in the water calling out "Help me!"
I thought I would die.
I felt the terror of death.
At that moment, an ELI friend helped me.
I grabbed his hand, and he pulled me to safety.

Manizales: The Open Door City

Alejandro Ramirez
R/W 41

Just imagine a city build one hundred and fifty nine years ago! Manizales is located in the middle of the eastern area of Colombia, and has several characteristics that make it unique; for example, it was built in the mountains, is in a very cold region, has steep streets, and it is a city surrounded by five universities.

The mountains near Manizales are very big and full of vegetation. The large size of the mountains is because it belongs to a chain of mountains called the "Region Andina", and they are full of vegetation because the mountains have a lot of water inside that gathers together into a mist. The cold weather in Manizales is related to the geographic location because it is at two thousand and five meters above sea level.

The people who visit Manizales usually are impressed with the streets. The streets are very steep and the main reason it is because the whole city was built on the top of a mountain and the city was developed in the sides of the mountains, like many European cities.

Additionally there are at least five important universities in Manizales. This feature of the universities makes Manizales an axis of knowledge, because there is a lot of research in many scientific fields. The actual major focus this city is improving the quality of the education in my city.

Finally, I think that people in Manizales recognize all the features that I talked about and these characteristics make it very different among the many others cities in Colombia.

My Hometown in Libya

Mohammed Eltaher
R/W 41

Would you like to live in small town with a lot of friendly people? My hometown is located in the south of Libya. I really like my hometown because it is a very small, with very nice weather, and very friendly people. Most of the people who

live in this town they are really like it for the same reasons. In fact, living in such a town as this can make your life easier and feel happy for all of your life.

Living in a small town is really nice and has several advantages. First, most of the small towns are very safe. It is really very hard when you live in big city without safety. Next, it is very easy and fast to go out to any place if you live in a small town. It is easy to memorize all roads because it is not complicated. However, there are other advantages to living in a small town, but to me these are the most important things.

The second reason that I like my hometown is the weather. The weather in my hometown has three seasons: fall, winter, and summer. Having three different seasons is really very nice to me. In the fall, the weather is really cold, but with out snow. It is wonderful to sit out in the sun when the weather is cold. In the winter, the weather is really nice, not cold and not hot. Also in the summer the weather is not really hot. It is really wonderful to have a town with this nice weather.

The last reason that I love my hometown is the people. It is very nice to know most of the people in your hometown. Most of the people in my hometown are very friendly and nice. Of course, living with friendly people can give you a lot of good things. It is really hard to live in a big city without friendly people.

For all the above reason, I really like my hometown very much and I'm very happy to lives in a place such as this town. In fact, living in small town with nice people and nice weather can really make you happy all of your life.

The Beautiful City – Ulsan

Yunjae Shin
R/W 41

Do you remember the match between the U.S and Germany at the 2002 Korea-Japan World Cup? It was held in my hometown, Ulsan. Actually, my hometown is not a big city, but you can enjoy many things there. It has green mountains and cool beaches. And also, when I describe my hometown, I can't help but tell about these things: A World Cup Stadium Park, an industrial complex, and a unique night view.

First, the World Cup stadium park is the most famous place in Ulsan. It was made in commemoration of the 2002 Korea-Japan World Cup, so the length of a park is 2002 meters. Especially, a walk that contains a lake and a flower garden is a very beautiful and peaceful place located there. You can see the turtle and many kinds of flowers, and also you can enjoy the fantastic laser show on a lake at night. A square, also, is loved by young people, because it is good spot for date and there is enough places to play badminton and roller skating.

Next, if you drive to the sea, you can see an enormous industrial complex. It is an essential course in the tour, because the biggest ships in the world are made in my hometown, and you can see the process of making cars. The length of the ship is longer than two soccer stadiums, so just seeing a factory can be a special experience. Also, the assembly line that makes cars is also interesting, because everything is done by robots.

Finally, you can see a unique night view that you have never seen before. Usually, a night view is made by the lights of buildings in a city. However, in my hometown it is made up by factories. So, there are not only lights, but also fire. It seems like a mirage on a desert. However, there are disadvantages; the air is not fresh, so when you go to the industrial complex, you have to close the car windows,

In conclusion, my hometown is in harmony with development and preservation. You can enjoy the industrial complex, and also enjoy a natural park at the same time. Ulsan is all of these things and my hometown.

My Hometown in the Dominican Republic

Patsy Andujar

R/W 41

How beautiful and interesting is the Dominican Republic? The Dominican Republic, which is my favorite place, is my hometown and where I was born. It is a very beautiful and interesting place. To introduce the Dominican Republic, I would like to explain where it is located; what is the population of the Dominican Republic; also, I would like to talk about the race; and the description of the capital and what things to do there.

The Dominican Republic is an island located in the Caribbean, it is a littler island between Puerto Rico and Cuba. The island is shared by Haiti and Dominican Republic. The population of the Dominican Republic is about eight to nine million of people. The Spanish colonized the Dominican Republic and because of that we have a mixed race between the Spanish and the Indian people that used to live there after the Spanish people got there. Because of that, we have a diversity of races.

The Dominican Republic has a lot of history, and it is a very beautiful place, where you can see a lot of Spanish places and even the streets and the old houses that are in a Spanish Style, but that is only in downtown area. Uptown you can find a lot of big buildings and long streets with a lot of commercial places and traffic. In the area where I live there are a lot of big buildings and people prefer to live there, than living in houses because of the high level of crime. It is safer to live in a tall building than in a house.

They are a lot of things to do in the Dominican Republic. At first, we have beaches, mountains and rives. We have a lot of gorgeous beaches and also, beautiful and clear rivers, but we have mountains too. There is one place were we have all these things together. This place is in the south of D.R., we have the river that merge in to the beach and also with a very beautiful mountain in the background. Second, we have restaurants with traditional food and international food, where you can go for dinner and spend a really good time. Finally we have the most attractive nightlife where you have a lot of different music and you can dance or just chill out. As you can see there are a lot of places to visit in the Dominican Republic.

In conclusion, the Dominican Republic is an interesting place with a lot of things to do and places to visit. I really spend good times there because there are a lot of things to

do. It is a really nice town with an easy access because of the location. I really love this place.

My Hometown--Seoul

Jeongyoung Do (Rick)

R/W 41

How is your hometown? All people have in their hometown something special such as a capital, a city of full of tourist attractions, or a small town in the country side. My hometown is Seoul which is the capital of Korea; I really like Seoul because there is a good traffic system, many amenities and historical places, and many educational institutions located there.

First, there is a good traffic system. The subway is the most convenient and useful transport system in Seoul because there are over ten lines, so we can go anywhere. Next, the bus system is good. Its work hours are from five a.m. to two a.m. Last, taxis are more common than buses. There are many taxis, and the fares are not too expensive. Actually, I really like the traffic system in Seoul.

Next, a lot of amenities and historical places are placed in Seoul. There are many amenities such as shopping malls and large amusement parks, so if you live in Seoul, you never feel bored and tedious. Also, there are many historical places because Seoul has been a capital for over five hundred years. So, you can see really gorgeous, colorful, and magnificent traditional palaces and castle gates that are a little destroyed, but these are still lovely and beautiful. These places are really helpful for relaxing.

Last, Seoul is an educational city. Numerous popular universities are in Seoul, so we can get good information very quickly. The quality of universities is improving because universities always compete with each other. Various private institutions are in Seoul, too. If we want to learn something, we can learn whatever we want. Finally, Seoul is a really good place for students to study.

In conclusion, Seoul is a really developed city where there is a good traffic system, nice places to visit, and beneficial educational institutions, so I love my hometown. I feel sure that if you move to Seoul, you can improve your life and enjoy your free time.

The Earthquake

Elif Topsakal

R/W 40

I experienced a really terrible day in my life. It was a destroying disaster, an earthquake. The day was on August 17th 1999. My family and I were in my grand mother's house. It was really late when we came back home. As soon as we arrived, we went to bed. I woke up at 3 am to drink water and went to the kitchen. Everything was so quite. Although, it was a really hot day, I did not even hear the voices of tree crickets. I came back to my bed and suddenly my bed started to shake. I could not understand what was happening. I was in shock. I jumped

up from my bed. I did not think about my sister who was sleeping in the bed across from mine. I was only screaming. My mother, my sister and I met in the doorway of living room. We were praying by screaming. We could hear our neighbors' screams also. It was so frightening. The thing that I only remember is the sky. I could see the sky from the living room's window. It was really bright as if all of stars were there together. The shaking continued for 43 seconds but I thought that it will never stop. The earthquake stopped and we went out of the house. Everywhere was dark because the electricity had gone. Also, everybody was shocked. All of the people were trying to get some news about the earthquake. They looked like extremely scared and anxious. The voices of car radios were echoing all around. Their voices are still in my ears. The news was saying that Istanbul was destroyed. We were wondering about Istanbul. We waited for it to be morning. We could not enter the house before it became morning. After that we learned that so many cities were affected by the earthquake such as Istanbul, Yalova. During this earthquake, 50 thousand people lost their loves and many people were without a home. This is the biggest and most terrible disaster that has been experienced by me and by all Turkish people.

My Hometown—Gu Jae Island

Donghwi Kim (T. K.)

R/W 41

When you listen to this word, hometown, what do you feel? I feel comfortable and warm, and I can remember my childhood. Although a long time has passed since I have visited, I can remember my home town in detail. If you read this essay, you can draw a mental picture of my hometown, Gu Jae Island.

First of all, suppose you fly into the sky over my country. How would you see my hometown? It would maybe seem like a cross, and you would be able to see a lot of small islands around my home town. In addition, on the west, there are two bridges by which my home town and the land are connected. My hometown is surrounded by mountains and the most mountains are located at the center of the island. So, most people live near the coastline of the island.

There are two heavy industries located there, Samsung and DSME. They make huge ships such as transports, warships and big pleasure boats. People can make a study visit to those industries. First, let's talk about Samsung. That place has three docks where a lot of ships are made, and there are twin tower cranes on the docks. Those cranes carry big parts of ships to the construction areas. Now, let's go to DSME; this place is bigger than Samsung. DSME has six docks, and there are the largest numbers of big cranes in the world and so many small cranes located there. In addition, sometimes, there are also warships and submarines in this area.

My home town is a small city surrounded by the seas. So, we can see so many beautiful scenarios. Especially, there is a marine park which is called Heagumgnag. This is composed of small islands, which are made of rocks. One island is called Lion Island, and another is called

Candlestick Island because they seem like a lion and a candlestick.

My home town is a beautiful place. People can visit the two industrial sites, see many kinds of ships and watch how they make a lot of huge ships. They can climb up that and see beautiful sceneries because there are many mountains. Finally, because there are a lot of beaches, people can do a lot of activities in the summer, and they can see beautiful things on the sea. Although my home town is small, there are a lot of things like these I have talked about. What kind of place is your hometown?

A Typical Day of President Bush

Elif Topsakal

R/W 40

Here you go a typical day in the life of President Bush. He wakes up at 7 o'clock every day. He takes a long shower in his white and huge bathroom. After that, he gets his daily massage for twenty minutes. He wears a dark blue suit and he gets his breakfast with his family. He likes to get different kinds of breakfast from every country everyday. After that, he meets ministers for daily meetings. Then in the afternoon, he plays with so many expensive toys in his playground. Especially, he likes to ride a scooter although he falls down sometimes. He goes to bed at 7 o'clock because game hours during the day exhaust him.

My Hometown--Torimoto

Yuri Nakajima

R/W 41

How do you feel when you go back to your hometown? I feel so calm and happy even though I don't do anything special. My hometown Torimoto is the most relaxing town because of these reasons: its nature, children, and families. As soon as I arrived at the small station at Torimoto, I can feel the typical Japanese countryside.

When I got off the train, I can see a view of huge rice fields where are colored a beautiful green, and I walk a side road which isn't paved. I can hear many songs sung by frogs, cicadas, and so on. It makes me happy, and I can feel I am in an orchestra.

Then, I keep walking to my house, I can see many children who are playing in nature's such as fishing at a river, running around the big grounds of a school, and so on. It recalls to me about my childhood, and I feel my heart is getting very warm.

After I pass these views in my hometown, I can arrive at my house where my family is. They always make me feel so welcome from the bottom of their hearts, they always prepare many warm dishes for me to eat. There are many things that are the same since I was born here, like the beautiful flowers my mother plants in the garden, a big couch where my father always lays down, and a big T.V. where my brother always

watches and laughs a lot. I really feel happy whenever I am in my house.

As I told you, my hometown has many things to make me feel calm and happy. These are all the things I have been feeling since I was born. This hometown is the best of all the times and places for everyone.

The Sapporo Snow Festival

Donghwi Kim (T.K.)

R/W 42

Do you know about the three major festivals in the world? First, in Brazil is the Rio de Janeiro Carnival. There so many people enjoy dancing and singing, and the people can be seen dancing the samba during the festival. Second, in Germany is the Oktoberfest. There a lot of people enjoy drinking so much beer and eating many sausages. Finally, in Japan there is the Sapporo Snow Festival. I will describe that experience to you in this essay.

Now, I remember that I was standing at the gate to a white world, the Sapporo Snow Festival on Feb. 8, 2008. To the north of me were sculptures. When I walked a few steps, I was looking at the sculptures which were carved like huge sphinxes and very hard. I felt the sphinxes, which were made of ice, and were really similar to the sphinxes which are found in Egypt. I thought they looked like they were alive because the looks of the sphinxes were so very realistic. When I walked a few more steps, I was amazed by a castle which was made of snow. I felt it was similar to the Inuyama Castle. Actually, the Inuyama Castle is the most famous in Japan and is preserved as a national treasure. It was really similar and the same size also of the real castle. Surprisingly, there were also a lot of Korean soldiers, who are also made of snow, there. I felt like they protected the castle from enemies. While I looked at the castle, I wondered about who made it. So, I asked a guide about it. He said that this was made by sculptors from Korea during the winter, and the guide praised it continually while he explained it to me.

On the East side of the festival, I saw wheat noodle shops. Japan is famous for wheat noodles. Especially, a lot of people estimate that the wheat noodles, which are made in Sapporo are the best of all the wheat noodles in the world. So, I found a noodle store where I could taste the famous noodles. At the noodle shop, I ordered wheat noodles and a bottle of Sapporo beer. The wheat noodles were made of various marine products, and as soon as I tasted it, I felt like I was swimming in the sea. In addition, although it was so hot, when I was drinking the cool beer, I felt like I was drinking a cup of so cool water in a hot desert.

Next, I decided to go on the Western way after I ate the wheat noodles. For an hour, I looked around the town, and then I stood in front of some beautiful buildings not made out of snow. The beautiful style of the buildings made them quite interesting to see. I really liked looking at the interesting old constructions.

Then I had traveled to a lot of places, and I experienced many things. Although the sculptures were not

real, I saw a lot of the architecture styles which exist in the world, I ate the wheat noodles which are also famous in the world, and I saw the huge castle which is made by sculptors of Korea. I think that the Sapporo Snow Festival was one of the most enjoyable places I have ever been.

Justice Has to Be

Naji Aldosary

R/W 50

A lot of students admire or like their teachers and they do not like anybody to say something bad about their teachers. On the other hand, some students talk worse about their teachers when they sit together after classes. Are you doing that? Some students think that impolite. We have two different students' feeling about their teachers. Some of teachers are more attractive and have more experience and some of them not. Some of teachers are good teachers and some of them try to be a good teacher. Some students want to evaluate their teacher and write about everything they want. Thus, some of schools have the teaching evaluations system to give their students a chance to write some notices about their teachers and teaching methods. Furthermore, the problem is the students evaluate their teachers not for the teaching systems or for teachers' ability. That means they evaluate the teachers by giving them a high or low value because they like, do not like them, or the teachers are very attractive and give the students more facilities, and they do not make the evaluations with more information about the evaluations skills. Thus, education and a good teacher will be failing and weak, and the attractive teacher will get more promotion. Therefore, there are some causes and effects for these evaluations.

The first cause is the students do not have any information about the evaluation systems. When the schools give students the estimate papers to evaluate their teachers, and they have no ideas or experiences about the estimate methods, they will evaluate their teacher by wrong approaches. Some of them will give their teacher high quality, and some of them will give their teacher a bad value. That is not fair for some teachers. Those schools have to evaluate their teacher or teaching system by some educationists because they have more experience and education; for example, when I was in high school at my village, my classmates and I had made a new evaluation about our chemistry teacher. We had made that evaluation to his teaching only. We had not looked to his figure, ethics or his country because he was from another country around our country, but we did not have experience about the evaluation's method. Our teacher had more experience about the teaching methods, but he had felt more comfortable with the biology classes more than chemistry classes. He had said, "I am not familiar with the chemistry classes." Biology science was his major. After that, the educational administration sent an educationist to our school to see our problem. The educational administration had not done anything, but that teacher had tried and tried to make that class too easy.

In addition, when the schools usually do that evaluation by their student, and the teachers know the

evaluation will be effective on their jobs in the future, some of them will give their students more facilities on their scores or some teacher will care how they satisfy their students more than the education; for example, one of my friends was a teacher. He was a good teacher in his school because he was giving his time to his classes and students, and he loved his classes from the bottom of his heart. He was giving them a great education, but he was a strong teacher. The result for the final evaluation to his students was 50% from students were failing in his classes. After that, the investigations were taken with him by many educationists from his educational administration in his area. It was not his mistake, but the students did not like the strong teachers.

Consequently, when the schools give the students' evaluation of teaching more importance, the teachers will lose their jobs because some of students will give their teachers low scores because the teachers are not attractive or they do not like them. Besides, when the students lose their good teachers because the teachers were strong and did not give them more facilities as the extra scores, they will not get a good education, and they will be tired through their graduate studies and life. For example, when I was in high school, my classmates and I had made a little evaluation about our biology's teacher. Our teacher was a new graduate and his first classes were with us. He did not have more experience about the teaching methods, and his major was in the biology. He was a very polite teacher, but the problem was we had not understood the biology from him because it was very difficult for us. After that, the educational administration had sent educationist to our school to see our problem right or not. We did not give him more time to show his skills. The new teacher was in our class after one week when the educationist left. Presently, the first teacher is studying the PhD program in his major at the famous university in my country.

To sum up, the evaluations need special skills not everybody can have. Because the students without any evaluations skills, with some partiality to some teachers such as students like or dislike them, or to teachers who want to gain students' estimation, the teachers and education will be weakly. Therefore, the good teachers are thinking, "The schools should eliminate teaching evaluation or at least give them less importance." Really, the students cannot give their teachers the real evaluation. Some teachers are saying, when the schools want to take any evaluation about us, they have to take the evaluation from teachers like us or somebody who has experience about the teaching evaluation. We are living in a wide world, so there is nobody is satisfied about his life, but the justice has to be with us anywhere.

My Hometown--Al-Basra

Mazin Saber

R/W 41

Have you visited Al-Basra before? If you haven't, let me take you with me by describing it to you. Al-Basra is the third largest city in southern Iraq. It is located on the Shatt Al-Arab River and close to the Persian Gulf. It has hot and humid

weather in the summer and kind of cold weather in the winter. In addition, Al-Basra is the only harbor in Iraq; it has two ports, Umm Qasr and Khawr Al-Zubair. Moreover, Al-Basra has wonderful canals like Shatt Al-Arab and Shatt Al-Basra. Now let me tell you more about my city Al-Basra.

First, if you visit Al-Basra, you can feel the burning sun in the summer, and the humidity is very high especially in August and September. The weather in Al-Basra is very dry, so we always went to swim near the canals. In addition, in winter, Al-Basra is not very cold, but some times we use heaters to keep us warm. This is how we deal with the weather in Al-Basra.

Second, Al-Basra is the only harbor in Iraq. It has two ports Umm Qasr and Khawr Al-Zubair, they are the major commercial ports and constitute the natural distributing centers for overseas supplies.

Now let me tell you more about Al-Basra's canals. Al-Basra has more than one canal; the most important are Shatt Al-Arab and Shatt Al-Basra. On the Shatt Al-Arab, you can take a round trip in a boat with your family and see all kinds of ships. Also, the Shatt Al-Basra is a nice place to visit; you can see people fishing at the edge of the canal. I really encourage you to visit Al-Basra's canals.

Clearly, people love to visit Al-Basra for its unique weather and its wonderful canals. Moreover, Al-Basra is a very important part of Iraq for its natural resources and its ports. Maybe one day you can come and visit it and experience all of those things and you would also learn to love it as I do.

My Friend the Cell Phone

Pajaree Thongpravati

R/W 42

One gadget that I definitely could not live without is the cell phone. Cell phones have made my life more comfortable and easier for several reasons. Firstly, cell phones connect me to the world. Nowadays new models of cell phones, especially iPhone or Blackberry, have provided internet devices. This enables users to conveniently browse a lot of information throughout websites via cell phones. Likewise, cell phones certainly help you with handling any unpleasant situation. If your car broke down at midnight on an isolated road, it would be really hard for you to deal with this problem. Instead of waiting desperately all night long for a good Samaritan to come along and give you a hand, calling the towing service by cell phone would simply save your time and solve the problem. Apparently, cell phones have changed difficulty into ease. Moreover, the cell phone is another alternative entertaining gadget. These days special features such as games and music are embedded in cell phones. Therefore, I never feel bored because I have my cell phone as a friend. Clearly, due to the multi-purposed functions in cell phones, I indeed could not imagine living without a cell phone. But more importantly, cell phones will continue to be useful gadgets in the future - -as long as they do not run out of batteries!

The Bias of Beauty

Loai Alkhatabi

R/W 50

What is the right definition of beauty? Is it the white skin and beautiful eyes, or is it the good body and blond hair. Every one of us has a different definition of beauty. While some of us think that the beauty is related to the person's skin and body, others say it is related to the person's personality. These different concepts sometimes affect our behavior when we deal with people. From our view of beauty and attractiveness sometime we evaluate and treat people. Many studies show that attractive people have a big opportunity to be successful and lovely among the people. Nowadays many companies prefer to hire attractive people than those who are not attractive. This cause has many effects on societies and people.

The first effect is unfair treatment of people. Parents, teachers, and employers are the most important people in our lives. If these people discriminate between the attractive and unattractive, most of the people are going to live a difficult life. For example, parents have two children, and they take care of one of them more than the other. Also, some companies hire employees because they are more attractive than others. Teachers sometimes give attractive students higher grades than unattractive. All of these things are unfair treatment of people. As a result of this unfair treatment of people, parents, teachers, and employers create antagonism among children, students, and employees. This antagonism has various effects in the societies. For instance, if a parent prefers the attractive child than the one who is unattractive, the unattractive child may break his brother's game or stuff. Discrimination between two children may lead up to losing one of the children. Moreover, companies that discriminate between employees are going to face the same problem.

Due to antagonism among children, students, and employees, society will become less progressive. One important effect of antagonism is deleting the teamwork in side schools and companies. For example, if a group of students have a project together, and of the students is unattractive or one is attractive the rest of the team is not going to make the person work with them. In addition, we are going to kill the competition among people. Also, unattractive people are not going to be involved in the societies, and they won't be creative anymore.

In sum, the three main effective people parents, teachers, and employers must be fair and aware of the problem of discrimination. If they don't, we will face many problems in the future. We will see and read about one child kills his brother; one woman kills her coworker or one student kills his colleague. I think we must look at the good side of people and which skills do they have? Not looking to their faces and bodies because the good evaluation of people depends on their skills and morals.

Family

Eun Bi Ko

US Culture

Family is very important. A family impacts one's character and life. When someone is sad and depressed, a good family gives rest, comfort and unconditional support. When someone is happy, a good family shares in his or her happiness. For example, on a birthday, friends might not celebrate with me because they are so busy, but a family can celebrate with a child at any time even though they are also busy. In another instance, when one feels sad or depressed, a family will help just by being there. In addition, when a person comes home, he or she can feel comfortable and rest after finishing a trip. If someone is unlucky with his or her parents, perhaps there is another adult to reach out to who can serve as a stand in parent. We can't choose our family, but you know, a good family is so necessary and important.

My Hometown--Yeosu

Yun Jung Cho (Yunie)

R/W 41

What do you feel when you think about your hometown? I guess most of you like your hometown, I also miss my hometown everyday. I was born in Yeosu, South Korea. I moved to the Seoul, Capital to go to my university, but my parents and cousins are still living in Yeosu. Although I just visit my hometown when it's a traditional holiday - like New Years Day, Christmas, and my parents' birthdays. I like my hometown because of the beautiful beach, quiet life, and good neighborhoods. I'll introduce my hometown with recent important events of Yeosu.

Yeosu is located at the end of South Korea. It's very special meaning, right? There are some popular beaches and many small beautiful islands. So, photographers and tourists are favor of my hometown. Although it's very touristy, my hometown is very clean and well organized. There are reasons why people like to visit my hometown.

The next reason is my hometown is a quiet city. In some parts, it's similar to Gainesville. Although Korea has four seasons, Yeosu's weather is always mild and warm. Also, there's no traffic jam and no crowded streets. The people's character is, of course, gentle and kind. Yeosu is a good place to feel relaxed and live peacefully.

The last thing is about an important event. Yeosu is a harbor city and has a clean beautiful sea; therefore, Yeosu was selected as the city to exhibit the next World Sea Expo. It's very important event in Korea after the World Cup in 2002. Yeosu citizens and the people in Korea were very excited and welcomed the international event. I think my hometown will be a famous city in the world like a Sydney in Australia.

Finally, I have introduced my hometown that it's not only calm, beautiful but also has an important meaning to Korea. I love my hometown for many reasons beyond my descriptions. I want to invite all of you to go there someday.

Real Florida

Hye Ran Hwang

US Culture

Florida has natural beauty.
The air is clean.
There are so many trees and wild animals.
The beaches are pretty.
This is matched by Florida's people.
For example, bus drivers are always smiling,
and they say "Hello" "Good morning"
That is good!
I think Florida is silent and comfortable.
On the other side of the world, Korea has a large population in its limited area.
For example, they walk fast, drive fast, and honk their horns.
However, in Florida I feel, see, and experience a slower pace of life, and I feel I can breathe.

My Hometown--Seoul

Jeongyoung Do (Rick)

R/W 41

How is your hometown? All people have in their hometown something special such as a capital, a city of full of tourist attractions, or a small town in the country side. My hometown is Seoul which is the capital of Korea; I really like Seoul because there is a good traffic system, many amenities and historical places, and many educational institutions located there.

First, there is a good traffic system. The subway is the most convenient and useful transport system in Seoul because there are over ten lines, so we can go anywhere. Next, the bus system is good. Its work hours are from five a.m. to two a.m. Last, taxis are more common than buses. There are many taxis, and the fares are not too expensive. Actually, I really like the traffic system in Seoul.

Next, a lot of amenities and historical places are placed in Seoul. There are many amenities such as shopping malls and large amusement parks, so if you live in Seoul, you never feel bored and tedious. Also, there are many historical places because Seoul has been a capital for over five hundred years. So, you can see really gorgeous, colorful, and magnificent traditional palaces and castle gates that are a little destroyed, but these are still lovely and beautiful. These places are really helpful for relaxing.

Last, Seoul is an educational city. Numerous popular universities are in Seoul, so we can get good information very quickly. The quality of universities is improving because universities always compete with each other. Various private institutions are in Seoul, too. If we want to learn something, we can learn whatever we want. Finally, Seoul is a really good place for students to study.

In conclusion, Seoul is a really developed city where there is a good traffic system, nice places to visit, and beneficial educational institutions, so I love my hometown. I feel sure that

if you move to Seoul, you can improve your life and enjoy your free time.

Real Americans

Ah Leum Shin

US Culture

Before I came to the United States, I had heard a stereotype about Americans. For example, "All American people are fat and lazy." However, it's not always true. They frequently work out, and they organize so many things like food, schedules, and work. Also, I heard that they were very selfish, but American people are very kind. They always take care of their friends, family, and sometimes, they take care of strangers, too. Now, I don't accept any stereotype of Americans. I have seen with my own eyes that many Americans are very active, healthy, and likable. I will always think of the American people with fondness.

Eating Grapes

Chia-Fang Wu

R/W 50

There are three kinds of people in the world. Some people like to eat grapes. They peel every single grape and eat it. One peel, one eat. But some people peel a lot of grapes and eat them at one time. Besides, some people don't eat grapes because they think that peeling a grape is very troublesome. Maybe we can see a person's attitude in their work from the trivial things in our everyday life.

The men, eating grapes one by one, are follower and no creative. They are used to following the prescribed rules and order to deal with things in work. They don't want to know what is the next step and just handle the things until that happened. They don't want to do more work if unnecessary. In a company, they are always the most loyal employees. The numbers of this classification are the most in the world.

The men, peeling a lot of grapes and eating them in one time, was organized and efficient. They always manage things before they start. They can't do the things without thinking. They want to control the time, qualities, everything in progress. Sometimes, they think too much and don't do anything. They are always the leaders in a society or the boss in a company.

The men, thinking peeling grapes is troublesome and refuse to eat them, are negative and passive. They don't do the thing they don't like. They choose depending on their own preference. Sometimes, they don't like to be controlled by other people. Maybe they aren't good employees. But they know about their own very much. Sometimes, they are artists or Soho.

Eating grapes is a very common thing happening in our everyday life, but it truly reflects the personality and how they deal with things in their work. It comes from the action unconsciously and can't fake. If I am the boss, maybe I will put some grapes in the interview room and watch their response to judge. It must be very interesting.

Capital Punishment Should Be Abolished

Giselle Ferreira Vieira

R/W 2

Capital punishment is the most contradictory method of punishing that a judicial system could have, and it should be abolished. First, the judicial system is created to protect mainly the most important asset of human beings and of the society, which is life. For this reason, laws should be made to protect this right in all circumstances, even when this life is of a murderer. Though for some people this may seem absurd, isn't it contradictory that a system that places a great value on life gives permission to kill someone? Second, there are other ways to punish people who break the law, such as life imprisonment, which may be more painful than a quick death. Another reason would be the irreversibility of a possible mistake in the judgment. Someone who is accused of murder may be afterwards found innocent, but the "wrongfully convicted" has already been executed. As we can see, to resolve this contradiction and reach harmony in the juridical system, Capital punishment should be abolished and alternative laws need to be made instead.

The Right Choice?

Guillermo Chiaway

R/W 60

"I pretty much agree with all that you are telling about the Democratic Party, but I am totally pro-life, and I don't know what you could say to people like me who are against abortion but, at the same time, agree with many other viewpoints of the Democratic Party." It was something that could be heard in the middle of a presentation about Barak Obama campaign for the presidency of The U.S. After this comment, many justifications in favor of the legalization of abortion (advocated by the pro-choice movement) were raised among the audience. Justification such as the number of damages in clandestine abortive clinics before laws legalizing abortion were enacted, raped teenagers that are forced to have and raise their babies, and the freedom of women to choose whether or not to have their babies. Although these justifications are spread nationwide, it does not necessarily mean that they are the right answers. Some people still believe that life is a precious gift that must be protected, especially the ones that belong to defenseless unborn children who already have life even inside their mothers' womb.

The first justification that pro-choice advocates use to justify abortion is the one concerning clandestine abortion. Although some people justify abortion telling that clandestine abortion would cause severe damage in women who undergo this procedure, scientific evidences demonstrate that abortion itself causes a lot of damage in women even in lawfully circumstances. According to Brind (2005), "even stronger data have emerged in recent years that firmly link abortion to premature births in subsequent pregnancies (which in turn raise the risk of breast cancer in the mother and cerebral palsy in the

prematurely born children), and to suicide and other forms of premature death in women" (pg 109-35). Abortion can also have many sad psychological consequences in women such as anxiety, depression, and suicide (Bachiochi, 2005).

In addition to clandestine abortions, pro-choicers also argue that there are circumstances in which to have an abortion is more convenient. They cite, for example, the case of raped teenagers who are forced to bear their babies and raise them. It is totally sad that rapes still happen in a civilized world, but people cannot add more pain to those poor victims of rapists by adding another burden to their sufferings. As it was demonstrated in the previous paragraph, abortion leads to many psychological problems on people who undergo this procedure, and it would be unfair not to prevent women about the double suffering they would have to carry if they chose an abortion as an alternative.

Another justification alleged by pro-choicers is that women have the right to choose what is more convenient for their bodies. Although women have the right to select what is the best for them, babies who are inside women's womb are not part of their bodies anymore. According to White (1999) life begins at the time of conception because "this unique and 'special' cellular complex contains all of the information, in the form of a genetic blueprint, necessary to produce an entire and unique human being" (pg 7-8). Others argue that embryos cannot be considered human beings because they do not have heart. Babies are genetically other humans since conception. They are genetically different than their parents, and even though they don't have hearts totally developed at the beginning of the growing process, they have heart cells that will be functioning as a complete heart of the body in the future, if the process is not interrupted.

Abortion is a sad reality not only against the unborn defenseless children but also against women. There are many other alternative solutions at the time an unwanted pregnancy is addressed. One of these solutions is adoption. Many couples are eager to adopt babies, especially those who are unable to have babies. Adoption could not only make many couples happy but also save thousand of unborn children's life.

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Special Places in Korea

Boah Lim

R/W 42

Although there are many beautiful places in Korea, I'd like to introduce three places that I'd really like you to visit. First, you should visit Anyang city, which is my hometown. It's a very small city, but there is a big park across from my apartment. It has very beautiful trees, flowers and a lot of big fountains. It is a really good place to go for a walk and to do exercise. The second reason is that it has a festival every October. So, some singers come to the park, and they enjoy this festival with many people. There is also a show of fireworks during the festival. Anyang city also has good shopping malls and many kinds of restaurants such as Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and Italian restaurants. You can go there with your friends or your family. The second place that I'd like to recommend is Insa-dong. It's located in Seoul. It's a really unique place. There are numerous traditional items that symbolize Korea there; for example, ceramics, which were used a lot a long time ago; craft items, which are made with Korean paper; and Hanbok, which is Korean traditional clothes. Insa-dong also has many restaurants where people can eat traditional food. So, a lot of foreigners like this place. Finally, the 63-story building in Seoul is a very popular place. It's a very high building, so if you stand on the top of the building, you can get a view of the whole city. It's really beautiful, especially at night. The building also has an aquarium on the first floor where you can see many kinds of fish. I think that if you go these places, you would really like them. For these reasons, I'd like to highly recommend these special places. If you visit my country, you should go to these three places first.

Reasons for Dropping Out of School

Hakan Kebeli

R/W 42

There are some reasons why sometimes college students drop out of school. These are homesickness, educational burnout, financial pressure, health problems, and setting sights on the wrong major. Homesickness is one of the reason why students drop out of school since they cannot fit into their new life far away from home. They feel alone and stressed out. They have to do all the housework that their mothers did before; for instance, the cooking, the laundry, the dishes, and the house cleaning. They miss the comforts of home like their houses and delicious dishes prepared by their mothers. Educational burnout is the another reason why some students drop out of school. Such an intensive schedule tends to lead a lot of students away from the desire to continue, even if they bite the bullet all semester. They need to relax and prefer not to wake up early to catch the classes. The next reason is financial pressure. Tuition costs, credit costs, and accommodation costs are too much for some students. Students can't be active in their social lives because of these costs. They prefer to be at home. The last reason for school drop-outs is health problems that

naturally make the students drop out of school. This is an acceptable reason for school admission departments, but sometimes students prefer to behave like they are sick in spite of being good in order to drop out of school. Setting sights on the wrong major is the last reason for quitting an academic program. Students might want to be a civil engineer, but after taking several computer lessons, they change their minds and switch to a major in computer engineering. This is a good reason for students to not continue their enrollment in civil engineering classes until they can attend the computer engineering classes. According to the above mentioned reasons, teachers, students and parents should listen to the students rather than before and shouldn't break off contacts with the children. They can fix these problems by keeping in contact with them.

President Bush Day

Douglas Castro

R/W 40

The president of The United States, George W. Bush, has an incredibly busy day. Every single day he wakes up really early at about nine o'clock. His day starts with a humble breakfast that is like Christmas supper. It is marvelous, but he is on a diet and for this reason he only can eat one piece of bread, three grapes and one cup of orange juice. The remaining food he shares among his five white poodles. Life is hard for this poor man. After his banquet, he sits in his golf cart and takes twenty minutes to arrive in his favorite place, which is like Disney World. During the trip he enjoys the fresh sea breeze through his missing hairs. After his terrible morning he goes to his office and meets many old men and discusses politicians for a long time, almost twenty seven minutes. Around eight o'clock he is starving and tired because of his hard day. His five chefs have just made dinner; of course not too much food, a little more than his breakfast. Then he plays war with some international friends on the internet and then he goes to his bed and sleeps like an angel. During his wonderful night he dreams about peace in the world.

The Worst Day of My Life

Itzik Elyahou

R/W 60

It was Monday, May 26, the memorial weekend. I had a break from UF ELI (English Learning Institute) and my best friend had come to visit me for the weekend in Miami. It was great. We had so much fun. Now Raanan had to go back to Israel and his flight was at 2:30 pm. I dropped him at the airport and we said goodbye to each other. I was sadly navigating towards the turnpike to head back to Gainesville. "Oh my God" I said to myself, "I need to prepare a lecture for tomorrow morning." I volunteered to lead a lecture about the differences in the educational systems between Israel and U.S, which I found very hard to do since I was a foreign language student, who was in the U.S only for 3 weeks. BOOM! A sound made

me jump out of my chair. I pulled over right away to see that my rear-right tire had completely blown up and had hit my rear bumper. The tire was completely ruined. "I guess this drive is not going to be as pleasant," I thought. Unfortunately it was too true. I started jacking up my car to replace the damaged tire with the spare one. The jack was so lubricated and filthy, and after 40 minutes of jacking under the Floridian sun, I was just as disgusting. Finally, I managed to attach the temporary spare tire. As I was lowering the jack, I was terrified to see that my new tire was flat. I had two flat tires, I was on the middle of the Turnpike (more the 300 miles from Gainesville), and I needed to get back early, to prepare the lecture. Luckily I was right in front of the Turnpike's Palm Beach exit. I started driving about 10 mph (so I will not damage my rim) and right after the exit, I found a fire department. I pulled over and asked a fireman to help me inflate the spare tire with his fire truck. Since the tire was so flat, we couldn't inflate it and I had to jack the car again. After about 40 minutes and buckets of sweat, I finally had a 4-wheel car. I could use the spare tire for only 50 miles, thus I had to replace it as soon as possible. The time was 5:30 p.m. Alex, the fireman, drew me a 'map' to direct me to the only tire service center opened in town on holidays. I was so happy to arrive at the service center. "Three hours delay, it's not so bad," I thought. I went to the teller, to pre-pay for the upcoming service. "You are lucky," he said, "we are closing in 10 minutes". "Where is your damaged wheel's rim so I'll put the tire on it?" he added. "OMG!" I replied. I left it on the turnpike, about 15 miles from there. Since the tire was so devastated I left it, not thinking about the rim. "There's nothing I can do dude, without the rim, I can't help. Go get your rim from the highway and come back tomorrow" he apologized. I realized I was going to spend the night in Palm Beach and miss the next school day. I was so worn out as I went back to the highway. I parked the car near the highway's exit and started walking about 1.5 miles on the highway towards the rim I had left there. The rim was there, but now I had to carry it back to my car. Just as I put it in my trunk, a highway-patrol SUV stopped and offered help. I explained the situation and he told me that there was a service plaza 14 miles south of this point and they probably had the tire I needed. I was driving very slowly on the side of the highway and managed to get to the plaza. By 7:45 I started heading north to Gainesville. And by 12:30, I arrived home.

By the way, the lecture was canceled.

My Hometown in Korea

Yujin Lee

R/W 41

What pops into your head when you hear "your hometown" from other people? In my case, when I am asked my hometown's name by my Korean friends who live in different hometowns, most of my friends ask me about my hometown's configuration of land, the air temperature, and water.

My hometown is in a basin, so I can see mountains

everywhere. When I had a picnic in the school, I always used go to the mountains because mountains are located all around the town. I grew up in my hometown until I came to America. So I was really surprised about the fact that I could not see the horizon only the mountains.

I never ever saw the horizon in my country's territorial waters. At this moment I realized that my hometown really seems to feel choked by the mountain. The basin is not only one of the characteristics of my hometown's location, but also one of the reasons for the increase in my hometown's temperature.

About two decades ago, my hometown was an industrial city, so I would frequently hear about air pollution on the TV news. However, the basin location makes air pollution and temperature either extremely hot or cold. My hometown's temperature in summer or winter is very famous in Korea.

Actually, the temperature in the summer is the same as in Gainesville. It will be raised to about 90 Fahrenheit to 100 Fahrenheit and very humid. So your skin gets easily burned from the ultraviolet rays and sticky from the humidity. It makes it hard to breath and some times elderly people die. However, in winter the temperature drops to 10 Fahrenheit. This is the reason why other citizens don't want to visit my hometown.

The last thing is the stream that runs through the center of my hometown. The length is not long and it is not too deep, but it helps to decrease the city's temperature in the summer. Many citizens go there who have to take a rest beside the stream. Some of people run with their pets beside the stream and other people read a book.

To conclude, my hometown has a lot of characteristics. Sometimes, these things make the citizens so exhausted, but I still like my hometown. Even though, my friends do not want to visit my hometown in summer or winter, aren't you interested in visiting my hometown?

My ELI Teacher

Ahmed Al-Jumaili

R/W 50

Do all teachers teach similarly? How they can get their students' attention? It was September 31st, 2007 the first time I arrived in the United States to study at the English Language Institute at UF to improve my English. Before this time, many teachers taught me different sciences, but most of them were doing their jobs like a regular teacher does. The regular teacher asks the students to prepare the subject. During the next class, he talks about the subject and explains it so that it is easily understood. Then, he says, "any questions? ... Your homework is...." However, my teacher at the ELI is significantly different from other teachers. She showed me the best things that a teacher should have to get her or his students' attention in order to help them to achieve their goals. I am very lucky to study with this teacher, and I admire her because she is an actress, a scholar, and a respectful teacher.

While she is teaching, she always uses artistic methods to explain the information or to answer a question. In other words, she always uses body language to help the students to understand the situation. For example, she changes her voice

or facial expressions to express different speaking styles like asking permission or warning someone from doing something. Sometimes, I feel like I am sitting in a theater or watching a movie, which always gets my attention. That feeling helps me to focus, understand, and remember the information. In addition, she is active and energetic. For example, she moves back and forth between students to look at their answers while they are working or doing a test, and she uses the board for high efficiency.

In addition to using artistic techniques, she has good information related to her major, as some teachers have, but she differs from them by the methods that she uses to offer this information and explain the topic or the answers. Furthermore, she always answers questions that she knows exactly and tries to postpone the answer of a question that she does not know. So, she often says, "I will bring the answer tomorrow" when she is not sure about the answer.

As much as she is active and smart, she is respectful. She acts with the students as she has to tighten the relationship with them, and she tries to help them to achieve their goals. For example, she greets every student by his or her name and always listens carefully to his or her questions in spite of the difficulties of their language. In addition, she is available outside the class to listen to their problems and help to solve it.

All in all, my teacher, who has good information about her major, uses simple strategies or tactics to offer the information, and respects the students, is a symbol of a successful teacher. For these reasons, a teacher who tries to be a good teacher and successful in his or her job ought to have a knowledge in his or her major, which is at least enough to guide the student to achieve their goals. In addition, he or she should pay attention to his or her students' problems.

Prisoner Exchange Deal between Israel and Hezbollah

Itzik Elyahou
R/W 60

Boom! The Hezbollah terrorists launched the missile. Eight soldiers were hit. Three died, three injured and two were kidnapped. This attack initiated the Israel-Lebanon war on July 12, 2006. The dead were buried, the wounded were healed. However, Eldad Regev and Ehud Goldwasser, two captives being held by Hezbollah till this day are still in the hearts of both the Israeli street and parliament. Although the captives are believed to be dead, the price tag Hezbollah demands in order to release the soldiers is that Israel releases 200 shahids' (Arab martyrs) bodies and 5 living terrorists imprisoned in Israel for terror crimes against Israelis. This demand draws many objectors and supporters. Some believe Israel should do whatever it takes to release the kidnapped soldiers, whereas others don't agree to surrender to Hezbollah's ridiculously high demand.

Those in favor of the agreement agree that everything should be done to return "the sons" to their families. First, there are various versions of what happened to the soldiers. The families of the captives pray to God that the intelligence

assessment that the soldiers are dead will be proven wrong. Second, many people, such as Ehud Barak, Israel's minister of defense, believe that neglecting the captives might demoralize young Israelis to join the army, since they will notice that not enough effort will be made to rescue them, in the case that something like that happens. Third, even though it's almost certain that the soldiers are dead, there is a deep reverence for the dead, both in Israeli culture and Judaism. The last argument used by those who support the exchange deal is that the soldiers were on a mission given to them by the Israeli army, and thus by the Israeli government. Therefore, they say, the government should have the full responsibility and liability to do everything possible to save the soldiers or at least to retrieve the bodies.

However, there is another side to the coin. The deal raises many objections among Israeli citizens and army generals. Hezbollah, a Lebanese terrorist unit, has radically different point of views from the Lebanese government. Hezbollah does everything it can to gain more acceptance and support from the Lebanese citizens in order to take over the government. Right after the Israeli parliament voted to agree to the prisoner exchange deal terms, many Lebanese citizens expressed their support to Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah, Hezbollah's secretary general. A mass support of this organization might be hazardous not only to the future of Lebanon but also to the future of the Middle East. Another reason to disagree with the terms is the fear that it will encourage more soldier-kidnappings as Israel's enemies will witness the high price it is willing to pay for the bodies, let alone living-captives and will interpret it as a weakness. Israel is subjected to a wave of soldier-kidnappings once every few years (6 kidnappings in the past 8 years) and every agreement signed to exchange prisoners accelerates the next kidnap. Moreover, the objectors claim that Gilad Shalit, another Israeli soldier captured by Hammas terror unit, will be executed since they might feel that a living-captive is just as worthy as a dead one. In almost all captive exchange deals in the past, Israel received bodies and not living captives -- the terrorists started realizing that dead bodies are very important to Israel. That is why they aren't as worried about killing the captives once they kidnap them. The last argument which has arisen is that the release of 5 terrorist can be deadly and empower Hezbollah. In a recent exchange agreement, Israel had released terrorists who were later found to have returned to their terror units and plans of attacking Israel.

In conclusion, there are many reasons to agree or disagree with soldier exchange agreement as it is offered by Hezbollah. On one hand I really feel for the families who lost their treasures and want to bury their sons in Israeli soil. However, the price demanded is way too high. Agreeing to an unfair agreement like this might lead to more attacks and kidnaps and defect the security of Israeli citizens and soldiers. Moreover, it will empower Hezbollah in Lebanon which could be lethal to the fragile situation in the Middle East. Ironically, Goldwasser's wife explains my point of view. "I've been fighting for two years" she says, "and I feel that in the end, even if I won, what has it all been for? So I can shout 'hooray', I am a widow."

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The Karaoke Booth

Boah Lim

R/W 42

I am a queen in the Karaoke booth. I love singing and dancing. So, when I have a party with my friends, I usually dance and sing at home. In this case, if my neighbors grumble about the racket, I have to try to keep quiet. However, when I go to the Karaoke booth, I feel free. It is a really good place to enjoy my time and get rid of my stress. I have a favorite Karaoke booth. Whenever I meet my friends, or I have a party with my family, I usually go to this Karaoke booth. It is called UFO Karaoke booth.

As soon as I go through the entrance of the Karaoke booth, I can see a big front desk in the right corner of the entrance and a dark atmosphere, like a club. There is a worker who is very handsome, and he always smiles at me whenever I go up to the front desk. In the left corner of the entrance, there is a foyer where people can wait for their room if all of the rooms are full. When I go there, the foyer is always filled with a lot of people because UFO is much cheaper than any other Karaoke booth. In addition, the boss is really kind. So, when I went there, I paid only 10 dollars for an hour. However, he gave me four more hours for 10 dollars. Therefore, I could sing for 5 hours there. In fact, all of the rooms are fancy and clean, and most of people like to sing Karaoke there.

If I walk down the hallway from the foyer and peek inside each of the rooms, I can see that there are three kinds of rooms there. One is very huge, and a lot of people can enjoy this room together. The room is for a big group who wants to have a party there. Everything in the room is very enormous; for instance, the monitor, the divan, and the desk. Another room is medium-sized. So, I can sing in the room with 4-5 people. People who visit UFO usually go to this room. It is the most suitable to sing because it's not too big and not too small. And, there is also a very small room there. It is possible for only one or two people to enter this room because it's very small. Even if I can feel stuck in this room, I think it's the best room for only two people, especially for couples.

As I walk through the foyer and in and out of the different-sized Karaoke booths, I can see a diversity of people with varying agendas. People usually go there after they had dinner or some alcohol with their co-workers. So, I can see some drunken people having a good time. On the other hand, in my case, I go there to have parties with my friends. I had a party in the big room with my schoolmates. It was my birthday at that time. We were really excited. We danced severely and sang very loudly together. Sometimes, I can see some people who enjoy their time with a few friends in a medium-sized room. When I was a high school student, I used to go there in my uniform very often with my friends as soon as my class ended. It became a very precious memory to me. There are some sweet couples singing together in the small room. I have been there before with my friend, sister and boyfriend. When I went there with my sister, I sang and danced with her in the small room. I didn't let the microphone down until I left there because there were only two microphones in every room, and there were only two people include me at that time. I could sing without taking a break. Thus, I had a lot of fun there.

Everybody can go to the Karaoke booth for fun. There are a lot of Karaoke booths in my country. Therefore, I had many chances to visit them. I think the Karaoke booth is the best place for people to have fun. Even though I'm not very happy, I can be pleased in the Karaoke booth. Also, no one cares about how I act or behave. That's the reason why I can enjoy this place anytime, and this is my favorite place.

A Multi-Function Sister

Annelena Porto Delgado

R/W 50

A long time ago someone said to me that, "*Siblings you cannot choose, but friends are siblings who you really choose.*" In my case I did not have to choose because my friend was born in my nice house. She is my sister, and she is my best friend. It was not like this, of course, when we were children we used to fight a lot. For example, if she had a toy in her hand, I will prefer to play exactly with this toy, instead of thousands of billions different toys which were available. But we grew up. We became mature people; although we had sometimes fights. However, my sister represents to me my best friend, sometimes my boss, and my psychologist.

Since we were children, we were great friends, who usually did all things together and talked during many hours without feeling the time running. Each phase we had a friendship, and we always knew we could trust each other. For instance, nowadays I'm far from home almost one year living in a different country, and everything happens to me I tell her. She gives me lots of advice, which clarifies, is accurate, and contributes in many ways in my life. When I was undecided to stay here for one more semester, she was sincere with me. "I think you should stay more time, yet I will miss you," she said to me few months ago. If I have any problem and I call her, she has a word, which is perfect, strong, and mature, to give me in that time. I say that she is my younger sister, but she seems like my older sister sometimes. Even though she always advises me,

we exchange many experiences. I give many suggestions, which are direct, creative, and funny, to her life. In a friendship people exchange experience and advice more than give order or directions. Our friendship is made by understanding, comprehension, and love.

However, my younger-older sister gives me lots of directions and orders. In my house we used to say that she is the manager because my mother and I always receive some angry speech about something wrong we did or because the house is disorganized. For example, if the refrigerator is broken, she gives all directions to call a technician. How. Where. When. And how much. When I left my home country to come to the United States, she organized my farewell party. And it was wonderful. Everything was perfect, and all my friends were in the party, which proves she loves me and she knows me very well. Sometimes her big boss personality makes us nervous, but sometimes it is very useful to ourselves.

I have been in therapy with a psychologist for two years, but I used to say that my sister was my home psychologist. She graduated in psychology, but she works in Humans Resources. Although she never had worked in a psychologist clinic, she always had good feeling to give wonderful advice. For example, when I left my analyst room really confuse and with lots of things in my head. I used to talk to her, and tell her everything made me nervous or stressed out. Whereas she knows me very well, she used to have the correct word in the correct situation. Such as: "Leave your job, and go ahead. The life is more than a position in a multinational company. You can do many more. Run the risk. If you have any problem we are here to support you." When I was lost without any idea about my career, she gave the best suggestions and encouraged me to go follow my dreams of change my career, and look for something, which will make me happy. She has always a professional advice to me, although we have relative relationship.

To conclude, my sister and I always share wonderful things and experiences. She always represented outstanding example to me, and she always gave me all the best. As a friend we exchange many life experiences, as a boss she always put me more mature, and as a psychologist she gave me the best and professional advices. I sincerely love her. I cannot live without her in my life, and I miss her so much. As we say in Portuguese that relatives we do not chose, but friends yes. In my case I had a sister, and I received a wonderful gift for all my life: my best sister friend. In sum, life is better, if you have a multifunctional sister in your life. My multi sister is called Mariana, and this work is totally dedicated to her. With love.

Nightmares and Dreams

Itzik Elyahou

R/W 60

Nightmares are a worldwide phenomenon, which is experienced by all cultures and ages. It doesn't matter if you are a 6-year-old American child or a 61-year-old Hindu, you can not avoid nightmares. Many studies have been conducted on nightmares throughout the years despite the difficulties arising.

Though nightmares are a universal human experience, researching this nighttime phenomenon presents specific challenges to researchers, including arriving at the definition of a nightmare, specifying when we begin to have nightmares and finding the cause of nightmares. Let us discuss these difficulties.

Even though many studies have been carried out on nightmares, there hasn't been complete agreement on the most basic issue, which is the definition of nightmares. While most studies agree that a nightmare is a bad dream that one wakes up from, others believe that a nightmare is a very disturbing dream that awakens the sleeper (Dunna and Barret, 1988; Zadra and Donderi, 1993). These disturbing dreams usually contain emotions of fear, anger and grief. The latter group chose this definition because it found that "approximately 45% of bad dreams are found to have emotional intensities equal to or exceeding those of the average nightmare" (Zadra and Dondrei).

Researchers are having a hard time studying the dreaming habits of newborns and thus difficulty, determining the age they start experience nightmares. The most common obstacles these researchers face are: the low oral expressions, low writing abilities and the lack of cognitive abilities and maturity the infants have. They say that it is possible that the babies spend much of their first months dreaming, and they might be suffering from nightmares as well, although "the answers to these questions are speculative – influenced by theory rather than research or clinical experience" (Siegel, Alan B., 2005) . As for 'grown-up' children, some studies (Lenore Terr, 1990, David Foulkes 1979) conclude that they do have nightmares at the age of 3 and older; others believe that young children begin to experience nightmares at the age of 5, right before school starts (Natalie Angier, 2007).

The last controversy these researchers have is the cause of that nighttime phenomenon. The causes of nightmares are not known for certain. Some might be triggered by psychiatric disorders or psychological traumas, though many times it occurs due to anxiety and stress (which is common to most of the society). Alan and Siegel (2005) explain that the reason young children suffer from nightmares might be anything from extreme hunger, separation from their mothers or the helplessness that they experience. As for adults, Dr. Bulkeley believes that cultural issues and conventions also contribute to nightmares. To support his point, he gives an example of a nightmare commonly experienced by Arab women in which they dream of falling through the air. He explains "There's such a premium in these countries on women remaining chaste, and the dangers of becoming a 'fallen woman' are so intense that the naturally high baseline of falling dreams is amped up even more."

Nightmares are a global experience shared by humans all over the world, men and women, children and elderly. Researchers have been studying nightmares for many years. However, they haven't yet arrived at a decisive conclusion regarding the core issues, such as the definition of nightmares, the age children start experiencing nightmares and the reason behind nightmares. Hopefully, in the near future, these experts will overcome those challenges and shed light on this mysterious phenomenon.

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Just to Remind You!

Ahmed Al-Jumaili
R/W 50

Are you single or married? It may be beneficial to you to be married and to live with your family, especially when you travel to study outside of your country for a long time. Your food is prepared, your clothes are washed and ironed, and your apartment is cleaned and arranged. Furthermore, your family encourages you to keep studying by giving advice or preparing a comfortable environment for you to study. They act as a pain reliever, especially when you are stressed and help you to pass difficult situations that happen to you during your study. Thus, you will avoid being homesick and you will have an enjoyable life with your family. Even though all these aspects seem very good, there is another side to this situation. Living with your family while you are studying a foreign language could possibly affect your learning negatively. You challenge yourself to get new information about your second language everyday, but it is difficult to keep it in your mind because you are forced to speak your native language at your apartment. In addition, you are required to give part of your time to teach and help your family to adapt to a new life. For example, you help your child with his or her math homework or go shopping with your family. So, I am not asking you to be single or married while you are studying a foreign language, but I just want to remind you that you will pay a part of your learning time to your family as a gift for having a pleasurable life with them. In other words, you are required to exchange a part of your studying time for a beautiful life with your family.

Visit to Orlando

Hakan Kebeli
R/W 42

I want my friend to see Orlando if he comes to visit me in the USA for the first time. There are a lot of reasons to visit

Orlando from my point of view. The first reason is that there are several opportunities for shopping, especially outside of downtown Orlando. I recommend visiting the international outlets, which include most of the popular trademarks such as Calvin Klein, Tommy Hilfiger, Nautica, and Timberland. My friend could find the cheapest clothes of those brands there. The second reason is that there are numerous touristy parks that would make my friend feel like he is in a dream; for example, the Islands of Adventure, Universal Studios, Walt Disney, Animal Kingdom and Sea World. My friend can ride roller coasters, be immersed in adventure, and be dazzled by the animals. The final reason is that Orlando is close to Ocala, which is the city I reside in, so my friend won't be tired or pay a lot of money for accommodation while visiting. It takes approximately 1 hour by car from Ocala to Orlando. Therefore, my friend and I will be able to visit those parks day by day, and we will not pay money for hotels because we will be able to return back to Gainesville when we feel tired. In conclusion, the above mentioned reasons are the reasons why I want my friend to see Orlando.

On Duty, and to Date?

Wan-Tzu Cheng
R/W 4

A survey from the American Management Association on office policies and personal attitudes about workplace dating reported that "[of those 116 people, 44 percent said their dating led to marriage]; another 23 percent said their dating led to a long-term relationship that either continues or has since ended; and 33 percent reported that office dating led to short-term relationships" (Workplace Dating ¶2). Another survey from Career Media in Taiwan reported that most of the technology companies discourage workplace dating, but encourage employees to date with those at different departments or enterprises. In general, the disadvantages of workplace dating outweigh the advantages.

Despite the fact that workplace dating creates a harmonious relationship, it is also accompanied by potential problems such as reducing working productivity, sexual issues and leaving grey areas between being in public and in private.

To begin, workplace dating can strengthen working relationship; otherwise, it should be avoided. Building up a relationship gives employees trust and confidence at work. The relationship, however; can be formed by friendship as well. Moreover, the line between acting in public and in private is hard to define, and often it is judged by others. Which is the best way to behave? What may others view? Do we still know right and wrong when in this dilemma? With two possible difficulties, one is the unexpected relationship development is discouraging and frustrating. Suppose a break-up boy and girl friend or a divorced couple has to work under the same roof, how will that be? Issues of sexual harassment and sexual discrimination may be raised when both sexes encounter. The other is the judgment of right and wrong. Thus, rights of working are established by the National Work Rights Institute, but the policy of dating is set up by employers. Last, when on

duty, the first priority is to get the task done. If people are occupied with affections toward their colleagues, they are unlikely to concentrate on their work. Under supervision, people tend to work harder to strive for praise and promotion.

Workplace dating, or office romance, provides employees with a sense of belonging and freedom of socialization, which is a trend. To start, having a relationship is a human right. Individuals should have their own will to get along with others, even on the condition of work. If befriending other people does not assure the productivity, then the boss can take control of setting the policy of dating. For employers, to be open for dating at workplaces does not mean for employees to indulge, but to be flexible. Nevertheless, a relaxed working relationship is another advantage. Males and females can have chances to develop relationships, either friendships or peer-ships. Because the structure of society is composed of units of family, both genders should have the right and freedom to be with the other. Or can we accept human production and become “one egg, one embryo, one adult-normality” (Huxley). If the enforced dating policy is against nature, it may result in modern diseases such as depression or insomnia. In fact, one of the workforce trends is more and more office romances. Today, as more women join in the workforce, men and women tend to meet at work. Longer working hours, strategy of collaboration and most singles in the workforce, Rosenbloom writes in Boss's Memo: Go Ahead, Date (With My Blessing), are the evolution of the workplace romance (Boss's Memo ¶4). Thus, we need not swim against the tide.

Briefly, the disadvantages beat the advantages. Relationship, work and workplace are three reasons for workplace dating policy. First of all, why do people have to be in intimate relationship so that they can build up trust and confidence? To be connected is good, yet employees should take initiative to be friends with their co-workers, instead of passively going on a date as an entertainment. They should focus on developing a good relationship, which aims to make progress for the group. Nevertheless, our value determines our workplace. In rural areas, they do not have strict regulations on workplace dating, but in urban areas, they do. According to National Work Rights Institute, in the state of Colorado and New York, they have special policies on marriage and coverage of dating and cohabitation (Lifestyle Discrimination?). If you are not interested in those works at those places, you can choose not to work there. Finally, we should be concerned primarily with salary and benefits, and policies are often the secondary, when going job hunting. This implies that dating is not our focus at work, the job is. Men are unlikely to look for a job on condition that it allows workplace dating! In less competitive industry, they do not have strict principles on workplace dating, yet in more competitive industry, they do. Take fashion magazines for example, *The Devil Wears Prada* portrays employers and employees, who have to be on the edge all the time, must give up dating outside the workplace as self-sacrifice (*The Devil* ¶2).

The relationships among employees depend on work and workplace. Long-term relationships or marriages may be the appeals, but potential problems such as reducing working productivity, sexual issues do occur. On the contrary, for the

competitive jobs, employees have to choose between enterprise and commitment. There is no substitute for hard work, after all.

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Workplace Dating

Rani Bakhsh

R/W 4

What if your manager married or started dating one of your coworkers? Will you still joke with him/her? Will you still feel comfortable to talk to him/her about something you don't like about your job? These and many other questions might come up when it comes to marriage or dating between coworkers. It might be more problematic when a difference in positions appears between the couple. Whatever they do will be explained wrongly by others in the workplace. Workplace dating affects the work process negatively in many ways that might cause the following: waste the company's resources, relationship interference, and can result to a bad work environment.

Dating or marrying a coworker is a result of non-work related activities during the work time. When employees are supposed to be engaged in the work related activities, they start wasting the time talking and discussing other things that lead to relationships outside the work limits. Time is very important for everybody, especially in the business environment. Businessmen say time is money, so when employees waste the company's time; that means they waste one of its most important resources. The dating couple may also misuse the other resources of the company such as computers and phones.

It would be very difficult to define the relations between employees when they are dating or married. If they are not on the same level of positions, it might be more difficult and complicated. A manager who dates a subordinate employee would have difficulties when the lower employee deserves a promotion or salary increment. The manager might face

problems from the other employees if they think the subordinate employee doesn't deserve the promotion or the salary increment. On the other hand, when the subordinate partner needs something from his/her manager partner, it might be misunderstood by others in addition to the manager partner. The whole situation will be uncomfortable.

It's very normal that the marriage between partners doesn't succeed. Coworkers are not an exception. When it doesn't work between partners, they normally don't want to see each other anymore and they might avoid seeing each other if they know that they will meet somewhere. Unlike that, coworkers can't avoid seeing each other; moreover they sometimes are forced to work with each other and spend more time together. We can imagine how difficult that would be. This would cause a horrible working environment, and that could dangerously reduce the productivity.

As we see, dating a coworker is not the right choice. On the other hand, employees spend more time at work than at their social lives. They don't have time to have social life outside their workplaces. There might be some reasons for employees to date at work, but they have to isolate their social life from work career. They can meet during the lunch time break and after the working hours and try to take their vacations at the same time of the year. By doing that, they can do their job sufficiently and have a normal and social life.

Workplace Dating

Di Xie

R/W 4

If you want to enter the heaven of love, date a co-worker; if you want to work in a place like hell, date a co-worker. Actually, there are few other work environment issues as controversial as workplace dating that is always the center of slanders in the companies. People who prefer to know their dates thoroughly before establishing a relationship or spend more time with each other definitely cherish the opportunities of workplace dating. Nevertheless, employers or employees who fear sexual harassment usually try their best to hinder workplace dating, because they don't like not only the bothers caused by this kind of special relationship but also possible distracted attention from their work.

A survey conducted by *www.vault.com* in 2006 shows that 58% of the surveyed admit that they have been involved in a workplace dating (Nemko 1). Obviously, there must be some advantages with workplace dating, which is to some extent popular according to the result of the survey. The most important reason for workplace dating is possibly that the workplace provides a far better chance to know the date who usually acts in a way making him/her more attractive. When a man and a woman spend eight or even more hours together everyday, it becomes almost impossible for both of them to hide something or disguise themselves. They can see the real quality of each other relatively easily, which helps them to determine whether the one they want to date is the right one. Meanwhile, the fast pace of modern society makes it hard for lovers to find enough time and the right place to get together. However,

people who have workplace dating don't need to worry about this, since they can spend a whole workday in the same place, even the same room, and take care of each other. Furthermore, work could be stressful because people often have to worry about the deadline of certain tasks or the security of their jobs especially when it's in recession right now. While you are dating your workmate, he/she will certainly be the person who would like to help you most when you are struggling with stress. We don't know whether Bill Gates dated Melinda French, who was a Microsoft employee, in order to relieve stress or for any other reasons mentioned above, but one thing that we're sure about is that Bill Gates found his Miss Right through this office romance (Vikesland 1).

However, in some people's eyes the workplace dating is nothing but a time bomb that may explode in the workplace anytime. The most dangerous flash point will be the sexual harassment issue, which is becoming more and more sensitive in the workplace. "Sexual harassment is harassment or unwelcome attention of a sexual nature. It includes a range of behavior from mild transgressions and annoyances to serious abuses, which can even involve forced sexual activity" (Sexual Harassment 1). When you ask your workmate out, you are taking the risk of being accused of sexual harassment. The employers are extremely sensitive to this issue for they have the capability to ask their subordinators for sexual favor and return in the form of promotion or salary increase. At the same time, another problem with workplace dating is the distracted attention from work. It's true that workplace dating could help people deal with pressure at work, but it also makes it difficult to focus on the work when your sweetheart is around you. In addition, it's not unusual that people spend some time at work on figuring out where to go for a dinner tonight or what kind of perfume I should wear to please him. On the other hand, when the workplace dating fails, it brings some unexpected awkwardness too. Even if you break up with your date, you still have to work with him/her face-to-face everyday, which may be the most awkward situation in the world. If so, you can either choose to quit the job that you still want to stay at or get back together with the one you don't love any more. That is really a dilemma likely caused by workplace dating.

In spite of all the advantages mentioned above, I still want to keep away from workplace dating. It's good to know your date thoroughly before building a relationship and spend more time with your lover; nevertheless, the disadvantages with workplace dating outweigh the benefits from it in fact. While the lovers help relieve the stress from work, they bring more pressure than that they alleviate. Moreover, the closer the lovers get the more possibly they will find flaws from the other, which may hurt the relationship sometimes because people always need some personal space. Finally, yet importantly, keep in mind that "Don't put all your eggs in one basket." When married couples work at the same company, if the company has to lay off employees or ends up in bankruptcy, the family will absolutely suffer a very dangerous and difficult time.

To sum up, some people like workplace dating because they focus on the advantages such as knowing the date better and more time together; other people are against it due to the potential troubles resulting from workplace dating, for example,

the sexual harassment problem, distraction at work and so on. In my opinion, I don't think it is good idea to be involved in an office romance. If inevitable, I will prefer to keep the relationship secret and avoid letting the relationship interrupt the work.

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Workplace Privacy

Wei-Hsuan Yang (Ashley)

R/W 4

In modern society, privacy has become the popular issue. More and more people start to think about how to protect their rights. However, our internet technology has become one of the factors which violate our privacy. For example, in the workplace, the employer could set up the equipment to monitor his employees. Therefore, we would ask is that appropriate to monitor employers during the work time.

In my opinion, I partly agree with that because there're advantages and disadvantages of that. For example, it's bad for the employer to monitor his employees' keyboard keystroke. Sometimes, the employees need to transfer money to someone; it would leak out their PIN number and account number during the process. On the other hand, it could also prevent employees from chatting with their friends by Messenger. Because most of employees are afraid of that their boss do this kind of things, they will reduce the time of chatting with someone. These things would waste work time and reduce productivity.

As a matter of fact, I can totally understand why so many companies do this kind of things. The word "Business Spy", which we always hear on the TV news. "Threats to the security of business information are numerous and they come from all directions, including organized crime syndicates, terrorists and government-sponsored espionage, and most global-technology companies have little idea of the array of hostile forces targeted against them," a former U.S director of intelligence said (Johnston, 1). Undoubtedly, they want to set up the equipment to monitor their workers. Monitoring not only can see whether the employees are working or not, but also can prevent they from revealing the secret information. Even though this is illegal, more and more companies are willing to do that.

I used to be a magazine journalist; I know privacy is so important. Nevertheless, it's so difficult to implement it for a journalist. During the work time, other journalists and I would

get together in the meeting room, and chat with each person, but our editor would stand out of the door to hear what we were talking about. It really made us uncomfortable and angry. Ironically, we all know we shouldn't chat during the work time, but still thought our editor as a bad person who violates our privacy.

To conclude, one day, you and me will be a manager or boss; we'll find out it's bad that your employees don't do anything--just waste the time. Therefore, I think that monitoring is ok, but companies should set up the rules for it. In addition, they should inform the employees who are being monitored. Besides that, some of things, such as drug testing and internet monitoring are acceptable, but keyboard keystroke monitoring is not a good thing which really violates people's privacy.

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Workplace Dating

Andressa DeOliveira

R/W 4

Mary is an Assistant Manager at a toy company in New York. Joshua is a Supervisor at the same company. They've been working together for 4 years, and in the last year, they decided to start dating. Since they didn't know how that would work out, they thought that would be better to keep things down for a while. However, the secret came out faster than they had expected, and suddenly everybody knew about it. Have you ever thought about a fellow co-worker as a possible lover?

We all know that in a capitalist world, where the more you have, the more you want, working becomes incredibly necessary, and workers are spending more time than ever at the work place. By working alongside someone for so long, in normal day life, you will probably get to know this person better than you would in other circumstances; besides that, it's normal to feel interested about a person when you both are doing things towards the same goal. According to Jayson, "54% of single men and 40% of women said they would be open to dating a co-worker." (¶3) In addition to that, if two people spend that much time together at work, and are still able to enjoy some more quality time doing others things with each other, that may be a sign that they found their soul mates. It's common sense that excessive time together can ruin a relationship. Therefore, if the romance does not fail after that, I guess it can survive through almost anything.

One of the biggest and more commented on problems on workplace dating is the possibility of jealousy between the colleagues. The other employees may become concerned about favoritism leading to an unusual promotion or raise in the salary. It can create an unexpected uncomfortable situation at the workplace, sometimes reflecting in the relationship. Another point not less important is that even though some workplace

romances lead to a “happily ever after” ending, it does not always happen like that. Breaking up a relationship is most of the time hard, and it can be even worse when you have to work with this person in a cubicle. Awkward situations between an ex-couple and colleagues probably would be part of the equation, and once again the workplace would become a tense place, and productivity could decrease.

I have been dating a colleague for nearly a year now and things could not be going better. Nevertheless, both of us had to learn how to deal with some things that we probably wouldn't have paid any attention to if we hadn't decided to become a couple. Our relationship is divided in two distinct parts and so far we have never mixed them up. At work we are normal employees working for a common goal. We kept our romance private as much as we could and even though nowadays everybody knows about it, we keep the rule of “no romance on company time.” I am sure that things have been working fine because both of us are willing to improve together and take something out of all this. Since we started we knew how hard this kind of involvement could be, but we gave it a try. I believe a relationship at work can work out as any other, as long as the ones involved know how to deal with it.

Workplace dating is a lot less taboo nowadays than it was in the past. But as Judith Sills said, “Freud himself identified the two great arenas of human enterprise as Love and Work.” (¶1) Putting them together may be a dangerous idea. I believe that before starting an office romance, the workers should mull it over so that they can try to predict the future consequences of their possible involvement. The lack of planning of Mary and Joshua might have led them to an unexpected break up. Continuing to ruminate about it may feel different. It may even lose the “magic” of an unpredicted romance. However, it's safer and it won't cost your job. Thus, if you get in an office romance, it better be love.

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Workplace Dating

Vinicius S. Alves

R/W 4

How deep does a relationship between co-workers affect the productivity of a company? If you have a crush on the next cubicle's worker, should you ask that person out? Relationships between employees of the same company have become normal nowadays, but a lot of issues are involved such as jealousy, productivity, subordination etc.

One of the issues involving a relationship between co-workers is when your partner is also your subordinate. Any behavior can be suspicious, even if it's just a simple conversation, let alone a promotion or a dismissal. Wouldn't you be suspicious if your co-worker received a promotion given by his/her spouse? That makes people think that the promotion just happened because of the relation between boss and subordinate. In the matter of dismissal the problem shows up when the boss has to decide whether he/she fires the employee or not. Probably when you see a worker with low productivity but closely related to the boss you wonder why that person does not get fired, don't you? Furthermore, these events can also lead to litigation; the company can get sued for that.

On the other hand, different sectors of a company could be united because of a marriage between chairpersons; as a result, the productivity of the company could increase hugely. In case they work at a same level of responsibility they could think together for the growth of the company. As a good example of that we have Betty and David Hamburg, they are married and are co-directors of the social medicine and public policy program and have won an award last year.

Every employer likes to have an employee that thinks about work all day long, even when not in the work place this is almost always possible when you have married co-workers; these latter probably discuss work issues in their houses or during their entertainment moments, and that would probably increase the productivity of the company.

Personally I think that the companies should have rules for relationships between co-workers, but shouldn't forbid it, just create some policies; for instance, any argument not related to work between employees results in a warning, and two warnings results in dismissal. Bosses should always be aware of relationships between employees to avoid any unexpected situation and workers should know that having a relationship with a co-worker is fine as long as they don't show any public display of affection.

It is the company's job to prevent problems, and this is a kind of situation that can destroy a company if not taken care of. After eliciting all the advantages and disadvantages we get to the conclusion that the education of the workers is as important as their behavior since one depends on the other. As a support to the conclusion we have the fact that English teachers in Brazil can date each other provided that they know how to separate the co-worker relationship from their private relationship.

Dating Your Co-worker: Is It a Good Idea?

Manuel A. Morales M.

R/W 4

The idea of dating your co-worker could sound inappropriate, or at least not recommended, even in modern times. However, the number of people dating their co-workers is increasing steeply: from a survey developed in 2006, 58% of respondents accepted to have been in an office romance, against 52% from just two years before that (Vault.com, cited by Marty

Nemko). The modern, time-limited employees require more work hours and consequently, the people of the workplace had become an important element of our social circle. In this environment, getting involved, sometimes romantically, seems to be at least a possibility. At the same time, the concept of sexual harassment had become a usual topic in the offices and business daily life, and workers as well as employers are worried about how to handle this situation, on one hand, and/or been accused of, in the other.

The good news is the things don't need to be as hard as they seem, if the employers recognize the problem and develop rules to guide the employee's behavior inside the office. In terms of being respectful with your company dating policy, the experts recommend you need to ask if they have any, in the first place. The next step is to be extra-careful with personal relations at work that we normally are in other situations. To develop an office relationship, before a romantic relationship it's highly recommended, to meet as well as possible the other person, and decide if taking the risk of starting to date is a good idea. The couples getting involved in a work environment must realize that they are starting a dual relationship, "that means that you have two different types of relationships (business and romantic) with the same person," says Gary Vikesland, editorialist at Employer-employee.com. In this kind of situation it's necessary to maintain an open communication and get the personal relationship outside of the office. The treatment given to the couple must be the same for the other co-workers, and the work decisions must be taken regardless of the personal feelings, especially when one of them is a superior and has to make decisions related with the professional development of the other at the company. Vikesland considers this last kind of relationship especially hard, because the conflict of interest developed is often difficult to handle, and even if the couple involved succeed with this goal, the other co-workers might say the boss has preferences for his or her sentimental partner, and that could create a hostile environment at work. Finally, the relationship must remain as private as possible, but once the situation is revealed, it's recommended to discuss about this with the boss and the other co-workers. For all the cases, how you manage your personal relationships at work will depend on your position and business relationship with your partner, and the particular characteristics of the employ policy of your agency.

However, dating between co-workers can result in undesirable endings, if the couple breaks up, and the previous hints had not been followed. First of all, the people getting involved must consider that if it doesn't work, they still will be working in the same place and forced to see each other everyday. That's the reason why Nemko recommends think twice before getting involved in a romantic relationship with the boss, and 10 times before getting involved with a subordinate. Whole careers can get ruined by a wrong decision or a bad relationship at work, and transcendental decisions like searching for a new job must be forced to be taken because of a scandal at the office. Furthermore, the existing laws against sexual harassment are very strict, and it's very easy to become involved in a legal litigation by almost everything, if the other person is not interested in starting a personal relationship at

work. This concept still applies for the broken relationships in which one of them had lost interest before the other, and is feeling harassed at work by his or her ex-sentimental mate, with whom he or she is forced to maintain professional relationships.

Working with someone related to you in a sentimental way doesn't have to be difficult if the relationship at the office is maintained professional for both, and the productivity is not compromised. Nevertheless, serious, long-lasting relationships are more likely to succeed and to not have negative effects at work, than others more informal or the product of a temporal attraction. For all the cases it's necessary to consider carefully all the pros and cons of getting involved with someone from your agency. Certainly, each case is different, and will depend on the office's policy in this matter, the kind of co-workers relationship existing between the interested parts and the particular situations related with the workplace's environment.

When two people become involved in a relationship born at work, it could be a blessing to spend the most of your time with the one you love. Since this particular situation had been communicated and openly discussed with the other co-workers involved and with the bosses, and as long as the couple manages to maintain their professional performance at maximum, their personal life must be respected, and they must receive the same treatment of the other employees. The workplace matching phenomenon is a social fact in these days and it can't be ignored.

Although this is a controversial topic, the employers must develop objective rules about it in order to diminish the stress aroused by the possibility of being involved in a sexual harassment conflict with a co-worker, instead of trying to control or forbid the developing of personal, romantic relationships between their employees. The legal frame must be considered, however, in the first place, and it will change from one state or country to another. In a new millennium world, in which more and more young people are joining the offices and with a higher amount of women getting to work, the workplace dating will keep rising and will become a main theme to be addressed by anyone who requires hiring staff. A healthy environment in the workplace is indispensable for the success of the business and for the peace of each worker inside and outside the office as well. Regarding this, the people involved in personal relationships with other co-workers must be specially careful and respectful with the others, to ensure the maintenance of this environment without affecting his or her personal happiness.

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Workplace Dating

Werachart Ratanatharathorn

R/W 4

Have you ever dated one of your co-workers? In today's world, people work longer hours with more co-workers who sit beside them or function in different departments. Therefore, co-workers have become as important as our family members who we spend only a few waking hours right after getting up and before going to bed. In addition, many companies do not have policies that prohibit co-workers to date others as long as they can maintain their efficiency. In a 2005 survey, 58 percent of employees said they have had an office romance, up from 46 percent in 2003 (Workplace Dating ¶10). According to the survey, dating co-workers is more prevalent than in the past. The following paragraphs will show you the benefits and drawbacks of dating in the workplaces.

Dating at work sometimes increases the whole efficiency of a project. Some people who date at workplace always go dating either after work on a project together or working late. The human is a social animal. People are influenced by surrounding circumstances, especially by their neighbors not only at home but also at workplace. People eat more while eating with their friends or family than they eat alone. People jog faster when run with friends or even a dog. Therefore, people who have office romances have a tendency to do a better job. "It allows me to know a different side of the company," Leslie, who works at Cerner in Kansas City, said (Workplace Dating ¶16). She met her husband who works in the same company. They were friends before being married. She said working with her husband doesn't reduce her ability to work; on the contrary, she enjoys discussing work at home.

Conversely, dating in a workplace is sometimes the cause of tragedy. When you date your co-worker, the first important thing that you have to keep in mind is treating your boyfriend or girlfriend as if you were not dating. However, try to answer these questions before you decide to date your colleague. What if a manager dates his subordinate who later gets a promotion? What would you think about this issue if you were a person who works under the manager? What if you are dating with a beautiful and smart co-worker who other co-workers also want to ask her out for a date? Nothing makes co-workers feel more jealous or insecure than to know that two employees have the "hots" for each other (Vikesland ¶10). What if an employee dates another employee and then they break up? What if they break up because one has a secret affection with another employee? What if a couple spend half of work hours talking to each other? What if you date someone who works for you and he or she expects only getting a promotion or higher salary? As you can see, there will be a lot of problems that follow you if you don't behave properly. Since these problems become more and more obvious nowadays, 21 percent of employers (probably mostly large corporations) now have dating policies, up from 17 (Nemko ¶3).

I personally believe that as long as you treat everyone equally and keep working as much as you did before you date, dating in a workplace will have more advantages over

disadvantages. It isn't necessary to conceal your office romances because it is very obvious. Eventually people in the workplace will know your relationship. All you need to do is to prove that having office romances affect neither your performance nor a way you treat your work-fellow. If you know that you aren't doing anything wrong but you are still blamed in absence, don't pay attention. You are doing the right thing. Keep doing it. When time passes, everyone will know and understand you and you will enjoy both working and loving. By the way, maintaining outside interests is a good suggestion because it means that if you break up, you'll still have a life (Nemko ¶14). Remember that even if you break up with your girlfriend, you still have your family and your friends.

As more employees date in workplaces, more people are interested in what is good and bad. Although employees might improve their performance when they have office romances, if they conduct inappropriately, they will bring themselves to a difficult situation. However, if you are going to start dating your co-worker, use your heart as well as your brain. Be patient and professional; otherwise, you might lose your job. In the worst case, you might lose your girlfriend too. In fact, dating in the workplace relates directly to the custom of each country since different countries have different points of view about this. What about people in your country? Do they have the same thought?

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Workplace Privacy

Hamzah Al-Shanbari

R/W 4

Workplace privacy had become a very controversial topic ever since computers were widely used by employees. Even though all employees nowadays must have a computer and an e-mail in order for them to carry on the assigned tasks, they are becoming rather a distraction from performing the job. In addition, the employees now have a faster and an easier access to the outside world during working hours. If they can do all of their personal activities while still at work, what would stop them from doing so?

Workplace monitoring can be very effective in raising the productivity level of any certain business (Young ¶10). If employees know that they are being monitored, they would refrain from committing any violation of the workplace policy (Young ¶10). Moreover, that would push them to compete with their co-workers to come up with better results since they know it will be noticed. Furthermore, the employees will refrain from engaging in personal activities during working hours, such as sending personal e-mails and completing banking transactions. However, all the mentioned results would occur only if the employees know that they're being watched.

When an employer monitors his staff without giving them any clue about it, which only 20% of American managers do (Employee Monitoring ¶5), it wouldn't be very effective unless when it comes to evaluating the employees. That, in place, would rather raise questions on whether the employer has the right to do so or not. The employees will be intimidated and that might cause law suits to be filed or some staff leaving the company using privacy as an excuse. Even though some lawyers might consider e-mails to be private and should follow the wiretap law (Guernsey 3), employers would consider including a line of surveillance acceptance in the employee's contract and continue monitoring.

Monitoring employees activities during work might not be the only possible way of controlling productivity. However, it is surely the most effective one. On the other hand, employers should have certain guidelines and rules for monitoring to ensure that they won't abuse it. Another question that could be raised is who would monitor the employers? Surely, each management reports to a higher one. Would the chain of monitoring continue to climb up to the Board of Directors? Therefore, a certain policy should be assigned to cover all of these and many other issues before starting the procedure.

In conclusion, in order to stop employees from goofing around, someone should monitor them while letting them know that they're being observed. Using technology shouldn't decrease work efficiency; on the contrary, it should increase it highly. The easiest and most effective way is to have control over the users of such technology. However, employees should have a certain time of the day, like at the lunch break, to engage in certain approved activities from work. This should include simple personal e-mails, online banking, government issues and reading the headlines of one's favorite newspaper.

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Workplace Monitoring

Kellen Cristina L. L. Duarte

R/W 4

Technology is a very important and an essential tool in the modern world. On the other hand, new technologies have been the cause of the lack of privacy in employees' workplace. They make it possible for employers to monitor employees in several aspects, either in employees' working life or in their personal lives, which is at times an invasion of privacy or it may be also characterized as a regular and ordinary practice by the employer's perspective.

Considering both sides, several points must be carefully discussed. It is simple to state that every citizen has his or her rights and that these rights must be followed and respected. It may be also considered that most of the time as employees, we want to have the same protection and rights that we have at home, according to the constitution. Nevertheless, we also must be aware that there are different rules in our jobs and that these rules must also be followed and respected.

In order to establish or keep the quality control and productivity, which is a priority in any firm, employers have adhered to workplace monitoring. Security is also one of the reasons they use to justify this practice. Having the control of the employees' lives may be easier for them to find out if the employees are really working or using their system for personal activities; also to know if any employee is revealing any information about the company, preventing theft or any sabotage this way.

Nowadays, employers expose their workers to several types of privacy-invasive monitoring, such as drug testing, video, Internet, email, instant message, phone monitoring and others. In contrast, most of the employees agree that it can be abused most of the times. In addition, it may lead to an oppressive work environment, and as a result, decrease effectiveness anyway. We should also consider that if bosses impose or establish all these rules, they should also apply them to every worker, including the top executives. Furthermore, after stating the rules, the employees should be told about them. It is ethical; otherwise, the purpose is to spy not to monitor productivity or whatever.

According to Jeremy Gruber, legal director of the National Workrights Institute, "There is very little, if any, privacy in the workplace, particularly in the private sector." He also said, "Privacy is one of the most violated principles in the workplace. People are aware to a degree how much monitoring goes on in the working place, but most individuals are unaware of how pervasive the lack of privacy is." For sure, we have to consider that Jeremy Gruber's job is to defend employees, once he belongs to an advocacy group for human rights, but at the same time we should consider that if workplace monitoring is so pervasive, what is the limit?

Actually, this situation requires some measures. Employees should think about having designated or separated phones for personal calls with a time limit. Besides, employees should use their mobile phone to make their personal phone calls. The company should also provide some memos, or

handbooks or even union contracts to inform their employees about any monitoring system. Also, they ought to try to convince employees not to waste the company time or bandwidth. These measures could be useful and practical.

In short, both the employers and the employees must be aware that there must be limits and more effective laws in order to ensure acceptable performance, good results, and quality in the workplace. Ethic is for everyone, not only for bosses. No one likes to have his or her principles or policies disrespected.

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Thanks from the Editor

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Steve Flocks



English Language Institute

PO Box 117051

315 Norman Hall

Gainesville, FL 32611-7051, USA

Phone: (352) 392-3354

Fax: (352) 392-3744

Email: StudyEnglish@eli.ufl.edu

Webpage: www.eli.ufl.edu