



EQUILIBRIUM SCHOOL

DECEMBER 2024 NEWSLETTER

All the stories in this newsletter are written by our students or our teachers.

Letters to Equilibrium

Good afternoon!
I would like to express my gratitude to Equilibrium School. First of all, for the honor of being a student at this school and being a part of the student community. The teachers have been helpful throughout my studies and beyond. My instructors have contributed a lot to my comfortable adaptation to Calgary.

Regards,
Kateryna Shmerla

See more on Page 11.

Songs about Equilibrium

Please compose a **pop song** using the following words about our wonderful workplace, Equilibrium School. You can also access our website for assistance: *diverse, friendly, inspiring, you feel at home, a big family, one of a kind, be yourself, professional, edifying, bonding*

(Verse 1) At Equilibrium, where the sun always shines,
Diverse and friendly, one of a kind.
Inspiring moments, every day we find,
You feel at home, let your heart unwind.

(Pre-Chorus) We're a big family, together we stand,
Be yourself, we're here to lend a hand.
Professional and warm, that's our plan,
In this place, dreams expand.

(Chorus) Equilibrium School, where we belong,
In this edifying world, we grow strong.
Bonding and learning, all day long,
Equilibrium, you can't go wrong.

(Verse 2) From different places, we come as one,
Laughing and learning, having fun.
Soft voices, kind hearts, always on the run,
Our journey here has just begun.

See more on Page 2.

Songs about Equilibrium

composed by our wonderful teaching staff ...with the help of ChatGPT!

We had a presentation on ChatGPT. For the team-building activity, I put the staff in groups and asked them to come up with words/phrases that describe our school. Then we picked different types of music and asked ChatGPT to compose songs using the words from each group.

Prompt 1:

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Be yourself, we're here to lend a hand.
Professional and warm, that's our plan,
In this place, dreams expand.

(Chorus) Equilibrium School, where we belong,
In this edifying world, we grow strong.
Bonding and learning, all day long,
Equilibrium, you can't go wrong.

(Bridge) With every step, we rise and shine,
Our spirits high, futures aligned.
In this loving space, we always find,
A home in our hearts, peace of mind.

(Chorus) Equilibrium School, where we belong,
In this edifying world, we grow strong.
Bonding and learning, all day long,
Equilibrium, you can't go wrong.

(Outro) Equilibrium School, our guiding star,
Together we thrive, no matter how far.
With love and support, we raise the bar,
Equilibrium, that's who we are.

Prompt 2:

Please write a **country song** using the following words about our wonderful workplace, Equilibrium school. Refer to our website for additional ideas: *lighthearted, focused on balance, good working atmosphere, flexible workplace, helping society, helping those who fall through the cracks of the educational system*

(Verse 1) Down at Equilibrium School,
where the sunshine's always bright, We're
balancing our dreams with a lighthearted
delight. From dawn till dusk, we're focused
on a mission so true, Creating futures bright,
for me and for you.

(Chorus) In this flexible workplace, where
smiles never lack, We're lifting spirits high,
helping students stay on track. With hearts
as big as Texas, and hands that never rest,
We're building up tomorrow, giving our
very best.

(Verse 2) Here at Equilibrium, we mend
what's been torn, Helping those who've
stumbled, where hope was nearly worn. A
good working atmosphere, where kindness
fills the air, We're reaching out to society,
showing how much we care.

(Chorus) In this flexible workplace, where
smiles never lack, We're lifting spirits high,
helping students stay on track. With hearts
as big as Texas, and hands that never rest,
We're building up tomorrow, giving our
very best.

(Bridge) When some fall through the cracks,
we're there to lend a hand, Guiding them to
greatness, helping them understand. It's
more than just a job, it's a calling deep
inside, At Equilibrium School, our passion's
in the ride.

(Chorus) In this flexible workplace, where
smiles never lack, We're lifting spirits high,
helping students stay on track. With hearts
as big as Texas, and hands that never rest,
We're building up tomorrow, giving our
very best.

(Outro) So here's to Equilibrium, where
balance is our song, In this place of learning,
where we all belong. With gratitude and joy,
we'll keep shining bright, At Equilibrium
School, where our future's in flight.

Prompt 3:

Please create a **rap song** about the same place. Use these words: *innovative, diverse, holistic, experience, community focused, enriching, global, academic excellence, supportive*

(Verse 1) Yo, welcome to Equilibrium,
where the vibe is so innovative, Diverse
minds colliding, every perspective we're
integrative. Holistic approach, we elevate
the experience, Community focused,
together we break barriers, no interference.

(Chorus) From the block to the globe, we're
enriching every mind, Global thinkers in the
making, academic excellence we grind.
Supportive hands lift us up, we rise above
the rest, At Equilibrium, we push
boundaries, putting us to the test.

(Verse 2) In the heart of our city, we're the
beacon that shines bright, Innovative
thinkers, day and night, we're reaching new
heights. From every background, every
creed, we celebrate diversity, One united
family, building bridges, unlocking
university.

(Chorus) From the block to the globe, we're
enriching every mind, Global thinkers in the
making, academic excellence we grind.
Supportive hands lift us up, we rise above
the rest, At Equilibrium, we push
boundaries, putting us to the test.

(Bridge) Experience the transformation, see
the knowledge unfold, At Equilibrium, every
story's told. Together we learn, grow, and
thrive, In this journey of a lifetime, we're
alive.

(Verse 3) With an eye on the future, we're
paving the way, For leaders of tomorrow,
ready to seize the day. Our roots are deep,
our vision is clear, Equilibrium, where
dreams appear.

(Chorus) From the block to the globe, we're
enriching every mind, Global thinkers in the
making, academic excellence we grind.
Supportive hands lift us up, we rise above
the rest, At Equilibrium, we push
boundaries, putting us to the test.

(Outro) So here's to our journey, here's to
our crew, At Equilibrium School, we break
through. Innovation in our veins, diversity in
our soul, Academic excellence, our ultimate

So, here's to Equilibrium, where balance is our song, In this place of learning, where we all belong.

Songs about Equilibrium

Prompt 4:

Please do the same with a jazz song: fun, appreciative, attentive, friendly, welcoming, collaborative, supportive, resourceful, creative

(Verse 1) Come swing with us at Equilibrium, where jazz is in the air, Fun and laughter fill the room, with friends who truly care. Appreciative of every note, attentive to the beat, In this friendly atmosphere, our rhythms can't be beat.

(Chorus) Step into our world, where the music flows so free, A welcoming embrace, for all who hear the melody. Collaborative minds unite, in harmony we thrive, Supportive souls create, where talents come alive.

(Verse 2) Resourceful in our solos, creative in our blend, At Equilibrium, jazz is more than just a trend. We improvise together, crafting tunes that soar, In this jazz-filled haven, we keep coming back for more.

(Chorus) Step into our world, where the music flows so free, A welcoming embrace, for all who hear the melody. Collaborative minds unite, in harmony we thrive,

Supportive souls create, where talents come alive.

(Bridge) In the heart of every riff, in the soul of every chord, Equilibrium resonates, with music as our sword. A symphony of friendships, a groove that never ends, Jazzing up our lives, forever making amends.

(Verse 3) With every beat, we celebrate, our creativity shines, At Equilibrium, our jazz spirit defines. So join us on this journey, where music's always new, In this jazz-infused community, we welcome you.

(Chorus) Step into our world, where the music flows so free, A welcoming embrace, for all who hear the melody. Collaborative minds unite, in harmony we thrive, Supportive souls create, where talents come alive.

(Outro) At Equilibrium, jazz is our guide, Forever playing, side by side. Creative sparks ignite, in this jazz paradise, Where every note, is a joyful surprise.

Prompt 4: For this one, I asked ChatGPT to compose a K-POP song using our website for content.

(Verse 1) Step into a world, where dreams come alive, At Equilibrium School, where we truly thrive. From Calgary to the globe, we spread our light, In this vibrant place, everything feels just right.

(Pre-Chorus) With a smile, we greet the day, Resourceful minds, finding the way. Creative sparks, in every class, Together we shine, we're built to last.

(Chorus) Equilibrium, where hearts unite, Fun and welcoming, pure delight. Appreciative and kind, we all belong, In this joyful place, we sing our song.

(Verse 2) Supportive hands, reaching out to guide, In this friendly school, we stand with pride. Collaborative spirit, working side by side, Every step we take, we feel the stride.

(Pre-Chorus) Innovative paths, we always choose, Attentive to our dreams, we can't lose. From EAL to GED, the sky's the limit, At Equilibrium, we're always in it.

(Chorus) Equilibrium, where hearts unite, Fun and welcoming, pure delight. Appreciative and kind, we all belong, In this joyful place, we sing our song.

(Bridge) With every lesson, we grow stronger, In this diverse space, we last longer. Holistic views, shaping our mind, In the heart of learning, treasures we find.

(Chorus) Equilibrium, where hearts unite, Fun and welcoming, pure delight. Appreciative and kind, we all belong, In this joyful place, we sing our song.

(Outro) Equilibrium, a place to shine, Together forever, our stars align. With supportive hearts, we'll always strive, In this wonderful school, we come alive.



With every lesson, we grow stronger, In this diverse space, we last longer. Holistic views, shaping our mind, In the heart of learning, treasures we find.

Cultural Potluck

Our morning English class was learning about food and decided to have a cultural potluck. We had food from Morocco, Ukraine, Mexico, Afghanistan, Pakistan, South Korea and Syria.



What is Eid?

Eid, meaning feast, denotes two official holidays celebrated within Islam. The first of these is Eid-Al-Fitr (feast of breaking the fast) which is celebrated the day after Ramadan to mark the end of the 30-day period of fasting during that month. Since the Islamic calendar is based on the moon, the exact date of both Ramadan and Eid shifts back 10-13 days every year.

Ramadan and Eid are celebrated by more than a billion people of many different, nationalities, ethnicities and backgrounds and so there are many ways of celebrating and many different traditions, culture and even cuisines involved.

Fasting may not sound fun at all but the ritual and ceremony that surrounds it is a big part of most Muslim family's lives and children grow up enjoying the family meals before dawn and at dusk. They compete in endurance, take part in communal prayers and enjoy special nutritious drinks and food that are made to keep and break the fast. Fruits and nuts are eaten in abundance, friends and neighbour gather at these meals. Other than introspection and reflection, this is also a time for charity and sharing, some of the largest soup kitchens in the world are set up in this month and it is made sure that no one goes hungry. Streets and houses are decorated with chandeliers and lights to signify the dawn and dusk meals and keeping awake at night.

Khaled, a Syrian student says, that his children expect 'Eidi' (money given to children or anyone younger than you on Eid) if they fast more days. They

have special requests for the food they want to eat and are excited for the new clothes that they buy. Women and girls enjoy the henna application on the hands and feet as well as other preps for the Eid Prayer. People sometimes travel all over country to be with their families at the time of Eid.

Eid Prayer is a start of the Eid day and as many people as possible gather at community centres, open areas and mosques to pray the special short prayer together and meet and greet each other, give gifts and enjoy sweets. Later people gather in houses and parks to enjoy meals and special Eid dishes; ethnic ones, special family recipes and some which are made only in large quantities and shared on such an event. A great thing about Eid in Canada is the multicultural dresses of the diverse Muslim community here.

The second Eid is Eid-al-Adha (feast of sacrifice), which takes place in the last month of the Islamic calendar, and also coincides with the third day of Hajj, which is the annual pilgrimage to Mecca performed by Muslims. Eid-Al-Adha celebrates and honours the willingness of the prophet Abraham to sacrifice his son in the name of God, which is represented by sacrificing various cattle.

While the Eid after Ramadan is also called 'sweet Eid' as people prefer exchanging and making sweets after fasting, this Eid is the 'salty Eid' as people eat meat from the sacrificial animals. The meat is divided into three equal parts, one for the family, one for friends and community and one for charity. Special meat dishes and complimenting dishes are prepared. There is no Eidi on this Eid and although new dresses and decorations are part of the festival, the bigger focus is on the sacrifice and sharing of communal meals.

Khatreh, a student from Afghanistan says, 'Afghan people enjoy three days of festivity (in Muslim majority countries, it is a three-day holiday). It is an occasion to visit family and friends, eat fruits of the season and wear brand new clothes, give gifts. People also play traditional games such as wrestling and buzkashi'.

In Canada and countries where it is difficult to sacrifice an animal, people donate to have it done where it will be available to the people most in need.



THANKING A HERO

Tina's afternoon class did a lesson from [elli.com](https://www.elli.com) on "September 11 Heroes" to commemorate that day. The lesson focused on the various groups of people that helped on that tragic day in 2001. This included first responders, fire fighters, boat operators, and police officers – including the K9 dog heroes!

The students' writing task was to Thank a Hero.

Mohamed

To: Doctors Without Borders

I was hesitant in writing you this note. I couldn't find the right words to thank you for all the good deeds you have done for humankind all over the world. But let me express some of my gratitude to those who put themselves in jeopardy every day for humans' sake. You deserve more than thanks. Your efforts to save human lives in war zones are remarkable. Records show your footprint in Afghanistan, Ukraine, Palestine, and Yemen. People from all over the world are thankful for the job you're doing and we're positive that when everything collapses in a war zone, and when hope diminishes, we can count on you to bring hope back. In short, I think you're the light at the end of the tunnel. Thank you.

Khaterah

My thank you note is for Ms. Amanda. She is a city police officer in Calgary. I had been attacked by a stupid person, and she was exactly my life saver. I want to say thank you so much for your assistance and support. Your help has made a significant difference in my life, and I truly appreciate the time and efforts you put into my life to protect me. It was a great pleasure from the City of Calgary Police. Their knowledge and technology was so reliable and helpful. I am sincerely grateful for your contribution. Thanks again.

Meriem

Dear Mr. "X"

Even though I don't remember your name and your face, I will never forget what you did for me a long time before when I was travelling from Morocco to France for my studies. We met on the plane. We sat next to each other. I was worried and scared because of my first trip alone without help or assistance. You reassured me and guided me with all the process of arrival. You booked the hotel and drove me to it. You acted as an angel and the only thing that you asked me for is to pray for your kids. I am very thankful and grateful for what you did on that day and for your sensitivity and generosity.

Juan Carlos

I would like to thank a dental surgeon. He was my hero in 2009. My daughter had a really bad infection and no one

wanted to care about my little princess. At that time our economic situation was very bad and we were not permanent residents. Fortunately, the front desk lady sent us to him and I told the assistant I have no money to pay but I will pay a monthly arrangement. The assistant said that in special cases like the doctor never charges any money for charity. He saved my daughter, which is why he is my hero and I will always be grateful to him.

Idioms Using 'and'

Tina's PM class studies weekly idioms on various topics. One week's lesson was on Idioms using the word 'and.' After studying the meaning and usage of these idioms, the students completed a writing task including as many idioms as possible.

Meriem

Last Friday on the C-train during my **back and forth** commute to school, I was sitting next to an elderly woman who was wearing a jacket with **wear and tear**. She looked sad and lonely. I started small talk about the weather. **By and large**, seniors like making conversation. We talked about the **ins and outs** of life, kids, travel, etc. I felt her confused and lost; that's why I asked her where she was living and where she was going. Unfortunately, she couldn't answer. I understood that she is suffering from Alzheimer's. I asked her to search in her pocket hoping that she could find a clue to know her identity. She found a piece of paper with an address. I accompanied her to the address.

Eduardo

I went **back and forth** to school the first week of September 2024. For me, it is very important to know the **ins and outs** and have more knowledge and experience in my English course. If I am working hard to be **fair and square**, I'm sure I will learn and speak better English, but I will always have to remember not to do **a song and dance** and keep my mind **spick and span!**

Juan Carlos

In 1999, I was crossing the border of the USA. I think it was the longest hike I've even been on in my life, but it was good. I heard this **song and dance** too many times so I wanted to verify it with my own

eyes. Actually, the trip was **safe and sound**. Four days and five nights, I will never forget that history of my life. I remember I started walking with new clothes and good running shoes, but at the end, my clothes had some **wear and tear**. The funny thing is I was used to the same clothes for one more week until I got to my destiny and started to work. When I got some money, I purchased some shoes and clothes and other **odds and ends**.

Khaterah

A situation where I was always going **"back and forth"**

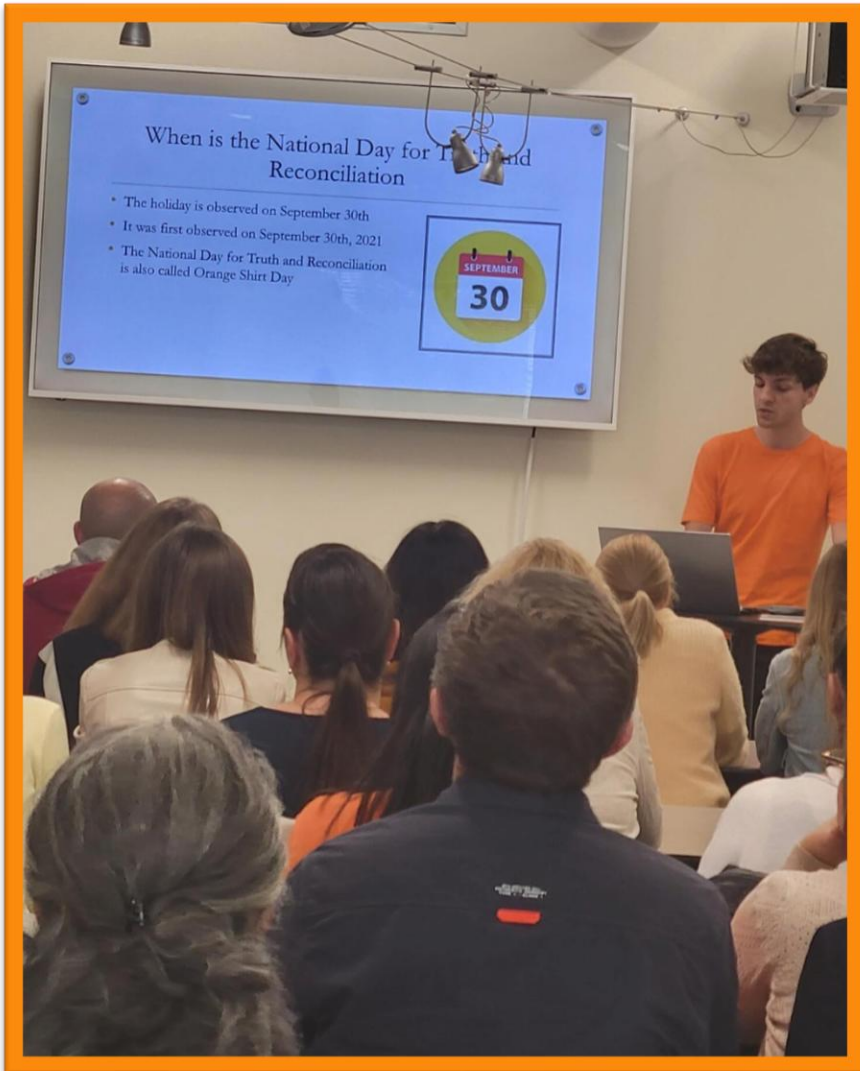
When I used to work as an assistant cook at the Kids & Company Daycare, my work was the same every day. I prepared food for about 175 kids per day. The morning snack needed to be in the class before 8:30am and because most kids had to leave for their school. I was **back and forth** between the kitchen and classrooms. My routine was more than 12 times in a day. First I delivered the food bins for the morning snack, then I had to pick up and wash all the dishes. The second trip was lunch, then back to the room to give them the food. To be honest, I was extremely exhausted at the end of the day. I was alone and no one was interested in helping in the kitchen. The job was so tough with long days of standing. My director was a humble and nice lady and she always encouraged and thanked me.

Mohamed

One day I asked the CFO in my previous job for a raise. She knew how good I was at doing my job. I was not the kind of messy worker or the kind of worker who always postponed their assignment, but she started telling me **a cock and bull story** every time I reminded her about my request. **By and large**, in a situation like mine, and after two reminders, workers move to the next stop, which is talking directly to the CEO. Not me – I wanted to earn my raise **fair and square**, so I gave him a last chance to answer my request, and I told her that was enough and I wasn't ready to listen to such **a song and dance** every time. After two days I got a negative answer. That was the end of my career in that company. At the end, I learned something, which is being **spick and span** at work doesn't mean you will have a raise easily.

National Day of Truth and Reconciliation

Truth and Reconciliation Day in Canada, observed annually on September 30, honors the survivors of residential schools, their families, and communities. This day serves as a reminder of the painful legacy of these institutions and underscores the need for ongoing efforts toward reconciliation. Through education, reflection, and commemorative events, Canadians are encouraged to acknowledge this history and commit to fostering understanding and healing. At our school, we commemorate this day each year with a variety of meaningful activities.



Our LINC Student BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION



Our LINC student **Wafaa** invited all his classmates and his teacher **Monika** to his house to celebrate his birthday. Thank you Wafaa for the delicious food and the wonderful company!



Wafaa who has been my student for about a year, is originally from Syria. Recently, she decided to experience a Canadian-style birthday party and invited all her classmates to celebrate with her. She beautifully blended her Syrian heritage with Canadian traditions, making the party truly special. Wafaa prepared a delicious array of Syrian food, which everyone loved, and included some Canadian games as part of the festivities. Her thoughtful planning created an atmosphere where we could all have fun, practice English, and enjoy each other's company. One of the games involved popping balloons, each containing a question about the classmates. For example, participants had to guess who among the group was the oldest or the youngest. This game sparked lots of laughter and gave everyone a chance to use and learn new English words. The food was fantastic, and Wafaa's classmates showed their love and appreciation by bringing her presents, including a homemade birthday cake. Wafaa's family was also part of the celebration—her husband and children joined in, making the day even more special. It was a joyful, heartwarming experience filled with laughter, cultural exchange, and wonderful memories. Everyone left the party feeling happy and grateful to have been part of such a unique and meaningful celebration.



Just Wondering

By Dale T. Latham, BSc

GED/CAED Instructor

No matter what culture we come from, we all have some short sayings, maxims, or proverbs handed down from our grandparents, to our parents, and yes, to us. Then, we find ourselves using these pearls of wisdom in our daily lives and on our own children, and they look at us and say.....Huh? What...ever! So, I guess the question remains, "where do these sayings originate?"

I thought it would be interesting to check some of them out, so I did some research, and this is what I found, **authored by Janey Davies, B.A. (Hons)**, from the website: <https://www.learning-mind.com/old-sayings-meanings/>

35 Popular Old Sayings & Their Real Meanings You Had No Idea About

1. "At the Drop of a Hat"

Means: To do something without delay

Real meaning: In the 19th century, a hat was used to indicate the start of a race or a fight. A hat would be dropped or swept in a downward arc and participants would begin.

2. "As Mad as a Hatter"

Means: To be crazy or insane

Real meaning: In the 17th and 18th centuries, hatters made felt hats with mercury, which lead to all kinds of side effects, including insanity. The Mad Hatter, from Lewis Carroll's Alice in Wonderland, is based on this phenomenon.

3. "Barking up the Wrong Tree"

Means: Take the wrong approach or waste your efforts

Real meaning: This is an old saying that originates in America and refers to hunting dogs in the early 19th century. Hunted prey such as raccoons or bears would escape the dogs by climbing up trees. The dogs would then sit and bark at the base of the tree, waiting for their masters.

However, sometimes the dogs would lose the scent and select the wrong tree. They would still bark for their masters.

4. "Basket Case"

Means: Stressed out, unable to cope

Real meaning: In WW1, tragically many soldiers lost limbs and had to be carried. They were put in a makeshift basket and referred to as "basket cases."

5. "Big Wig"

Means: A very important person

Real meaning: This is one of those old sayings that is literal in origin. In the 18th century, the important figures within the political system would wear the biggest wigs.

6. "Bite the Bullet"

Means: Go through the pain and get on with it

Real meaning: There was no such thing as pain relief or anaesthesia in the 19th century. As a result, when soldiers were injured on the battlefield and needed treatment, they were given a bullet to bite down on to prevent them screaming out loud.

7. "Burning the Midnight Oil"

Means: Working late into the night

Real meaning: Before the days of electricity, oil lamps were used for lighting a room. Hence, you were burning oil at midnight if you were working late.

8. "Bury the Hatchet"

Means: End a disagreement and move on

Real meaning: This old saying comes from a Native American tradition. When tribes declared a truce from battle, the chief from each opposing side would take a hatchet and bury it during a ceremony.

9. "Caught Red-Handed"

Means: Apprehended during the commission of a crime

Real meaning: In 15th century Scotland, being caught red-handed refers to committing a crime that leaves you with blood on your hands.

10. "Chow Down"

Means: To get on with eating

Real meaning: The US military came up with this slang term during WWII. The Chinese were rumoured to eat dog meat and as a Chow is a Chinese dog the term grew from those two things.

11. "Dead Ringer"

Means: An exact likeness

Real meaning: In the 19th century, US horse-racers would substitute a horse that was faster or slower than the original racing horse to con the bookies. That horse looked exactly like the substituted horse and was called a ringer.

12. "Dressed to the Nines"

Means: Wearing your best clothes

Real meaning: There were no 'off the shelf' suits in the 18th century. If you wanted one, you had it made especially for you. In those days, a suit included the waistcoat and so it took nine yards of fabric to complete.

13. "Eating Humble Pie"

Means: To be submissive or apologetic

Real meaning: As far back as the 17th century, the lord of an estate would give the umbles (the less tasty parts of an animal) to his

servants. Typically, they were made into a pie. This became associated with a lower social status.

14. "Feeling under the Weather"

Means: Not feeling well

Real meaning: This is another one of those old sayings that come from the sea. Sailors would rest under the bow of a ship if they became seasick during a voyage. This was the best place as it would protect the sailor from bad weather. Those who were ill were described as 'being under the weather'.

15. "Give a Cold Shoulder"

Means: Ignore or reject

Real meaning: At medieval banquets, the host would give his guests a cut of cold meat, usually the shoulder, to indicate the feast was over and it was time to go home.

16. "Happy as Larry"

Means: As happy as you can be

Real meaning: In the late 19th century, Australian boxer **Larry Foley** won a massive prize pot of \$150,000. The headlines the next day reported on Happy Larry.

17. "Can't Hold a Candle to"

Means: You are nowhere near as good as

Real meaning: In the 17th century, it was the job of the apprentices to hold the candles during the night so that their teachers or the talent could see what they were doing.

18. "In the Limelight"

Means: To be the centre of attention

Real meaning: In the 19th century, theatres used a limelight, a bright white spotlight, to light up the actors. In the limelight became known as being the centre of attention.

19. "Honeymoon"

Means: The holiday immediately after a newly-wed couple's marriage.

Real meaning: It was a tradition for just-married couples to drink honey for a month to increase their chances of good luck throughout the marriage.

20. "In the Nick of Time"

Means: An action performed before it is too late

Real meaning: There are lots of old sayings that relate to money and debt. This one originated in the 18th century. People kept track of the money they owed to creditors with a stick. A nick was carved onto this stick every day the money was overdue. If you paid before the nick, then you didn't owe interest on the debt.

21. “Kick the Bucket”

Means: To die

Real meaning: During the slaughter of cows, buckets were placed under the animal to catch the blood. Often the cow would kick the bucket at the last minute as it was being hoisted up for slaughter.

22. “My Ears Are Burning”

Means: Someone is talking about me behind my back

Real meaning: The Ancient Romans paid particular attention to bodily sensations. They believed they were signs of good or bad luck, depending on where these sensations occurred. The left-hand side was associated with bad luck and the right side was good luck. Burning in the left ear indicated criticism whereas burning in the right ear was associated with praise.

23. “One for the Road”

Means: The last drink before setting off

Real meaning: This old saying dates back to the Middle Ages. Apparently, prisoners on their way to execution in London were allowed to stop along Oxford Street for one final drink before they died.

24. “Paint the Town Red”

Means: Go out for a wild night

Real meaning: There are several explanations for this old saying, but it is generally attributed to a night of drunken antics in 1837 by the **Marquis of Waterford**.

According to the records, the Marquis was a known drunk and renowned for his drunken rampages in the small English town of Melton Mowbray. On this particular night, however, the marquis and his friends went wild, vandalising houses and eventually painting the doors and a statue with red paint.

24. “Pulling Out All the Stops”

Means: Making a huge effort

Real meaning: In the late 19th century, organists used stops to create volume whenever they played. Pulling out all the stops is the loudest an organ can play.

25. “Put a Sock in It”

Means: Be quiet and stop talking

Real meaning: Talking of volume and sound, here we have yet another one of those old sayings from the late 19th century. Gramophones used to have large trumpet-shaped horns which provided the sound. However, there was no way to adjust the volume in those days so the only way to lower the sound was to literally put a sock in the horn.

26. “Resting on Your Laurels”

Means: To sit back and rely on past achievements

Real meaning: In Ancient Greece, laurel leaves were associated with high status and achievement. As a matter of fact, athletes were presented with wreaths made from laurel leaves to denote their prestige.

Later on, the Romans also implemented this practice and awarded laurel crowns to successful generals. They were known as ‘laureates’ and allowed to retire because of their past achievements. In other words, they could ‘rest on their laurels’. Nowadays it has more of a negative connotation.

27. “Sell You Down the River”

Means: A betrayal of trust

Real meaning: During the abolition of the slave trade of the 19th century, southern states in the US would continue to capture and sell slaves. These slaves would be shipped down the Mississippi River and sold.

28. “Show Your True Colours”

Means: Divulge your true intentions

Real meaning: ‘Colours’ refer to a ship’s flags and, therefore, their identity. In the 18th century, pirate ships would deliberately lower their colours or display false colours to confuse other ships into thinking they were friendly. It was only when they got close enough to attack, they would show their true colours.

29. “Sleep Tight”

Means: have a good night’s sleep

Real meaning: this is just one of the many old sayings that derive from Shakespeare’s era. In those days, beds and mattresses were secured with ropes that were pulled tight. This formed a solid base and led to a night of good sleep. Hence – sleep tight.

30. “You Son of a Gun”

Means: A term of endearment

Real meaning: When sailors took their wives to sea on long voyages inevitably some of the women fell pregnant. The safest place to give birth was deemed to be between the gun cannons. Therefore, a child born on the gun deck was known as a ‘son of a gun’.

31. “Spill the Beans”

Means: Tell me your secret

Real meaning: Back to Ancient Greece again for this old saying. During elections, voters would place a bean into a jar designated to the candidate of their choice. Sometimes the jar would be knocked over and the beans would spill out, revealing the result of the voting.

32. “Steal Your Thunder”

Means: Take the limelight away from someone

Real meaning: As old sayings go, this one is the most literal I can find. 18th-century playwright *John Dennis* wanted an authentic sound of thunder to give his play more gravitas. So, he invented a thunder-making machine.

When his play flopped, he thought nothing of it, but later on, he learned that someone had looked at his machine and made a similar one for their play. It was practically the same but he was not credited with the invention. This person had literally stolen his thunder.

33. “Turn a Blind Eye”

Means: Refusing to accept the situation

Real meaning: Naval commander **Horatio Nelson** is a hero in British history, but even he had his foibles. During one particular battle, his ships were sent to battle a huge combined fleet from Norway and Denmark. When an officer suggested that they withdraw, according to legend, Nelson held the telescope up to his blind eye and said:

“I really do not see the signal.”

34. “Walls Have Ears”

Means: Watch what you say, someone could be listening

Real meaning: I’m not sure whether this is one of those old sayings born from myth but the story is interesting enough. It is said that there are underground chambers built into the Louvre Palace in Paris. In fact, **Catherine de Medici** had them built specifically for listening to plots against her family.

35. “Winning Hands Down”

Means: Wins by a huge margin

Real meaning: In horse racing, a jockey uses a whip to make his or her horse gallop faster. If they are miles away from the competition, then they can put their hands down as they don’t need the whip.

*****References: History.com, Columbia.edu**

At the end of her article, Ms. Davies notes these sayings are but a few of what is out there.

I’ll bet if we polled our students, they would come up with a plethora of their own.

Just sayin’...

- “In the Nick of Time”
- “Kick the Bucket”
- “Walls Have Ears”
- “Spill the Beans”
- “Pulling Out All the Stops”
- “Paint the Town Red”
- “Winning Hands Down”

- “At the Drop of a Hat”
- “As Mad as a Hatter”
- “Barking up the Wrong Tree”
- “Basket Case”
- “Big Wig”
- “Bite the Bullet”
- “Burning the Midnight Oil”

- “Bury the Hatchet”
- “Caught Red-Handed”
- “Chow Down”
- “Dead Ringer”
- “Dressed to the Nines”
- “Eating Humble Pie”
- “You Son of a Gun”

- “Feeling under the Weather”
- “Give a Cold Shoulder”
- “Happy as Larry”
- “Can’t Hold a Candle to”
- “In the Limelight”
- “Honeymoon”
- “Sleep Tight”

SLAVA and EXTENDED SLAVA PROGRAM

Dear Elahe,

I hope this message finds you well. I am writing to sincerely express my heartfelt gratitude for your outstanding dedication and commitment to teaching English at Equilibrium School in Calgary.

Your lessons have been immensely helpful, and I deeply appreciate the clear explanations, engaging teaching methods, and the supportive atmosphere you foster in the classroom. Thanks to your guidance, I feel increasingly confident in my ability to communicate in English—an invaluable skill for both my personal and professional development.

I would also like to take a moment to acknowledge the incredible staff at Equilibrium School, especially Kasia and Slavica and teacher Richard. Your collective efforts to support Ukrainian citizens during these challenging times have not gone unnoticed. Your care, attention, and encouragement mean so much to those of us navigating this difficult period caused by the war in Ukraine.

Thank you once again for your patience, kindness, and dedication. Your impact on my language-learning journey has been profound, and I am truly grateful for all your hard work.

I wish you continued success in your future endeavors and sincerely hope to have the opportunity to learn from you again.

Best regards,
Oleksandr Rogatov

Tetiana Rohatova

*Dear Equilibrium School Team,
I want to express my heartfelt thanks for giving me the opportunity to join the SLAVA Course. For us Ukrainians, learning English is essential for adapting to life in a new country, and this course has been an invaluable help. I joined the SLAVA Course from the very first day and am still continuing it now. I can confidently say that I have noticed significant progress, and it has been incredibly helpful both at work and in my daily life here in Canada.*

Thank you for helping us feel more confident and comfortable in our new environment. Your support truly means a lot to us!

I would also like to thank the teachers of the course.

Teacher Richard provided us with so much valuable information that has helped us adapt to life here.

A special thank you to our teacher, Elahe - her teaching style, patience, and clear explanations made learning enjoyable and easy. The course structure and the supportive atmosphere made the whole experience motivating and rewarding.

Thank you once again.

Best regards,
Valeriia

*Dear Equilibrium School Team,
I would like to sincerely thank you for providing the SLAVA class for Ukrainians. This class has been incredibly helpful to me, and I am truly grateful for your support.
I especially want to highlight how amazing our teachers - Elahe, Richard, and Julia. They are all truly awesome. Their dedication makes a huge difference in my learning experience, and I am so thankful to have them as my teachers.*

Best regards,
Anna Boichenko



The SLAVA program of study at Equilibrium School, where I have had my three stages of study, became a real breakthrough for me in learning English. From the second level of CLB I rose above the fourth level, thanks to the caring administration of the school in particular in the person of Slavica S. and professional teachers: at the first stage - the magnificent Philip M., who promised to become a famous writer, at the intermediate stage - an amazingly pleasant couple Richard C and Julia L, who have a deep knowledge of the history of the country, and at the third stage of study - the future professor of philology - Elahe G.

Following a well-structured program, I significantly improved my speaking, writing and listening skills. The classes were not only informative, but also very interesting, which contributed to better assimilation of the material.

I would like to express special gratitude to the teacher of the third stage of the SLAVA course - Elahe, who created a friendly and supportive atmosphere in the group. Her deep knowledge and ability to explain complex grammar structures made learning not easy but very enjoyable.

I express my sincere and deep gratitude to the entire Equilibrium School team. I really hope that the SLAVA program will continue to deepen our knowledge of the language and customs of our new homeland - Canada.

Sincerely,
Mikhailo Moisieiev.



Holiday Around the World

Explore how **Christmas (or other winter holidays)** is celebrated in different countries.

Holidays Around the World – By Roxanne

The holiday season is a time of joy, reflection, and unique traditions celebrated across the globe. From the warm summer festivities in Australia to the candlelit processions of St. Lucia's Day in Sweden, each culture brings its own special meaning to this magical time of year. Whether it's sharing a meal, exchanging gifts, or honoring centuries-old customs, the season reminds us of the importance of togetherness and gratitude. **However, you choose to celebrate, spend it with your family, friends, and those you hold dear.**

1. Christmas in Mexico: "Las Posadas"

- In Mexico, the Christmas season begins with *Las Posadas*, celebrated from **December 16 to December 24**.
- Families reenact *Mary and Joseph's journey* to find shelter by visiting homes, singing carols, and sharing food.
- Traditional foods include *tamales* and *ponche navideño* (Christmas punch).
- Children often break a festive *piñata* shaped like a star during celebrations.

2. Hanukkah (Jewish Festival of Lights)

- Hanukkah is an eight-day celebration that usually occurs in December.
- Families light a candle on the *menorah* each night, exchange gifts, and eat special foods like *latkes* (potato pancakes) and *sufganiyot* (jelly-filled doughnuts).
- It commemorates the miracle of a small amount of oil burning for eight days in the ancient temple.

3. Kwanzaa (United States & African Diaspora)

- Kwanzaa, celebrated from **December 26 to January 1**, honors African-American heritage and culture.
- It focuses on *seven principles* such as unity (*Umoja*) and creativity (*Kuumba*).
- Families light a candle each night on a *Kinara* and share music, stories, and traditional meals.

4. Diwali (India)

- Though celebrated earlier in the year (typically October/November), Diwali is often called the *Festival of Lights*.
- Families clean their homes, light *diyas* (oil lamps), and set off fireworks to symbolize the triumph of light over darkness.
- Traditional sweets like *laddoos* and *jalebi* are shared among family and friends.

9. Italy – "La Befana" and Nativity Scenes

- In addition to Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, Italians celebrate **Epiphany** on January 6.
- A kind old witch called "**La Befana**" delivers gifts to children, similar to Santa Claus.
- Italians often display elaborate **nativity scenes** called *Presepi*, which are more important than Christmas trees in many regions.

10. Germany – "Christkind and Christmas Markets"

- Germans celebrate Christmas with **Advent calendars** and **Advent wreaths** leading up to Christmas.
- Traditional markets (*Weihnachtsmärkte*) pop up in towns, selling crafts, treats like **gingerbread** (*Lebkuchen*), and mulled wine (*Glühwein*).
- Gifts are delivered by **Christkind**, a golden-haired angelic figure, on Christmas Eve.

5. Christmas in the Philippines: "Simbang Gabi"

- The Philippines celebrates the longest Christmas season in the world, starting in **September!**
- *Simbang Gabi* is a series of nine early morning church masses leading up to Christmas Day.
- After mass, families enjoy festive treats like *bibingka* (rice cake) and *puto bumbong* (purple rice cake).

6. Australia – Christmas in Summer

- Since Christmas falls in **summer** in the Southern Hemisphere, Australians celebrate with barbecues, beach picnics, and outdoor activities.
- Traditional foods include seafood like prawns and pavlova (a meringue dessert topped with fruits).
- **Carols by Candlelight** is a popular event where people gather in parks to sing carols with candles at night.

7. Sweden – "St. Lucia's Day"

- St. Lucia's Day on **December 13** marks the start of the Christmas season. It honors St. Lucia, the saint of light.
- The eldest daughter in families dresses in a white gown with a red sash and wears a **crown of candles**, delivering "**Lussekatter**" (saffron buns) and coffee to family members.
- Christmas trees are decorated, and the holiday culminates with a traditional feast on Christmas Eve.

8. Norway – "Julebord" and Nisse

- Norwegians celebrate Christmas with "Julebord," a festive meal held with family, friends, or work colleagues.
- Children look out for the mischievous gnome called "**Nisse**", who is believed to bring gifts but may play tricks if not left a bowl of porridge.
- Norwegians also hide their **brooms** on Christmas Eve to prevent evil spirits from stealing them and flying away.

11. Japan – Christmas as a Festive Date

- Christmas is not a religious holiday in Japan but is celebrated as a time for spreading happiness.
 - A popular tradition is eating **fried chicken** (thanks to a famous KFC marketing campaign in the 1970s) and **Christmas cake** (a sponge cake with cream and strawberries).
 - Couples often celebrate Christmas as a **romantic date night**, similar to Valentine's Day.
-

12. Poland – Wigilia (Christmas Eve)

- Polish families celebrate **Wigilia** (Christmas Eve) with a traditional dinner of **12 dishes**, symbolizing the apostles.
 - The meal begins when the first **star appears** in the sky, honoring the Star of Bethlehem.
 - Families share **Oplatek** (a thin wafer), exchanging wishes for health and happiness before eating.
-

13. Venezuela – Roller Skating to Church

In Caracas, the capital of Venezuela, it's a tradition to go to early morning **Christmas Mass** on roller skates!

- Roads are closed to traffic so people can safely skate to church in large groups.
 - Afterward, families gather for festive meals, including **hallacas** (similar to tamales) and sweet treats.
-

14. Ukraine – "Sviata Vecheria" and Spider Decorations

- Ukrainians celebrate **Sviata Vecheria** (Holy Supper) on Christmas Eve with a meal of **12 meatless dishes**.
 - A unique tradition involves decorating the Christmas tree with **spider webs**. This comes from a legend about a poor family whose tree was magically decorated by spiders, symbolizing good luck.
-

15. Brazil – Festive Fireworks and "Missa do Galo"

- Christmas in Brazil includes **fireworks displays** and late-night church services called **Missa do Galo** (Rooster's Mass).
 - Traditional foods include roasted turkey, ham, and **panettone** (a sweet bread with fruits).
 - People enjoy beach celebrations and vibrant decorations in tropical weather.
-

16. Iceland – "The Yule Lads"

- Icelandic children look forward to visits from **13 Yule Lads**, mischievous troll-like characters who leave small gifts in shoes left by the window starting on **December 12**.
- Each Yule Lad has a unique personality and plays tricks, like **Stekkjaraustur** (Sheep-Cote Clod) or **Gluggagaegir** (Window-Peeper).

Did You Know? (Fun Holiday Facts)

1. **Christmas Trees**
 - The tradition of decorating Christmas trees originated in *Germany* in the 16th century. Early decorations included apples, nuts, and candles.
2. **Candy Canes**
 - Candy canes were invented in the 17th century to resemble a shepherd's crook, symbolizing shepherds visiting baby Jesus.
3. **Hanukkah Gelt**
 - *Gelt* are chocolate coins given during Hanukkah. The tradition symbolizes giving to charity and dates back centuries.
4. **Christmas in Space**
 - Astronauts aboard the *Skylab space station* celebrated Christmas in 1973 by decorating with handmade stockings and a small tree.
5. **The World's Largest Snowman**
 - The largest snowman ever built stood **122 feet tall** in *Bethel, Maine* in 1999. It took an entire community to build!
6. **Jingle Bells' Origin**
 - "Jingle Bells" was originally written in 1857 for *Thanksgiving* before becoming a Christmas classic.

Christmas Traditions

4. **Why Do We Hang Stockings?**
 - The tradition of hanging stockings comes from the story of **St. Nicholas**, who threw gold coins down a chimney to help a poor family. The coins landed in stockings drying by the fire!
5. **Christmas Crackers**
 - Christmas crackers (popular in the UK) were invented in the **1840s** by Tom Smith, who got the idea from the snap of a burning log.
6. **The First Christmas Card**
 - The first official Christmas card was sent in **1843** in England. It featured a family drinking wine and was criticized for encouraging "holiday cheer."

Christmas Weather

7. Snow at Christmas

- The concept of a “White Christmas” became popular thanks to **Charles Dickens’ *A Christmas Carol*** and the song *White Christmas*, written by Irving Berlin.

8. The World’s Snowiest Place

- The town of **Aomori, Japan**, gets the most snowfall in the world—averaging over **26 feet** annually—perfect for a snowy Christmas!
-

Christmas Music

9. Silent Night’s Global Reach

- “Silent Night” has been translated into **over 300 languages** and was declared an **intangible cultural heritage** by UNESCO in 2011.

10. Jingle Bells in Space

- “Jingle Bells” was the first song broadcast from space. Astronauts aboard *Gemini 6* in **1965** played it using a harmonica and small bells.
-

Christmas Foods

11. The First Candy Cane

- Candy canes were originally all **white**. Red stripes and peppermint flavor were added in the **20th century**.

12. Gingerbread Houses

- Gingerbread houses became popular after the **Brothers Grimm** wrote *Hansel and Gretel* in the 19th century.

13. Christmas Pudding

- Traditional Christmas pudding in England is made with **13 ingredients**, symbolizing **Jesus and his 12 apostles**.
-

Other Interesting Facts

14. Santa’s Modern Look

- Coca-Cola is often credited with popularizing **Santa’s red suit** in the 1930s, but the image of Santa in red dates back to the **19th century**.

15. The Largest Christmas Stocking

- The world’s largest Christmas stocking was over **168 feet long** and 70 feet wide, created in **Italy** in 2011.

16. Reindeer and Carrots

- The tradition of leaving **carrots** for Santa’s reindeer started as a way to thank them for their hard work on Christmas Eve.





CHRISTMAS

**AT
EQUILIBRIUM**

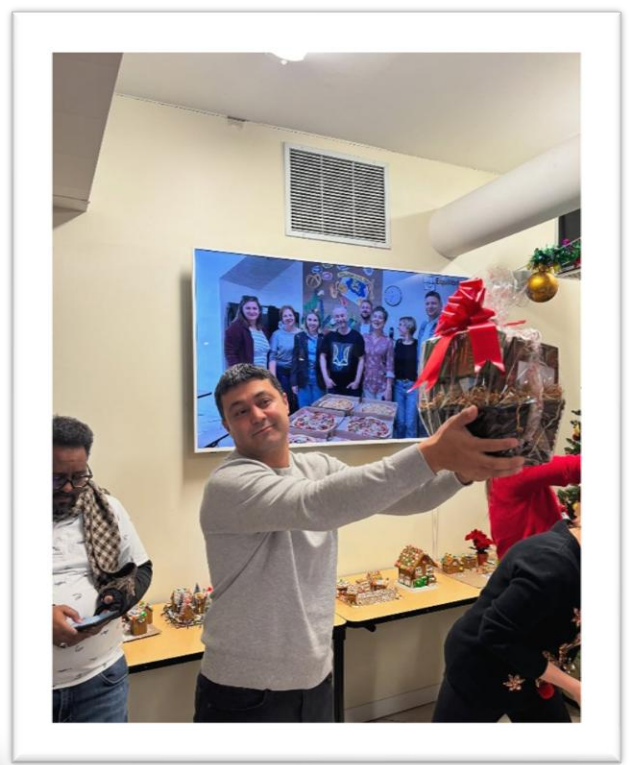
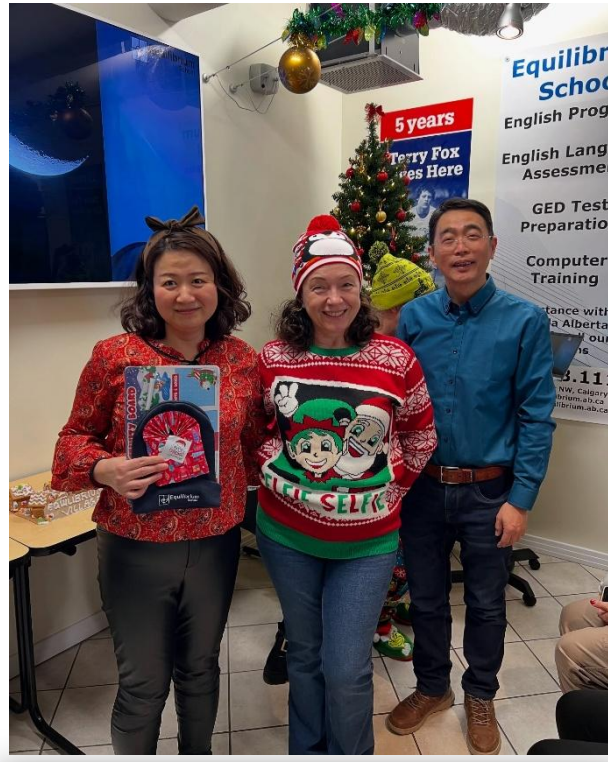
CHRISTMAS AT EQUILIBRIUM



School's Christmas Party!



The best waffles ever!



CHRISTMAS AT EQUILIBRIUM



CHRISTMAS AT EQUILIBRIUM



Liliya's LINC students devoted some classes to **Christmas celebrations and Christmas**

traditions in different parts of the world. One of her PM class students, **Oleh Bolyuk**, prepared a short presentation about some Ukrainian Christmas traditions, and Liliya would like to share some pictures and comments from his presentation.

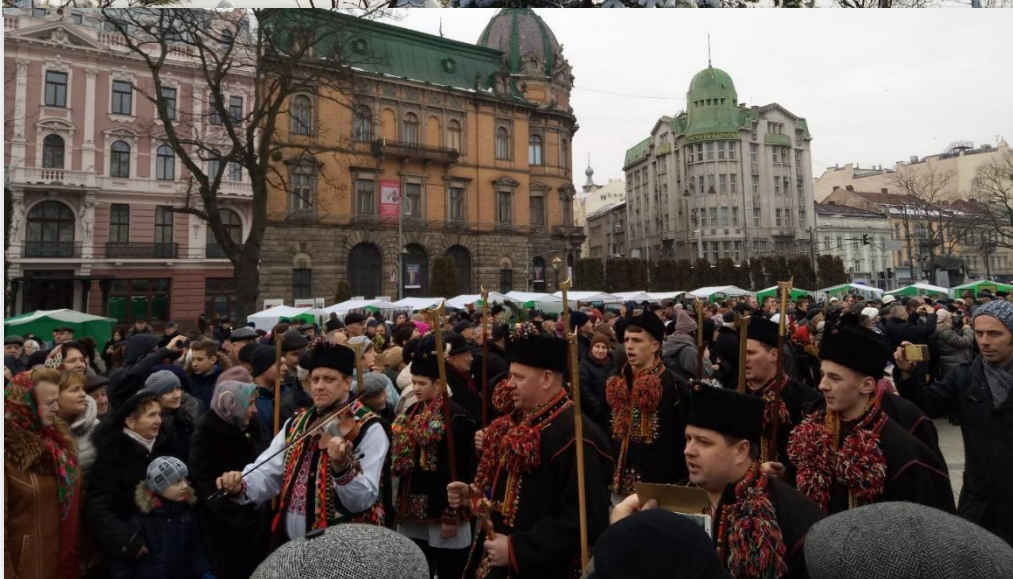
Christmas in the Carpathians

village Oriv
Lviv region, Western Ukraine



I remember when I lived in Ukraine, I always went to celebrate Christmas with my grandparents who lived in the mountains.

Our dog Oscar



My family observed long-standing Ukrainian Christmas traditions.



We always had twelve dishes on the table, but they were not served all at once. Each dish was replaced by the next after being tasted. The dishes were served by the person who prepared the festive dinner.

After dinner, on Christmas Day, and during the following two days, special songs called carols were sung. Children who went Christmas caroling could dress up as angels, shepherds, or characters from folklore.

Many of you may have listened to and enjoyed *Carol of the Bells*, but you might not know that it is based on the Ukrainian song “*Shchedryk*” that was created by the Ukrainian composer Mykola Leontovych at the beginning of the 20th century.

The English-language lyrics were written in 1936 by Peter Wilhousky.

Oleh Bolyuk, LINC student
(Liliya's PM class)



Christmas celebrations

Nice Christmas decoration's pictures shared by **Alicia Maiolino**, Liliya's LINC student from Argentina.



EQUILIBRIUM SWAG

Kasia and Anna gave these mugs to my parents for a birthday present!

My dad turned 91 on September 12 and my mom turned 87 on August 24!

They love their Equilibrium swag!

TINA



Travel log: Elvis Week 2024

Tina Jensen (Mega Elvis Fan)

What is Elvis Week?

It's an annual gathering in Memphis, Tennessee of thousands of Elvis Presley fans from all over the world. There are numerous live concerts of all kinds of music (not just Elvis music). There are movie screenings, special tours, panel discussions, celebrity appearances...and the biggest and most anticipated event of all: The Ultimate Elvis Tribute Artist Contest. This is where highly talented and dedicated artists from around the globe compete to see who can give the best representation of Elvis Presley. These are respectful (good-looking!), extremely talented, hard-working professional entertainers. They compete all year in various qualifying contests for a spot in the Top 20 in August in Memphis. After 2 nights of competition, the winner is chosen. He receives a \$20,000 cash prize as well as a performing contract and most of all, the respect and admiration of his peers and fans.

The other big event is the Candlelight Vigil, held on the evening on the anniversary of Elvis' death (Aug. 16, 1977). Fans line up for hours holding candles for their moment to walk past Elvis' grave and pay their respects. The grave is in a special garden behind Graceland, which is the mansion in Memphis where Elvis lived from 1956 – 1977. He died in this beloved home, and now it is a National Historical Treasure, meaning it will be forever preserved. It opened for tours in 1982 and is the second most visited home in the USA (as you can probably guess, the White House is the first!)

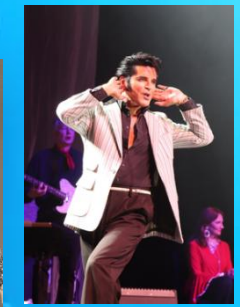
So why is Elvis Week so special? Who would go to Elvis Week? For me, it is a reunion of my many dear friends from all over the world with a shared passion that most people don't really understand. Some people are crazy about sports, some love camping, others love video games...we love Elvis!

The first time I went was 2008. I didn't really know that much about Elvis Week, but I had always wanted to visit Graceland. I didn't go to that many events that first year, but I am not exaggerating when I say that trip changed my life! The first night, I met the first two of my many Elvis friends and they remain dear to me. Then I spent about 4 hours touring Graceland and was moved to tears many times. I can't really explain why – we Elvis fans say, "If you get it, no explanation is necessary. If you don't, no explanation will be good enough."

I was 9 years old when Elvis died. I remember the moment I heard the news – I was in a hair salon with my mom getting a haircut. An Elvis song came on the radio and my mom looked

up in surprise when the announcer said that Elvis had died. I saw my mom's face in the mirror – her mouth fell open and she gasped in disbelief. We got home and she kept saying she couldn't believe it. I went to the living room and took out an Elvis record and went to the kitchen to ask her to put in on the record player for me. I found my mom leaning on the counter with her head down, crying and crying. It shocked me because it was the first time I had ever seen my mother cry.

Yes, **Elvis Presley** had many faults. Yes, he made mistakes. But he was immensely talented, highly respected in the music world, hard-working, humble, extremely generous, and always searching to better himself. He often feared he would not be remembered and that nothing he did would matter. Given the millions of people who visit his home every year and the thousands of international fans who love him and attend Elvis Week every year, and the many people he has influenced in the music world, it is clear he has left an important legacy.



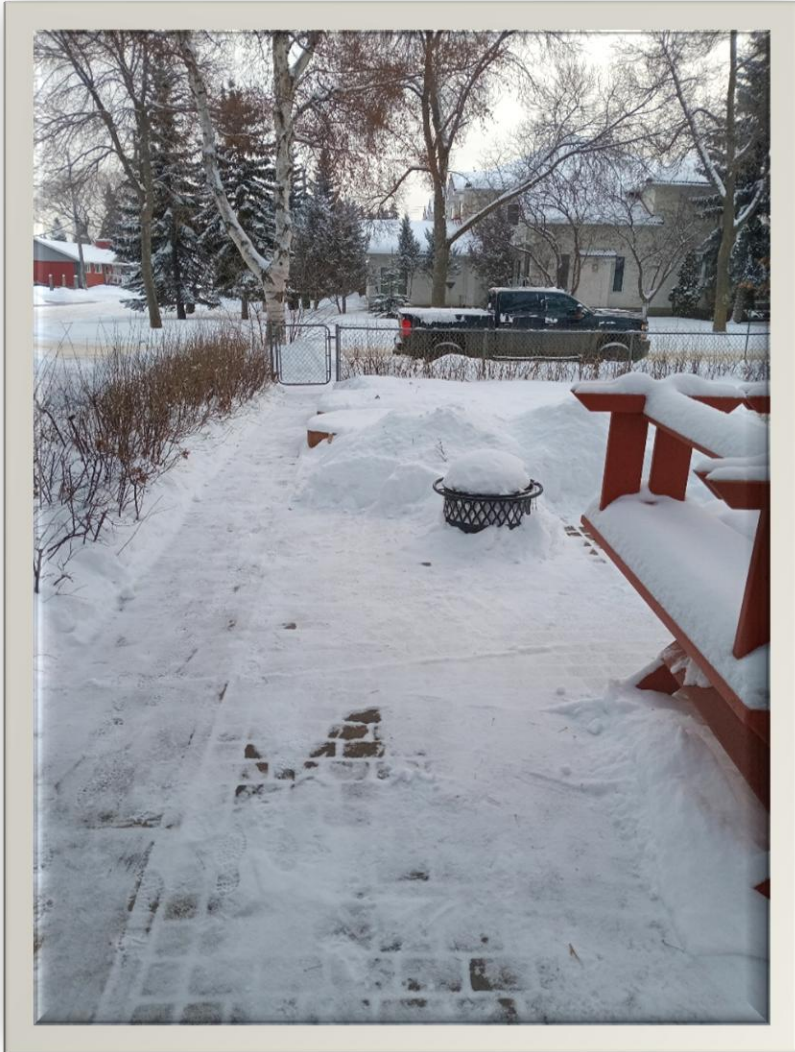
For me, he has given me lasting friendships and happy memories.

Hello, everyone who faithfully reads the Equilibrium Newsletter that Slavica Sero faithfully and capably compiles and sends out every other month (*how's that for a long introduction!?!?*)

Many, if not most, of our faithful readers live in Calgary, so a lot is known about the biggest city in Alberta. However, do you know much about **Edmonton**, the 2nd largest city and capital of this beautiful province? Well, you're about to know a lot more about this special city, so read on below...

Now you'll know...

Edmonton is the fifth largest city in Canada and the capital city of the province of Alberta. We are one of the youngest and fastest-growing cities in the country.



Edmonton is located on the North Saskatchewan River and is the northernmost city in North America with a population over one million people. We are the gateway to Canada's North.



Edmonton's River Valley is 22 times the size of New York's Central Park.

*On average
Edmonton
receives 2,299
hours of bright
sunshine per year
and is one of
Canada's
sunniest cities.*

During the summer, Edmonton can have up to 17 hours of daylight!

In the wintertime, the Aurora Borealis (Northern Lights) can be seen on a regular basis.

Looking for the scenic route? Edmonton is fully accessible through Via Rail Canada. Bask in the magnificence of the Canadian Rockies or the beauty of the windswept prairies.

Wait! Here's more about Edmonton, so keep reading...

- **Nickname**
Edmonton is known as "Edmonchuck" or "The Chuck" because of its large Ukrainian population. It's also known as "Festival City" or "Canada's Festival City" because of the many festivals held there.
- **Former names**
The Cree called Edmonton amiskwaciwaskahikan (Beaver Hills House), the Nakota Sioux called it ti oda (Many Houses), and the Niitsitapi called it Amakowsis or omahkoyis (Big Lodge).
- **River Valley Park**
Edmonton's River Valley Park is 22 times larger than New York City's Central Park.
- **Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village**
This open-air museum is located 25 minutes east of Edmonton and tells the story of the early Ukrainian settlement in Alberta.
- **West Edmonton Mall**
This mall is North America's largest shopping center, with over 800 stores, 100 places to eat, 2 hotels, and 12 attractions. It also has the world's largest parking lot (*which makes it really hard to find your vehicle after Christmas shopping!*).
- **Average house price**
The average price of a house in Edmonton is around half the national Canadian average (*MUCH lower than in Calgary!*).
- **Battle of Alberta, NHL Hockey Rivalry**
Edmonton won the Stanley Cup in 1984, 1985, 1987, 1988, and 1990. Calgary won the Stanley Cup in 1989 (*you do the math!*). Calgary leads the all-time series with a 141-129-18-6 record, however, Edmonton leads in postseason victories with a 23-12 record (*where it really counts!*).
- **Snowfall:**
Edmonton typically receives more snow than Calgary, especially between November and March. Edmonton receives an average of 123.5 centimeters (48.6 inches) of snow per year, while Calgary's average is lower (*if you enjoy winter and winter sports, Edmonton is the place to be and/or come to!*). By the way, I've got proof of the large amounts of snowfall that Edmonton gets; here are 2 photos, taken December 19, 2024, of Judy's and my front yard...check out all the snow!

Even though Judy and I miss living in Calgary (*we especially miss all the great Equilibrium School special events!*), we don't regret moving to Edmonton 3.5 years ago. If any of the faithful Equilibrium Newsletter readers visit Edmonton to check it out (*any season, but especially winter!*), we know you won't be disappointed!

**Respectfully submitted,
George (and Judy Van Bruggen)**



Idioms about Weather”

Tina’s PM class studied various idioms about weather and wrote about their experiences.

Meriem

Canada is known by its extreme cold weather. When we announced my husband and I our intention to immigrate to Canada to our family and friends, they were astonished and they asked us, “How are you going to resist the Canadian winter?” Especially because we are coming from a country with a warm climate. We decided to come **rain or shine**. We landed in Calgary in March. Honestly, the weather was cold but it was **a breeze** compared to my expectations. The country is well equipped and prepared to face the low temperatures. Moreover, it’s not always **raining cats and dogs** and the snow is not constant. Sometimes, I felt like **breaking the ice** with some cold people is more difficult than removing the snow from my car!

Mohamed

When I decided to move to Canada in 2018, I moved alone and I asked my family to be patient about six months. After that they can join me. I thought it’s going to be **a breeze**. As soon as I landed, things went left, and my family started to make some pressure on me. I had no choice but to **weather the storm**. After months, the situation was getting bad. I couldn’t find a job because of the pandemic, couldn’t go back as there were no airline flights. In order to overcome this situation, I contacted a friend to lend some money. Unfortunately, he was **a fair-weather friend** and didn’t help me. I had never thought that he was just **full of hot air**. However, I kept my expectations high, found other alternatives and was **snowed under** with work until I succeeded at the end and my family joined me in 2021. Moving to Canada was the biggest challenge I’ve ever had in my lifetime.

Khaterah

I tried to make a new pancake recipe for my daughter’s breakfast. Because pancakes are her favourite breakfast on the weekend. With lots of toppings like maple syrup, strawberries, bananas etc. I always followed the steps carefully, so that I finished **in no time**. It’s **a breeze** for me. My pancakes always turned out fluffy and delicious.

In Afghanistan it’s common to save money in the house. But women always buy gold jewellery that’s meant to be saved for a difficult time. They can sell it anytime to get cash right away. But in Canada it’s extremely hard **to save for a rainy day** because of the high cost of expenses.

Saving is a good habit to have because everyone has some emergency that never is expected to happen, but it is true. It’s why we need to save all the time little by little. Maybe it is not you who needs help but can be one of your kids or family member. Humans always have to be prepared just in case something occurs and

sometimes it is not for a bad thing to happen. Just save money in case you want to add another piece at home, like furniture, a car, gifts, food...I think it is the best way to succeed in life. Be focused and smart with money because it is easy to lose, but so difficult to make. But remember not everything in this life is about money!

Juan Carlos

“Saving for a Rainy Day”

Mario

“Saving for a Rainy Day”

Let’s call him ‘Joe.’ He was a mason, working so hard from April – November doing stone work, bricks, blocks. But when the bad weather came (snow, ice, rain), Joe was working double every day. Every day was a real challenge, covering the materials, putting plywood to protect from rain and snow, installing a tarp to keep the heat in, putting some heaters. Because Joe only worked 6 months a year, to survive the winter, he **saved for a rainy day**, like a squirrel.

2024 in PICTURES



Equilibrium School

