

Summer Holidays – A New Kind of Adventure

Last summer, I decided to do something different. Instead of going to the beach like I usually do, I joined a volunteer program in the north of Spain, in a small village near the mountains. At first, I wasn't sure if I had made the right choice – I didn't know anyone there, and I was nervous about speaking Spanish all the time. But looking back now, it was probably one of the best experiences of my life.

The program lasted four weeks. Every morning, we helped restore old buildings in the village – painting walls, repairing windows, and cleaning the streets. In the afternoons, we took Spanish lessons and participated in cultural activities like cooking traditional dishes or learning local dances. I was surprised by how quickly I improved my Spanish just by being surrounded by native speakers and using the language every day.

One of the things I enjoyed the most was the people I met. There were volunteers from all over Europe – Germany, Italy, France, and even some from as far as Japan and Canada. We shared stories, cooked meals together, and often stayed up late talking under the stars. It felt like we had known each other for years, even though we had just met.

On the weekends, we went hiking in the mountains or visited nearby towns. I had never seen landscapes so beautiful – green valleys, peaceful rivers, and ancient stone villages that looked like they belonged in a fairytale. It was so different from the crowded, noisy beaches I was used to.

When the month ended, I didn't want to leave. I had made new friends, learned a lot about a different culture, and discovered that summer doesn't always have to be about relaxing – sometimes, doing something meaningful can be even more rewarding.

I'm already thinking about next summer. Maybe I'll volunteer in another country, or maybe I'll return to the same village. What I know for sure is that I want every holiday to be an opportunity to grow, not just a break from school.

A. Reading Comprehension – True or False

Write **T (True)** or **F (False)**. Correct the false sentences.

1. ___ The writer went to the beach during her summer holidays.
2. ___ The volunteer program lasted more than four weeks.
3. ___ Volunteers worked in the mornings and had classes or activities in the afternoons.
4. ___ The writer didn't improve her Spanish during the program.

5. ___ All the volunteers were from Spain.
 6. ___ The writer preferred the mountains to the beach.
 7. ___ At the end of the month, the writer was happy to go home.
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B. Vocabulary in Context – Choose the Best Option

Circle the correct answer.

1. "I wasn't sure if I had made the right choice" means:
 - a) She was happy with her decision
 - b) She didn't know if her decision was good
 - c) Someone else made the decision for her
2. "We helped **restore** old buildings" means:
 - a) To build new houses
 - b) To fix and repair old buildings
 - c) To paint walls in a new house
3. "We often stayed up late talking **under the stars**" means:
 - a) They watched science fiction movies
 - b) They talked outside at night
 - c) They went to sleep early
4. "It was probably one of the **best experiences** of my life" refers to:
 - a) A very positive experience
 - b) A boring but educational event
 - c) A bad memory

Answer the following questions in full sentences (2–3 lines each).

1. What are some advantages of joining a volunteer program instead of going to the beach?

2. Do you think it's easy to make friends in a different country? Why or why not?

3. Would you like to have a summer holiday like the one in the story? What would you do differently?

A. Listening Comprehension – True or False

Listen to the audio and write **T (True)** or **F (False)**. Correct the false statements.

1. ___ The speaker planned the job several months in advance.
2. ___ The speaker had experience working with children before the camp.
3. ___ The staff at the camp were all from Ireland.
4. ___ The international night included music and food.
5. ___ The speaker improved her English during the experience.
6. ___ Everything went perfectly during the camp.
7. ___ The speaker made friends that she still talks to.

B. Vocabulary in Context – Choose the Best Option

Choose the best meaning based on how the words were used in the audio.

1. "I applied at the last minute" means:
 - a) I prepared a long time before
 - b) I sent my application very late
 - c) I didn't apply at all
2. "It turned out to be amazing" means:
 - a) It ended badly
 - b) It was boring
 - c) It was much better than expected
3. "Stay calm when things didn't go as planned" means:
 - a) Everything happened exactly as planned
 - b) Some things went wrong
 - c) They canceled the camp