I have always dreamed of studying English overseas. Living the experience of learning in a different culture and having the chance to live a University campus life has been something I have always envisioned myself doing.

When I began to consider coming to the United States, it all seemed to be a dream. One day, I realized that I was already here in Miami and everything began to feel very real; I was in such an amazing campus, FIU, and I was taking classes at the best language institution, the English Language Institute.

When I was rewarded with a scholarship due to my performance and dedication, it not only gave me the opportunity to extend my knowledge and live more experiences, but it also made me commit to doing my best as a symbol of how thankful I am to every teacher who believed and supported me.

Note: More scholastic winners will be featured in our upcoming issues!

**Did you know?**

⇒ Did you know that English is the most widespread language in the world and is more widely spoken and written than any other language?  
⇒ Did you know that of all the world's languages (over 2,700) English is arguably the richest in vocabulary  
⇒ Did you know that over 700 million people, speak English, as a foreign language?  
⇒ Did you know that 5 of the largest broadcasting companies in the world (CBS, NBC, ABC, BBC and CBC) transmit in English, reaching millions and millions of people all over the world?
Welcome to the newest addition to the ELI Newsletter! Here we will promote literature that will supplement your education of the English language. Reading is an important exercise in language learning as it forces you to apply what you know while exposing you vicariously to new places and outlooks on life.

**Selected reading:** *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* by Lewis Carroll, reading level 5.9

If the title doesn’t give it away, this novel is full of adventure in the dream-like wonderland Alice explores. Reading this will allow you to meet many odd characters puzzling Alice with word games and nonsensical stories. Logic may tell you this story is confusing, but if you allow yourself to suspend disbelief and fall down the rabbit hole with Alice you’ll be sure to enjoy this wacky tale.

What’s it all about, though? This story carries with it some controversial stigma. Many claim that Lewis Carroll had an inappropriate relationship with the young girl, Alice Liddell, for whom the story was originally written. Others claim the story is heavy on psychedelic influence, akin to drug provoked episodes and hallucinations. Despite all that, however, the storystands nearly 150 years later as a classic novel everyone should read, and for good reason. This story will challenge your perceptions of the world as you see it taking you back to a child-like outlook, and pushing you to question everything around you. You may not find answers to all these questions, but they’ll definitely lead you to ask more. Moreover, this story will force you to consider whether the so-called logical world of adulthood is at all logical. You may come to find, like Alice, that order is never pure, and disorder or madness will most likely end up consuming any given system.

Is this story really just a string of illogical events, or is there more to Wonderland than meets the eye? Decide for yourself as you take part in *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland.*

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**6 Things not to do when Speaking English**

1. Don’t be too ashamed to speak. There is only one way you are going to learn how to speak English, and that is by speaking English.

2. Don’t be afraid to make mistakes. Part of being human is that we make mistakes.

3. Don’t apologize for your level. Achieving fluency in a language is a process and something that takes time.

4. Don’t get frustrated with yourself.

5. Don’t take it personally when people don’t understand you.

6. Don’t compare yourself to other English speakers. No matter what level you are in, you had to work really hard to get there. Be proud of what you have accomplished.
Culture is an integral part of societies worldwide, providing the foundation of education for children where they are raised. Culture is a collection of a people’s traditions, art, religion, and perspective based on their history. It can be fascinating to observe other people’s cultures, or even attempt to learn their methods and reasons for the way they live. These experiences provide us with a better world view, and enable us to pull away from narrow minded thinking.

However, as exciting as it may be, integrating into a new place can lead to an unpleasant experience widely known as culture shock. Many people who leave their home and reside in a foreign place for an extended time may experience the negative symptoms of culture shock, such as anxiety, sadness, home-sickness, and frustration. It is important to understand that this reaction is normal, and there are many ways to deal with it. Making new friends is a great way to cope with the anxiety you may feel, and it will put you back on track to learning about the new culture you’ve been exposed to.

What things in American culture strike you as odd? In Miami we have a weighted Hispanic flavor mixed with other cultures that occur nationwide and worldwide. Just walking through FIU’s campus will provide you with overwhelming examples of our diversity.

Whether you’re foreign or native, American culture can shock us all. Looking at our history as a nation of immigrants, from native and colonial integration to the Harlem Renaissance to Rock N’ Roll, our nation has seen a vastness in art, music, literature, and social movements. Learning the history of our culture will prove to be a controversial journey of discovery where your ideas of right and wrong may be smudged away into something different.

If you’re interested in learning more about American culture, its oddities, and shocking moments in its history, the Public Broadcasting System (PBS) created an interesting webpage all about the odds and ends of our culture and its controversies (find URL address at the end of this article). Here you can discover more about historical moments of change in culture that shocked the masses, learn about famous art, music, and literature, and expand your own ideas and worldview.

Upcoming Events

The spring term has begun and is off to a great start. The Welcome Breakfast was a hit! Students ate delicious treats provided by Corner Bakery all while socializing and getting to know one another and let’s not forget to mention that everyone was taking selfies! Our next event will be help at Macaroni Grill on May 8th at 7pm. If you like Italian food, you are in for a treat! Macaroni Grill is known for its scrumptious appetizers and entrees. It will be a fun-filled evening. See you there!
The ELI newsletter is a bi-weekly publication of the English Language Institute that updates students on upcoming events and important dates. It invites students to participate in its publication process. It also includes news, trivia, quotes and reading suggestions. You may e-mail any suggestion to Laura Lamour at: llamo001@fiu.edu. The ELI newsletter is produced by ELI instructor Laura Lamour.