

ESL M11/911: Academic Reading and Writing I

Reading

In this class, we read the graphic novel, [*I Was Their American Dream*](#) by Malaka Gharib.

Writing

Here is a sample of the kind of writing assignment you can expect in this class. If you can write this type of essay easily, go to the next higher class. Remember, you will have a tutor and teacher working with you.

ESL M11/911 Writing Prompt:

For this writing assignment, you will reflect on the assigned readings and your personal experiences. You will write a 1-paragraph paper explaining two perspectives on ONE (1) of the following topics:

- Melting pot
- Mosaic
- Diversity
- Biculturalism
- Globalization
- Include evidence from class readings and your personal experience

Student Model:

Benefits and Challenges of Biculturalism

Being bicultural means being part of two different cultures, and people have different opinions about it. Most people believe that it is a positive experience that can help create unique forms of art and cuisine. For example, in the article, “One World: One Culture?” Pakenham et al. explain how American rap music has spread to other parts of the world. They write, “In 2006, rap came to Afghanistan in the form of a local artist, DJ Besho... Like many artists in different countries, DJ Besho has taken music from one culture and made it his own style (4). In other words, artists such as DJ Besho have taken parts of American culture and combined it with their own culture to create a new musical genre. Now, young Afghanis can listen to rap in their own language and feel more connected to this musical style that originated in the US. Another example of artistic cultural fusion is Korean tacos. When I was a student at CSULA, many people used to wait for the Korean taco truck to arrive on campus. The taco truck sold beef bulgogi and kimchi wrapped in corn tortillas, and many students enjoyed this combination. These examples show that biculturalism can have positive effects on art and cuisine. On the other hand, some people believe that biculturalism can lead to inner

conflicts and cultural alienation. For instance, in the essay, "The Struggle to be an All-American Girl," Wong explains how difficult it was for her to grow up as a Chinese girl in America. She writes, "When I was ten years old, I had more important things to learn than copying difficult Chinese characters...the language made me feel embarrassed" (2). In this story, Wong does not embrace both of her cultures. Instead, she feels ashamed of her Chinese culture and wants to be American only. In other words, biculturalism can lead to inner conflicts. Another example is from the article, "One World: One Culture?" Pakenham et al. explain how Indian workers must become bicultural so they can do their jobs more effectively. They write, "As Indian workers take on western names, wear western clothes, and even organize a western time zone, they can become alienated from their own culture" (2). The authors argue that biculturalism has made Indian workers feel disconnected from their culture because they are forced to "Americanize." These examples demonstrate that biculturalism can have many challenges. Because of globalization and increased immigration, I predict that biculturalism will become more common. Even though it has many challenges, being bicultural is beneficial because it allows people to learn from each other and embrace different perspectives.