

## **Growing up poor**

My name is Mike, and I was born in a very poor neighbourhood in Los Angeles. When I was little, my mother took care of my brother and me, because my father left before I came to this world, and he wasn't too interested in being a part of our lives. My mother had to work two jobs that didn't pay much. She had to work very hard so that we could have food, clothes, and a place to live. She was great; we loved her and appreciated her efforts.

Every day, she usually arrived home very late, and she was exhausted. Still, she always cooked nice meals for us, played with us, and made sure that we did our homework. She always insisted on how important it was to get a good education. She couldn't finish school because she got pregnant with me when she was just a teenager. "I couldn't finish school, and that's why I must work so hard now, and I earn so little money," she often said.

Children were very violent in my neighbourhood; you needed to be violent if you wanted to survive. There were lots of crime, vandalism, and drugs. It wasn't easy to be a good student for any child who lived in our neighbourhood. The other children hated you if you got good grades, so I wasn't very popular. The only positive thing about living in that place is that you needed to be very clever to survive, and that helped me later in life.

Finally, my brother and I could finish high school. I went to university because I was a very good basketball player, and basketball paid for my university degree. On the day of my graduation, my mother was in tears. And she was in tears again the day I showed her our new apartment, away from the neighbourhood. Do you know how difficult it is to get out of a poor neighbourhood? It's very hard, but I did it, and it was thanks to my mum. Now she doesn't have to work two jobs anymore, and I take care of her.

## **Archaeologists identify the mummy of a lost Egyptian queen**

Egyptian archaeologists announced on Wednesday that they have identified a mummy discovered in 1903 as that of Queen Hatshepsut (hat-shep-soot), Egypt's most powerful female pharaoh. The mummy was originally found in the Valley of the Kings, a sacred burial site for kings and powerful nobles located on the west bank of the Nile River in Egypt. Although the mummy was discovered more than a century ago, it remained in a tomb until this past spring, when it was brought to the Cairo Museum for testing.

### **A Powerful Ruler's Legacy**

Queen Hatshepsut was the only woman to rule ancient Egypt while the kingdom was at the height of its wealth and power, from about 1502 to 1482 B.C. Of all the female pharaohs—including Cleopatra and Nefertiti—Hatshepsut's reign was the longest and most successful. While in power, she established trade routes and built hundreds of monuments and temples throughout Egypt. Despite her prosperous reign, both her mummy and her legacy were virtually erased from Egyptian history. Many historians believe that Tuthmose III, Hatshepsut's stepson, destroyed records and monuments bearing her name. It may have been his revenge. It is believed that she stole the throne from him. Finding the mummy of this powerful queen may provide details about an important part of Egyptian history.

## **Chinese New Year**

Chinese New Year (or generally referred to as Lunar New Year globally) is the Chinese festival that celebrates the beginning of a new year on the traditional Chinese calendar. The festival is usually referred to as the Spring Festival in mainland China, and is one of several Lunar New Years in Asia.

Celebrations traditionally take place from the evening preceding the first day of the year to the Lantern Festival, held on the 15th day of the year. The first day of Chinese New Year begins on the new moon that appears between 21 January and 20 February. In 2019, the first day of the Chinese New Year was on Tuesday, 5 February, initiating the Year of the Pig.

Chinese New Year is a major holiday in Greater China and has strongly influenced lunar new year celebrations of China's neighbouring cultures, including the Korean New Year (seol), the Tết of Vietnam, and the Losar of Tibet. It is also celebrated worldwide in regions and countries with significant Overseas Chinese populations, including Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia, the Philippines, and Mauritius, as well as many in North America and Europe.

Chinese New Year is associated with several myths and customs. The festival was traditionally a time to honour divinities as well as ancestors. Within China, regional customs and traditions concerning the celebration of the New Year vary widely, and the evening preceding Chinese New Year's Day is frequently regarded as an occasion for Chinese families to gather for the annual reunion dinner. It is also traditional for every family to thoroughly clean their house, in order to sweep away any ill-fortune and to make way for incoming good luck. Another custom is the decoration of windows and doors with red paper-cuts and two-line poems. Popular themes among these paper-cuts and two-line poems include that of good fortune or happiness, wealth, and longevity. Other activities include lighting firecrackers and giving money in red paper envelopes. For the northern regions of China, dumplings are featured prominently in meals celebrating the festival. It often serves as the first meal of the year.

## **The Rock Garden of Chandigarh**

In Chandigarh, a city in northeast India, there is an amazing garden. There are tall rocks and small paths between them. There are waterfalls, pools, and hundreds of sculptures. The sculptures are surprising because they are all made from rubbish, like plastic jewellery, bottles, broken pots, sinks, toilets, and pieces of electrical equipment.

The garden has a surprising history too because it was built in secret! A man called Nek Chand started building the garden in 1957. He chose some land in a forest near the city, where there were rocks and a river. Nobody was allowed to build here, so Nek knew that people wouldn't see him there. Then he started to collect rubbish and make the sculptures.

Nek's project was illegal, but for 18 years, nobody found it. However, in 1975, some government officials discovered it. By that time, the garden was nearly 49,000m<sup>2</sup> in size. The government tried to destroy the garden, but when the people in the city heard about it, they wanted to keep it.

In 1976 it became a public park. After that, Nek Chand received a salary so that he could work in the garden full-time, and fifty more people were employed to work there with him. People paid to visit the garden. Nek put collection centres around the town so that he could make more recycled sculptures.

However, the garden wasn't safe yet. In 1990, the local government tried to build a road through the park, just for VIPs. But local people protested, and their plan failed. Later, Nek became famous. He travelled to the USA to tell people about his garden. But when he returned, his garden was destroyed! It took a long time to rebuild it and keep it safe.

Now, a charity manages the garden. Five thousand visitors visit this special place each day.

Volunteers, workers, and local children still work here. They keep the garden clean and learn to make sculptures. If you like, you can volunteer here too!

## **The daily routines of a sportswoman**

Janet is an athlete, and she wakes up at 4:30 am every weekday morning. She spends the first 30 minutes reading and then 15 minutes meditating. At 5:15 am Janet checks her email for only 30 minutes and then goes for her first run of the day. She runs for an hour and a half along the lake near her house. After running, Janet has a shower and then prepares breakfast, which is usually cereal and fruit. However, she occasionally has a less healthy breakfast.

She usually finishes breakfast at around 8 am. If it is a weekday, she always leaves the house at 8:20 and goes to training. Her training starts at 9 am, and she needs 30 minutes to drive to the gym. She trains for 3 hours with her team and then goes home for lunch. She always eats a very big and healthy lunch. As soon as she finishes lunch, she has a nap for one hour.

After her nap, she likes to go for a walk around the lake and look at nature. She sometimes reads or meditates at the lake in the afternoon. In the evening, during the week, she meets up with friends. Most of her friends are athletes too, so they have a lot to talk about.

She typically goes to bed at 9 pm because she prefers to be awake in the morning than at night. She sometimes falls asleep listening to music, but she never watches the television or reads anything on her tablet. She always makes sure her alarm is set and is almost always asleep by 9:45 pm.

## **Online shopping**

My name is Sara, and I love shopping online. I prefer mobile phone apps, but sometimes I use my computer. The phone is more convenient for me, and I can even do my shopping from bed!

I love shopping so much that I buy everything I need at home. I get food, electronics, books, and even large pieces of furniture like my sofa and bookshelves all online! But I still prefer getting clothes from a store so I can try them on to be sure they fit me fine.

Yesterday, I bought a birthday present for my mother, and it arrived today! That saves me a lot of time. I am a very busy person, and I am a little forgetful too. If I think of something I need, then it is wonderful that I can buy it at that moment.

My friends aren't as comfortable with buying things online as I am because they think that it can be dangerous. Of course, bad things sometimes happen, but I am very careful with all of my personal details. I think the biggest fear that people have with using their credit cards online is that someone will steal their number. It is important to be sure that the web page is secure. You can see this if the address has got an "s" in it, like <https://>. That "s" means it is safe.

People should not be afraid of shopping online. I think it will be the only way we will do our shopping in the future!

## **Travelling alone**

### **Tips for travelling alone**

Travelling alone seems scary if it's the first time you are going to leave the comfort of home. You will probably think about the potential risks or difficult situations. What happens if I get ill, or have an accident? Isn't it dangerous to go out alone at night? What happens if I get attacked? Isn't it strange to eat at restaurants alone all the time?

Most travellers have these worries and more before their first trip alone, but all these fears disappear when they see all the benefits of this great experience. Here I'm going to give you 3 tips on how to travel alone and have a good time.

### **Speak the language**

Humans are sociable creatures. We all need to talk to other people. If you are travelling alone, it's a good idea to go somewhere you speak the language.

### **Sleep with the locals**

Hotels are comfortable but very lonely, and hostels are perfect for people who travel alone, but you will only speak with other tourists. Try to rent a room in an apartment. This will give you a connection with local residents and they can give you a lot of tips on what you can do.

### **Don't be shy**

Don't be afraid of asking. Ask for directions in the street, or ask about the place, the culture or the customs to the local people that you find in bars, parks, etc. You will be surprised how much people like to talk about their town or their culture. Remember you are alone. Asking can be an effective way to start a conversation and meet new people.

## **What do you do with your free time?**

I'm almost 19 years old and I finished my first year of university. I'm currently on holiday and I have a lot of free time. Having free time is nice, but the problem is that when you are a student, you never have money. And when you have a lot of free time but you don't have much money, it can get boring.

Every morning I go to the gym, and I read in the afternoons. But I still have a lot of free time.

Going to the gym takes me about two hours, including the road time and the post-gym shower. And I usually read for one hour. Another activity that I do is watch documentaries. I study history and I love historical documentaries. I learn a lot from them. I watch documentaries for one and a half hours four or five times a week.

But those activities are a small part of my day. When I'm not at the gym or reading, I get bored and I often play video games for hours. I enjoy playing video games, but I don't think it's a productive activity. When I play for a long time, I feel bad. I'd like to find more productive activities to do, but it's difficult. I live in a small town and there aren't many things to do.

Do you have any suggestions ? What do you do with your free time?



## **Famous people's first jobs**

Not all famous people were born into famous families. A lot of them had normal lives before becoming famous. They also had jobs like the rest of us. Here are just a few:

Former President Obama worked at an ice-cream parlour selling ice-cream cones. He was in high school in Honolulu, Hawaii and said it was quite hard. He also said that the job taught him about responsibility, hard work and how to spend time with work, friends and family.

Brad Pitt had a weird job when he was younger. He worked as a chicken! That's right. He worked at a restaurant called El Pollo Loco in Hollywood, and his job was to dress up like a chicken and wave at the cars on the road. In fact, if you go on a "See the Stars" tour in Hollywood, many of them will take you past the same restaurant where Brad used to work.

Maybe the strangest path in life was that of Pope Francis. When he was young in Argentina, he worked several jobs before joining the Jesuits and dedicating his life to religion. He worked as a cleaner sweeping floors, a chemical tester at a laboratory and as a bouncer at a bar! Yes, the pope was the person responsible for security at a bar in case anything wrong happened. Can you imagine?!

## **Going to the Mall**

Every city in the USA has a mall or four. There are about 1,100 malls in the US. These giant store-filled buildings are one of America's greatest entertainment options for teens and families.

Mall of America in Minnesota is the largest mall. It is so big that it has an amusement park in it, Nickelodeon Universe, with several roller coasters! There are more than 500 stores in it, about 400,000m<sup>2</sup> and about 12,000 people work there.

But malls nowadays aren't the same as they used to be in the 80s and 90s. During those decades, teens would go to the mall and spend hours shopping, playing video games at the arcade, or just hanging out with friends. It was cool in the summer and warm in the winter. In those days, malls provided the perfect source of shopping and entertainment for entire families.

Nowadays, you can still eat in the food court and go to the movies, but there aren't many arcades left. Millennials have their Xboxes or Ps4s, and they like shopping online, which is also happening with more and more people from other generations. And as more people shop online and play video games at home, fewer people go to the mall to hang out.

Hopefully, malls will remain one of the great American pastimes. But only time will tell how people in the future will prefer to spend their time.

## La Belgique

La Belgique Le plat pays est connu dans le monde entier pour ses bières et son chocolat. C'est aussi un grand pays d'art, qu'on découvre en visitant ses nombreux musées ou en faisant des promenades à vélo, en traversant les petites rues des villes avec leurs chefs-d'œuvre architecturaux et en suivant les chemins de campagne où on est charmé par la beauté des verts paysages et des sites historiques. Si vous préférez voyager en Belgique pour participer à une fête, c'est très simple, il y en a toute l'année ! À voir Bruxelles, Bruges, Gand, Anvers, Liège, Namur, Dinant, Bouillon, Ostende et les côtes de la mer du Nord, les Ardennes, le parc national de Lesse, le parc des Hautes Fagnes, Malines, Louvain. À faire Cyclotourisme\*, randonnée, activités nautiques, pêche, équitation, festivals et carnivals, dégustation de chocolats, de bières belges, architecture, histoire et gastronomie, BD\*, design et mode. À ramener Des chocolats, de la bière, de la dentelle\* (à Bruges), des bijoux et des diamants (à Anvers), des tapisseries\* (en Flandre\*), des céramiques, des bandes dessinées\*... Période idéale De mai à octobre. Événements La procession du Saint-Sang à Bruges (à l'Ascension\*), le carnaval à Binche (en février), le Brussels Jazz Marathon (en mai), le festival musical de Dour (en juillet) et de Bruxelles (Couleur café, en juin), les fêtes gantoises (à Gand, en juillet), l'été d'Anvers\* (en juillet et en août), la fête populaire des géants\* d'Ath (la ducasse, en août).

## **Dans les Alpes**

La région des Alpes est située à l'Est de la France. Les Alpes sont la chaîne de montagnes la plus haute d'Europe, c'est aussi une frontière naturelle avec d'autres pays européens : la Suisse et l'Italie. La montagne la plus haute des Alpes s'appelle le Mont Blanc, on peut y monter grâce à un téléphérique.

Les français aiment beaucoup cette région car ils peuvent y passer leurs vacances en été et en hiver. En effet, en hiver il y a beaucoup de neige dans les Alpes et les touristes peuvent pratiquer le ski, la luge ou le snowboard. Il fait très froid et pour se réchauffer ils mangent des plats typiques et boivent du vin chaud.

En été, les touristes aiment se balader dans les montagnes, ils font de la randonnée. Ils peuvent se baigner dans les lacs et observer les animaux sauvages qui vivent dans cette région : les marmottes et les chamois. Mais on peut voir aussi beaucoup d'animaux domestiques pendant l'été : des vaches, des chèvres et des montons.

## **Une journée à Paris**

Je n'ai qu'un jour pour visiter Paris. Je suis l'itinéraire donné par Pierre, un ami français. Je commence par un petit-déjeuner dans un café près de l'Arc de Triomphe avec des croissants délicieux. Après une marche sur les Champs-Élysées, je suis au pied de la Tour Eiffel. Il y a beaucoup d'attente pour les ascenseurs (pour monter les étages) mais je suis enfin au sommet et peux apprécier la vue sur Paris.

L'après-midi je me promène aux Tuileries, paradis de verdure au cœur de la capitale. Je suis fatiguée et préfère prendre le métro pour aller à l'Île de la Cité. En visitant la cathédrale Notre-Dame de Paris je pense à Quasimodo, personnage du roman de Victor Hugo. Encore le métro, et je contemple la splendide façade de l'Opéra Garnier. C'est le quartier des beaux magasins et des produits de grandes marques.

Je termine à Montmartre avec sa basilique et ses ruelles (petites rues). Après l'ambiance de luxe, ici c'est comme un tranquille village. Je vais choisir un restaurant pour savourer un bon repas après cette journée bien remplie !