

VIP Group – Reading task



CULTURE SHOCK

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I'm an exchange student from Spain navigating life in the United States. *Lucia M.*

JANUARY 15

My hometown of Seville, Spain is a city with active, passionate people and a lively nightlife, so coming to Seattle, in the United States, has been quite an eye-opener. Americans think of Seattle as an exciting city, but the first time I went out with friends on a Saturday night, there was hardly anybody out in the streets. I actually thought something was wrong! Then my friend explained that most of their social life takes place indoors. In Seville, people fill the streets year-round, and Saturday nights are like a big celebration.

JANUARY 22

After a couple of weeks of classes, I've begun to notice some differences between Spanish students and American students. In Spain, students talk a lot during class, and it's not always related to the lesson. On the other hand, when Spanish students are enthusiastic about a lesson, they often ask unusual questions, and it's common to stay after class to talk to the teacher. American students are expected to talk less and listen more, and many of them take detailed notes. Most of them leave the room as soon as the class ends, though, and are already focused on the next lesson.

FEBRUARY 8

Before I came to the United States, a friend who had studied here told me that American friends don't greet each other like we do in Spain, where we touch cheeks and make kissing sounds. Americans often hug each other, but kissing is not common, and I've gotten used to that. So imagine my surprise when I was introduced to a new girl, and she immediately gave me the Spanish-style double kiss. When I asked my friend about this later, she explained that the girl was from a family of actors, and that "air-kissing" was a usual greeting for artistic people. My friend also said that some outgoing people greet their friends or family this way, but that it would make other people feel uncomfortable. I think I'll stick to handshakes and hugs while I'm here!

Read the blog. Then add the correct title to each entry.

Meeting and greeting Where's the party? Class contrasts

Check (✓) True or False for each statement. Then correct the false statements.

	True	False
1. The writer was nervous because the Seattle streets were crowded at night.	☐	☐
2. Spanish students often stay after class to ask questions.	☐	☐
3. Hugging is a usual greeting among friends in Spain.	☐	☐
4. The writer plans to change the way she greets American friends.	☐	☐