

A Collection of Writings
by
Learners of Core Skills



Bord Oideachais & Oiliúna
LÚIMNIGH & AN CHLÁIR
LIMERICK & CLARE
Education & Training Board

**COLLEGE OF FURTHER
EDUCATION & TRAINING**

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Foreword

Welcome to the 36th edition of Simply Said, our annual collection of stories by Core Skills learners from the six Clare campuses: Ennis, Ennistymon, Miltown Malbay, Kilrush, Shannon and Scariff. Core Skills is a part-time programme under Limerick & Clare Education & Training Board. This issue marks 36 years of published writings, which is truly something to celebrate.

There are stories from learners' imaginations and stories of learners' memories, hopes and dreams. There are stories of parental pride as well as stories of war, peace, home, family, friends, pets and many stories of the beauty of Ireland, County Clare and its people.

This year's cover is a collection of floral paintings by learners in a Visual Art class in Lisdoonvarna. Each learner picked their favourite flower and learned how to draw it step by step. Learners applied the watercolour techniques they learned during the class to make each beautiful flower unique. For the final cover design, the flowers were edited together digitally.

Congratulations to each learner who contributed a piece of writing and became part of the Simply Said story. We are fortunate to have so many skilled and caring tutors who support learners to tell their stories in their own way. There is a truly outstanding full-time team in Core Skills, whose dedication to the learners throughout the year makes all aspects of the programme possible.

Apart from writing stories, Core Skills learners have achieved a record 1,041 individual QQI certificates since August 2024. Subjects include ESOL, Information Technology, Art, Craft, Horticulture and Cookery. We congratulate every learner who has been QQI certified this year. A significant number of ESOL learners from around the county also sat Cambridge English exams in Clonroad. We wish them luck with their results and commend them for undertaking such a challenge.

We hope you enjoy reading the very special stories herein.

Kerry O'Sullivan
Adult Literacy Organiser
June 2025

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A day in the life of John

I attend Rehab Care on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. I come by the Local Link bus service. We do many different activities in the centre. We partake in the following programmes and classes like bingo, skittles, meditation, art and crafts. We also partake in the Go for Life games and healthy eating classes which are enjoyable. I enjoy going on walks and outings in the car. I like using the computer to listen to music and the Joe Duffy show.

I go home from the centre in the late afternoon. When I go home, I watch television. I enjoy watching Coronation Street, Fair City and football games. My favourite club is Liverpool. They are top of the table now. I am very happy about this. They are a great team.

By John

Brownie and Fluffy

My cat, Brownie, is brown with white spots and my other cat, Fluffy is black and white in colour. I look after my cats very well. I feed them twice a day, in the morning and evening. I buy special food for my cats in Dunnes Stores. I take them to the vet when they are sick, and I change their litter tray every day. When I go on holidays, my friend Sandra looks after the cats for me. I also feed some stray cats because I feel sorry for them as they seem to have no owners.

I am going to Killarney at the weekend with my brother David to see a new-born baby boy. I have bought a gift for the baby. I like babies because they remind me of my cats as they need cuddles and to be looked after.

By Philomena

Parnell Place

Parnell Place is a lovely day service in Limerick. It is located near the bus station so it is easy to get to. It has two big kitchens and a sewing room. My friends Phil, Anna and I used to have a morning coffee in there.

Mary who works in the centre is very nice, and all the staff are lovely too. There was a girl who used to play the piano very well. I love to listen to her when she plays. I really enjoy the music. I especially enjoy it when some of the girls would sing along, they are beautiful singers.

Sometimes, we go back to visit Parnell Place. Some friends and I go out with Wayne to have a coffee morning there in the big dining room. Don the musician comes out to play music and this always puts everyone in a good mood with his songs. This helps people to have fun and enjoy themselves by singing along and dancing and laughing.

At Christmas time, I have some fond memories of going back to Parnell Place for a music session with Don. I have some lovely memories of Parnell Place.

By Marian

The country vs the city

I live in Limerick city, for 2 days a week, on a Tuesday and Wednesday. I like it there, as it is central in the city. I go home to the countryside in Dromin where I spent 5 days on the farm.

When I am on the farm, I help with the housekeeping and farm jobs. My favourite animals are the four cats. I also like cows. I help with the cooking and washing up for my three brothers and one sister.

Life in the city is different. It is busy with the traffic. It is easy to go to the shops as they are all close together.

In the countryside, we must drive to the shops, and it is dark at night. You can see the stars and the moon in the sky in the countryside better than in the city. They are beautiful. The air is fresh and healthy.

By Nora

My new cat

My name is Breda. I am getting a new cat. Her name is going to be Lucky. She is tiger coloured. I am looking forward to meeting her. She is able to play with a ball. Lucky will eat nuts. My two children will be looking forward to greet her.

I will buy special toys. Lucky, the cat will be great company. She has to get used to new people. Lucky, the cat will love climbing everywhere.

By Breda

Quizzes

I like watching programmes about quizzes. I like to challenge myself to find the answers to each question. I like to learn about new topics to help my brain learn new information. Watching these programmes helps me to expand my knowledge.

I like to watch quiz programmes such as Who Wants to Be a Millionaire, Beat the Chasers and Mastermind. I like to watch these programmes every day. You can watch them on BBC, Virgin Media and RTE 1. I like the way they make these programmes fun to watch and see the progress of each player. It helps me to not just increase my knowledge but to enjoy the learning process. It is always surprising to find out that the answers can be something totally new to me. The more I watch, the more I learn and enjoy my time.

By Dermot

My best friend

My best friend is Philomena. She goes for a walk with me. She gives me sweets. We went to the same school. We have been friends for a long time. She is so lovely. We do things together. We used to play together when we were young. She has been always kind to me.

By Máiread

My birthday

I like to spend my day colouring, painting and going for a walk. I like gardening and I have different plants. My birthday is tomorrow and I will spend it with my family. We will go out to celebrate and eat a cake. My favourite cake is chocolate with strawberry. We will watch TV later on the day. We will watch different movies and enjoy the day.

By Joseph

My story

I like baking at Rehab Care. I usually bake on a Monday at the Rehab Care centre in Shannon with my programme facilitator Monika. We bake fruit scones, cheese scones, tea bracks and cheesecakes. I share my baking with my housemate. The most difficult cake I baked was a Swiss roll as it difficult to roll.

I like social outings with the Brothers of Charity. Last year, we went to Belfast and stayed 2 nights. We went to see the Titanic Museum. It was very interesting learning about the history. We also had lovely meals out. This year we will go somewhere different in the summer.

By Mary

My interests

I like to spend my day looking after my animals. I have about 20 animals. I have about 15 roses in the garden. My roses are red, yellow, orange, white, purple and much more. I like watching them and smelling their lovely fragrances. I like to grow roses and give them as a gifts to my family and neighbours. My family and neighbours are always happy to get some of my roses. I have different plants inside my house in different rooms. I find gardening very relaxing and therapeutic.

By Darren

Welcome to Dnipro

Dnipro is the leading business, industrial, scientific and cultural centre of Ukraine. It has the longest embankment in Ukraine and Europe, as well as a large number of parks and recreation areas. For the more curious there are museums, exhibitions and theatres.

Here are some historical places worth visiting:

1. Historical Museum named after Yavornytskyi
2. Katerynoslavsky Boulevard is the first pedestrian street in Dnipro
3. Hotel Ukraine
4. Savior's Transfiguration Cathedral
5. Dnipro Philharmonic
6. Menorah is cultural and business centre
7. House of organ and chamber music

I also recommend a visit to the Time Machine Museum of retro cars, the Planetarium and the Rocket Park. Gastro-tourists can find a variety of cafés and restaurants with cuisines from all over the world in Dnipro.

By Nataliia

Baking

My name is Aleksandra and my job is to bake cakes, sweets, cookies and pastries. Living in Poland, I graduated from school in this subject. I came to Ireland in 2021 year and started working in a hotel in a housekeeping position. Over time I began learning English so that I could find a job in my profession. When I know how to communicate in English, I will find a job that will give me more satisfaction. I'm glad I'm not alone here. I live with my boyfriend. I like living in Ireland, although the weather here is gloomy the people are nice and helpful.

By Aleksandra

From Poland to West Clare

I'm Polish. I moved to England in 2016. I felt very excited. At that time, I did not speak much English. Everything was new to me. I moved to England because my cousin offered me work and a place to stay.

After a few days I started working in a production company. At the start, this job was very difficult but I felt happy and comfortable because I was not alone. After few weeks I started English classes. I stayed in England for few years and then returned to Poland to attend university. I studied electronics. After studying, I decided to return to England. Now I live in Lahinch in County Clare with my girlfriend. We are both learning English with FET in Miltown Malbay. I am very happy attending this course.

By Rafał

Seeing the ocean for the first time

My name is Svitlana. I am from Ukraine. When I came to Ireland I saw the ocean for first time in my life. I was fascinated by its beauty. It changes its colour like a person changes mood. It is grey, then blue, then turquoise. I can watch the ocean for hours.

I have two grandsons, Max and Zenya, and we often walk near the sea. Although the water in the ocean is cold, this does not stop my grandchildren from playing in the water. They love to swim in the ocean too. I like living in Ireland. It is a wonderful country.

By Svitlana

Feeling happy in West Clare

My name is Liliia. I was born in Ukraine in the beautiful and cheerful city of Odessa. This is a city on the Black Sea coast. It is a lovely city. I have two wonderful children. My son is 7 years old and my daughter is 16 years old.

This is part of my story about my life before I moved to Ireland. I had a favourite job and many friends. I worked as the manager of a large petrol station. It had a restaurant and many other services. I was happy there until the war started. It was very scary but we continued to live and work. My children and I lived like this for 2 and a half years like this.

When my car was damaged in an explosion and my son started having health problems, I decided to drop everything and leave Ukraine. On 27th of January 2024, my kids and I arrived in Ireland. Life started over. I needed to remember some of the English language that I learned in school 25 years ago but had never practiced.

I was surprised when we were greeted by a wonderful and very beautiful country. Wonderful and colourful nature, very nice, friendly and open people who live life, smiling and laughing a lot, keeping up their traditions. Thanks to them I quickly found a job. My kids are in school, and I joined a FET English speaking course in Miltown Malbay to help me improve my English. A year on, I finally feel calm and comfortable in Ireland and I really hope that I will be able to stay here. Bless this country.

By Liliía

From Argentina to Ireland

My name is Noelia. I was born in Argentina. In 2017 I took the difficult decision to leave my country to move Spain. The reason was the bad situation of my country. My first goal was to study and start working quickly. I'm a lifeguard and a swimming teacher. I never imagined that a visit to Ireland would change my life. I fell in love with an Irishman and this beautiful country. Today, I am a lifeguard and a swimming instructor in Lahinch. I love my job and County Clare.

By Noelia

My hope

I'm deeply grateful to Ireland for giving my family and I safety. My eldest son Nikita is fighting in the war and my niece's husband has died. Here, my 15-year-old son, Benzhamin, can study and live in peace. I hope this war will end soon and we'll return to Ukraine because we miss our relatives and our old life very much.

By Oksana

Our place

Our family lives in the town of Ennis. We live in a two-storey house. Our apartment is on the first floor. We have two bedrooms. There is a large living-dining room and a very small kitchen. We also have a bathroom with a shower, washbasin and toilet.

In the living-dining room we have a sofa, an armchair, three other chairs, a table, a bookcase and a fireplace. Above the fireplace there is a large family photo and a wall clock. We have electric heating. There is a small hallway. It only has a coat rack. We have a nice and cosy apartment.

By Eduard

A Ukrainian in Ireland

I have only one wish. I want this terrible war to end. The war changed us all. I love my country very much.

Tourism is developed in Ukraine and also in Ireland. Both Ukraine and Ireland have many beautiful places: mountains, lakes and forests, but of course the climate is different and the landscape is different. In Ukraine, the land is very fertile, but in Ireland, the harvests are not as good. People in Ireland are very kind and welcoming.

By Olha

In the café

One day I went shopping to Ennistymon. Being hungry and tired I decided to have a quick snack in the café, Foodies Korner. This lovely deli café is situated on the main street, in the centre of the town, opposite the bus stop. Its location is very convenient for waiting passengers who want a snack and others who have plenty of time to relax in such a cosy place.

The café is simply designed. A few tables and chairs are on the left, a display case with products is on the right. It has a wide range of good value food and drinks on the menu. You can enjoy plenty of toasted sandwiches, brown bread, pancakes, cakes or you can order a full Irish breakfast with tea or coffee. The price is very reasonable and affordable. The workers are extremely kind, attentive and helpful. The service is fast and efficient.

I would highly recommend this café for adults and for families too. Children can enjoy this place also. The best time to visit this café is in the morning and noon time. Dinner time is the busiest. Enjoy eating there!

By Oksana

Growing food in Ukraine

My name is Tamila. I am from Ukraine. Ukraine is my motherland. Ireland is a wonderful country and the nature is beautiful. In Ukraine there are forests, mountains, rivers, lakes, seas, gardens and boundless fields in which golden wheat grows. All this beauty awakens in spring, when nature comes alive and our gardens bloom. Ukraine has a favourable climate and a lot of sun. Thanks to these natural conditions, fragrant fruits and vegetables ripen. My favourite fruits are cherry, apricot, peach, watermelon. My favourite vegetables are tomatoes, cucumbers, zucchini, eggplants and peppers. All vegetables and fruits are very, very tasty. Come to Ukraine and see for yourself. I thank the Irish for their understanding and support. I will always remember their kindness.

By Tamila

Friends from around the world

My name is Sai. I am from Bangladesh. When I arrived in Ireland, I felt very nervous. It is my first time in Ireland. I speak only in a few words in English. My mother language is Marma. English is my third language. Everything in Ireland is new for me. When I arrived in Dublin, a friend met me at the airport. His name is Md. My friend and I took a taxi to my new home in Dublin and then onto Miltown Malbay.

Miltown Malbay is a beautiful place near the Atlantic Ocean but the wintery weather is very cold. This is difficult for me. I am used to the sun. After a few days in Miltown Malbay I started an English conversation class with LCETB. I enjoy our class on a Wednesday afternoon. I have made many new friends. They are from different countries around the world, Poland, Ukraine and Spain. I have learned many new words and feel very happy. I am no longer alone.

By Saí

Culture

My son is Irish, but his mother is African. He has grown up with Irish culture and speaks the Irish language. He loves Irish food and is very friendly. In a sense, he is a bit confused about his culture but likes me to teach him about my own culture. He is a smart child. If he is in Ireland, his actions are the same as other Irish people but when I bring him back home, he tries to adapt to my culture. That makes me happy as a parent.

By Síham

The Aran Islands

I would like to tell you about my trip to the Aran Islands. It was in the summer, in August, and the weather was very warm and sunny. We got there by ferry. I really enjoyed it. I was on the island when there was a running race. I forget the name of it but there were a lot of people there.

There really are a lot of donkeys on the island, and they are friendly. It's an incredible place that I would love to go back to.

By Abiodun

Cottage cheese pancakes

Ingredients:

720g cottage cheese
1 egg
80g sugar
65g semolina
1 vanilla pod
10-30g flour

Method:

Mix all of the ingredients in a mixer at a low speed and leave to infuse for 10-15 minutes. When the mixture is combined, it is necessary to form the dough into balls, weighing 50-60g, and then put them on a board with some flour. Take a plate and sift some flour on to it and roll each ball in flour. Shape them into pancakes and fry them in a frying pan with a little oil on both sides. Put on a plate and serve with maple syrup, Nutella and fruit.

By Anastasiya

Now I live in Ireland

I have lived in Ireland for the past two years. It is a very colourful country. Before, when I lived in Ukraine, I thought Ireland was a cold, desolate and remote island. Now that I am here, it turns out not to be so uninhabitable. I'll tell you more, I managed to fall in love.

The nature in Ireland is fantastic: a strong, immense and beautiful ocean, the beaches are unique in their own way and the cliffs are dangerous and so beautiful. For the first time in my life, I saw the ocean. I am amazed by the green colour because the island is richly green all year round. Here, there is a mild winter and summer compared to Ukraine. The winters there are about -20 degrees and

in summer +40 degrees and in Ireland there is a much more average temperature all year round.

I especially love the sky in Ireland. It is especially beautiful and deep. I'm getting a little tired of the rain and I want more warm days in the summer to be able to swim in the ocean, but I am infinitely grateful to Ireland and its people for giving me the opportunity to hide from the war and provide wonderful living conditions.

By Valeríia

A Christmas feeling

I very much like the feeling before Christmas Day. Everything is filled with magic. The streets and buildings are beautifully decorated. It feels like you have found yourself in a fairytale. The world and all people are being kinder. Everyone is smiling and expecting their dreams to come true. Everybody hurries to buy more gifts for their family and friends. The children are excited, and they are writing their letters to Santa Claus. Everybody, from young to old, expects magic.

By Yanína

Facts about vinyl records

Do you want to know some facts?

1. You can see music on vinyl records, not just listen to them, if you have a microscope.
2. If you want, you can hear music from vinyl without speakers.
3. A vinyl record player can weigh much more than you.
4. A vinyl record has the best music recording quality.
5. The most expensive vinyl record costs about 1.5 million pounds.
6. The price of a vinyl record player can be more than €200,000.

So, love and listen to vinyl.

By Igor

My hobby

My name is Nadiia. I'm from the wonderful country of Ukraine. I am a creative person living in Ireland, and have had the opportunity of making unique, handmade products from epoxy resin. I make beautiful items like clocks, Christmas decor, jewellery holders and other products. It is a hobby that gives me enjoyment and relaxation when I am making things.

My clocks decorate three different houses and give pleasure to their new owners. It's wonderful to make things that bring people joy.

By Nadiia

An Irish forest

Ireland sometimes gives me a sense of my Ukrainian home. My childhood was spent in a small village near the Carpathian Mountains.

In the summer, my mother and I often went to the forest to pick berries, mushrooms and nuts. For this, we needed to wake up very early and walk about an hour to the forest. To this day, I remember this feeling of the morning forest – the fresh smell of pine trees, moss and the light aroma of flowers.

When I first found myself in an Irish forest, I felt the same way. Childhood memories flooded back and tears rolled down my face. It was a feeling of home, that I had long forgotten.

By Mariana

My close friend

This story is about my best friend. She is very close to me. We know each other for many years now. We go together for lunch every week. She likes to eat rice with curry and drinks Coke. She likes to enjoy a cup of coffee during the day. She likes to eat chocolate cake.

I always love to give her art work that I make myself. She is always grateful to get my art work pieces. She loves listening to music such as Westlife. She loves art and crafts. She likes socializing with people. She loves to go out a lot with her family and friends.

We love to go away for a few days twice a year to see new places. We prefer to go away during the summer to visit nice places. She likes going to the pub, she loves dancing. Also, she loves going to the disco. She plays sports. She likes baking cakes, scones and apple pies.

By David

Life in Ireland

My life in Ireland has changed absolutely. When I arrived in this place, I felt stressed, and I did not want to leave my country. The first time without a language and without friends was really hard, but people in this country are really friendly and kind. They helped me feel better in the hard situations of my life. I was surprised when an old man, who did not know me, asked me, 'Can I help you? Are you crying?'. It was so nice and warm.

When I started volunteering more in a charity shop. I met my friend Armelina. She's from France and she had similar difficulties with the adjustment period to Irish life. We became good friends, and she helped me with English.

By Oksana

My dog Koda

My name is Malgorzata. I live in Shannon. I come from Poland and I'm 48 years old. I have a husband and a daughter. I also have a dog, that I will tell you a little about.

My dog's name is Koda. She's a boxer breed. Koda is female and she's brown in colour. There is no other like her in Shannon. Koda is a very smart dog. She's very friendly and she really likes to play with a

ball. She also likes to sleep a lot. She's part of our family and we love her very much. She's our faithful friend.

By Malgorzata

My life

I am thankful to have my own place. In the morning, I like to do some gardening work. I love flowers, I have many different flowers with different colours. I like to do art and crafts at home such as painting. I like to go to my crafts and cooking classes every week. We have a great time learning and socializing with each other.

I like to listen to music such as, Westlife. I like to cook rice and crisps for lunch. I like to have cornflakes for my breakfast with orange juice. After having my breakfast, I like to go out for a walk with my friend. I like to go for a walk around my house. During the day, I like to go for a cup of coffee with my friend. We enjoy talking and spending the time together.

At the evening time, I like to iron my clothes. Every day, I like to watch *Home* and *Away* on RTE 2. Also, I like to watch *Heartbeat*. *Heartbeat* is my favourite drama series. It is about policemen going after people. Nick Rowan is one of the main characters in this series. Every day, they have a different story with a new adventure.

I have a big family, sisters and brothers. I am the oldest. We live in the same city. We love to see each other from time to time. We celebrate our birthdays, Easter, Christmas and all the special occasions together.

By Teresa

Scar the lion

Today, I would like to tell you about the brave and good leader Scar. I heard about Scar a few years ago. I watched a programme about Scar on the Discovery Channel which was very interesting and a good story.

Scar is a brave lion in Africa. He is a famous lion. He is famous for being such a brave lion that scares crocodiles and other dangerous animals. He is a good leader and protector for the other lions. Scar leads a pride of 14 lions. Scar's age was confirmed at around 10 years old when he started to protect other lions.

There is a big mystery of how he lost one eye. Some people say that he lost it while he was protecting his family, while others say that he lost it due to health issues.

I liked Scar's story as I found it very interesting. Also, very inspiring to me to help and protect my family. You can watch many videos and stories about Scar and other lions on YouTube.

By Travis

Amazing Ireland

I arrived in Ireland in August 2022. Until April 2024, I lived in Ennis. This is a very beautiful town in which there are a lot of shops, cafés and restaurants, as well as places where you can take a walk. I was in many cities, such as Galway, Shannon, Limerick, Waterford and Cork. In my opinion, all cities have their own character, which emphasizes their beauty. At the moment, I live in a small village called Bunratty. It is located near Bunratty Castle. There are several bars and a restaurant near the castle. I really like this place.

By Serhiu

My life in Ireland

My name is Lidiia. I came to Ireland with my daughters in 2022 from Ukraine when the war started there. Ireland welcomed us warmly, provided temporary protection, which includes the right to live, work, healthcare and education. We really like this emerald country. There is very beautiful scenery here and many kind and friendly people who are ready to help at any time. There are many beautiful places

here that we have visited. We especially like the Atlantic Ocean, cliffs, beaches with turquoise water, beautiful majestic castles. Over these last 3 years we have fallen in love with Ireland and we would not mind staying here.

By Lidíia

Voice of Silence

My name is Svitlana. I'm 22 years old, I'm a pretty creative soul. I like to draw, go on mini trips to picturesque places, play the keyboard and sometimes write poetry. Here is one of my favourite poems:

Voice of Silence

The grove hums, the grass sways,
somewhere in the distance, a princess sighs,
longing for her village.

Where everything bloomed, smelled of grass,
nightingales greeted on the porch,
and cats roamed about.
Neighbours all drank wine
she wasn't invited
and they were all merry.

While I sat alone,
looking out the window,
where rain with ominous thunder,
brought sad thoughts,
and the storm with wind raged,
making me think it was the end.

But, as always happens,
the sun emerges from behind the clouds,
giving a smile and prosperity,
and you want to respond,
giving joy and love...

By SvitTym

The Emerald Isle

My name is Tanya. I am 57 years old. I'm from Ukraine. I have a habit of making plans for the following year. My plans included travelling around Europe. I was attracted by the architecture of Austria, Germany, France and Italy, but COVID-19 and war wrote their own plans.

I arrived in Ireland at the end of January 2023. Dublin greeted me with rain, thick grey clouds hung over the city. The sun was invisible. A fine rain fell from the sky and the wind swirled the drops close to the ground. An umbrella is useless in this situation. Later I realized that the weather in Ireland is very varied. It may change several times during the day.

Ireland is called the 'Emerald Isle' because green grass grows here all year round. When you drive from one city to another, you can see sheep, cows, and horses grazing in the fields.

I have visited many interesting places in Ireland. There are beautiful medieval castles, temples, parks and museums. You can get special feelings on the observation platforms near the ocean. Cliffs up to 200 meters high and turquoise foaming waves are mesmerizing with their beauty. You can look at these landscapes forever. I fell in love with Irish nature.

I'm happy that life changed my plans, and I got to know such a beautiful country, with its magnificent scenery and wonderful people.

By Tanya

Satsivi-a Georgian dish

Boil a chicken in 3 litres of water. Take it out of the broth, cut into pieces and fry in butter.

To make the sauce; grind 300g walnuts, add salt, pepper, 1 tablespoon turmeric, 1 tablespoon of coriander and six or seven cloves of garlic.

Mix everything together and add 1 cup of dry ground corn.

Fry two onions in butter and put them in the sauce, pour the broth gradually over this sauce, add the fried chicken pieces to this broth and boil.

The dish is now ready to eat.

By Marharyta

My favourite day

Now that I've retired, every day is my favourite day!

By Nollag

My favourite day

My favourite day of the week is Friday. There is so much to look forward to and be excited about, knowing that I am free to plan what I like to do for the long weekend.

By Catherine

My favourite day

My favourite day of the week is Wednesday because I get to learn a skill I've always wanted to have, and I get to meet lots of people.

By Eilish

My favourite day

My favourite day of the week is Sunday because I love to spend time with my family.

By Veneta

My favourite day

My favourite day of the week is Wednesday because I come to sewing class and experience it with a lovely group and tutor. It's the highlight of my week.

By Siobhan

My favourite day

The weekend is my favourite time of the week because I chill out, read papers and look after moi!

By Rosario

My favourite day

My favourite day of the week is Monday because since I retired I can enjoy the freedom at the start of the week.

By Louise

My favourite day

My favourite day of the week is Sunday because it's my day of rest and relaxation, with a good book or my embroidery, and Lyric FM.

By Eileen

My favourite day

My favourite day of the week is Wednesday because I have a day off work. I have day and evening classes and I get to walk my dog.

By Bernie

My favourite day

My favourite day of the week is Wednesday because I get to meet all my talented friends and patient tutor in my sewing class.

By Edel

My favourite day

My favourite day of the week is Friday because it's like a little celebration. Families can get together and share, and visit each other.

By Sawzan

My favourite day

My favourite day of the week is Wednesday because I get to come to sewing class, which is something I've always wanted to do.

By Paula

My favourite day

My favourite days of the week are the days when I visit the over sixty-fives club in Cahercalla in Ennis, where we do so many different things like growing sweet peas and crafts.

By Monica

My favourite day

My favourite day of the week is Tuesday because I like sewing and embroidery.

By Trish

My favourite day

My favourite day of the week is Thursday because I video chat with my sister in Canada on a Thursday.

By Iseult

My favourite day

My favourite day of the week is Sunday because it's full of possibilities.

By Antoinette

Trash Busters

All of us have some difficulties in life. For some, it's the language. For others, it's loss and pain. For Ukrainians, it's a kind of hole in our hearts because of this damn war. We all have our own sort of battlefield and it's not always necessary to have a gun in your hand. I'm certain we can fight in a different way, not with destruction, but with solutions. Not with guns and bombs, but with ideas and positive actions, with projects and with engagement.

Three years ago, when I came to Ireland from Ukraine, my English was something like: 'Hello. How are you? Goodbye.' I felt, probably like all of us migrants feel, like an alien who had just landed on another planet, without any instructions or maps. Along with this fear, something else came up, an idea. A thought slowly turned into a goal. A decision to change at least something for the better, that's how my bold project with the bizarre name, 'Trash Busters', was born.

How did it all start? I remember rambling around Ballyalla Lake and seeing how a stunning place was spoiled by litter. At that moment, the idea came to me. What if we turned the cleaning process into a kind of quest, so it wouldn't feel like boring chores? At the time, it was just a raw idea, a dream. Later, I realized that if we want to change anything about our future, we should do it through our youth. Young people often become the source of pollution, but they can also

become the driving force of change. Through humour, a sense of competition, visual language, and simple participation, we can engage them. They are always open to new things and full of energy. We just need to direct that energy in the right way.

Then came the years of studying. At first, there was a struggle with the language barrier, and then two years in college. Every day was a small step toward positive change, like a tiny grain of sand in a glass vase it took time. Slowly, but with belief and now — university. Now, imagine going through all of this as a man in his forties. If it weren't for that path, I might have forgotten about the idea. It would have stayed in my imagination, and you wouldn't be reading this story now.

'Trash Busters' is not just an intriguing name, it's a journey. It's an application. What is important is an idea, an idea that unites those who want to make the world a better place by doing simple things. We turn the environmental problem into a game. Someone takes a photo of pollution, the app creates a 'monster' on the map and maybe even in augmented reality and to kill the monster, you have to clean the area! All participants are hunters. Is it a game? Sure thing. However, behind it hides a real idea to form a new attitude toward the environment by marking polluted places on the map and involving volunteers. It could be you. It could be anyone under a hundred.

I hope that by next year, all of us will have the opportunity to download this game. I hope you'll become part of our team. Let our weapons be garbage bags, gloves, phones and smiles. Even one, small, clean place is a huge win. If all of us who believe unite, we are destined to succeed.

By Serhiu

I like Ireland

My name is Arina. I am 18 years old. I'm from Ukraine. I came to Ireland in 2023 with my parents. I continue studying at a Ukrainian college online. I like Ireland. There are very nice people here.

By Arina

Cake for Anastasiia

One day my daughter wanted a cake. I happily agreed because I love to bake. I found a recipe and got the ingredients: flour, eggs, butter, sour cream, baking powder, and my daughter's favourite jam.

I made and baked the cake. It took me 2 hours. When Anastasiia came home from school, she was happy. I made tea. We sat down to eat cake.

By Mariia

Living in Killaloe

My name is Viktoriia. I am forty-three years old and I am married to Yevhen. We are living in Killaloe with our daughter Arina and a small dog, Tyapa. We are from Ukraine and came to Ireland in 2023. We are learning English and I started working here. I like my new job. We like living in Killaloe very much.

By Viktoriia

Volunteering with Killaloe Tidy Towns

My name is Ahmad. My birthday is in May. I am an accountant and I live in Killaloe. I am married and we have two boys. They are 15 and 12 years old. I am learning English with LCETB.

I am a volunteer with Killaloe Tidy Towns and we work every Saturday morning. I am very happy to work with great friends and have a good time. They have helped me a lot in getting to know this community.

By Ahmad

Driving in Ireland is peaceful and relaxing

My name is Yevhen. I drive my car in Ireland every day. I follow the left-hand driving rules. I enjoy the beautiful Irish roads and the green landscapes. I stop to admire the charming villages and ocean views. Driving here is peaceful and relaxing. I love exploring new places in my car. I am happy living in Ireland. The weather changes often but I like it.

By Yevhen

Ireland

My name is Alla. I'm from Izmail in Ukraine and I've been living in Ireland more than two years. I went on many trips with my host family. Last month, we visited Clifden and we stayed there for three days. I loved everything there, especially, the beaches, the mountains and the big castles. I loved the fresh seabass in the restaurants and I enjoyed listening to great Irish music in the pubs while having some Guinness.

Ireland is a beautiful country. I know this because of my many wonderful trips with my host family.

By Alla

My Kherson

My name is Tanya. I am 57 years old. I'm from Ukraine. In Ukraine I lived in Kherson. It is a very large city with a population of about 275,000 people. It's on the right bank of the river Dnipro. Kherson region is the watermelon capital of Ukraine. Very tasty sweet watermelons grow in the fields of Kherson region. Tomatoes, cucumber and many other vegetables are also grown in these fields. Here you can see very large fields where sunflowers and wheat grow. We also have many big gardens where many types of fruit trees grow. I love Ireland with its great nature and wonderful people, but I miss my city of lovely fresh fruits.

By Tanya

My family and me

My name is Viktoriia. I am 45 and I am from Ukraine. I am interested in new experiences, so I am enjoying my life here in Ireland. I work in a restaurant and I love it because I can talk with a lot of people and improve my English. My hobbies are sport and listening to classical and modern music. My favourite time is when I am with my family. We love to go fishing in the lakes and rivers of Ireland. We usually have a BBQ afterwards or visit a historical site or the zoo.

By Viktoriia

Ramadan

The month of Ramadan comes once a year and when it starts the whole family keeps a fast and everybody, both young and old, pray together when it is Iftar time. Iftar means that fasting time is finished – time to sit and eat together.

By Shufurabi

Then and now

My name is Alla and I am 31 years old. I am from Ukraine. My family and I used to live in the village of Velyka Kardashynka in the Kherson region. After the war we were forced to leave our home. Before the war we grew vegetables and kept bees. Now, our family has started a new life in beautiful Ireland, with the hope that the war will end as soon as possible.

By Alla

Easter traditions

My name is Tetiana. I'm from Ukraine and I have a big family there. We have Easter traditions in our family. At sunrise we gather near the church, and then we go to our parent's house to gather at a large table with loved ones and friends. We continue to celebrate all day.

I am living in Ireland for three years. I like it a lot, but now I miss my family and our values and traditions.

By Tetiana

My dream

My name is Nataliia and I like living in Ireland. The people here are very friendly. They have helped us a lot and I am very grateful to them for that. I really would like to return to my hometown of Pochaiv to meet my daughter and the rest of my family, but my dream is to live here in Shannon with my daughter and her family.

By Nataliia

My Saturdays in Ukraine

My name is Liudmyla. I miss my Saturday tradition in Ukraine. Every Saturday my two daughters and two grand-daughters used to come to my house where we set a big table and cooked food together. We talked about many things, played cards, danced and had a lot of fun. I really miss Saturdays in my home.

By Liudmyla

My loved ones

My name is Svitlana. I'm from Kharkov in Ukraine. I've been living in Ireland for two and half years now. I like Ireland very much but I miss my native places and my loved ones. I have one son and he lives in Canada. I would love to go to Canada to visit him.

By Svitlana

Clare Animal Welfare

My mum works with a charity called Clare Animal Welfare. They take in cats and dogs. She gets calls from people who need help with trapping and neutering cats. Sometimes they don't want to keep the cats, so my mum tries to find homes for them. That's why, sometimes, we keep them. We kept a collie called Minty and we also kept a few cats.

I've got a cat called C.B. and we have a dog called Minty. I had another cat called Ellie but she was old and she had to be put down.

I think Clare Animal Welfare are a good charity because not everyone is nice to their pets and we should support them.

By Jení

Fairs in Whitegate in the 1930's

I read about local fairs in Whitegate in 1930's on the Dúchas website. The fairs were held in the middle of the village, usually on the 28th of the month.

Back then, buyers would go to the local fairs to buy either cattle, pigs or horses. When animals were sold, a 'luck-penny' was usually given. It was calculated according to the price of the animal. If a cow was sold for fifteen pounds, the luck penny was five shillings, and if a horse was sold for twenty-five, then ten shillings would be given. When a bargain was made the parties concerned would spit on their hands and shake on it.

I think it's a pity the fairs aren't there anymore. It was a great way for farmers to meet up and talk about farming problems or the weather and some had fun gossiping.

By Paula

One from my bucket list

I would like to learn sign language, so I signed up for an online course today with the help of my tutor. I've started already by printing out the alphabet. I'm trying to learn this in the class and also at home. I am going to work hard at this course. I like the idea of helping other people and this is why I'd like to learn it for myself.

By Mary

My job

I work in a flower shop in Scariff. I sort out the new flowers that come in to the shop and help getting deliveries ready. Then sometimes, I make up some boxes for the flowers that are sold in the shop. I often help out with customers which I enjoy a lot.

I like my job because it is a nice place to be, while at the same time, I earn money for myself.

By Liam

It was too late

It was a usual Saturday morning. Maria had decided to have a little walk across the park to her favourite café. It was a nice, sunny day, though a little cold. She got a cappuccino and sat down by the window. There were a few people inside, but only one man caught her attention. He looked anxious and spent most of the time staring at his phone. After a while, the man suddenly jumped up from his seat.

As the man left the café, Maria noticed that his phone was still on the table. She thought he would probably come back but when 15 minutes had passed, she decided to take a look at the phone, hoping to find some contact so she could return it. She had nearly reached the table when a message popped up on the phone: 'Don't tell him.'

Curious, she unlocked the phone and was absolutely shocked. The text was about a man who had been given his last chance to leave

the country, or it would turn out badly for him. The man who had left the phone behind knew some secrets about these people, and they wanted him to keep quiet.

Maria was confused and left the café in no time. She saw the name on the phone and kept thinking: 'Who is Mark?' She hadn't even made it around the corner when a black car suddenly stopped in front of her, blocking her way. A few men pushed Maria into the car, and one of them whispered to her, 'You were not supposed to read that'.

She rode with a bag pulled over her head, her body thrown from side to side as the car took sharp turns. 'Why did I have to be so curious?' she thought, regretting it a dozen times over. 'Just 10 minutes ago, I had been peacefully drinking my coffee. Why is this happening to me?'

After another turn the car braked harshly. A man dragged her out of the car and then pushed her into a dark, smelly place and sat her on a chair. She could feel how much colder it was than outside. Then someone yelled, 'Here we are, Mark, as you asked for!'

'Mark...' Maria thought, fearfully. She heard slow steps approaching to her. The man took the bag off her head. Maria couldn't believe her eyes. She had seen this face many years ago, but couldn't remember who was standing right in front of her.

He covered her mouth with a cloth that had a strong chemical odour. She quickly started feeling weak, and her eyes began to close. A few men grabbed her and dragged her behind the door. Every now and then, as she struggled to open her eyes with the last of her strength, she saw flashes of light passing along the corridor. Then, suddenly, she remembered who Mark was, but it was too late.

By Artem

'Look around...do you know her?'

It was almost midnight. The nightclub on one of the lively streets in France was teeming with events, attracting young people to immerse themselves in a world of relaxation and new sensations.

Twenty-five year old Tinsi, who had come to study in this new country, was right in the middle of it all, accompanied by her two best friends.

Tinsi had never been like the others. She was far more interested in studying and getting to know different people, immersing herself in the country through communication with the locals. The fact that Tinsi ended up in the club was no accident - it was part of her plan, a plan her friends had no idea about. A few hours later, Tinsi found herself surrounded by young French men and French women, chatting with them amiably. How she managed to make connections so quickly remains a mystery to this day?

After some time, Tinsi learned an important detail - soon, a closed VIP party for locals would begin in the club, and only French people could get in. At that moment, an idea sparked in her mind - she had to get in, no matter what. Her desire was so strong that her clear-headed reasoning could not resist it. To achieve her goal, Tinsi decided to make a radical change. She would completely alter her appearance. She decided to look entirely different, hoping that with her new look, she would be able to better fit into the crowd. Telling her friends that she needed to step away for a moment, she set her plan into motion.

In a short time, she not only changed her clothes but also her overall appearance, getting rid of her long, luxurious hair. Now her hair was cut short and styled in an elegant fashion, giving her the charm of a French woman from the elite circles. Gathering her thoughts and glancing in the mirror, Tinsi felt how her inner world had also shifted. This new version of her was confident, even a bit cold and ruthless in her determination to break into the elite society.

Looking at her now, only one question could be asked. 'Who was this elegant French woman?'

By Sofía

New Syria is free

On the 8th December 2024 there was a big surprise for the Syrian people. Suddenly, the war was finished and the bad people were gone! There is a new president, Ahmed al Shara and a new flag. Everyone was happy and excited and less scared. There was a new government and new rules.

Many people were in prison for all the 14 years of the war. We didn't know if they were alive. On this day the Sednaya prison was opened. We found out that 5 members of my family had died in prison. This was very, very sad for my family. Before Syria was freed a lot of people were being treated badly and lots of innocent people were killed.

Now there is a future of hope. There is economic recovery. Healthcare and education systems are being rebuilt. There is a return to tourism. Before the war Syria was a big tourist destination known for its ancient sites, like the old city of Damascus. Now there is peace there can be tourists again.

In my family we had extra happy news on this day. My sister had a lovely baby boy, Karam. The name Karam means generosity. Karam will grow up in the new free Syria. This makes us happy.

By Mayssa

Fatma's travels

Last Easter, I went to Germany with my 3 children to visit and help my sister with her new baby. We stayed for 2 weeks. It was nice but very busy with all the children.

Last summer, I went to Turkey to visit my family. It was a holiday for the 3 children and myself. We went to visit my Dad. My dad has lived in Turkey for 8 years. We stayed for one month. We also visited my 2 brothers-in-law, sister-in-law, my nephew and a friend from school. I met another Syrian friend, who lives in Cork, in Turkey and we stayed in a hotel together for one week. We had a beautiful time.

On the way back there was a problem with my children's passports. We missed our flight. We had to stay one more week to get it sorted

and to get new tickets. They missed the start of the school year. We were sad to miss our flights and happy to get back home to Ireland.

Last winter before Christmas I went to the Netherlands to visit my husband's family. I went with my 3 children. We had a nice time. We stayed for 2 weeks and had lots of parties. The weather was the same as Ireland but we had a fun time.

Now I still have itchy feet. This year I hope to go back to Syria to visit my mom. I'm excited to go because now Syria is free and safe. I haven't seen my mom for 10 years. I can't wait to see her again.

By Fatma

What I love

I love singing. I sing French songs. I learned to sing in church.

I sing quietly. I sing joyfully. I sing solo. Singing makes me happy.

By Laurene

What we love

We are Fehima from Ethiopia, Amran from Somalia and Tamana from Afghanistan. We are in English class together. We are friends. We are Muslims and we love Allah. Next, we love the prophet Mohammad, peace be upon him.

We also love our husbands, our children, our families, moms and dads, and our sisters. We love our friends.

We love the peace and safety of our lives in Ireland. We hate the fighting and the war in our countries. We hope the fighting will stop.

By Fehima, Amran and Tamana

God's help for my family

It was a difficult time for our family. We didn't have a home. I was crying a lot.

Me, my husband and our 5 children were staying with my husband's friend's family. We stayed in one room in their house for 1 year and 2 months.

We asked the council for a house. We got a call from the council to go to a meeting and to bring our payslips. The council helped us with a 3 bedroomed house. On the 12th December we got a call to go to see the house. Then we signed the house contract. We got the keys and moved in on the 23rd December.

I'm so happy, happy. We are all so happy in our nice new house.

By Vida

My twins first visit to Algeria

I recently had the pleasure of travelling to Algeria with my four children, twins Amira and Mohamed and my older children, Yousra and Zakaria. It was the twins first time to visit my country. Our trip was a wonderful family experience, filled with visits to relatives and exploring some of the country's beautiful locations.

Our journey began in Oran, where we stayed at my parents' house. It was great to reconnect with family and spend quality time together. We also visited my husband's family's home, which allowed the children to bond with their extended relatives. After a few days in Oran we decided to take a four-hour taxi ride to Alger, where we stayed with my niece and her children.

While in Alger we took time to explore the city. We visited the famous Casbah, wandering through its narrow winding streets and soaking in the rich history of the area. The children loved the vibrant markets and we enjoyed sampling some of the local food, including traditional Algerian dishes like couscous and tajine. We also spent time at the waterfront, where the kids had fun playing by the sea and enjoying the warm weather.

After a few days in Alger we returned to Oran and spent more time with the family. One of the highlights of this part of the trip was our

visit to Mostaganem, where we spent a day at the beach. The kids had a great time swimming and playing in the sand, though our youngest daughter Amira fell ill during our stay. Unfortunately, this meant we had to cut some of our plans short as we focussed on caring for her until she recovered.

Despite the challenges, our trip to Algeria was a memorable experience. We enjoyed the time spent with family, exploring new places and making lasting memories together. The warmth of the people, the beauty of the landscapes and the richness of the culture made it a trip we'll always cherish. The children were very happy to come back to Ireland and meet their friends again. I was happy too.

By Fatima

How I got here

I told a friend that I was not good at reading. He told me about the Ennis campus. I did not know about the Ennis campus. He told me how to get there. I met a teacher and she was very nice to me. I had her for a month and then I got a new teacher. She is so nice to me and helps me to get better at my reading. She is really helping me to get better at my reading. My reading and my confidence are much better thanks to her helping me. She is the best teacher for me.

By Noel

My favourite day of the week

My favourite day is Saturday because I have free time. I get up at 9 o'clock. I make scrambled eggs for breakfast. After that, I clean the house. In the afternoon, I go for a walk. I visit my family every Saturday. We all eat lunch together. I watch TV in the evening. For dinner, I make a ham and avocado sandwich. I go to bed at 10 o'clock.

By Paulina

Welding

My name is Michel. I'm a Cameroonian living in Ireland for one year now. I am a qualified welding technician. It is my favourite profession and I have been doing it since I was in my home country. Now that I am in Ireland, I would like to continue working in this field. In fact, I am already looking for a training school in the Limerick area. I want to redo this training here in Ireland and keep working in the profession that has fascinated me since childhood.

By Michel

Ennis

I like Ireland very much. I like the town of Ennis very much. It's very beautiful and green. There are interesting places for walks. Very nice and friendly people live here.

By Olena

Wet heart

We came to Ireland to work and live near those we care about. After a year, our mission is complete, and now it's time to leave this rainy land. But our hearts remain wet - not from the weather but from tears of longing for the friends who stayed behind.

By Jackson

My story

My name is Nataliya. I came to Ireland from Ukraine. I am from Zaporizhzhia. I left my home because of the war. It was very hard to leave my country. I miss my dog and my cats.

Now I live in Ireland. Irish people are very kind and friendly. I feel safe here. My daughter and my son are with me, and I am happy we are together. We are learning English and trying to start a new life.

My husband and my daughter's husband are soldiers. They are in Ukraine now. They are protecting our country. We are very proud of them. I hope the war will stop soon and I can visit Ukraine again.

By Nataliya

A visit to the zoo

A rhinoceros who was quite superior was sitting on his big fat posterior whilst eating his eggs, beans and chips.

His wife sat beside him whilst doing the ironing and chattered about her big hips.

The monkeys are flying from tree onto tree whilst playing their usual pranks,

As they're gracefully dancing and prancing and ranting

You'd think they had ants in their pants!

A man in a hat jumped over the fence, his camera in both of his mitts.

He was clicking away at this one and that and annoying the rhino to bits.

Whilst rhino and wife they were trying to bathe in their leisurely pool just for kicks.

Said rhino to wife, 'Cover up for dear life then you won't get your bum in his pics.'

Funny things happen inside the compound,

As the man with the camera was chased round and round

By our four-legged friends, like a dog-track greyhound.

The rhino he turned to his wife and said, 'Hon, he does not get the picture,

And pardon my pun.'

We all laughed as we watched hippo chase the wild man,

Pick him up and deposit him in a trash can.

The point of this story is don't go for glory

The next time that you visit the zoo,

And whatever you do keep your camera in view
If you don't want it chucked in a bucket of poo!

You see animals are fine if you treat them all kind,
They will treat you quite equally too.
Whilst monkeys are screeching we all go a-leaping
'Cause we think that we're monkeys too.

Then we go to see penguins who are so independent
When they swim they don't need a wetsuit.
For in all kinds of weather in their black and white feather
They wobble together so cute.

We saw tigers with stripes grooowwwl with all of their might
As they pace alongside looking cool.
But when we scream with delight they get such a fright
That they all go and jump in the pool.

As we looked to the sky where giraffe's heads are held high,
We all shout that we're here, they look down and we cheer.
They come closer and slurp, lick our faces and burp
Oh it's so funny-mom, dad, baby bunny!

Then it's time for our lunch, as we sit down to munch
A monkey called Sean jumps onto the lawn,
And with no delay as we're looking away
Grabs our cookies and crisps and our stuff,
Then he comes back for more and ice-cream galore,
'Til at last he's eaten enough.

As we go on the train for a ride round the zoo,
And the name of the train is the Buzzy Choo-Choo,
We can see all the animals as they're running around
As we go on the Buzzy up, down and around.
We can see all the zebras lying out in the sun
And we shout out to them, 'Oh we're having such fun!'

When we're back at the compound again we did see
The man with the camera pursued by a bee.
He hid in a hut with the door tightly shut,
But next thing he's out and starting to shout
As he's chased by a clown with an old eiderdown.

Oh! It's so funny, he has such a frown.

Then it's time to go home. All the animals are fed.
The monkeys eat 'nanas and nuts before bed.
We waved bye to the rhino, his wife, babies three,
They're all in the pond munching oysters for tea.
We're all tired out and so hungry too,
But it won't be that long 'til we're back in the zoo.

By Marian

Six-word stories

In the 1920s the American author Ernest Hemingway bet 10 dollars that he could write a complete story in just six words.

He wrote: 'For Sale: baby shoes, never worn.' He won the bet.

I used his story to inspire my learners to write their stories and they took up the challenge. You can read some of the stories below.

Six-word stories

Want to sleep, need to get up.

By Maryna

Six-word stories

Tarts, cupcakes, muffins, sweets – my diet!

By Natalia

Six-word stories

When will the third war start?

By Trính

Six-word stories

No winter, no war, no home.

By Nataliaia

Six-word stories

Remember who and why you are!

By Karína

Six-word stories

Birth, toys, student, job, pension, flowers.

By Polína

Six-word stories

New start. Found love. Face challenges.

By Uzma

Six-word stories

Curiosity, knowledge, fun, experience, skills – exam.

By Magdalena

Six-word stories

Polar bears are dying. Who cares?

By Kateryna

Six-word stories

War, new countries, life goes on.

By Karína

Six-word stories

Try new things for a new life!

By Svitlana

Six-word stories

Hurry up, join us, be better!

By Yun He

Six-word stories

Born poor, lived achieving, died yesterday.

By Kateryna

Six-word stories

Always hurry, always late, on time.

By Anna

Six-word stories

Culchie, four kids, housewife. Absolutely unexpected.

By Malgorzata

My favourite day of the week

My favourite day of the week is Thursday because I do singing in the morning and sewing in the afternoon.

By Dolores

My favourite day of the week

My favourite day of the week is every day, because every day starts with dawn, which means life goes on and you can dream about the best things in life!

By Olga

My favourite day of the week

My favourite day of the week is Friday because it's the start of the weekend.

By Mary

My favourite day of the week

My favourite day of the week is Thursday because the bulk of the week is behind us, the weekend is coming and I can do whatever I like.

By Deirdre

My favourite day of the week

My favourite day of the week is Thursday because I am learning to sew and it's something new for me.

By Oksana

My favourite day of the week

My favourite day of the week is Tuesday because it's my free day and I can spend it enjoying the things I like.

By Bríd

My favourite day of the week

My favourite day of the week is Thursday because I come to my sewing class. I meet my tutor and my friends. We have a ball!

By Anna

My favourite day of the week

My favourite day is Thursday because I start the day with keep fit, which I love. We have a good workout. Then my sewing class is after that and I love that too.

By Geraldine

My favourite day of the week

My favourite day of the week is Thursday because I go singing, I go sewing and I go dancing.

By Liz

The first cat on the moon

My name is Tofik and I am a cat - but not just any cat. You might be wondering why? Well, it's because I can talk, play computer games, and even pilot a space rocket like an astronaut! But let me start from the beginning.

I was born on a big farm near Cork. That's why I have a Cork meowccent! I lived on that farm with my siblings and my cat mum, until one day my new mum came and took me home to Ennis.

I felt a little sad and when no one was watching, I would shed a few quiet tears at night because I missed my mummy and my siblings. However, after a few days, I started enjoying my new home and my lovely new family.

Believe it or not, everything in this house was for me! Fresh food, milk, treats, and of course - toys! I ran around like a crazy cat, coming up with a new game every single day. For some reason, I absolutely loved breaking Mum's vases, swinging on the curtains, and launching myself onto the furniture. And the best part? I got away with everything!

Until one day, everything changed. Norbert, Mum's son, who lives with me in my house, came home with a very big box. It was filled with Lego bricks, and he immediately started building.

I was fascinated. I sat and watched. I was completely mesmerized as Norbert carefully put the pieces together and then, I couldn't believe my eyes, he had built a space rocket out of those blocks! That's when it hit me, with a rocket, I could fly into space!

Without wasting any time, I began my astronaut training. First, I climbed into the washing machine and started running like a hamster to improve my fitness. Of course, Mum yelled at me, telling me I was never to go in the washing machine again. 'Pfft, a washing machine is nothing! Space is everything!' I thought to myself.

In my mind's eye, I could already see the headlines flashing across TV screens and newspapers: 'One small step for cat, one giant leap for catkind!'

I think my mummy and I sometimes have very similar ideas because she immediately ran out and bought me a Buzz Astral astronaut costume! Of course, after that, she tried to take photos of me with the rocket, but I wanted to be an astronaut, not a fashion model! I was ready for my journey.

For my first trip into space, I chose the moon. When I was a little kitten, Mummy told me a Polish legend about a man who was sent to the moon as a punishment. I don't remember the story exactly, but I think he sold his soul to the Diablo and then played some kind of game with him—kind of like me when I play with Mummy! I wanted to check if he was still sitting up there or not, because the Polish legend says he's still on the moon to this day.

I waited until night time when Norbert was fast asleep. When I was sure he was sleeping, I put on my astronaut suit, grabbed an Irish flag and a few treats! Of course, as the first Irish cat on the moon, I had to plant the Irish flag! Also, I borrowed Norbert's phone to take some pictures—I hope that someday I'll have my own phone, maybe even from a sponsor!

I started counting: 10... 9... 8... 3... 2... 1... and then—the rocket took off. A few minutes later, through my sleepy eyelids, I saw a huge golden moon. I couldn't take my eyes off it—it winked at me with a million tiny sparks.

The rocket landed safely. I started looking for the man from the legend which Mummy once told me, the one who was banished to the moon... but I didn't see anyone!

Everything around me sparkled with gold! I'm not entirely sure, but in the distance, I thought I saw a beautiful meadow filled with golden flowers. I wanted to run over and explore it—maybe even roll around a little—but I was starting to feel a bit tired.

I proudly planted the Irish flag. Of course, I took a few pictures—and a selfie for the media. Then, I started feeling a bit hungry. Unfortunately, the moon didn't have any food—not even a single treat! That meant it was time to go home. As the rocket launched for the return trip, I got sleepy and my eyes slowly closed.

I woke up in my own bed. And I started thinking about my next journey. What would it be? Maybe... Mars? There must be cats living there—I mean, come on, a whole red planet and no cats? I have to check it out!

Now, I'm just waiting for the press and TV to show up. Maybe I'll call the local radio station, Clare FM, and give them priority to break this spectacular news! And just so you know, the next time you look up at the full moon and see a little Irish flag, it was me, Tofik, the first cat on the moon!

By Beata

A spring day in Ennis

I was on the early bus because I go to a computer class on Friday mornings. It was a lovely day in Ennis. Sometimes I meet my friends in Ennis and we go for dinner and talk about the news. I go home in the bus in the evening.

By Tony

My life in Ireland

We live in a small house in Ennis. It has two bedrooms, a kitchen and two bathrooms. We have a TV and a Sky box. We have a small garden. The only bad thing about the house, is that it is small and old. I don't like this house.

By Antigona

My apartment in Ennis

I live in a small apartment. It has one living room combined with a kitchen. There are two beds in my bedroom and also a mirror. There are two large windows in my living room, through which I can have a beautiful view. I like my apartment because it is wonderful. I am so happy.

By Liliia

My life in Ennis

My husband and I live in a big old house in Ennis. We live in the apartment on the second floor. Our apartment has a living room. The living room has big windows. The apartment is bright. We like to relax in this apartment. I like our apartment, because we are happy here.

By Svitlana

Happy in Ennis

I live with my wife in the apartment. I like my apartment because it is very beautiful. It has one bedroom, a living room, a kitchen and a bathroom. In the living room there are two armchairs and a sofa. There is a TV. There is a picture on the wall. I feel really happy in my apartment.

By Paata

Moments to remember

People say in childhood the grass is greener and trees are taller. It's probably true about snow as well. I have never seen as much snow as I remember from my childhood and in Ukraine it snows every winter.

I remember how excited my brother and I were when we woke up in the morning, and new sparkling snow was falling and covering autumn's dirt and greyness. We were both anticipating our walk in the afternoon.

Each of us had our own sleigh. Mine was a girls' type sleigh with a solid backrest which curled around my back and arms like a comfortable armchair, especially when covered with a blanket. My brother's sleigh was a boys' type sleigh, with a foldable backrest, the one you use to slide down the hill head-first, at a fast speed, and pray not to hit a tree.

After lunch we would be sitting on our sleigh train, and our grandmother would pull us along white winter streets towards the park where we would build snow-castles and throw snow balls enjoying ourselves and sincerely couldn't understand how our grandmother could be freezing when the weather was so lovely.

With age comes the appreciation of these moments. Snow storms bring problems to adults' lives, but for children it's a magic time. My grandmother is not with us anymore, but she is alive our memories.

By Natalia

Living in a foreign country

I arrived in Ireland in the early summer of 2022, when bombs started exploding behind my house. I sent my daughter's family and my wife first. Then I came myself because they needed my help. My daughter has small children, the youngest was one and a half years old at the time.

At first, I thought it would be for a few months and perceived everything around me as temporary. However, I noticed very good roads, neat and clean roadsides, a perfectly organised reception for

Ukrainians and the extraordinary friendliness of the people who met us. Honestly, it was a contrast to my country.

I needed to do something so I started helping people with back pain with massage and manual therapy. I also organised dance clubs for children and adults in different cities of Ireland, first for Ukrainians and now for Irish people.

I realised that the most important thing for integrating into Irish life is knowing the language. My children and grandchildren, whose English is better than mine, did it much faster and now feel very comfortable in this country. They are going to stay in it for a long time. My wife and I haven't decided yet, but life in this modern, socially protected country, where there are no cold winters or hot summers, is attracting us more and more!

By Serhiu

Living in a foreign country

I came to Ireland three years ago. Ireland is a slow and quiet country. I started working in a hotel. This job is harder than my job in Ukraine. When I came here I was with my mother, my sister and her kids. A year later my husband joined me. Now my family wants to go back to Ukraine. I think life in Ireland is unhurried, but very expensive. Irish people are friendly and kind.

By Iryna

Living in a foreign country

In 2023, my daughter and I came to Ireland because of the war in Syria. My husband was already here. Ennis is much quieter than my country. I like Ireland because they have a good system, everyone follows the rules and I learn something new every day. My daughter misses her brothers and friends. In Syria, we were surrounded by family, but we are on our own in Ireland.

I like it here, but there are big differences: the weather, the food, the culture. My husband is settled here, but my daughter and I would like to return to Syria. We'll see.

By Sawzan

Living in a foreign country

I came to Ireland in November 2012 to live with my partner. It was hard. Many things were different, such as left-side driving. I couldn't speak with people because my English was very poor. The weather made me sick. Poland has much better weather, especially in summer time, but the people in Ireland are friendlier and more helpful.

I live here with my partner and two daughters. My partner works as a carpenter. My daughters go to school here. They are happy here. Living in Ireland is even harder now, but there are many more opportunities such as better jobs, higher salaries and some courses for free. At the moment I want to stay here. In the future, I would like to go back to Poland or move to another country.

By Gabriela

The most frightening experience of my life

After a nice night out with my children, I came home to live the hardest day of my life. I didn't know which was more frightening, when I opened the house door to see glass everywhere or, seeing the man who had broken into my house run away through the garden to his friends. There were three men altogether who had stolen my things. You can't imagine the screaming from my kids. This was the hardest feeling.

By Karima

Dragon Boat Festival

My favourite celebration in my country is the traditional Dragon Boat Festival with a history of over 2,300 years. It's on the fifth of May (lunar month). The celebrations last only one day. This festival commemorates the patriotic poet Qu Yuan. There are performances, rice dumpling making and dragon boat racing.

I prefer to watch the dragon boat competition. Those boats have an exquisite pattern and colour in the shape of a dragon. The drummer uses the sound of the drum to control the speed of the dragon boat to compete.

Afterwards, we go for a swim. Chinese people believe doing that can bring health and good luck. I also enjoy swimming in the ocean during a humid hot summer and having delicious rice dumplings. This festival is both traditional and vibrant.

By Hoff

Living in a foreign country

My name is Haitham. I am from Kuwait. I came to Ireland in 2019. I lived in Dublin for a year. Then I moved to Ennis in 2020. I really like Ireland because people are very friendly and kind.

The weather in my country is very hot. Here in Ireland it is very cold and it rains most of the time. I never think of moving away from Ireland because I really like this country. I have no family but I do have lots of friends.

By Haitham

Living in a foreign country

I came to Ireland in November 2005 to try a new life. The beginning was very hard for me. It was difficult to get a job here and talk to people. The weather was awful. It was raining every day.

After a few months, I started to work cleaning an office and a bed and breakfast. I liked working there because I met nice people and

I could practice English. After one year I started work in a factory as a general operative. We made lenses for glasses. I worked there for 16 years. Now, I have taken a few months break from work. I'd like to find a nice job soon.

In my opinion, here in Ireland we have more opportunities for better work and better salaries. I don't like the Polish government because they don't care about people. I miss my family in Poland, the Polish weather and the lovely scenery.

I like Ireland, people here are kind. I live here with my husband and three children. They were born here. At the moment, we are happy in Ireland. We go to Poland every year to visit our family and friends. My children are settled here. They feel Irish, especially my fourteen-year-old daughter, Wiktoria and eleven-year-old son, Dominik. Our youngest, four-year-old Dawid, is happy as well. They speak Polish very well. The children love Ireland. I think we would like to return to Poland in the future. We'll see.

By Renata

Mid-Autumn festival

My favourite celebration is the Mid-Autumn festival. It is celebrated on the full moon day, the 15th day of the 8th lunar month. There are lots of lantern displays throughout the streets filled with festive joy.

On this day, families have dinner together because the full moon represents reunion. It is a chance to gather. After dinner, families admire the moon, drink Chinese tea, enjoy mooncakes, as well as pomelo and starfruit. Pomelo's round shape looks like the moon and the yellow skin also symbolises prosperity. It will bless families with good luck and happiness.

Afterwards, people go to Victoria Park to enjoy the largest Mid-Autumn lantern carnival in town, which includes Cantonese opera, a fire dragon dance parade, a Mid-Autumn market and lantern riddles.

By Ka Fung

Living in a foreign country

I came to Ireland in 2022 because of the war in Ukraine. At first, I felt good and safe, but now I feel homesick. I find it hard to speak English because my level is very low. My life in Ireland is different because Ennis is a lot smaller than Kharkiv. The weather and food are very different too. People in Ireland are friendlier. In Ireland I live with my youngest daughter. She goes to school here. My oldest daughter lives and works in France. We miss each other very much.

I like my life in Ireland, but I really miss my home, family and friends. I'm very grateful to Irish people for their help and support. I hope the war is over soon and I can go back home.

By Svitlana

Eid al-Adha

Eid al-Adha is a religious festival of Muslims which is celebrated every year all around the world. This Eid is also known as the festival of sacrifice.

The day begins with a special prayer known as Salat El-Eid, and then we slaughter a sheep, cow or goat. A third of the sacrificed animal is distributed to the poor and needy people. On this day, people wear neat and new clothes and prepare delicious and distinguished dishes for this occasion. As for girls and women, they apply henna on their hands. On Eid's evening families meet, exchange Eid wishes and have fun. This Eid is a special occasion for Muslims because it strengthens family relationships and teaches us the meaning of solidarity.

By Hafida

Living in a foreign country

I came to Ireland in 2022 with my son. It was July 1st. The sun was shining brightly. When we were going by bus to the accommodation centre I couldn't look away from the window. I was fascinated by the beauty of this fabulous island. A million shades of green, lush flowering bushes and many flowers! I fell in love with it at first sight.

I'm very happy to be here. Now Ireland is in my heart together with Ukraine. Irish people are very nice, kind, ready to help people. I'm very sorry that my English level is low and I can't speak properly. Sometimes it's a big problem for me.

I'm glad that my family and I are safe now. We are learning English and working. We are happy with what we have. The biggest problem for us here is the inability to find housing for rent. It's mentally hard for me to stay in a hotel for several years. Every day we remember our house and how happy we all were.

We would really like to return home, but the chances are decreasing every day. We are from the Donetsk region and the front line is a few kilometres from our town. There are only four towns left in the entire region which have not yet been completely destroyed, including ours.

Russian terrorists destroy cities, destroy our homes, kill people, break lives, leaving behind only destruction and death. We would really like to stay in Ireland and start a new life here, but if we don't find a home for ourselves or the state doesn't extend our temporary protection, we may have to leave and look for a safe place to live again. We pray and hope.

By Anzhela

The most frightening experience of my life

It was the most frightening experience of my life. The story happened almost three years ago when my family and I arrived in Ireland.

We flew from Bucharest airport to Amsterdam and then changed planes to fly to Dublin. When we arrived in Dublin, we realised that

our baggage was missing. It was awful because we didn't have any clothes to change into.

After a few days of complaining, we were informed that our suitcases hadn't left Amsterdam airport. Two weeks later, we finally got our things back.

By Denys

It was the most frightening experience of my life

When I was a child, my mother asked me and my sister to go to church. We were not in the mood to go out, so we said to her that we wanted to stay at home. Then my parents went to church without us.

While we were happy playing with our toys in the living room in peace, suddenly, three scary cockroaches appeared flying over us. My sister and I started screaming out loud. We tried to escape from the cockroaches many times, but our attempts were futile.

The neighbours, very worried, called at the gate and asked what was happening to us. Since the door and the gate were locked, they couldn't do anything to help us. It was so traumatic that I can't remember what happened after that but I'm still terrified of cockroaches.

By Ediana

Living in a foreign country

I came to Ireland with my family in March 2022 because the war started in Ukraine. My city, Kharkiv, was bombed very heavily from the beginning of the war. It's 40 kilometres from Kharkiv to the Russian border.

The Irish people welcomed us very hospitably. They wanted us to feel at home. The Irish people are very attentive, intelligent and polite. In Ireland, I work as a home helper with Clarecare. I am studying English at college. I need a B2 level in English to get my diploma recognised in Ireland.

I really like the annual average temperatures in Ireland. They range from -1 to +26 degrees Celsius. In Ukraine there are four distinct seasons. The temperature ranges from -25 to +40 degrees Celsius.

Ireland has a quiet and measured life. There is a good social side, infrastructure, roads, schools and hospitals. The government cares a lot about its population.

At the moment in Kharkiv, 69 schools, 53 kindergartens, 15 hospitals, 1,410 buildings and 1,717 houses are destroyed. Our life has been thrown back 30 years and the prospects for our children are now very vague, especially in the field of education and security.

By Olena

My dream

After the war started in my country I came to Ireland to find a safe place, make a new start and to progress my career. There is a big difference between Ireland and my country. Ireland is colder than Sudan so it took me a long time to adapt to the weather.

In my first year in Ireland, 2023, I faced communication problems with people because my English wasn't so good and I felt lonely because I didn't have any friends. In addition, I felt worried about my family. My parents and my brother were in Sudan at that time and I couldn't contact them regularly because the telecommunication wasn't stable.

After a while, I started my English course in Ennis. The staff were very helpful, my language got better and I met people of other nationalities. They are so nice that they make me feel good. Now, I am planning to finish my English course and start a diploma in business to find a good job.

I really miss my family. I hope I can invite them to live with me in Ireland because they will feel safe like me. I dream that someday I can take my morning tea with my parents under the sun here in Ireland. I know this will be difficult because it's raining all the time but I will keep dreaming about this. Who knows? Maybe someday my dream will come true.

By Meral

The most frightening experience of my life

One day I went to work in my new car. It was a small red car and I left it in the car park next to my workplace. After my shift, at about 10:00pm, I went to the car park and tried to unlock my car with the key, but the key didn't work!

I thought that someone had tried to steal my car and broke the lock. To justify my reaction, after work I was really tired and I just got the wrong car! It was the same size, the same colour, and even the registration number started with the same numbers! So, it really was the most frightening experience of my life!

By Pavlo

The most frightening experience of my life

It was the most terrifying experience of my life. I was going home after a late-night shift when I suddenly heard the sound of breaking glass. I was between two apartment buildings. I ran toward the sound and saw a nearly naked man lying on the ground. He had blacked out.

I tried to speak with him, but he only produced groaning sounds. I knew that you shouldn't move a fallen person due to the risk of further injury. I called an ambulance and looked around. I saw a broken window on the second floor and a couple of heads hiding behind it.

I asked people nearby to stay with the injured man and went to the flat from which the person had fallen. I rang the doorbell, but no one answered. I returned to the injured man and waited for the ambulance.

By Oleksiú

Our life in Ireland

I'm from Ukraine. My husband and I have been in Ireland for three years. We have already got used to the unusual weather. Ireland is very beautiful. Flowers and green grass grow and bushes bloom all year round. I love flowers. Our accommodation allowed and helped me to create a flowerbed near my house. My husband and I planted a lot of flowers and made a small vegetable garden. I planted onions, garlic, dill and parsley there. Every morning I look at the flowers and rejoice. Many thanks to all the Irish people and our accommodation village and teachers for all their help and support.

We were given the opportunity to learn English and teachers come to our village. We go to Scariff FET College in various groups for different classes. My husband and I would like to stay in Ireland as our city and home in Ukraine are in ruins. We already have a lot of friends and acquaintances here.

By Svitlana

Fishing in Ireland

My name is Viktoriia. In Ireland, I live in Bodyke with my husband. When we lived in Ukraine, we liked fishing in the river. In Ireland, we often go to the ocean to fish. It is very dangerous because there are very high cliffs. We catch many different fish, crabs and lobsters. Nature is really nice here in Ireland. Sometimes we go to the lake in Killaloe or Mountshannon. I like to spend my time in nature because it makes me feel good.

By Viktoriia

My morning in Ireland

I love to get up early in the morning and go to the river. I like to walk and look at nature. I watch the trees and bushes bloom in the spring. Clean air and birds singing are a pleasure for me. Cows are grazing in a green meadow. A hare runs across the road. Little lambs are

grazing near the river and beautiful horses drink water from the river. Sometimes you can see a pair of white swans. This beauty puts me in a great mood and charges me with good energy.

By Natalia

I love this blessed land

I love this blessed land
Rich in wonderful people
Ethnic heritage and beautiful views
Love always comes back
And I feel how here I'm enveloped in love
Necessary for life far from the motherland
Do you know which country I'm talking about?

By Liudmyla

What Ireland is for me

I have lived my whole life in Ukraine but due to the war, I ended up living in Ireland with my family. Many people throughout the entire world love this country. It attracts us with boundless green lands, mysterious folk tales, culture and traditions, literature, pubs with good whiskey and beers.

The Irish say it's possible to experience every season's weather in one day. Because of its location so near to the Atlantic Ocean, the weather is very changeable. Even if a day is very rainy and stormy, the land still holds its sense of tranquillity and relaxation, where our worries can easily be calmed. Picturesque lands, coastline and the islands make people fall in love with the country.

By Liliia

S.T.A.L.K.E.R. Universe - a Ukrainian computer game

I love computer games like the Stalker Universe. This series of games was developed by a Ukrainian company called GSC Game World. The plot was based on the events of the Chernobyl nuclear plant disaster in 1986 and the Strugatsky brothers' book, *Roadside Picnic*.

Who is a stalker in the game? It is a person who visits and explores abandoned places. The first part of the stalker series was released on 20th of March 2007 and it's called, *Shadow of Chernobyl*. The second part was released on 22nd August 2008 and is called, *Clear Skies*. The third part was released on 2nd October 2009 and is called, *Call of Pripjat*.

The trilogy was a great success with players around the world and the developers decided to create a continuation of this series at the request of the players. However, the realisation of this project was hindered by many events such as the coronavirus pandemic and the war in Ukraine. Now, after fifteen years, Stalker 2 called, *Heart of Chernobyl*, was released in 2024 and one million copies were sold on the first day of release.

By Oleksandr

The unexpected catch

Every summer, when I was a child, my parents took my sister and me to the village to visit my grandparents. It was fun there. Just like us, other children were also brought to the village. Our family had their own lake. We went fishing there.

One evening when everyone had already gone, I was the only one left without catching a fish. I prayed to God to catch at least one. It was already starting to get dark, the float on my rod started to twitch. I lifted the fishing rod and there was a huge frog caught. I threw the fishing rod and started running away from the frog as it was jumping after me. In the end, I ran away from it.

By Tetiana

County Clare

In the beautiful green country of Ireland, there are many cities, towns, villages, coastal areas that we have become acquainted with. They are located near our home in East Clare.

We can talk a lot about Scariff, Tulla, Feakle and, Mountshannon. It seems that everything is similar - a central square, a church, a park, always a monument or memorial sign and an old bridge over a river or a view of the ocean. However, at the same time, they are so different and each town has something special and memorable.

Limerick is distinguished by its magnificent picture of the city overlooking the River Shannon, beyond which is the majestic King John's Castle. Bridges encircling the river connect the streets from both banks. Double-decker buses and intercity buses masterfully turn at the corners of narrow streets.

Ennis is a town with an ancient history. The River Fergus, with a cascade of waterfalls, a wooden mill and lock gates are in the centre of Ennis. There are narrow streets with shops, cafés, restaurants and hotels in the town.

For me, the greatest beauty of the Shannon are the twin towns of Killaloe and Ballina. From any elevation in the town, you can enjoy the beauty of the natural landscape for a long time.

Lucky Irish! They know how to live surrounded by nature and with nature. The Irish take care of nature and their rich history.

By Olga

My daughter Sofiia

My name is Anna. I want to tell you about my daughter, Sofiia. When we arrived in Ireland, she was six years old. Sofiia was a frightened girl who didn't know English at all.

In 2025, she and a group of 2nd class girls participated in singing Irish songs such as 'Tá na Báid' and 'Peigín Litir Mór'. They won gold. That was her first victory. On March 14th in Ennis, a poetry reading competition dedicated to Taras Shevchenko was held in the new De

Valera Public Library. There, Sofiia recited the poem 'The Days Pass, the Nights Pass' and won first place.

I am very proud of my daughter because in just two years, she has learned not only Ukrainian but also English and Irish. I know how hard it is for her to study, but as they say in Ukraine, 'hard work feeds a person, while laziness ruins them'. I know these are not her last victories, so I want to wish her inspiration, easy learning, and strong health.

By Anna

From Gaza to Ireland

I am a medical student and my brother is a graduate doctor. We managed to flee the ongoing war in Gaza. We came to Ireland and it took us in with its compassionate and loving arms. It felt like home and the Irish people were extremely kind and supportive.

I started attending some classes and one of those was English with a brilliant, kind and wonderful tutor. His name is John. His teaching style has had a huge impact on me personally, helping me grow in so many aspects of English and life in general. I made some new friends as well. At last, my brother and I owe Ireland and its superb people a huge debt of gratitude.

By Abdallah

Thank you

My name is Halyna. I am from the resort region of Skadovsk in Kherson region. I worked as a primary school teacher for twenty-two years. February 22nd 2022, was the day my family were sent away from a peaceful life, from work and from home. Unfortunately, now my home is under occupation. My dream is that one day soon, I will be able to return to my native Ukraine. Thank you, Ireland, for providing us with shelter and work. The Irish are incredible.

By Halyna

This is my story

My name is Tenday. I'm from Zimbabwe. I came to Ireland almost four years ago. I'm a mother of seven. My children are in Africa, and I lost one child almost ten years ago.

I appreciate being in Ireland. I attend school for English and driver theory. I'm so happy about that. I like to study and meet friends. I live in Kilrush and I go shopping at Aldi, Tesco, Penneys and Supervalu. I love shopping! I'm not working now. I'd prefer to work because I'm a hardworking woman. I hope to get a job as a shopkeeper or health care assistant.

By Tenday

My new home in Ireland

Ennis, my new home in Ireland, is a welcoming town located in county Clare. It is surrounded by verdant hills and the River Fergus. The old part of town captivates me with its cobblestone streets and historic buildings. Local markets offer fresh produce and charming handicrafts.

One of the things I most appreciate about Ennis is the music. Live music sessions in pubs are a tradition, where local musicians play traditional Irish tunes. Additionally, we have the grand music festival called the Fleadh Cheoil, which brings everyone together to celebrate music and dance.

For nature lovers, Ennis is a paradise. We're close to the famous Cliffs of Moher, which offer breath-taking views of the ocean and are perfect for a day trip.

The best part of Ennis is the people. They are incredibly friendly and always willing to help. Living here is like being part of a big family. It's a special place that I'm fortunate to call home, even as a Brazilian.

By Valéria

To play or not to play

Believe me, life is truly plain,
Though shadows sometimes bring us pain.
A quarter passed – now take a glance,
Like masked magicians at a dance.

The world's a stage, we play our part,
With dancing souls and beating heart.
Some act for praise, for fleeting cheer,
And whisper tales for all to hear.

While others, quiet, play the role,
Assigned without a dream or goal.
'What script is this?' you might demand,
The Author wrote it with His hand.

But see – there are no dress rehearsals,
No time to edit life's reversals.
Each act flies by – so seize its core,
And hear the soul behind the lore.

Remember this: it matters not,
What hero in what tale you've got.
Or victories you count and store,
Stand firm, protect the ones you fight for.

Raise your hand with steady grace,
Guard a back in time and place.
As friend, as brother, brave and strong,
The truest soldier all along – never the foe, but righting wrong.

By Yana

An invitation to visit my favourite city

I used to live in the city of Kherson. Three years ago, I would have done the best advertising to tourists. I would have told them, 'You need to see Kherson.' It is not the largest city in the south of Ukraine but it is the most beautiful city for me.

It is located near the Black Sea, on the banks of the Dnieper River. There are many flowers, parks and beaches in the city, so the air is very clean there. For the more curious tourists, there are theatres, many cinemas and a great entertainment centre.

In summer, you can buy the cheapest vegetables and fruits, the most delicious Kherson tomatoes, the sweetest grapes and strawberries, and the most famous watermelons and melons in the markets. By bus, you can go to relax at the sea or go to the healing and saltiest Lake Limeria with pink water. Outside the city, there is a large pine forest, with huge pine trees. There you can have a picnic, pick mushrooms or just breathe the healthiest coniferous air. You will definitely want to come to see us again, we are waiting for you.

By Valentyna

Lahinch beach

Lahinch is hotter than Ennis because Lahinch has more sun. Lahinch is smaller than Ennis. If you visit Lahinch beach you will see the most amazing view. This place is outside the town of Ennis. You will be able to see the town and enjoy nature and fresh air.

By Olha

My city

I think my city is the best city in the world. Many happy people live there. Most of the people are students, artists, scientists and workers. My city has a lot of relaxing places – theatres, art galleries, museums and cinemas. The third longest river in Europe is the Dnipro River. There are many beautiful beaches on the banks of the Dnipro River. Restaurants in my city prepare the most delicious food. My city is wonderful in summer and winter and both day and night. Welcome to my city.

By Volodymyr

Kryvyi Rih

This is the most industrial city in Ukraine and it is also the longest in Europe. Its length is 124 kilometers. It has lots of parks and the most wonderful people. Kryvyi Rih is the 'iron heart' of Ukraine.

By Oleksandr

My day

After I woke up, I washed my face.
Then, I did some exercises.
After that, I went to the kitchen to prepare breakfast.
Then, I had breakfast.
After that, I went to do my English homework.
Then, I remembered that I didn't have much food for lunch.
Then, I went to the store for groceries.
After I got back home, I cooked food.
Then, evening came.
After that, I didn't have lunch, but dinner.
Then, I got tired and went to bed.

By Oleh

A special day

The 2nd of March was my birthday. In the morning, my family congratulated me and gave me a new phone and a huge bouquet of flowers. Then, my niece and her husband and neighbours came to congratulate me.

After breakfast, my mother called me from Ukraine. Then, my family and I went to a restaurant in Limerick. After dinner, we went for a walk along the embankment. After the walk, we went home.

By Liliia

Shopping in Clare

Yesterday, I went shopping in Scarriff. I got up at 7am. I usually get up at 9am, but yesterday I was in a hurry to go to the store. Then, I had breakfast. After that, I got dressed and went to the bus stop.

I didn't have to wait long for the bus. I went shopping and after that I drank coffee in a café. Then, I went home. Next week, I'm planning to visit Ennis.

By Nataliaia

Nick's new friend

It was Wednesday. Nick was home alone and he was bored. He had no one to play with. Nick tried to read a book, tried to draw, and tried to play with his toys but nothing pleased him.

Suddenly, Nick heard a noise outside. He went out and started really listening. The sounds were coming from everywhere. Just above him, in a tree, there were some birds. In front of the fence, there was a hen with her chicks. Between the fence and the shed, there was a horse, and beside the horse was a little pig. However, none of these were the sounds he had heard from inside.

Nick decided to go around the house. First, he went to the right. Very soon, he heard the same sounds. They were behind the house, somewhere near the fence, behind the raspberry bushes. Nick went through the raspberry bushes, reached the fence, and saw a little dog. It was tangled in wire and trying to get free. The dog seemed happy to see Nick and looked at him hopefully, as if waiting to be rescued.

Nick helped the dog get free, and they walked back to the house through the bushes together. Nick asked the dog its name, but it only barked, so Nick named it Bow Wow.

Nick fed Bow Wow and then they started to play. They ran around the house, jumped on and off the bench, and crawled under it. Bow Wow jumped into the box that Nick had placed among the trees and jumped out again. They ran up and down the stairs, raced along the path and played hide-and-seek, hiding behind the trees, the house, and the shed. Nick was happy. He had never had such a good day before that Wednesday. Bow Wow seemed happy too.

This short story is not only about Nick and Bow Wow, but also my learning of prepositions of place!

By Olena

A story from our imaginations

Mayssa lives in County Clare. She is a wife. She is a mother. She is a housewife and she is a helicopter pilot!

Mayssa parks her helicopter in the yard at the back of her house. On Tuesdays and Thursdays, her friend Fatma comes to her house. They start the helicopter and go to Ennis. They stop in Quin to collect Vida. They all come to Ennis for shopping and English class.

Mayssa parks the helicopter on the roof of the College of FET. They all get out and climb down the ladder. First, the ladies go to town for shopping and then they come back for English class. When class is finished, Captain Mayssa brings everyone home in her helicopter.

By Vida, Fatma, Fatima, Mayssa and Fehima

Dreaming

I sat by the tree and gazed at the sea. The waves were ebbing and flowing.

Time stood still or so it seemed, until the wind started blowing.

Just then, I heard the church bells ring and realised I'd been here all evening, but alas, it was my alarm clock bells and I was only dreaming.

By Oliver

My kids

I have two beautiful kids. My son plays the concertina. My daughter likes to play with her friends.

My son is 8 years old and he is making his Holy Communion this Saturday. He is wearing a cream coloured suit.

My daughter will be going into 2nd class next year.

I love my two kids very much.

By Tracy

My best friend

My name is Helen. I am writing a story about a good friend of mine. His name is Hugh. The first time we met was when I moved into my apartment building in 2015. We were close and good friends. I always made him feel welcome in my apartment and he always made me feel welcome. When he had a family member visiting him, he always told me to come in to see them.

We would always go for drives together. The first birthday party I was ever at was Hugh's 60th birthday party. It was such a great night. The disco was great fun. When there was a disco on Hugh would bring me up dancing and I would bring him up dancing.

His favourite song was 'Goodbye, Johnny Dear', he sang it for me one day and then we sang it together. His other favourite song to sing was 'Are You Right There Michael, Are You Right?'.

One day Hugh saw that I was upset when I was in his apartment. He was sweet to me. He said, 'You are sad'. I said, 'Yes Hugh, I am sad now, but I'll be OK'. He told me to make myself a cup of tea. He was so caring.

In 2018, I was told Hugh would be moving to Morrissey Avenue. I found that year hard. I helped staff to put stickers on the wall because I wanted to do something for Hugh. One day I went with Hugh and 2 other members of staff to help with his house. We went for lunch in the Market Bar. It was lovely.

One evening a staff member asked me if I would like to go to Lahinch for a drive with Hugh and herself and I said, 'Yes.' I was delighted. I wanted to do something nice with Hugh before he moved. We went to Lahinch for a walk and something to eat. I treated Hugh. It was a lovely thing we did together before he moved. It meant a lot to me.

In October 2018, when Hugh moved to his new home, I was sad and lonely but I knew it was right for him. It was nice and quiet. I made him a cake. I knitted him a blanket and gave him 2 tea coasters saying, 'His Lordship' and 'Friend'. I would go over to visit Hugh in Morrissey Avenue when it was convenient and OK for Hugh. Himself and the staff always made me feel welcome and made me tea. I would always buy him a present for Christmas and his birthday.

In 2020, I stopped visiting Hugh because of Covid. Once I had been vaccinated twice, I was able to see him again. His staff told me his health had changed, and he was a different person. He was always happy to see him, and I kept our friendship growing and I never stopped visiting him until the end.

In February 2024, I heard Hugh was not well. I decided to go to visit him one Sunday. I could see a big change in Hugh. I enjoyed visiting him and I had a great time with his staff. I knew it was my last visit. On Friday 9th February of 2024, I got some sad news that my best friend Hugh had sadly passed away. I was very upset. I went to Morrissey Avenue the next day and staff reminded me that I got to see him before he died and it was a great visit. I was the last visitor to see him before he died.

When he died, I requested that he bring the blanket I had knitted for him to heaven with him so he would always have it. He did. He got a lovely funeral and a great send off. Hugh was like a brother to me. I was sad that he died but I was happy for him because he was not suffering anymore. He went to sleep and peacefully slipped away.

Later that year there was a mass said for a few people that died in the Brothers of Charity and Hugh was included. I was honoured to I say a prayer of the faithful in his memory. I will always have great memories of Hugh.

He gave me a necklace one year for my birthday. When I wear it, I think of Hugh. I will never forget him. I was so proud to have had him in my life. I will never forget my best friend, Hugh. I know that he is very happy up in heaven with his parents. Hopefully someday, we will reunite again in heaven. May Hugh rest in peace. I am proud to be writing this story about him, sharing my thoughts, stories, and memories.

By Helen

With Love from Meghan Markle

I am watching Meghan Markle's new show on Netflix now. There are eight episodes, and it seems to be popular, it was advertised on Sky News last night and it's mentioned in the English newspapers. In the show, Meghan is baking, beekeeping and gardening. We get to watch Meghan enjoying her hobbies. I like watching her doing the activities such as baking because she makes some beautiful cakes, buns and apple tarts. Meghan even home bakes dog biscuits for her two dogs.

I am currently on episode five. Meghan is creating different recipes and using fresh ingredients from her home garden such as honey from the bees, tomatoes from her garden, and juice from her orange and grape trees. Meghan has more than one garden, and a stunning big house that you can see the beach from. The views are stunning.

Meghan has a big kitchen with lots of space and different cookers. Meghan invites other celebrities over to do cooking demonstrations

with her for the show. This is great as we can see more celebrities and their personalities and some of their talents in the kitchen. Meghan has a professional chef cooking with her in her kitchen, I watch some things that he has made, and they are absolutely brilliant.

Meghan has one dog who sometimes sleeps in the kitchen in his bed. He looks very relaxed and cute when he is all comfortable in his bed. She also has another dog who sleeps upstairs who Meghan adores. Meghan goes to the flower shop and buys some bunches of flowers and puts them into the pots to add to her garden. She makes flower arrangements to add colour to her gardens.

I think Meghan is a very intelligent and talented woman. Not only is she great with arts and crafts and her cooking and gardening skills, but she is also an actress, a mother and a wife. Because she is a celebrity and has connections to the royal family, her house and the grounds around it are under strong security with different bodyguards for her and her family.

I enjoyed when Meghan said she enjoyed the soaps when her kids go to bed. I also enjoy watching the soaps and because of this, we share the same hobby.

By Mary