

BRANO 1

A great summer vacation

I just returned from the greatest summer vacation! It was so fantastic, I never wanted it to end. I spent eight days in Paris, France. My best friends, Henry and Steve, went with me. We had a beautiful hotel room in the Latin Quarter, and it wasn't even expensive. We had a balcony with a wonderful view.

We visited many famous tourist places. My favorite was the Louvre, a well-known museum. I was always interested in art, so that was a special treat for me. The museum is so huge, you could spend weeks there. Henry got tired walking around the museum and said "Enough! I need to take a break and rest."

We took lots of breaks and sat in cafes along the river Seine. The French food we ate was delicious. The wines were tasty, too. Steve's favorite part of the vacation was the hotel breakfast. He said he would be happy if he could eat croissants like those forever. We had so much fun that we're already talking about our next vacation!

BRANO 2

Going to a restaurant

Sandra and Paul are at a steak restaurant. A waiter greets them.

"Do you know what you would like to drink?" the waiter asks.

"Water and orange juice," Sandra says.

"Thank you. Here are your menus," the waiter says.

The waiter brings water for Paul and orange juice for Sandra.

"What would you like to order?" the waiter asks.

"I would like a steak and mashed potatoes," Paul says.

"The same thing, but with green beans," Sandra says.

"And two orders of garlic bread," Paul says.

"Great. You should have it in soon," the waiter says.

The waiter returns after an hour.

"Sorry for your wait. Here are two orders of steaks with mashed potatoes and garlic bread," the waiter says.

"I asked for green beans with mine," Sandra says.

"I'm sorry, I'll get those for you," the waiter says.

The waiter quickly returns with Sandra's green beans.

BRANO 3

At school

Lucas goes to school every day of the week. He has many subjects to go to each school day: English, art, science, mathematics, gym, and history. His mother packs a big backpack full of books and lunch for Lucas. His first class is English, and he likes that teacher very much. His English teacher says that he is a good pupil, which Lucas knows means that she thinks he is a good student.

His next class is art. He draws on paper with crayons and pencils and sometimes uses a ruler. Lucas likes art. It is his favorite class.

His third class is science. This class is very hard for Lucas to figure out, but he gets to work with his classmates a lot, which he likes to do. His friend, Kyle, works with Lucas in science class, and they have fun. Then Lucas gets his break for lunch. He sits with Kyle while he eats. The principal, or the headmaster as some call him, likes to walk around and talk to students during lunch to check that they are all behaving.

The next class is mathematics, which most of the students just call math. Kyle has trouble getting a good grade in mathematics, but the teacher is very nice and helpful.

His fourth class is gym. It is just exercising.

History is his last class of the day Lucas has a hard time staying awake. Many lessons are boring, and he is very tired after doing gym.

BRANO 4

Chicago

Keith recently came back from a trip to Chicago, Illinois. This midwestern metropolis is found along the shore of Lake Michigan. During his visit, Keith spent a lot of time exploring the city to visit important landmarks and monuments.

Keith loves baseball, and he made sure to take a visit to Wrigley Field. Not only did he take a tour of this spectacular stadium, but he also got to watch a Chicago Cubs game. In the stadium, Keith and the other fans cheered for the Cubs. Keith was happy that the Cubs won with a score of 5-4.

Chicago has many historic places to visit. Keith found the Chicago Water Tower impressive as it is one of the few remaining landmarks to have survived the Great Chicago Fire of 1871. Keith also took a walk through Jackson Park, a great outdoor space that hosted the World's Fair of 1892. The park is great for a leisurely stroll, and it still features some of the original architecture and replicas of monuments that were featured in the World's Fair.

During the last part of his visit, Keith managed to climb the stairs inside of the Willis Tower, a 110-story skyscraper. Despite the challenge of climbing the many flights of stairs, Keith felt that reaching the top was worth the effort. From the rooftop, Keith received a gorgeous view of the city's skyline with Lake Michigan in the background.

BRANO 5

Christmas

A Christian holiday signifying the birth of Jesus, Christmas is widely celebrated and enjoyed across the United States and the world. The holiday always falls on 25 December (regardless of the day of the week), and is typically accompanied by decorations, presents, and special meals.

Specifically, the legend behind Christmas (and the one that most children are told) is that Santa Claus, a bearded, hefty, jolly, and red-jacket-wearing old man who lives in the North Pole, spends the year crafting presents with his elves, or small, festive, excited Santa-assistants. All the children who behave throughout the year are admitted to the Good List, and will presumably receive their desired gifts on Christmas, while those who don't behave are placed on the Naughty List, and will presumably (although the matter is determined by parents) receive a lump of coal.

Santa Claus is said to fly around the Christmas sky in a sled powered by his magical reindeer, delivering presents to each child's house. Santa is also expected to slide through chimneys to deliver these presents (homes not equipped with chimneys might "leave the front door cracked open"), and children sometimes arrange cookies or other treats on a plate for him to enjoy.

BRANO 6

Los Angeles

Stephanie recently took a weekend trip to Los Angeles, California. Los Angeles is a coastal city situated along the Pacific Ocean. Many celebrities earned their claim to fame here. Although the town offers many attractions centered around Hollywood culture, there is a lot to see and visit in Los Angeles.

Of course, all things related to Hollywood are popular tourist attractions. The Hollywood Sign, located the Hollywood Hills of the Santa Monica Mountains, is a famous landmark for this star-studded town. Once in downtown Hollywood, it's possible to take a stroll along the Hollywood Walk of Fame. This landmark contains more than 2500 brass stars dedicated to celebrities who have made a significant impact on the entertainment industry. In Hollywood, visitors can even take tours of popular movie studios. Stephanie had a chance to visit Universal Studios, which produces her favorite films.

Los Angeles is also a popular beach town, offering plenty of opportunities for sunbathing and surfing. A common beach destination is the Santa Monica Pier, which offers rides and attractions to its visitors. Here, Stephanie rode the iconic Ferris wheel, which offered her a spectacular view of the city and coast.

These are just some of the things Stephanie experienced during her visit to Los Angeles.

BRANO 7

London

London is a famous and historic city. It is the capital of England in the United Kingdom. The city is quite popular for international tourism because London is home to one of the oldest-standing monarchies in the western hemisphere. Rita and Joanne recently traveled to London. They were very excited for their trip because this was their first journey overseas from the United States.

Among the popular sights that Rita and Joanne visited are Big Ben, Buckingham Palace, and the London Eye. Big Ben is one of London's most famous monuments. It is a large clock tower located at the northern end of Westminster Palace. The clock tower is 96 meters tall. Unfortunately, Rita and Joanne were only able to view the tower from the outside. The women learned that the tower's interior is undergoing renovations until 2021.

Fortunately, the London Eye, the city's famous Ferris wheel, was open to the public. The London Eye is situated along the southern shores of the Thames River. This attraction stands 135 meters high. It is one of London's most well-known spots for gaining aerial views of the city. Each capsule of the Ferris wheel can hold up to 25 passengers. When their capsule stopped at the top of the Ferris wheel, the women took spectacular panoramic photographs of the beautiful cityscape below.

BRANO 8

Miami

Christina visited Miami during her winter vacation. She is from Boston, where it is cold during the winter months. Miami, however, has a very warm climate. There are many sunny days in Miami, and people can go to the beach all year long. Christina spent a good portion of her trip on the beach to relax and sunbathe. However, she also explored Miami and its surroundings.

Inspired by Miami's proximity to the ocean, Christina visited the Miami Seaquarium to learn about marine life. There, she watched a show using trained dolphins, killer whales, and other aquatic mammals. She took a lot of pictures of the sea creatures jumping out of the water and performing tricks.

Christina also took an excursion to the Everglades National Park. This park is a protected area spanning 1.5 million acres. Because the park is mostly swampland, it is home to many reptiles. Native animals include snakes, alligators, and crocodiles. The park is also great for birdwatching. Christina enjoyed hiking the trails in the Everglades and observing the wildlife in its natural environment.

When Christina returned to the city, she visited Little Havana. This is Miami's Cuban neighborhood. Christina could see that Little Havana's people demonstrated a lot of pride for their Cuban heritage. There were many outdoor shops and vendors, live musicians, and the Cuban cuisine was delicious. Little Havana was Christina's favorite part about her trip to Miami. This neighborhood made Christina feel like she had traveled to Cuba without ever having to leave the United States.

BRANO 9

The pet store

George is at the pet store, looking at what kind of pet he might want to get for his birthday. George asked if he could have a horse, but his parents said no because horses are too big.

First, he sees dogs and cats. Baby dogs are called puppies. Baby cats are called kittens. George likes them because they are easy to take care of and can play a lot, but they will get bigger. George wants a small pet. Then George sees animals that have to live in a cage. He sees rabbits, guinea pigs, and mice. He likes these animals because they are small. Birds live in cages too. George sees a parrot and a canary. He likes them all, but he doesn't want to clean the cage.

George sees the animals in tanks. The tanks full of water have fish and turtles in them. He thinks about a goldfish but decides he likes the turtles more. There are also tanks with rocks and sand that have snakes, spiders, and scorpions, but George is afraid of them. George likes the turtles best, but they won't fit in the little fishbowls. Turtles need bigger tanks, so they can swim sometimes and hide sometimes.

George decides he wants to get a turtle for his birthday. He buys a book on how to take care of a turtle and a list of what types of turtles the store has.

BRANO 10

LETTER TO A FRIEND

Hi Fred!

It's been a while since we have been in touch. How has your semester been?

I wanted to send you an email update to you let you know how things have been going during my semester abroad here in Málaga, Spain. I've already been here for six weeks, and I feel like I am finally adapting to the culture. I'm also speaking the language more fluently.

I arrived during the first week of September. The weather has been very nice. Even though it's October, it's still rather sunny and warm. In fact, I went to the beach and swam in the Mediterranean Sea earlier today.

I am living with a very welcoming host family. I have my own private bedroom, but we eat breakfast, lunch, and dinner together. On Sundays, we eat a big home-cooked paella for lunch. In Spain, lunch is usually the biggest meal of the day. It's also very common for the people to take a midday nap right after a big meal. I am actually just waking up from my nap right now!

I am so glad that I decided to spend the semester here in Spain. We have an extended weekend coming up, so a group of my friends and I are going to travel to France for four days. It's so easy and inexpensive to travel internationally in Europe. I love it!

I look forward to hearing from you soon. Like I said, don't hesitate to stay in touch more often. Perhaps you could even come to visit! What do you think?

Best wishes,

Patrick

BRANO 11

The Aperitif

Sometimes, after work, Davide goes to a bar with his friends for an aperitif. The bar is five minutes' walk from the office. Amanda runs there, hoping to find her boyfriend. The bar is big and stylish and there are lots of people. Everybody is chatting and looking very relaxed. Amanda looks around: outside, some older people are sitting at the tables having a coffee or a tea and reading the newspaper. Inside, groups of young people are talking, drinking beer and eating crisps. Among them are some of Davide's friends. "What luck!" thinks Amanda, relieved "Davide is sure to be here with them." But an unpleasant surprise awaits her.

BRANO 12

Looking For Davide

"No problem" thinks Amanda, "Luckily I have the keys!" She opens her bag and searches for the keys. But the keys are not there. Where are they?! Then she remembers, she left them on the table at home in Bologna! Amanda can't get in and she doesn't want to waste time waiting. So she goes to find Davide at work. The office is very close. It is in a large and modern building. When she arrives she asks the secretary where Davide is, but the secretary replies: "I'm sorry, Davide is not at work today." Fortunately, she meets Davide's colleagues on their way home from the office, but they don't know where her boyfriend is either. Amanda begins to worry.

BRANO 13

Amanda And Davide

Amanda is 25 years old. She is studying medicine in Bologna and has lots of friends because she is nice and kind. She is going out with a young man called Davide. He is 30 years old and works in Ferrara. Davide is an engineer. Davide loves going out in the evenings, going to the cinema and meeting friends. Amanda and Davide have been engaged for three years. They live in different cities but luckily Ferrara and Bologna are not very far apart. Amanda has the keys to Davide's house and Davide has the keys to Amanda's house: they don't have any secrets. Today is Wednesday. Amanda doesn't have lessons at the university. She wants to surprise Davide because today is a special day. For Amanda, in fact, it is a very important day.

BRANO 14

Where Are You?

Amanda approaches Davide's friends, Matteo and Carlo. "Hi! How are you both? How nice to see you!" "Hi Amanda! What a surprise to see you here in Ferrara! We're fine, and you?" "I'm fine too, thank you. I'm here to surprise Davide. Do you know where he is?" "Sorry, we don't know. We haven't seen Davide for two days. Why don't you have a glass of wine with us?" But Amanda doesn't want to drink wine with Carlo and Matteo. She just wants to find her boyfriend and celebrate their anniversary! Now Amanda is tired and confused. She doesn't know where to go anymore. Davide is not at home, nor at the office, nor in the bar. Where can he be?

BRANO 15

Surprise!

The train arrives in Bologna on time. Amanda goes straight home but, as she climbs the stairs, she spots some strange things: coloured balloons, red heartshaped cards, red roses. "How strange" she thinks, "Perhaps there's a birthday party... I don't understand." When Amanda reaches her apartment, she opens the door and... surprise! Davide is inside. He's sitting on the sofa reading a book. On the table, dinner is ready and there's a cake and a present for Amanda... and the keys to Davide's place that she forgot to take this morning! Amanda is really happy. She hugs and kisses Davide, and then tells him about her terrible day in Ferrara. Finally they eat and celebrate their anniversary... in the end it has been a truly special day.