

# MEET YOUNG IMMIGRANTS

Hear the stories of real kids who have recently immigrated to the United States.



Hi, my name is Asya. I was born in Nickolaev, Ukraine, but I have lived most of my life in a suburban town near Atlanta, Georgia. I moved to the United States with my parents when I was a baby. I am now in the third grade and speak both English and Russian. My brother, Tim, is in the first grade. I also have a cat named Tiger and a pet water frog named Perry. When I grow up I want to be a paleontologist, an artist, and an ice skater.

My family flew to the United States from Ukraine on an airplane. We moved from Ukraine when my father won a green card and got a job here. We lived in Michigan first and then moved to Atlanta.

Thanksgiving is a new tradition for us. We decorate the table and put all kinds of food on it. We celebrate together.

Things are different in Ukraine and the United States. The holidays are different. We celebrate Christmas on January 7. Ukraine is an Orthodox Christian country, and Orthodox Christian countries follow the Julian calendar. It is 13 days behind the normal calendar, so we celebrate Christmas later than other parts of the world.

And Thanksgiving is a new tradition for us, because it is not celebrated in the Ukraine. At Thanksgiving, we decorate the table and put all kinds of food on it. We celebrate together.

I have been back to Ukraine several times to visit. There is a lot more traffic in Ukraine than here. When I visited, I remember thinking, "who can forget that road, it's so crowded!" People in Ukraine use a lot of different kinds of transportation. There aren't a lot of cars, just vans and trains and buses.

When people ask me if I miss the Ukraine, I say that I miss my grandmother most of all. I talk to my grandmother on Skype, and she tells me stories about her cat Buska. One day Buska caught a pigeon and brought it in the house. Buska always does funny things. My grandmother also tells me stories about the neighborhood in Ukraine where she lives.

I like living in the United States. It's clean, and I have a lot of friends here. Some of my favorite places to go are the ice-skating rink and gymnastics class. I also like to go to restaurants in New China. I love to go to the beach in Florida!

I think I will go back to live in Ukraine one day. My parents will have to decide that. When I went to visit my grandmother in Ukraine, she met us at the airport with balloons in her hand. It felt like I was really at home. It felt like my real home.

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My name is Taylor and I am Korean. My parents are Korean, but my brothers and I were born in Australia. I lived half of my life in Korea. We all moved to Atlanta, Georgia, in America nine months ago. We moved here because my mom's job was transferred here.

The things I do after school are still the same in both Korea and America. I play the piano and do origami.

I was only a little nervous about moving because I was worried about how I was going to make friends and improve my English. I didn't know anything about what my new life would be like. I was scared. I had never seen this place before. My oldest brother likes it here because he speaks English well. My little brother is not as happy because he does not speak as well and he has trouble doing his homework.

My father, grandmother, and cousin are still in Korea, and I miss them. I keep in touch with them through Skype.

Everything here is different. In Korea, I eat Korean food, but here I eat steak and hamburgers. My favorite American food is macaroni and cheese.

I learned about trick-or-treating on Halloween. My mother bought me a costume, but it was too big so I handed out candy at home. In Korea, we celebrate Children's Day, which is not a holiday here in the United States. Children's Day is on May 5. Children get to stay home from school, rest, and spend time with their parents.

The things I do after school are still the same in both Korea and America. I play the piano and do origami. My favorite subjects in school are math and social studies.

I like math because I'm good at it. I like social studies because I like to learn things about history.

I like American schools much better. I have lots of friends here. I have learned that America is a big and good place. The people here are kind and have been very good to me.

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Hi, my name is Vandi and I was born in Freetown, Sierra Leone. There was a war in my home country, so we had to leave. When I was six, my family was living in a refugee camp in Liberia, which is a country that neighbors Sierra Leone. We were picked by some officials there to come to America. I was really sad because I had to leave my family and friends; I will not get to see them again until I am grown and can go back to Liberia as an adult.

Coming here was amazing. It was my first time being in a real plane. My first impression of America was, "Wow! This is huge!"

Leaving was hard, but my mom made me feel better by telling me that in America we would learn to use the telephone to keep in touch. Now, I can call my family and talk to them by phone. They speak Mende, and I speak English to them to help them learn my new language, too.

I have been in America for six years now, so I don't speak Mende much anymore.

I like living in America. The education is better. The teachers here help me more than the teachers in Liberia. I had trouble learning in school in Liberia. Here is different.

I am a Muslim and that's really different, too. We don't celebrate Christmas, but the day after Christmas, my mom and dad go and buy me presents. I go out with my sister on Halloween, and we get candy. We celebrate Valentine's Day. On Thanksgiving Day my mom cooks a turkey. We didn't do that in Liberia.

The United States has lots of roads and sidewalks, which we don't have in Liberia. To go anywhere in Liberia you walk on the flat land. Our house in Liberia was only one room. In America, our house is huge. We can spread out in different rooms.

In America, I play football, soccer, basketball, and go on Facebook with my friends. I also play dodgeball, which I love. We didn't have any of those games in Liberia. I like to read books like *The Bridge to Terabithia* and *Amulet*. I also read comics. My favorite American foods are hamburgers and pizza. My favorite food from Liberia is a spinach and rice dish. In my home country we ate rice with every meal.

Although I was sad to leave, coming here was amazing. It was my first time being in a real plane. My first impression of America was, "Wow! This is huge! It's really big!" Now I can work hard in school and learn to be a lawyer and help people when I grow up.

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Hi, I am Sadana. I moved to Queens, New York City, from Chennai, India. My mother, father, brother, and I flew here on a plane. When we landed at JFK airport in New York City, I was really surprised. Everything is so big, and it was so cold. In India, it is hot.

Since I am Hindu, I wear a bindi on my forehead. Hindu people wear bindi to make their face beautiful. It signifies good fortune.

My brother Guru is 9 years old. He and I go to a public school. I don't like school much because I don't have any friends yet and I don't know English well. I've been studying English since fourth grade. I am in fifth grade now. I like math, because I can do that correctly. I really miss my friends in India. I also miss my family, my teachers, and my principal.

Our house in India was different. We had three bedrooms and a kitchen. Here in Queens, we have only one bedroom and a kitchen. Also, the roads are different. Here, they are smooth. In India, they are sometimes made of stones. India's roads are crowded with people. Here they are crowded with cars instead. In India, I would see cows outside in the roads, but here there are no cows.

We drew Kolam outside the gate at our home in India. (Kolam is the art of drawing designs on the ground using brightly-colored rice powder.) "Kolam" means beauty in Tamil, the language I speak. Drawing Kolam outside your house makes it a sacred place. Kolam is like a prayer you draw. It is a prayer for success and happiness.

My father is a priest at the Hindu temple near our home here in New York. The temple is my favorite place in New York.

Since I am Hindu, I wear a bindi on my forehead. Hindu people wear bindi to make their face beautiful. It signifies good fortune.

Even though we live in the United States, we still eat Indian food. My favorite Indian food is noodles. My favorite food in America is ice cream!

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Three months ago, I moved to Austin, Texas, to learn English. I didn't know any English when I got here. My mother, sister, brother, aunt, grandmother, and I drove from our ranch in Coahuila, Mexico, to our new apartment in Austin. It only took a day to make the drive.

I am in the 7th grade at East Austin College Preparatory, where I am learning to speak English. I want to work in my family business when I get older. We have a furniture store and a ranch in Mexico.

I was worried and excited to move. I didn't know people here. I was really scared at first.

Leaving the ranch in Mexico was the hardest part about the move. I miss my two horses and my dog. They are my life. I took care of them every day.

I don't have any pets here. I can't have pets in an apartment. In Mexico, I have a big house like a castle, so I miss that. My house here is small.

I like a lot about America. I especially like my teachers. They are really nice here and very helpful. I like the stores and the mall. My favorite music is hip-hop and rock. I love to read books that are scary, funny, and beautiful. My favorite American foods are macaroni and hamburgers.

I communicate with my friends on my computer and my phone. I get to go home to see my family, my animals, and my friends every school break.

I was worried and excited to move. I didn't know people here; I didn't know things. I was really scared at first. My hardest moment was when I started school. At first, homework was really hard because everything was in English, and I didn't know what they were talking about.

I was so nervous to meet new people and new teachers. But the teachers here are so great. I really like it here. My family likes it here too.

