

University Preparatory Program NEWSLETTER



Celebrating Diversity

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This newsletter was completed with the help and guidance of Dr. Samar Harkouss and Ms. Rima El Harake, as well as the contributions of the UPP students.

UPP EVENT

Celebrating Diversity

Abd Allah Alhaj Sulaiman & Joseph Tanios

UPP organized an event titled “celebrating diversity” that took place on December 11, 2017. During this event, all sections at UPP assembled to celebrate diversity & the end of the semester. All the UPP staff, instructors and representatives of all scholarships attended this event. Each group of students showed the others their own traditions through the food they brought as well as through folkloric dances. Each student brought one kind of food that his village is famous for such as: Mjaddarah, Sfouf, Halawet el jibn, Riz bil haleeb, Buche De Noel, etc.....



After eating, students shared their traditional dances and they had an extraordinary time. Students danced the Lebanese Dabke, Syrian dance, Yemeni dance, and the Somali dance. Dr. Harkouss gave a brief speech wishing the students the best at university. The students were extremely happy and optimistic regarding the next step in our lives and what the future holds for us. Finally, all students gathered to have a group picture to save this unique memory and to show the next group of UPP students the amazing time they had.



ARTWORK

Jana Kassem

My hobby is art. It has grown with me since childhood. The special thing is that I taught myself the skills of drawing and painting without any help from others. I started by drawing a small house with a tree beside it, and now I paint many paintings with different kinds of paints, like oil, acrylic and pastels. In addition, I am improving my skill of drawing portraits. I love this talent that I have!

These paintings are relatively recent - from the past 2 years.



These next paintings were completed in December 2017



I think that this talent makes me special because my passion towards painting is growing more & more. As I touch the brush, mix the colors together and paint on the canvas and my hands are stained with many colors, I feel free - that I can paint whatever I want and express myself in this painting. For me, it is a special feeling to sense the paint and create whatever I want with no limits. I think that words cannot describe my feelings towards this talent. My dream is that I will become a professional artist and that I will have my own exhibition someday.



Omar Halabi

Drawing is a hobby that I have loved all my life. I love to draw, especially when I get stressed from studying. I find drawing is the only way to relieve stress. In my opinion, I find that drawing is the best way for expressing and exploring our feelings and emotions. In fact, it is a way of being clear-headed, calm, working with our brains, and having fun all at the same time. Many times, I draw beautiful pictures and I hang them on the wall in my room. A year ago, I decided I wanted to study civil engineering because I loved the combination of math and drawing, but I have now decided to change my major to nursing because I find it much more interesting. However, whatever my major, I will keep on drawing and painting.



STUDENT WRITING

My Writing Course at UPP

Tracy Khalil

In June 2017, my best achievement was being accepted at the most reputed university in the Middle East, “The American University of Beirut”. I was classified as a “UPP” student according to the English Entrance Exam (EEE). At the University Preparatory Program, students are required to take several courses with different instructors, such as English skills, math, science and humanities in order to mainly enhance their language skills, especially in academic writing.

This course was so beneficial for me; the biggest lesson I have learned was to confidently write essays about any topic by using the method provided by my instructor. The most important part of the writing course was “Peer-Editing”, because I learned during sessions that I couldn’t directly and objectively correct my errors; I needed help from other students to ensure the information written and gain insight from several people to learn from their remarks and comments. Every time I finished my essays about several topics, I felt proud of my achievements and my grades improved progressively. However, at first, I felt that I would have many difficulties in writing an essay because I am French educated and we took very few English sessions in high school. We wrote short paragraphs only not a full essay. I appreciate my instructor a lot because she put a lot of effort to improve her students’ skills and spread enthusiasm in her classes. I think that she was one of the people who believed in my ambitions and encouraged me to keep up with all university obligations such as assignments, projects, and presentations. This course seemed challenging at first.



Despite that, I realized my English skills, especially in writing, have improved slowly, progressively and surely. I am so glad to be a student in this course, to profit from other students' ideas and from my professor's experience, and enhance my knowledge in English. Finally, I took all their comments into consideration because I always learn from my failures not from successes.

In conclusion, taking this writing course before starting the next semester has given me a sense of pride and boosted my self-confidence to start my major courses. I have learned three major things this semester: communicating in writing, expressing my ideas, and turning my weaknesses into strengths. I suggest that all UPP students benefit from this course as much as possible; it's an opportunity for them to enhance their English skills by writing well and presenting any project or task, because writing is the basis of communicating in English! These skills are essential for college students to master in order to become academically successful and handle the workload effectively. Also, I advise UPP students to manage their time correctly and make a plan to achieve both short and long-term goals and fulfill their ambitions during the next semester.

(This excerpt has been adapted from the student's longer essay.)

Cheating

Omar Halawani

Cheating on exams has become a serious issue these days. Exams play an important role in every student's life. The actual and foremost reason that drives students to cheat on exams is the desire to secure higher scores. It was found that many students start cheating on exams only because they are pressurized to score good marks. One of the most common things that drives students to cheat on exams is the inability to prepare well for the exam. Other students draw a complete blank during the exam. One more thing that drives students to cheat on an exam is lack of self-confidence. A lot of students study well, but during the exam, they don't do well and hesitate to answer. Finally, cheating on exams is not a good habit and it must be controlled from the very beginning.



Cheating on Exams

Mohammad Hasan Al Adlani

Some recent studies in the U.S have shown that between 75 and 98 percent of college students have cheated in high school (ETS, 1999). There are many factors that contribute to cheating during exams. The first cause is that some students procrastinate doing their school and homework assignments. Consequently, it becomes much harder for them to cram material for their exams. Therefore, they end up cheating during their tests. In addition, students cheat because they need high grades either for their GPA or to get a scholarship. Since grades matter to many students, they will definitely find an easy way to improve their grades even if they end up doing it in an unethical way. Another reason why some students cheat is because they panic and lose control. To sum up, poor performance at school, the need for high grades, and lack of self-confidence are the main reasons why many high school students cheat on their exams.

How to Prepare Thyme

Nour Badran

Thyme is a kind of plant that is very famous in Lebanese cuisine. This healthy food is served in every Lebanese restaurant and home. Preparing thyme is an easy process if you follow the correct steps. First, in the right season (spring or summer), get thyme plants from the mountains. After separating the green oregano and the impurities (straw), dry the oregano completely by putting it in fresh air, but try not to display it in the sun. This step can take a few days. Later, when completely dry, grind oregano to become powder. Then mix it with “Sumac” powder and some salt; 1kg of thyme powder needs $\frac{1}{2}$ kg of “Sumac” and 40g of salt. Finally, a few days before eating, add baked sesame to the mixture as needed. If you follow these steps, you’ll get delicious thyme.



Should Lebanese Mothers Pass their Citizenship on to their Children?

Kawthar Okasha

In the last 20 years, the number of foreign citizens in Lebanon has increased. New research shows that the number of non-Lebanese nationals has become approximately equal to the number of Lebanese citizens. For this reason, the rate of marriage between people from different nationalities has increased dramatically. Whether Lebanese mothers should be allowed to give the nationality to their children or only the father has the right to pass the nationality on to his offspring has become a debatable topic in our society. Lebanese officials argue that the father has the main power in a country controlled by religious authorities. Therefore, according to this reasoning, the father is the only one who is responsible for his children and the only one who should give them the nationality.

(This excerpt has been adapted from the student’s longer essay.)



“Kebab Karaz- Cherries”

Kotaiba Mokadem

“Kebab Karaz”- cherries- is one of the most traditional dishes in Aleppo’s cuisine. Preparing “Kebab Karaz” is very simple if you follow these steps. First of all, bring all ingredients that are necessary to make the dish for two people. To illustrate, buy meat, salt, parsley, spices, cinnamon, and cherries - “vashnie cherries”, which are special and have an acidic taste and a dark red color. Second, remove the stems from two kg of cherries and then put them in a strainer. Squeeze until you extract juice from them and then throw away the seeds. Next, mix one kg meat with one teaspoon salt and other spices. After that, roll the meat to make balls and grill on coal. Later, put cherry juice with two teacups of sugar on the stove until the mix boils. Next, add the grilled meat and shape it in a beautiful triangular pattern. Arrange bread in a dish, put the meat and cover with the cherry sauce, and decorate it with parsley, pine nuts, and cinnamon. In brief, if you follow these steps accurately, you will get one of the most delicious meals in the world.



How to Prepare “Kebbet Hile Bil Laban”

Bashar Awada

“Kebbet Hile Bil Laban” is a traditional food in my village, Mashghara. It is prepared with yogurt, dough, and kebbe that are mixed together. Preparing “kebbet hile bil laban” is very easy if you follow this recipe. First, you mix three cups of flour with one and half cups of water in a bowl. Then, add jreesh, extra fine bourghul, to the mix and continue mixing until it becomes homogenous. Afterwards, you roll the dough until it gets extra thin. Then, you start to take small pieces of the dough and you round them into small balls. At the same time, add water, salt and rice to the yogurt and heat. Keep on stirring until the yogurt boils. After that, you put the already prepared dough balls into the boiling mix, and keep them simmering on a low fire until the dough is well done. Finally, add some crushed garlic and one teaspoon of dried mint 2 minutes before you take it off the fire. Leave it until it cools and serve it at room temperature. By following this recipe, you’ll obtain a delicious “kebbet hile bil laban”.



How to Prepare “Sfiha”

Ali T. Masri

“Sfiha” is a kind of food that is made only in Baalbek. It’s very delicious. To prepare 1 kg of “Sfiha”, you should follow these instructions. First, you should prepare the ingredients. To clarify, you have to buy flour, yeast, sugar, meat, salt, pepper, onion, tomatoes, and water. To prepare the dough, you have to mix 5 cups of water, 2 teaspoons of sugar, 2 teaspoons of yeast, and 5 cups of flour. After that, you have to prepare the meat, which is the filling. To explain, you need 1 kg of meat, 1 tomato and 1 onion (cut into small pieces), 1 teaspoon of pepper, and a pinch of salt as needed. Then put them in the mixer. Later, inside each small piece of dough, start to put a spoon of meat and decorate as you like, but usually the shape is squared with an open top. Finally, put the “Sfiha” in the oven for 20-25 minutes to bake. If you follow these instructions, you will have a delicious meal.

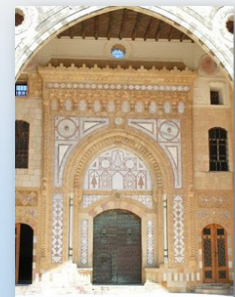


POSTERS



Beiteddine Palace is located about 17km to the south of Beirut, 850m above sea level.

Beiteddine Palace



In 1890, it was the headquarters for the Ottoman Empire. After that, the French army took it for itself during WW1. Today, Beiteddine Palace is a summer residence for the presidency of the Lebanese Republic.



The Palace is designed in Lebanese architecture style in the 19th century, and it took 30 years to finish. It was constructed by Bashir Al-Shihabi II.

By Alaa' Saghir
English 002
Fall 2017



Byblos Castle

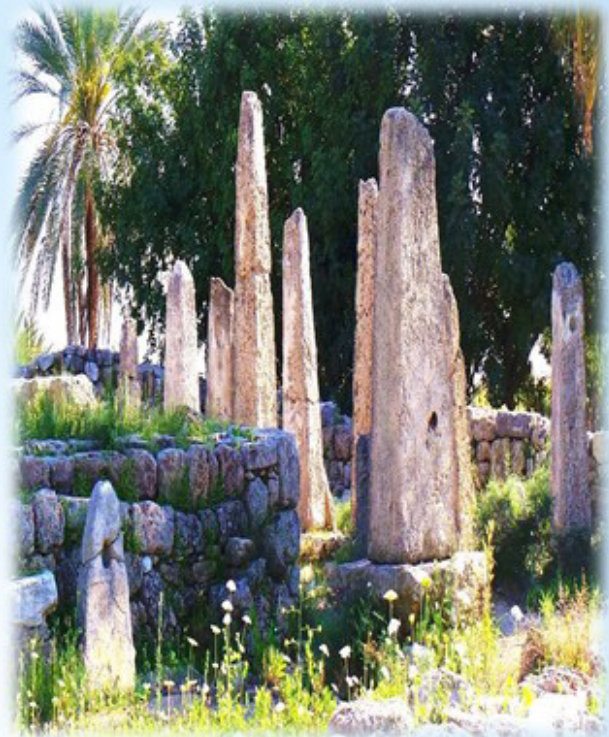
Byblos Castle is thought to have been built in the 12th century. The Temple of the Obelisks is an unusual temple. It speaks volumes about the strong connection that Byblos had with Ancient Egypt, to which the city state exported cedar-wood and other valuable products. Since 1984, it has been listed on the World Heritage Site by UNESCO.



The Crusader Castle dominates Byblos' atmospheric archaeological site, which incorporates Neolithic, Chalcolithic, Greek and Roman ruins.



By Fatima Abbas
English 002
Fall 2017



Byblos, now known as Jubail, is about 37 km north of Beirut and occupies a small plateau on the edge of the Mediterranean Sea. It is the oldest inhabited city in the world.



The Roman Amphitheater

The theater remains show five stairs out of thirty. A high theater façade adorns ten small Corinthian columns with the remains of a stone altar base. The coins uncovered by the excavations under the stage helped determine its date back to 218 BC.



This is picture of a cow painted in one of the caves.



Location on the Somaliland Map. Laas Geel is 55 kilometers northeast of Hargeisa, the capital of Somaliland.

Laas Geel Somaliland

- ❖ Laas geel is a Neolithic rock which is 5000 years old.
- ❖ It is one of the oldest rocks painted in Africa and the Horn of Africa.
- ❖ Laas Geel means "source of water for camels".
- ❖ It is named after a water well which camels used to drink from.

By Kawsar Musse
English 002
Fall 2017



This is the mountain which includes the painted caves.



One of the caves in the mountain. There are around 22 caves now while 11 others have been destroyed.



Beaufort Castle



Beaufort Castle is located in Arnoun, south Lebanon. It is also known as Qal'at al-Shaqif.

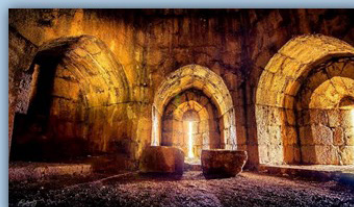


Beaufort castle is a Crusader fortress built before the 12 Century. It is now one of the very ancient ruins in south Lebanon.

Maher Salloum
English 002
Fall 2017



Beaufort Castle was built by the Romans, and occupied by the Crusaders in the 12th Century. It was rebuilt by Fakhr Ed-Din in the 17th century.



STUDENT PROFILES

Ahmad Hamza

My name is Ahmad Hamza and this is a short introduction about me. I am 18 years old; I come from a village called Al-Rafid in Beqaa, Rashayya district. Ever since I was a kid, I have dreamed about inventing new things. I realized later that computer science, but more precisely artificial intelligence, is designed for inventing new technological facilities. Because of this, I have worked hard to acquire the needed skills so I can achieve my dream. In fact, getting a scholarship at AUB was the first step on my way to achieving this dream. This scholarship was a great opportunity to make my dream come true. Furthermore, I have felt more confident about myself, and I have realized that nothing is impossible in this life.



Kawthar Okasha

Hello everyone,

I'm Kawthar Nasser Okasha.

I was born on May 16, 2000 in Al Rafid, Beqaa, Lebanon. I studied at Al Rafid High School and scored high grades on the Baccalaureate exam. Being a USP scholar, hoping to major in chemistry at the American University of Beirut (AUB), is one of my greatest achievements and the first step in my successful journey. My first semester was at the University Preparatory Program, so I have worked hard in order to improve my English language and be prepared for my major. I have participated in several volunteering activities and registered in different clubs in order to benefit my country. The first semester at university has caused a major shift in my lifestyle and has played a very important role in my personal growth. Now, I know that I have an important role to play in my society and I can make a difference in my country. Finally, I am planning to continue my studies and get a PHD in chemistry.



“...I can make a difference
in my country.”

Melissa Tanios

Hello everyone!

My name is Melissa Joseph Tanios.

I am from a small village in Chouf named Fouara. I have lived in this village with my family all my life. I have two brothers and one sister. Last year, I graduated from my high school in Deir El Qamar with a Baccalaureate in General Sciences with distinction. I love my high school because it was the place where I grew up to become the person I am today. Moreover, I proudly say that I am a student at the American University of Beirut because of receiving a scholarship. This scholarship is a priceless opportunity for me. No words could express my feelings the moment I got notified that I had received this scholarship. I am very thankful and happy for this opportunity, and I will do my best to be an exemplary student.



Omar Halabi

Hello everyone.

My name is Omar Halabi and I am 17 years old. I am from Beirut, and I continue to live there. I grew up in a small family made up of five members consisting of my mother, my father, me, and two younger sisters. My education journey started when I was 4 years old. First, I studied in Ali Bin Abi Taleb private school till the seventh grade. These years were the best moments that I spent in my life. After seventh grade, I moved to JRS public high school. It was my favorite school. I liked everything about it: my teachers and my friends. I remained there until I graduated, but now, I am at AUB in UPP. UPP is the next best experience that has happened to me. There, I met beautiful people with beautiful souls. Being better in English is one of my top



goals, and I have worked hard to achieve it through UPP. This program helps everyone with everything such as English, science, math, humanities, and IT. Because I love nursing, I have decided to go into nursing after I finish UPP.

“UPP is the best experience that has happened to me.”

Abdallah Alhaj Sulaiman

I am Abdallah.

I was born in Syria on March 13th, 1991. In 2009, I studied agriculture at Aleppo University, but I couldn't finish this degree because of the war, so I travelled to Egypt in order to finish my degree. Unfortunately, they didn't have the same courses, so I was obliged to change my major to Food Sciences and to start all over again. In June 2016, I received my Bachelors degree in Food Science & Technology from Mansoura University, Egypt. On August 22nd, I was granted the Al Ghureir Scholarship to study Master of Food Technology at the American University of Beirut with the hopes that when I graduate, my work will allow me to create lasting change in individual lives as well as communities as a whole.



“...my work will allow me to create lasting change in individual lives as well as communities as a whole.”

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