Bridges ESL
Spring 2016 Anthology
Yale University
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Featuring work by some of our students:
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Book & Life
By Nataliia Lysa  Tutor: Yifu Dong

Personally, I am a big fan of books and I truly believe that reading books helps us develop our imagination and manner of thinking, and makes us broadminded persons. But as I am getting older I understand that not everything that is learned is contained in books. I believe this phrase makes deep sense because although, the greatest experience of humanity is concentrated in books, there is another teacher, sometimes ferocious and unfair, but the one, who always helps us to learn lesson well -- our life. Sometimes when we encounter obstacles and need answers that we cannot find in any book, the only way to decide a problem is to listen to our mind, consider general moral principles and follow our beliefs. Also the great power of life’s lessons has an experience gained from our parents and especially our grandparents. Their advice is based on exceedingly rich and vital experience and is passed on to the next generation with great care and devoted love.

Although books are an excellent source of getting new knowledge, we can always pick up life’s lessons and learn from life’s mistakes.

Untitled
By José Malitasig  Tutor: Meg Pritchard

I’m sad about what is happening in Ecuador. Almost always the aid never reaches the poorest, the humble living in rural places. Anyway, God bless Ecuador. Ahead, Ecuador, always ahead.

I am happy, because I’m improving my English. Thanks Bridges Yale English Program. Thanks Miss Meg for being patient and dedicated. Speaking English fluently is good, because it opens the door to be successful. Speaking fluent English gave me opportunities, better relationships, and jobs. I hope to continue to attend English class next semester. I would like to receive more class because the breaks are long. Anyway thanks for everything, good luck, God bless USA and CASA Yale.

Driving open top is a drug
By Chitoku Toda  Tutor: Ellen Kan

I bought a convertible sports car, a two-seater Miata. Before, I didn’t like sports cars because they are noisy, gas-guzzling, and impractical for driving in a city – you don’t race in the city. I thought that sports car drivers are snobby, weak-headed people who just want to show off. But now, I’m a sports car driver.

Last Christmas, I was thinking of buying a normal car. One of the candidates was the Mazda3. I went to the dealer and had a test drive. It was a great car. I thought I would buy it. But fortunately or unfortunately, Mazda renewed the style of the Miata last year, and it looks beautiful now. Additionally, everyone says the Miata is a super fun car; it makes you smile every time you make a turn. So, I was just wondering what it would feel like and asked to try it. That changed my life.
The car is amazing. I love the sound, the look, the feeling of driving. My heart beats up like the engine. Everything banged my brain. I can’t explain. My words will never be better than these feelings. After the test drive, I couldn’t stop thinking about having my own Miata. I checked car websites during the holidays, had several test drives, and bought a used one a month later.

I’m sure I looked crazy. This winter was not too cold, but I drove my car with the top down even when it snowed. The car is rear-wheel-driving, so on the snowy turns, it drifts when I accelerate. It’s so fun! I should mention that I didn’t drive fast. I would almost stop at intersections and then accelerate after turning the steering wheel, and it was at 11pm on a snowy day, when nobody was outside.

Now, it’s beautiful outside with a clear sky, and flowers are blossoming everywhere. When I drive with my roof down, the comfortable sunlight and breezy wind touch my skin, soft as fur. Actually, there are a lot of scenic roads in Connecticut. There are several horse farms and beautiful houses with a huge lawn near Cheshire. The coastline between New Haven and Bridgeport is my favorite road to feel the sea. Route 7 near New York goes along a river, and there are several parks with waterfalls. The only bad thing is that I can’t stay in the lab now. I don’t want to do any experiments. However, this summer will be one of the best summers behind the wheel. I know that some people, like me last year, would look at me in my Miata and say, “That dude is stupid. Do it on the racing course.” Now, I would say, “Nobody knows what can happen in one year.”

Thank you, the Bridges program and my tutor Austin
By Xianglong Zhu  Tutor: Austin Strayhorn

I have spent over 6 years at Yale pursuing my PhD and I am still amazed that there are so many great things Yale offers that I didn’t know about earlier. The Bridges program is definitely one of the best things I am grateful I embraced during my last semester at Yale.

When it comes to improving any skills, including English as a second language, it is all about practice. However, what is more important than practice is the execution of a practice plan. I have been buried in the lab work during the past few years which does not lend itself to speaking and practicing English verbally too much. To make things worse, most of my friends are Chinese, and it is more comfortable to chat with them in Chinese. If I were to give any advice to people who just arrived on campus it would be to make friends with people who you have to speak English with. Getting back to my story, I realized that I had to make efforts to improve my oral English when I decided to work in the United States after graduation and started to interview for jobs. I found out about this Bridges program on the OISS website and felt lucky that I met a great tutor, Austin.

The topics Austin brought up in the session are usually beyond my daily life and field of study, which is fascinating. I myself am a biomedical science researcher and mostly read scientific papers and think about my experiments. I do read some news and extracurricular books but rarely get a chance to talk about them. In addition, I was informed that it is always better not to talk about politics in the United States given the controversy. Austin introduced me the general rules and procedures of US election and we had many interesting discussions on Donald Trump’s political opinions and the potential reasons why
he is the lead candidate in the Republican Party. Besides the help with grammar and vocabulary, I really appreciate that Austin asked me many inspirational questions and encouraged me to express my opinions.

I remember I asked Austin why he came to Bridges and he said that he is always willing to serve the community in one way or another. I recall that I volunteered as a math tutor for children at 4-8 years old at New Haven Reads my first two summers in New Haven. I enjoyed that experience but decided to stop when things got busier in the lab. I have interacted with some Yale undergrads through serving as a teaching assistance and I understand how busy their life is. I really appreciate that Austin and all the tutors at the Bridges program decided to allocate their time to help others despite their busy schedule and I think I would definitely pass along the torch and find my way to give back.

Time flies and it is already near the end of the semester. Although my gratitude is beyond my words, I would like to say thank you to my tutor Austin and the entire Bridges program organizers and participants. You guys made my final months at Yale more fruitful than I expected and I will cherish these memories along my future journey.

Untitled
By Michael (Jheiros) Arias Rios   Tutor: Fiona Riebeling

There are people who make the best for others and they’re not looking for a reward. They show you how powerful you can be, they show you the power you have within yourself. It seems crazy to think that love and wisdom are the answer to every problem we face. They share every experience they have faced and teach you how you can be the change.

I know a wonderful woman who shows me that if you make an effort you can reach your goals. I read a post she wrote, it was so inspiring to me. Even she has faced problems squarely. And if you look at her you can say she is the nicest girl in the world; she encourages other people to make things better through mindfulness. She shows that you can take care of every little detail in a bigger picture.

There is a quote she wrote in the post, “You might not be invincible, but I promise you are strong enough to come back.” It was like she was talking to me when I was feeling so worried about my problems. I’ve been a lazy man but that inspirational quote has helped me to think about my life and the ways I should be working now.

For me she has fought against her demons, she already has healed her wounds and the scars make her look even more beautiful and she teaches other people to survive.

Fiona has taught me more than English, she taught me how to be brave. She taught that I can do the right thing. She taught me to be strong even when I feel down, she taught me to work on my goals even when they look hard to reach. There are so many things she taught me and I’m still learning.

I think if maybe someone like her were in every corner this world would be more amazing than it already is. I feel so thankful for her, I feel so proud of her, I will bet my life just to say that I know she will change more lives as she did with mine. I’ll bet my life saying that she will change this world and I promise I will help because she has left a seed in me, and it’s growing to bloom in good actions.

I wish I could write everything that she makes me think, maybe not now but someday.
My experience at Yale
By Sayaka Ericson   Tutor: Daniel Leibovic
I moved to New Haven in July 2015 with my husband who is a postdoctoral researcher at Yale. Because I heard the crime rate in New Haven is very high, I was anxious about moving here, but once we settled down in the new environment, I really liked the town and the campus. I met a lot of great people at events and classes that were organized by OISS, Pen Whitney Gym and BRIDGES ESL. My life at Yale was so fruitful. And on top of all of that, I just gave a birth to my first child at Yale-New Haven Hospital in April, which was the most wonderful experience in my life. Now New Haven, and Yale University, is one of my favorite places in the world.

Untitled
By Qiuling Xiang   Tutor: Gabrielle Coloma
Before I came to New Haven, I had not left my home for several years. I am a traditional person who does not like change very much. I completed my education in Zhonshan Medical School and then worked as a teacher there. I am quite familiar with the people there and the city of Guangzhou. When I considered living in another country, I was nervous.

When I arrived here last summer, Yale OISS organized some activities. A nice lady gave us a campus tour to know the history and characteristics of the famous buildings at Yale, such as Sterling Memorial Library, Harkness Tower, Art Gallery and others. Yale is a beautiful university with excellent architecture. I like walking around the old campus with blooming flowers, jumping squirrels and a bright blue sky. My favorite monument is the Women’s Table in front of Sterling Memorial Library. It is designed by a Chinese-American lady who is the niece of a famous Chinese female writer. On the table, the curved numbers are the female students admitted by Yale every year, which suggests the equality of men and women.

People in the University are also very nice. Although I had studied English for several years, I did not have enough confidence to speak English with a native person. Every time I worried my expression was incorrect. When I came to Bridges, I was matched with Gabi, a pretty girl. She was a freshman at Yale and it was her first time as a tutor. I think she did a good job. Since I majored in medicine, I have to give presentations about my research in English. I also need to give lectures to medical students in English in China. I am eager to improve my medical English, for it is so important to my career. Although Gabi’s major is English, she searched clinical cases from New York Times and we studied these cases together. I learned a lot of medical words and sentences to describe diseases and the mechanisms behind them. I think they are quite useful to my presentations and lectures in the future. We also discussed articles about American culture and society, which is good for me since I want to know more about America.

Time flies fast. This summer I will leave New Haven and go back to China. I will miss this beautiful, quiet and historical city. I will also miss the people here. Because of all of you, the city becomes more attractive. Best wishes to all of you!
My Dear Cheshire Cat
By Taeyun Kang  Tutor: Cameron Biondi

The first impression I got from New Haven was not pleasant. In November, the days were too short and sirens from streets made me scared every night. At that time, I thought myself as Alice in Wonderland who was confused and looking for a way to go through situations in an unfamiliar environment. People I’ve met here are mostly kind and friendly. But sometimes I sensed that people got tired and embarrassed to talk with an alien who is not speaking as fluent as they expect. The momentary feeling used to make me feel depressed a little bit. And then one day, I met my Cheshire cat in Bridges. He has tried to show me the world where he lives with patience for the last 2 years. It was a great comfort to have such a person who knows where I am from and who is willing to wait until I complete my sentence although it has a lot of grammatical errors. Thanks to him, New Haven is not a Wonderland to me anymore. Now he’s graduating in May and it is the last semester with him. As Cheshire cat told Alice, I hope that both of us will get SOMEWHERE if we walk long enough. And I hope it will be the place of where we’ve dreamed in our lives. I wish you good luck, Cameron. I really do.

My life at Yale
By Song Zhao  Tutor: Xinyu Guan

How time flies! I remember the joy that I felt when I first got the news that I could come to Yale. My earliest memory of Yale University was a picture hanging on the wall of my high school classroom. It gave us inspiration to work hard so that we could succeed in the college entrance examination. I never thought that 15 years later I would have the opportunity to come to Yale as a visiting scholar and enjoy the experience of doing research and getting to know American culture. Even after I had already been in New Haven for a month, everything still felt surreal for me.

It was a beautiful autumn day when I arrived in New Haven, a peaceful and quiet town. After settling down, I walked around the campus, East Rock, downtown, and I visited the Yale Art Gallery and Peabody museum. Everything seemed new for me: new friends, new architecture styles, new daily routines. The Office of International Students and Scholars organized numerous events, such as cultural excursions, conversation groups, and holiday parties. I heard from my friend that there was a program called Bridges at the Asian American Cultural Center on Saturday, a wonderful platform to practice English. I registered and then got to know my excellent tutor, Xinyu, who gave me a lot of help in English pronunciation and speaking. We talked about diverse topics that made language study more enjoyable, for instance, daily life, festivals, college life, movies, famous speeches, sports and literature. I really appreciate that I got so much happiness together with Xinyu and Dan.

I have enjoyed listening to interesting conversations in seminars, learning softwares in workshops, and spending time with my friends, during which I have also discovered the spirit of collaboration and enthusiasm in research, and felt the kindness and respect in interpersonal communication. I have also learned to be positive and persistent in my pursuit of a better life. There are five months left for me at Yale. I will cherish the remaining time and acquire more knowledge. Even after I go back to China, the motivation and optimism that I adsorbed from here will always inspire me to keep making progress.
Some thoughts in my mind
By Dan Peng  Tutor: Xinyu Guan

In *Catcher in the Rye*, Holden says that, “Among thousands of people, you meet those you’ve met. Through thousands of years, with the boundlessness of time, you happen to meet them, neither earlier nor a bit too late.”

It is one of the most beautiful sentences I have ever heard. It also reminds me of the words from the *Book of Ecclesiastes*, “To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven.”

I have not read these two books, but the words come to mind when I look through the window of my office and hear the clock strikes twelve. I have been here for more than six months. Like a little girl picking from a box of chocolate, I enjoy every morning as the start of complete new day, and prepare myself for both ups and downs. Sometimes we would meet our friends and share thoughts on art, movie, and literature. Other times, bad things happen and we keep moving on. In happiness or sorrow, inspiration or disorientation, what really matters is that we are learning from our everyday experience, and that we are to be stronger, more courageous, and more grateful.

Life is a journey, and may all of us find our way.

Fantastic Experience at Yale
By Yanyan Jiang  Tutor: Anna Hwang

I still remember the scene when I first arrived at New Haven in mid-September 2015. Honestly, at the time, I did not feel quite good and even a little scared. Because I had read some terrible news online when I was in China. They said that New Haven is one of the least safest cities in the US. And even worse, when I consulted with a visiting student who was already living here, he told me that, “The news is true so you should be careful and reduce the time on the streets if you want to keep safe here.” Even though I did not want to believe it, you could not imagine how I was shocked by such negative information. But as it turns out, ‘seeing is believing’. However, from my perspective of view, New Haven is one of the most fantastic places in the world, and studying at Yale is one of the most valuable experiences in my life!

Unlike metropolis, such as New York, Boston and so on, life here is much simpler. There are no prosperous commercial streets, magnificent skyscrapers and lively nightlife. However, it is full of surprises in every moment of the day. To be more specific, I am touched by the warm greeting from drivers whenever I get on or off the shuttle; I revel in the beautiful sunshine, the fresh air, the colorful plants and the traditional buildings when I go for a stroll in the campus. I am pleased to make friends with people coming from all over the world. I prefer the diligent studious atmosphere and the comfortable learning environment found at bass library where I usually study. I am fond of both Shelly’s passionate lectures and Thomas’ knowledgeable lectures which enlightened me to have a deeper and broader thinking. I love the Tuesday Workshop in our program where so many famous professors and talented researchers share their intelligent thoughts. I enjoy the symphony concerts in Woolsey Hall and the movie showings in Whitney Humanities Centers where I spend most of my leisure time. I relish diverse kinds of events held by Yale, which helped me to better experience the local school life, New Haven community etc. It is
really difficult for me to use a single word to describe or sum up the whole experience in Yale.

What I want to highlight here is that since I know Bridges just before the registration deadline, I am lucky enough to participate in this wonderful program and meet with my super tutor, Anna!!! This program is so meaningful not only because it offers our opportunities to learn English but also because it promotes the cultural communication between different countries. In the first week we discuss and make a learning plan. After that, every week, Anna will prepare some local idioms, and I will prepare a Ted talk in advance. Each Saturday, I will learn those idioms and discuss the content of Ted talks with Anna. Anna is so kind and patient to correct my mistakes both in pronunciation and grammar. Thanks to Anna, my oral English is getting a little better but I think I still need to work harder in order to make more progress.

All in all, never make a judgment before you experience it for yourself, and only through that, can you enjoy the beauty of life. Thanks to everyone, I have had a fantastic life here, which has become a part of my precious memory. I appreciate Yale and New Haven so much!

Make Ourselves Inside Out
By Huizi Huang Tutor: Victoria Wang

Do you ever look at someone and wonder, what is going on inside their head?

Well, I know. I know my own head. Now Joy is in charge of my brain headquarters, because I'm very excited to share my experiences again at this special occasion. As an animated movie buff, today I’d like to recommend to all of you one of my personal favorite movies, a movie which can make you think: Inside Out.

The movie, which was produced by the Pixar Animation Studio, was released on June last year and generated heated discussion online in a short time. To nobody’s surprise, it won the best Animated Feature Film in the 88th Academy Awards this year.

The movie is fairly intriguing, full of rich imagination and emotion. So many heartwarming moments make you feel spirited in every way. It has two storylines. One happens in the real daily life, and the other one happens in a girl’s brain. "Joy", "Fear", "Disgust", "Anger" and "Sadness" are a team. They control a little girl called Riley from the internal control center of the brain, to make her happy, to protect her safety, to keep her from being poisoned, to defend justice. Sometimes they have quarrels like normal people in the workplace. Only the droopy, clumsy girl Sadness is an exception. At the beginning, others worry about Sadness, because she can’t do anything besides make Riley sad and annoying. It seems that she is harmful to Riley.

But when Joy is on the way back to headquarters, she sees the value of her buddy. Sadness lets Bing Bong express why he is unhappy and makes him become cheerful again. Riley’s memory about losing the goal makes her depressed. But because of despair, she received care and love from teammates. From the above, the presence of sadness brings happiness, instead of covering up all the problems with aimless happiness. So Joy gives the core memory balls to Sadness and never worries about them again.

I felt deep empathy for Joy. I once had the same thoughts as her. I was a lot like her. I believed that happy memories were the only treasures I deserved, and was unwilling to
admit the existence of sadness. To be sure, people prefer to exhaust their whole lives to pursue happiness regardless of anything else, but life doesn’t go the way as we plan. It can’t be all smooth sailing. Actually, every sad memory and feeling provides us with a chance to rethink the manner and method of living. Crying can help us to calm down and not obsessively worry about life’s difficulties. Joy and sadness should be complementary to each other.

This is one of the most impressive messages I got from the movie. But it’s just one tip of an iceberg. Almost every viewer can draw inspiration from watching the movie. It is definitely a guide for us to know more about Psychology, and to understand personalities and the function of brain. For example, are there really only five emotions in human beings? How do the emotional center and memory center work? What is subconscious? As people get older, why does Joy no longer conduct emotions?

Inspired by this thought-provoking movie, let’s make ourselves inside out. By analyzing problems and overcoming setbacks not only from daily life but also from the inner heart, we can enjoy meaningful days with real great joy.

Untitled
By Abderrazzak Abina   Tutor: Seamus Houlihan

I’m Abderrazzak Abina from Morocco. I came to the United States in August 2014. This is my first time I have been to the United States. Also first country I have been living in it outside Morocco, so when came here I was so confused because I left my family, friends, everything behind me. Therefore everything here was strange. I had a different life, different place, and new people. Sometimes I keep asking myself why I come to United States but I never find any answer. Only time made me get along with this new life. Although I have a big brother that lives here, it is still hard. After two months I got a job. It was at one restaurant, Ali Baba, and I’m still working there since November 2014. At sometime I decided to study English because I knew my native language, Arabic, doesn’t help me here. So I went to Adult School New Haven, I registered there and I got classes three days a week, Monday to Wednesday 7pm to 9pm, of course I like it because I feel my English gets better over time as well I decided to improve my English so I came to Bridges ESL. I have been studying there for three semesters. As at Adult School I like Bridges ESL, for me it’s a good opportunity to improve my English with my tutor. I knew two hours a week was not enough, but I try to do more in my work, with my work mates and customers.

In the future I have a plan. I’m going to study computer science. I will start in this coming fall semester. So I will get classes at Gateway Community College New Haven. I know it will be hard for me, because I finished my study in my country I spent more time and more energy there. I graduated from Kaddi Ayad University in Law in the city of Marrakech, but I will consider it as a new challenge and I will do it.

In the end, I want to say this is my new life. I chose it by myself so I will accept everything that will happen to me, and I will try to do anything I can to live a happy life, except things that are inconsistent with my religion.

Thank you for this opportunity.
**My Experience at Yale**  
By Yi Zhang  
Tutors: Diego Fernandez-Pages & Nicholas Biniaz-Harris

My name is Yi Zhang, but you can call me Richard. I’m a visiting scholar from Shanghai doing a one-year research program at the Yale School of Medicine. Shanghai, which is located on the east coast of China, is not only an incredibly tourist-friendly city, but also one of the most internationalized metropolitan areas in the world. It would be a great experience for anyone to have a tour in Shanghai.

I came to Yale last November when all the leaves on trees were yellow. I had heard that autumn is the most beautiful season at Yale, which is indeed true. When it was sunny, I always enjoyed walking to work even though it was a 40-minute walk. I could see all the colorful leaves on the side of the street, as well as Gothic church buildings and characteristic old campus buildings with years carved on the stones. I loved to walk on Hillhouse Avenue and College Street over and over again because the trees and buildings there were the most beautiful ones I had ever seen.

In the past, I had never liked winter because I didn’t like to be cold. However, when the first snow of 2016 visited New Haven, I fell in love with winter. Actually, I had one of my best winters of my life—the other best winters were when I stayed two years in Guangzhou, the southern coastal city in China which is also called flower city. It was like living in a fairyland when all of Yale’s campus was covered in snow. My friends and I made a giant snowman in front of our house during the snow. I also participated in a whole lot of other winter events such as hiking and ice-skating. I even learned how to ski.

After a very long and very cold winter—there was snow even in April—the spring finally came. There were cherry blossoms, tulips and all kinds of other beautiful flowers all over campus. Every morning when I walked by the lawn in front of the Sterling Memorial Library, I would always love to stop for a while, sit down on the chairs around the corner and enjoy the warm sunshine. Every day, I had a dream that I could take a day off from work and stay there for a whole day.

Summer is coming in a few months. My friends and I went to the beach in West Haven last weekend. The beach was very good, and we are looking forward to having some fun times with beer on the beach. I hope it will be a wonderful summer too. We’ll see.

I think I have already fallen in love with Yale. It’s one of the most beautiful universities I have ever seen. It’s hard not to fall in love here, with all the beautiful trees, flowers, architecture, and friendly people.

In the end, I’d like to thanks my tutors Diego and Nick for all the wonderful classes, as well as the Bridges ESL team for offering me this great opportunity to practice speaking and making more friends.

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**My US Story**  
By Arti Sharma  
Tutor: Cindy Yang

When I came to the US I was scared. I didn’t know English. If I went anywhere I felt nervous. I didn’t go alone out of my home. I depended on my husband. Many times I thought why I came here. I couldn’t help my husband or myself. That time was really very bad time for me. I missed my home in India. I missed my family—my Bhabi, my parents, my niece, my brothers and sisters, my friends. I missed my life in India. My husband was also worried for
me. I needed to talk to my doctor, bus driver, shopkeeper, but I couldn’t. I didn’t understand what they were saying. I wanted to talk to everyone but I couldn’t talk. I was helpless. I had no confidence. Then one day my husband’s friend told him about Bridges ESL. Then I decided I would go. Then I came here. My first day I was nervous. That’s why my husband came with me. After 4 to 5 classes I felt confidence. One day I went to the library. That was not important. What was important was I went alone. I had some idea but I was not sure where the library was. But I went and made my library card by myself. That is important. That time I was very happy. Now once a week I go to the library to check out comic books. I like reading them because they are fun to read and sometime they make me laugh. If I hadn’t come here maybe I couldn’t go to the library. Now I can go alone anywhere. Finally I am very happy.

Thank you Bridges ESL. Thank you Cindy Yang. Thank you so much. I want to come here again whenever it will start again.

Why do people attend university?
By Natalia Diaz    Tutor: Ellis Burgoon Miskell
In my experience, I have noticed that people attend university, because they want every day to navigate through the world, immerse themselves in culture, learn idioms, feed their hunger for scientific knowledge, and discover themselves. The university helps every person to reinvent themselves time and time again, investigate many of their interests, in this way is born every day an idea that can change the world. It is precisely there that nothing is true, however everything at the same time makes sense. In my opinion people attend college because of intellectual pleasure, love of knowledge, desire to live daily in this environment and from obligation, since they feel a calling to be part of a society that always requires competent human beings with a capacity to face a globalized world, that for better or for worse, we have developed.

Untitled
By Galina Batarina    Tutor: Ellis Burgoon Miskell
Every Saturday morning I walk to my English classes with great pleasure. It is very nice to meet rushing students and teachers on my way to school. It is a pulse of Yale. All people around are busy, lively, and energetic. And I feel the same too.

My teacher Ellis Burgoon Miskell is patient and tactful. Thanks to her I started to read, translate and understand texts. Every lesson is very interesting and flies quickly.

Many thanks for the wonderful idea to have English classes and for the opportunity to visit these classes! That is very interesting. Knowing language is needed for meeting new people.
After the magic was broken
By Shin Hayashi    Tutor: Daniel Leibovic

While I want to believe it’s not only me, many Japanese seem to believe that living abroad has some magical power, especially about an ability of foreign language. For example, only living abroad improves our English drastically. Actually, I may have believed such an innocent assumption. But, you know, it is only silly prejudice.

I came to New Haven late 2014 in order to work as a researcher in Yale. This was my first experience of living abroad, and soon I found that I would not be able to speak English well, only if I kept living in the US. Oh my God, the magic was broken! Certainly, I can read a manuscript of my specialty and barely talk about the research. However, for example, when I went to Dunkin’s donuts or Walmart, I was not able to understand how the staff was saying. It was a shocking episode for me! Small talk is also very difficult, which remains bothering me.

However, such experiences reminded me one important fact. That is, I cannot improve my English without learning by myself. Though it may be paradoxical, much more I speak alone, much better my conversation seems to be. Anyway, I can say that English helps those who help themselves.

Now I am setting some goals of studying English. At least I would like to be able to have a conversation without with less stress. It is the most important purpose for me. And if possible I would like to improve my writing and reading skills. I know there are many interesting literatures in English. Also, actually I have published some novels in Japanese, so I would like to try to write a novel also in English. I am expecting that thinking and writing in two languages may provide me a new perspective.

Thank you for your attention!

The Spring of Elm City
By Jun Zhang    Tutor: Michelle Peters

This spring comes earlier than the last one. Before the end of April, the Elm City has become totally green. Getting rid of the mist of winter, the sky turns sunny and azure, which is as crystal clear as Mill River’s water. Accompanied by the shining faces and pleasant laugh of the blooming people, the old campus seems to get back its youth again.

Yale owns a well-known old campus, which has amazed countless visitors with the grand architectures in Gothic and Georgian Styles. But for an academic traveller who has dwelled here over one year, the amazing collegiate architectures may not attract me as it did in the beginning. After aesthetic fatigue disenchant the mysterious aura of the architectures, they become the normal surroundings for studying and working. What can really fascinate me is no longer the appearance of the campus, but the people inside and what they are thinking and doing.

The old campus has witnessed hundreds of thousands of great minds walking through the gates, the lawn, and the corridors. Their speech, debate, laugh and cry are still haunting the buildings. No matter whether they have gone or not, I can obviously feel the spirit they have been creating and hear its gentle breath among the wind over the elms.

Seeing people arguing in the classroom, reading in the library, thinking before the window of the coffee store or just laying on the grass for a sunbath, I am often moved by
these scenes, because I know it is these people who bring spring to this great university and make its life eternal, it is them who make the Elm City become the oasis in the desert.

Maybe this is the last spring for my long term stay in New Haven. What I have seen and experienced in this wonderful place, I believe, will necessarily enrich my life and bring me inconceivable inspiration in the future. Because I have tasted the eternal spirit of spring in the university, the aroma of which will come with me for my whole life.

On my desk, Descartes’ *Meditation* lies in the indolent light of sinking sun. Studied by numerous Yale philosophers, now it’s passed on to my hands. I am sure we are thinking the same questions when we read the book, and the color of sunset in the window is the same, too. Behind Yale Old Campus Courtyard, Harkness tower has stood for nearly 100 years. The bell tone is still singing the same melody to the young hearts at the dusk.

**Untitled**

By Tingting Geng  Tutor: Victoria Wang

I have been in New Haven since last June. I was shocked by the blue-sky and beautiful sunshine when I was in the shuttle from the airport. A friend of mine told me summer is one of the best seasons here. It was a beautiful summer with fragrant flowers, sunlit meadows and comfortable weather. After I got my own apartment near East Rock, I climbed the mountain every weekend.

Soon, however, I was freaking out about the unsafe environment here. It is legal to hold a gun here! Thank goodness, my apartment is very close to the Yale shuttle stop, from which I can jump to my home.

As time went on, I grew familiar with the environment and culture here. Trust is one of the things I like most here. Mutual trust makes us feel comfortable when we communicate with each other. Without suspicion and distrust, most things become simple, direct and efficient. I become a more straightforward person and communicate in a more straightforward way.

**Traveling Outside New Haven**

By Yongai Zheng  Tutor: Jannet Rivera

My name is Yongai Zheng. I am a visiting scholar in the Child Study Center in the School of Medicine. I come from China. I have been here since last September and I will leave in this coming September.

Because of my daughter’s Spring Break, my friend and I decided to travel to several places.

The first place was Philadelphia. I left New Haven by Greyhound bus on Friday at 3:00 pm and was supposed to arrive at Philadelphia at 8 pm. Due to the traffic jam in New York City, I was unable to arrive until midnight. The unexpected traffic made me worried about the children. I won’t travel by bus next time, because the arrival time is not guaranteed. In Philadelphia, we went to the Independence Hall and saw the Liberty Bell. Philadelphia was the first capital of the United States, and it was the beginning of American history. I also ate Franklin Fountain ice-cream and a cheese steak.

After Philadelphia, I went to Washington, D.C.. We went to the White House, the
Washington Monument and the Lincoln Memorial. It is better to travel by subway in the city to avoid traffic.

We stayed in Washington, D.C. for three days before we went to Virginia. We visited my friend and stayed at her home. She kindly drove us to Virginia Tech University and gave us a campus tour. During the tour people sold campus merchandise and electronic products on the drill field. The campus was very beautiful and large. The campus was so large that there was an airport in it. I enjoyed the tall trees and the green grass there. My friend also took us to do some shopping.

I arrived back to New Haven a week later. I was happy to take my friend and my daughter to travel.

**Untitled**

By Xi Liu  Tutor: Meghana Singh

My husband got a job offer at San Francisco last December, and last week he decided to drive from Austin, TX to his California job. When he told me about his idea, I felt very worried. I was not sure his old second-hand car could make the journey. I couldn’t help him drive, so I thought it would be a long drive for him. But he insisted, saying that his colleague had made the trip before.

So I first flew to Austin, and then we started the road trip. Our first day destination was El Paso, a border city between U.S. and Mexico. In Texas the flat land stretched out into the horizon.

We had brown crispy BBQ rib for dinner, a very typical Texas food. We drove almost 9 hours from Austin to El Paso, and it was our longest drive in a day. We were too tired to enjoy the city view.

The second day destination was Phoenix, and we passed by New Mexico. The land around us changed as we drove along, from green farms to yellow desert.

I didn’t like Phoenix very much. It was really hot there; I guessed that’s why it was named the Sun City. There was the desert yellow everywhere, and it felt the city was kind of proud of the yellow; they made lots of things in that color, like highway bridge, walls.

I felt like the journey in New Mexico and Arizona was the least exciting part, all you can saw were yellow desert, big sun, and cactus, which was the only green around us in the road.

The trip became more fun as we entered California. We stopped at hot springs, the oldest wind farm. We were surprised at the strong winds that blew. We had a late seafood lunch in Saint Barbara, creamy shrimp pasta and fresh oysters.

We spent our night at Buelton, a small town north of Saint Barbara. When I had breakfast the next morning, I saw lots old people and beautiful vintage cars. They said that they gathered together every year and spent four-day trip. My husband had a late morning, and missed the car show. I felt sorry for him.

We finally arrived our destination at 4th day, after a long and fun trip.
Untitled

By Zhiling Tan       Tutor: Sara Tabin

I arrived at Yale last August. It’s different from anything I had ever seen. It gave me a different feeling than any place I had ever been. It is beautiful and quiet and friendly. Most people are well behaved.

My favorite things in New Haven are the fresh air and friendly people around me as well as studying quietly in rooms. The most impressive thing to me is how hard people here work. But I think there are some poor people in New Haven City; they need support and to be attended to.

I also miss my family and friends and students, and so on.

This program was suggested to me by my previous roommate, now she’s back in China. We still correspond with each other, I like her, she’s a good girl. She provided some good suggestions to me when I first arrived at Yale. This program is very helpful to visiting scholars. It is very helpful to study English. My tutor is very beautiful and patient with me. I like her. Also, I think my tutor is a highbrowed girl and this is a highbrowed program. This program deserves to have us enroll.

Untitled

By Xiaojuan Cheng    Tutor: Sara Tabin

I study biblical literature at the Yale’s Divinity School. I think Yale is very rich in all kinds of resources. I can find almost everything I want on my research. There are many different thoughts here that make my thoughts richer and deeper. I think people here are very free. You can do things according to your own desires; that makes people more creative. I think the managers of the school respect everyone; that makes me feel very comfortable.

I like this English course very much. I think it is a very good opportunity for us not just to study English, but also to communicate with our tutors here. That has taught me more about American education and culture. I appreciate my English tutor very much. She is warm-hearted and she spends much time on our studies, even when she is very busy with her own homework.

Untitled

By Zhoufang Mei     Tutor: Lekha Tlhotlhalemaje

Six months ago, I came to study the mechanism of asthma at Yale School of Medicine. I have been learning English at Bridges ESL for two semesters, with my tutors, Allyssa and Lekha, and with their help my English has made great progress. As you know, my speaking was very poor, but my tutors always encouraged me to open my mouth and speak out. They were very patient with me; they taught me how to pronounce certain words. Besides learning English, I also gained a lot of knowledge about American culture.

After six months living in New Haven, I can really understand the problems I faced in China. One is the air pollution, and another is the Chinese doctor’s work environment.

In China, I rarely see the blue sky, but here almost every day the sky is blue. I’m allergic to dust (I have allergic rhinitis disease) and when I was in China, every night before
go to bed, I sneezed continually. It is amazing that now, in America; my allergic rhinitis is getting better without any therapy. In China, no matter how well you clean you car one day, it will always be covered with dust by the next morning. So I can understand why there are so many car wash shops on the street.

In the past ten years, China's air pollution has become worse, directly influencing the increasing incidence of lung cancer. Seven years ago, I started working as a Physician in Shanghai and every month there were two patients diagnosed with lung cancer. But recently, I have been diagnosing 10 new patients every month. Lung cancer patients are getting younger and younger. One of my patients was only in treatment for 6 months before she died. She was only 26 years old, and she left behind a 1-year-old child. Another patient, a 20-year-old college sophomore, was diagnosed with lung cancer; she had pericardial metastasis and chemotherapy was out of the question. She dies less than one year later and her parents had a nervous breakdown.

The issues with China's healthcare system are almost as serious as the environmental pollution. However, the Chinese Government is reluctant to admit the failure of health care reform. The government makes all its citizens pay for health insurance, but they are not willing to bear expensive medical costs. The government has also told hospitals to afford fewer resources to its patients, so the patients are really angry. On one hand, the government says patients can enjoy medical insurance, but on the other hand the hospital doesn’t give the patients enough medical assistance.

The government is very clever: in order to transfer the blame to others, they persuade China’s media to exaggerate the incompetency of Chinese doctors. Patients believe what they see, the media and the government succeed, therefore patients put their complaints, dissatisfaction and blame on doctors, and patients began to quarrel with doctors, insult doctors, or even kill doctors. According to statistics in China, every day, there is one doctor or nurse who is insulted or hurt, and one doctor is killed every week.

I hope that China’s air can be as the same as the US, China’s doctors can live and work in the same social status as the US someday.

**Untitled**

By Shan Guo  
Tutor: Kara Weiss

My most impressive memory is the Yale Library, not only because of the quantities of the books, but also the extensive library services. For example, the faculty in CSSSI hold a variety of workshops and individual consulting services for teaching the skills of graphing, statistics, and creating maps using Arcgis Software for academic papers. These assistance systems really provide great help for research jobs. Accessibility is also a wonderful feature here. The faculty stay at the library during working hours and support researchers efficiently and immediately. Captivated by these resources, many research students in my department spend most of their working time in the library. It’s also beneficial for us to share interesting ideas and consider research problems by holding miniature discussions in the seminar rooms. I appreciate their input and harvest a lot of knowledge about some basic research skills and research experiences.
Untitled
By Crius Sun       Tutor: Jason Hu

I came to New Haven 4 months ago. It’s my first time living and studying abroad. I was really nervous and excited, and I couldn’t adopt here very well at first due to the language barrier. I was afraid to speak English, so I always stayed at home and only went outside with my husband. Based on this, my husband recommended the English class at Bridges ESL to me. He had took a class here and made a great friend, his tutor. So, I went here with him, and met my English tutor—Jason Hu. He is a great teacher and very patient. At first, I rarely opened my mouth because I was afraid that people couldn’t understand what I said. But, Jason often told me “Don’t be shy, you can do that!” Again and again, under his patience and encouragement, I became confident and forwardly attempted to speak with native speakers. Besides, due to personal reasons, I missed some classes on Saturday, and Jason always asked me to make up missed lessons. I’m so appreciative, and it helps me a lot! So, I really want to say “thank you” for Jason! And I also thank Bridges ESL and their members for giving us this chance to improve our English skill!

Thanks!

Untitled
By Yiding Ping       Tutor: Jason Hu

I came to New Haven last September to pursue a breakthrough for my academic career. So far, I’m not sure if I have accomplished my main purpose, though I have gotten some new ideas for my future research.

For me the biggest improvement comes from an unexpected way, the personality.

I’m from China, a relatively conservative country. For younger generations, things might be better, but for people whose age is around 40, like me, or older, talkativeness is not very encouraged, especially in academics. That’s why many foreign researchers experience a strange quietness during the “any questions?” part of a colloquium. Most people think that’s because we are shy or our English is not good enough. But as I know, the most essential reason is that we come from a culture in which people are afraid of making mistakes. Saying something means there could be something wrong with it, which means one could “lose face”, the worst and most unacceptable thing that could happen in front of colleagues or other researchers. Therefore, in the past ten years, I have tried to speak as little as possible, especially in academic occasions. That made me quieter and quieter. Sometimes, I even thought that maybe I had always been a quiet and introverted person.

But after coming to America, I have changed my thoughts totally. My English (speaking in particular) was very poor because of the deficiency of practice. The total number of English sentences I spoke before I came here was even less than the amount I speak in one conversation class with Jason Hu, who is my tutor in Bridges, a very nice freshman of Yale. I was extremely eager to improve my English, so I grabbed every chance to practice it. Yale is a very diverse and international community, where I could meet and talk with people who come from different countries with different cultures. I began to talk with people every day in English. At first, I simply wanted to improve my speaking ability. I talked with people every day in spite of all kinds of mistakes of grammar and vocabulary, because nobody cares and almost everybody is tolerant and patient with me. Gradually, I found that I
became more and more talkative. I’m not shy to express my personal opinion any more, ready to share my story and experiences anytime and anywhere, even willing to debate with others sometimes. All those things remind me of when I was a young, happy, and talkative student, and how much I loved to communicate with people. It’s an amazing re-discovery about myself, from which I think I will take a lot of advantages in the future.

Staying in America for an entire year will be the most amazing experience of my life. Here I improved my English, got a lot of life-long friends, as well as a totally different self-understanding.

Untitled
By Keumjoo Seol Tutor: Emily Xiao

My name is Keumjoo Seol. I came here to New Haven about one year ago. Before I came here, I worked for a life insurance company for ten years as an underwriter. At that time, I was tuckered out because of my routine days. I was really busy, so I didn’t have enough time to spend with my family. It made me tired.

Just then my husband brought very good and big news. He got a chance to attend an MBA course through his company’s financial support. He was accepted by Yale and I took on temporary leave for two years from my company. And I came here.

At the beginning I thought I would be completely happy. I could be with my family and spend the time just for me. But such was not the case. I was poor at housekeeping and parenting. Above all things, I was unfamiliar with being at home. Besides, I was in my second pregnancy. I was having trouble adjusting to life in New Haven.

But time became the medicine for me. I am getting used to doing housekeeping and parenting and I gradually can find the value and worth being at home. And I had my second baby in November.

I am not completely adjusted but I am becoming so. Now I can enjoy New Haven. I often go to famous restaurants or coffee shops. Now I can smell the roses a little bit.

Winter is gone and spring is coming. Now it reminds us to enjoy our spring. I am going to try to enjoy the rest of my one year here.

My First Day in the US
By Jinyang Yang Tutor: Alice Yang

It was 2:00pm, September 6th, 2015, the most scorching day in the year when I arrived at JFK airport in New York. My body temperature was higher than 100 degrees. I was too weak to notice my surroundings. After passing through Customs, I dragged my body to the information center and made a call to the limo I had booked. One hour later, the driver found me. He took my luggage without any expression on his face. There were six people in the van, and three were Chinese. We didn’t talk much on the way until I was close to my destination. I recognized I should tip the driver. It was my first time paying a tip. I reached into my pocket and found that I had only one hundred-dollar bills. Nobody had told me I could get change for the tip. So I was reluctant to pay 100 dollars for a tip! “Could you please lend me some money?” I said to the Chinese guy beside me. “Of course,” he replied immediately, to my surprise, “how much do you need?” “Probably 20 dollars. I will return it
to you soon!” I thought everything was going to be smooth afterwards, but I was wrong. The driver told me that the dropping off location I had chosen online was New Haven Hotel, instead of my house. But how could I get to my house? It was almost dark, and my cellphone couldn’t receive data. I desperately begged him to do me favor. At last, we were in front of my house, a lovely red house! I offered 20 dollars that borrowed from “my friend” and said to the driver, “is it enough?” I could detect that he got a little surprised, and took the money, still without any expressions.

John, the landlord, a white haired peaceful American, left my room door open. I couldn’t wait to sign the lease after he came because my bones and muscles weren’t able to support me any longer. I fell onto the bed, sleeping there for a whole week. Thanks to my friends in the house, I could survive during such a tough period. They gave me medicine, a thermometer, and cooked delicious homeland meals for me in the US. And thanks to the man who lent me money, I know how powerful trust is. We are now friends. His name is Zhiguang, Hong, an opera singer at Yale.

During the first several months here, I felt a mix of excitement and worry. The sky was deep blue, which I had never seen before. Various styles of architecture fascinated me. But the night was horrible. I received a crime notification every week, and one of them just happened near my house. A lot of stories took place, which I won’t forget.

New Life in New Haven
By Shen Cheng  Tutor: Yixuan Yang

Half a year ago I was just staying in China and half a year later I’m living in America now. After I came here, I have found that there are many differences in living in a foreign country.

First, the language is different. Even though I have learnt English for five years, I can’t understand when the locals speak quickly. When people go to a foreign country, they need to talk to the local people because communication promotes relationships. But if you can’t express yourself and the other person has no idea what you mean, misunderstanding will happen. It will make you feel depressed, so language is indeed a big difficulty for one who lives in a strange place.

Second, culture shock brings misunderstandings. Culture shock is a big problem, it has a great effect on communication between people from different countries. We may tell a joke to want to make the conversation easy, but on the contrary, the joke may bring misunderstanding. We don’t mean to offend others but it has the opposite effect. What an awkward situation!

However, ever since the first day I joined the English class, everything has been changed. With the teaching of the tutor, we learnt a large number of new English words and reviewed the basic knowledge of grammar. She kept leading us to know the world of America and helping us speaking fluent English. Thank you for everything the English class has given us and this will be one unforgettable experience in Yale University.