



Sol, 17

When I met Sol, I didn't realize that English is not her first language. She has learned English very well.

What have you been doing this week?

Well, this week I've been focusing on trying to get my extracurriculars* started, because the year has just started, and I'm trying to study and getting my grades up this year.

What kind of extracurricular activities do you do?

Oh, I've been doing speech and debate, and Battle of the Books, and soon Science Olympiad is going to get started and I'm going to be doing that. And in addition after school I also have a Jewish youth program that I do, and I help with the kids in Sunday school* at Temple. I'm basically like a teacher's assistant.

And what is Battle of the Books?

Battle of the Books is a school club that is focused on a competition with a list of books that we get every year, and we compete on our knowledge of the books.

What kind of books?

Well, this year there are fifteen on the list, and I just started reading *The Bell Jar* by Sylvia Plath. And the list is mostly fiction but there is some nonfiction in there.

And what is the Science Olympiad?

Science Olympiad is a school club that is also geared to* preparing towards a competition, but it's for a state science competition where we compete in partners on different science events.

What do you hope to do after high school?

After high school I really hope to get a degree in chemistry because that's what I'm really passionate about,* and then probably go to medical school to focus on people and the brain, which I'm also really interested in, and I want to be a neurologist.

Is there anything that you would like to say to kids in other countries?

Uh, I don't know. I'm kind of a new English speaker. I've been here for six years so it's kind of surreal* to talk to kids who are also learning English.

What is your first language?

My first language is Hebrew. I'm from Israel.

How did you end up here?

Well, my dad got a transfer from work, and we all thought it would be a really good experience, and I have loved it so far and so has my whole family.

So, is there anything you would like to say to kids in other countries?

Well, first of all, "Hi." And I guess a really good piece of advice is really go after what you love and work towards doing what you are passionate about.

A Few Words

Extracurriculars: This is a short way of saying "extracurricular activities." The regular subjects at school are the curriculum. Extra activities outside of the regular class times are called extracurricular activities.

Sunday school: Religious education classes on Sundays are often called Sunday school.

Geared to: "Geared to doing something" means "organized for this purpose."

Passionate about: If you are passionate about something, you think it is very important and feel excited about learning and working in this area.

Surreal: Very strange or like something that could never really happen.

Discussion Questions

1. What kinds of extracurricular activities do you participate in? Do any of the activities that Sol participates in seem interesting to you? What kind of extracurricular activities do you wish your school could start?
2. Are you passionate about any subject? What is it? Do you know students who are passionate about things that do not seem interesting to you? What are those things?