

Interviewing our Language Assistant: Sarah Wu



"Chess is one of my hobbies". Watching Judit Polgar play in Seville

Hello Sarah. We hope everything is going well. First of all, the school is very grateful for your work here and we would like to know a few things about you, your family and your hometown.

What can you tell us about your family? Do you have any siblings?

There are five people in my family: me, my father, my mother and my two younger brothers. One is eighteen years old and the other is ten. I have no pets because I have allergies.

What is the thing that you miss the most about your country?

The two things that I miss the most are my friends and my family.

Can you tell us about your hobbies? Do you play any sports?

Yes, I do have hobbies. I like to play chess. Some weeks ago, a very famous chess player, Judit Polgar came to Seville and I was able to get a picture with her. She played eighteen people at the same time. That was really interesting. I like to rock climb as well. During the summer I started to rock climb. I like to play basketball, to read and learn languages. I also like to walk around and explore the cities. I don't have a favourite writer, but I like many types of fiction and am currently trying to read the classics.

How many languages do you speak?

I speak four languages: English, Cantonese, Spanish and French. I am a native speaker of English and proficient in Spanish, but I am intermediate with Cantonese and Italian.

Why did you start learning different languages?

I started learning different languages because I think it is a great way to connect with people and be part of their culture. It shapes how you see the world

Now, we would like to ask you a few questions about your university life

What university do you go to? What are you studying?

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I went to the University of Illinois in Chicago, which is where I used to live. I'm studying Economics and Public Policy. My minors are Spanish for the Professions and International Studies

We know that you started studying a different degree? Why did you drop it?

When I came into university, I was unsure about what I wanted to study. I chose Physics because it was a subject I really enjoyed in high school. I dropped it because I didn't see myself working in a laboratory or in something related to physics. Also, I liked working with people and speaking different language, but now, I'm taking a gap year to rethink what I want to do in the future.

Had you worked before coming to Spain? What did you use to do?

I had a few summer jobs. I worked at Costco giving samples to customers. I also worked at a water park. I did an internship at a company in Chicago where I was a management intern, organising the teams. I was working on an app with software developers, marketing and sales men. I also worked in New York City for three months in marketing strategy, which was a great experience. Some students from Ireland and I were trying to start a company last summer.

Do you like working as a language assistant? What led you to apply for this job?

I wanted to come back to Europe. I studied abroad in Seville in spring 2020 right before the pandemic happened but, because of the pandemic, I had to leave, I had to go back to the States.

Another thing that led me here was that I wanted to practice my Spanish. I love living here because I think Seville is a beautiful city and I like to meet people from many different cultures. I think it is more meaningful than studying something that I maybe don't want to do in the future.

What did you have to do to apply for it?

The application process was pretty easy. I did it online and I uploaded all the documents, my grades and a letter of recommendation from a teacher or someone I had worked for. Also, I had to write about why I wanted to be a language assistant. Then, I had to choose which destination I wanted in Spain. Andalusia was in first place, then secondly I chose Catalonia and finally Extremadura; but I am very lucky to have been placed in Seville

We know that you like travelling because this is one of the reasons why you are here, so how many countries have you already visited?

I have visited Spain, obviously, Portugal, Switzerland and Italy.

Which country did you like the most? What is your favourite country up to now?

It is difficult to have a favourite country. Italy has a special place in my heart because it was the first country I have ever been to outside the US. I love Switzerland too because it is like three countries in one. Portugal is quite nice too.

Are you visiting any other countries after living in Spain?

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I'm planning to go to Belgium and Germany. I want to revisit Switzerland before going back to the US for winter break. I want to go to the south of Asia for the summer as well.

We know that you have some previous experience living here, so we have some questions for you about that. What is your favourite Spanish dish?

I don't have any favourite dish. I like all of them: paella, carrillada, solomillo al whisky... Everything is so good! And "croquetas", there are so many different kinds...

What do you like the most of Spain and the Spanish culture? And the least? What do you think about bullfighting?

I think maybe the attitude. Spaniards are easy-going. When I came here I was able to slow down and appreciate the little things in life. I feel here I had the chance to think about what I wanted. I like the lifestyle in Spain. I don't know too much about bullfighting, so I don't have an definite opinion.

Did you have any friends in Seville before you came here?

Yes, I had a friend living here and now I live in her apartment with her sister and her cat. It is funny because my friend is living in the US now. She married an American boy during the pandemic and moved to Maryland.

What are your Spanish films or TV series?

I think "La casa de papel", "Aquí no hay quien viva" y "Élite".

Is there any habit in Spain that you consider weird or unusual?

I've noticed how close or affectionate Spanish people seem to be, perhaps more than what I'm used to. Also, you have dinner very late for me. At home, I have dinner at six or seven.

How much did you know about Spain before you came here for the first time?

I didn't know much about Spain to be honest. When I first came here I thought it was going to be quite warm and it wasn't. I came in late January. I thought that it wasn't going to be that cold and I brought T-shirts and some sweaters. I had to buy some winter clothes because it was so cold.

Would you like to live in Spain in the future? In which country would you like to settle in the future? Why?

Yes, I would. I have a routine, so I would like to continue living here for another year, maybe in Barcelona. I would like to go to some Eastern countries: Croatia, Czech Republic. Estonia, Latvia or Georgia.

Where do you see yourself in ten year's time? What are your future plans?

I don't know what I'm going to do tomorrow, so it is very difficult to know what I'm going to do in ten years. I think I would like to be living permanently in Europe and travelling a lot. I believe that I may be starting my own kind of projects or a company of my own, but I see myself working with people from different cultures.

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In the near future, I don't know if I will renew for another year or go back to Chicago and finish my degree.

So, that's all. Now we know many more interesting things about you Sarah. Thank you for your attention and patience.

Thank you all for your excellent questions, and I am happy to meet you all

Interviewed by the students in "Ampliación de Inglés 1º Bachillerato: Irene, Carolina, Cayetana, Flordelina, Nuria, Lucía Mogaburu, Lucía Moya, Fran, Lucía Pérez, Andrea, Lucía Ruíz, Alba y Marco.