

B2+ | Unit 01, p. 59 | Sample blog post

mary_mae

We are not lost!

How do you feel about all this talk about a 'lost generation' because of COVID? In newspapers, magazines, all over social media – this idea is everywhere. I think it's rubbish, and many of my friends agree. OK, so our lives weren't easy throughout the pandemic, but we're not a lost generation! Why do people keep saying that?

Of course – COVID wasn't easy for us. Rather than being 'lost', though, I think that we can say that we have all acquired valuable skills. Most importantly, many of us developed new digital skills, such as video conferencing. Before the pandemic, we didn't need video conferencing tools to work on group projects for school, for example, but the pandemic forced us to learn to collaborate online. It was tough, but I'm sure that it was great preparation for the modern world of work. Many people work from home today, and digital skills are crucial when you want to do that.

But we didn't only learn to work together online. During the lockdowns, when we were not allowed to meet our friends in person, our social life happened online as well. We couldn't interact face-to-face, so we had to figure out ways of connecting online. We chatted over tea, we played games together on the internet, and we were even happy to see the others in online class. I don't know about you, but I feel that this experience has brought me and my friends even closer. We went through a very difficult experience together, and our friendships are even stronger now than they were before.

And what about our personalities? Have they been shaped by the pandemic? Personally, I think the pandemic taught me to improvise and solve problems in creative ways, thanks to all those technical problems during distance learning. It also made me more aware of my mental health and how important it is to have friends and stay in touch with them. Now I go to their parties and invite them over more than before, or I take part in Secret Santa games and buy little gifts for my classmates. I think my generation really appreciates friendship. For me, that's the most important lesson of the pandemic.

Digital skills, strong friendships, patience... We've definitely learned a lot. Do you agree, or do you think we're really a 'lost generation' like some people say? Let me know in the comments.

(400 words)

B2+ | Unit 02, p. 64 | Sample essay

Financial literacy should be part of the curriculum

It is a famous saying that money rules the world and because of that, financial literacy is a crucial skill. Everyone should have access to knowledge about money and everything that comes with it, which is why financial literacy should be a regular school subject.

It is particularly important for young people to become financially literate. They tend to underestimate their monthly expenses, such as their mobile phone bills and streaming service fees. This is partly due to the contracts for such services, which are sometimes difficult to understand. However, if young people are taught to read the small print in advance, they will not sign anything they find suspicious. Therefore, basic financial knowledge can lead to considerable savings and should definitely be part of young people's education.

Unwise financial decisions can affect young people's lives very negatively. For example, it is very tempting for young people to spend more than they can afford. Online shopping can be particularly dangerous in this regard because bills are usually paid by credit card. Once young people have an overdraft or credit card debt, it is hard to pay it off again, and their parents might not be able to support them either. Not knowing how to make ends meet with a small amount of money makes life very challenging and can even cause severe anxiety and other mental illnesses.

It is therefore obvious that financial knowledge is crucial for young people and that money should not be a taboo topic. Everyone should be able to ask the adults in their lives about financial matters without feeling ashamed. Unfortunately, many families in Austria do not talk openly about money, and parents therefore often do not teach their children the necessary basics about it. For this reason, financial literacy should be taught in upper secondary schools for at least one hour per week. Additionally, there should be more workshops about this topic for young people who want to expand their knowledge of financial matters even further.

To sum up, money and finance are among the most important topics in our society. A lack of knowledge in these areas can have serious consequences, especially for young people. As not all parents teach their children about money and finance, all students should be taught financial literacy at school.

(395 words)

B2+ | Unit 03, p. 70 | Sample email of application

From: Noora Mansour <n_mansour@mymail.com>
To: info@diveresort.com
Subject: Application for the barefoot bookseller position

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to apply for the job of barefoot bookseller at your resort, as advertised on your website.

The job caught my interest because I like books and travelling. Although I have not walked barefoot a lot, it sounds like fun, and I am always willing to try new things. When I meet people from different cultures, I always talk to them, and I have no problem getting along with them. After my school leaving exam at the end of this school year, I would like to work abroad and explore different countries and cultures.

There are several reasons why I believe that I am well-suited for this job. Not only is my English fluent, I am also a decent writer. I am an avid reader and have some knowledge of classical and modern literature. Last year, I took a special class on young adult literature at my school, which added greatly to my knowledge of modern fiction. In this course, my responsibilities included supporting my teacher in setting up and managing a blog, a project which was featured prominently in the local newspaper.

If I get the job, I hope that I will be able to make a contribution to your resort because of my familiarity with young readers' preferences. Maybe you do not have enough young adult literature in the bookshop, and I could provide recommendations for a range of titles.

Please contact me if you have any questions. I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours faithfully,

Noora Mansour

(255 words)

B2+ | Unit 04, p. 75 | Sample report

From: Annalena Heise
Subject: Political engagement in class 7c
Date: 13 April

Introduction

The following report illustrates the experiences of the students in class 7c with political activism and their attitudes towards political engagement. It is based on a class survey in which all 27 students in class 7c participated. The report will also provide recommendations for a planned project on political activism.

Experiences with political activism

Almost all of the 27 students in class 7c have actively taken part in political activism. Only a small **minority** (3 students, which is 11% of the whole class) have no experience of political activism at all. Of the 24 students who have experience with activism, a large **majority**, namely three quarters, have taken part in protest marches. Five **out** of 24 students have written emails to politicians criticising their decisions, and **one** has performed a protest song at an anti-war event for young people.

Motivation for political activism

The most important factor that motivates the students of 7c to engage in political activism is concern about their future. **All** 24 students who have participated in a form of activism are worried about issues which they see as dangerous. The two most important dangers which were discussed by the students are the climate emergency (mentioned by 87.5%) and the threat of war in Europe (62.5%). **Half** of the students (12 out of 24) additionally explained that they engage in activism because traditional politics is too slow to react to new developments in the world, and a **third** (8 out of 24)¹ believe that activism is necessary because young people's worries are not taken seriously by politicians otherwise.

Knowledge about activism

Most of the students in 7c would like to learn more about political activism. Only **about** 15% (4 students out of 27) are not interested in the topic at all (3 students) or think that they already know enough (1 student). **Of** the students who are interested in learning more, 14 (about 60%) report a particular interest in the role of young people have played in political change throughout history, and the **remaining** 40% would like to know more about successful protest movements in general.

Recommendation for the project

Based on the results of the survey, it seems that the planned project should focus on analysing historical protest movements and explaining their connection to the experiences of class 7c with political activism.

(429 words)

¹ You would not normally put both numbers (8 out of 24) and proportions (a third) in a report – one or the other is enough for the reader to understand. In this text, both versions were needed to fill in the gaps correctly.

B2+ | Unit 05, p. 80 | Sample formal email

From: Yara Smith
To: David Attenborough
Subject: Your speech at COP26

Dear Mr Attenborough,

I watched your speech at COP26 online and I was so touched that I decided to write to you.

Most young people, including me, are worried about climate change. What makes me particularly anxious is the number of animals that might become extinct because their habitat is disappearing. Another problem is poaching. Killing wild animals is illegal, but it is a lucrative business because people make a lot of money when they kill elephants and sell ivory, for example. It would be really sad if our planet lost its biodiversity.

What I found most inspiring about your speech was that you talked about hope, not fear. For me, optimistic people are the ones who create sustainable change. If you feel scared, you just resign yourself to your fate. People will have to continue fighting climate change for a long time, so it is important that they do not lose hope. I liked it when you talked about how powerful people are. It really made me think about what I can contribute.

I am still in school, so for now, I can only do things such as reusing things and reducing the waste I produce. After school, I would like to work for an organisation that promotes conservation. I have heard that there are organisations that set up nature reserves where rare animals are protected and can live in safety.

Thank you for everything you do for the environment. I hope this email shows you that young people are listening to you.

Yours sincerely,

Yara Smith

(253 words)

B2+ | Unit 06, p. 84 | Sample paragraph

Pets teach children to be more responsible. When I was little, I saw a hamster in a pet shop and begged my parents to buy it for me. Before they bought it, my parents made me promise to always feed my new pet regularly and also clean its cage myself, even if I found it disgusting. That was the first time in my life that I was put in charge of something, and I remember taking this new responsibility very seriously and looking after my hamster well. This is why I believe owning a pet is very beneficial for children's personal development.

B2+ | Unit 07, p. 91 | Sample abstract for a final project paper

Abstract

Nowadays, the number of bilingual and bicultural families is rising. For more and more people, it is common to speak two languages and to practise two cultures at home. However, while bilingual and bicultural families may be common, each family and individual has their own way of living a life with two cultures.

This paper aims to provide an insight into the lives of bicultural people. It focuses specifically on the aspect of language, as bilingualism often goes hand in hand with biculturalism and because language is inevitably a part of culture.

In the theoretical part of this paper, different kinds of bilingualism and bilingual parenting methods are presented and explained, and the connection between biculturalism and identity is discussed in detail. The practical part deals with the experiences of multiple bilingual and bicultural individuals who participated in a survey carried out for this paper. Their responses to a questionnaire are presented and analysed.

The results indicate that the way families integrate different languages into their everyday lives is determined by different factors, such as the distance to the parents' home countries and the parents' knowledge of the family languages. However, although the individuals surveyed all use different strategies in their families, they all share positive attitudes towards bilingualism and biculturalism.

B2+ | Unit 08, p. 96 | Sample essay

The benefits of cosmetic procedures

In recent years, beauty treatments and operations have become more common. Although many people are extremely critical of cosmetic procedures and believe that they should always be avoided, I am convinced that they can be necessary under certain circumstances.

First of all, it should be pointed out that there are many different kinds of cosmetic procedures, and most people who are against them have the dangers of plastic surgery in mind. However, there are some treatments that are much less serious than plastic surgery and have practically no side effects, for example, a Botox injection, which is so simple that it can be done in a doctor's practice instead of a hospital. Such procedures are not high-risk, and this is why they can definitely not be compared to a real beauty operation. They should therefore be considered by people who have serious self-esteem issues because of their appearance.

Secondly, being unhappy with the way you look is not always simply a matter of vanity. For example, if an accident leaves somebody with visible scars or burns their skin, it can be almost impossible for them to accept the way they look, and they often develop psychological problems which make it impossible for them to lead a normal life. There is psychological help available, but it is often not sufficient. In such cases, patients may need beauty treatments in addition to psychological support to build self-esteem and improve their quality of life.

Finally, while the price of cosmetic procedures can be very high, financial support is available in certain cases. Although many people spend astronomical amounts of money on unnecessary operations such as nose jobs and breast reductions just because they want to look like their favourite celebrities, it has to be said that there are also people who are so unhappy with their looks that it has a negative impact on their quality of life. For example, somebody who has been unhappy with their prominent ears all their life might be desperate to have them corrected. In such cases, cosmetic procedures are also often covered by insurance.

In conclusion, cosmetic procedures are acceptable when they are low-risk, medically necessary and improve the patient's self-esteem. In these cases, they are worth considering in order to improve the patients' quality of life.

(380 words)