

Teil I (Fundamentum)

Leseverstehen: *A year abroad*

The following article from 2005 deals with Johanna who after year 10 at her German school went abroad to go to an American high school for one year.

Read the following article and answer the questions:

- First read the whole text once, trying to form a general idea of the information given.
- Then read the questions.
- Re-read the text and answer the questions.
- Finally check your answers.

- Johanna wanted to go to America from the time she was 12. So when she got to 10th grade¹, she was sure she wanted to spend a year at an American high school. She started applying for a place
- 5 the autumn before she went, and had to do a language test as part of her application². The cost of her stay was €5,700 including flights, plus spending money³ and about €50 for medical insurance⁴.
- 10 The high school Johanna went to was in New Jersey, on the coast, not far from Atlantic City. Before she went, Johanna got to know her host family by email. When she got there, she liked them at first, but after a while she had problems
- 15 with the father. “He was just a difficult person, even his own grown-up daughters didn't really get on with him”, says Johanna.
- Fortunately, Johanna had made a very good friend at the high school, and she was able to arrange to stay with her family instead. The organisation helped her to change families, and her second American home was a big success. Today, she says they felt like a real family.
- 20 Going to school in the US was a very interesting experience for Johanna. “They were much stricter”, she says. “You even had to get a card signed⁵ if you wanted to go to the toilet during lessons, so they could make sure you weren't hanging around in the corridor.”
- 30 Some of the lessons were harder, others easier. “I thought maths was hard”, says Johanna, “but maths isn't my best subject anyway.” One thing she noticed was that teachers were generally younger than in Germany, and often friendlier to
- 35 the students.
- The school day is longer, from 7.45 to 14.20 at Johanna's school, with one 40-minute period for lunch – usually burgers, French fries and cakes, but with a choice of salads for the health-
- 40 conscious.
- Most kids stay on in the afternoons after lessons to take part in clubs or sports. There was a wide variety of activities – drama club, newspaper club, poetry, a jazz group, French and German for fun. Sports – an important part of high
- 45 school life – were also on offer in the afternoons.
- Johanna says her stay helped her English a lot, particularly her spoken English. “I find it really easy to talk in English lessons now”, she says.
- 50 Writing is a different matter, sometimes she puts slang words she learnt in the US into written work.
- After a year, Johanna says the US started feeling like home. The Americans she met were open, friendly and interested. She liked the informal way neighbours got together for barbecues, the
- 55 way they just dropped in for a chat. She has kept in touch with the second family she stayed with, and even visited them at Christmas.

Read on Oct. 2005, p. 5–6 (www.readon.de)

¹ grade – year, form
² application – to apply for sth (see ll. 2 – 3)
³ spending money – pocket money
⁴ medical insurance – “Krankenversicherung”
⁵ to sign – write your name (signature) on sth

Questions on the text:

1) How does Johanna feel about her stay in the US in general today?

- a) Positive
- b) Negative
- c) Neutral
- d) Confused

2) When did she start applying for her year abroad?

- a) At the beginning of Year 11
- b) Soon after the beginning of Year 10
- c) When she was 12
- d) At the end of Year 10

3) How did she get on with the families she stayed with?

4) How did she find her second host family?

- a) The organisation found the family for her.
- b) She found the family herself.
- c) A teacher helped her to find the family.
- d) She found the family by email.

5) What was different at the American high school, compared to Johanna's German school back home?

- a) Lessons: _____
- b) Teachers: _____
- c) School day: _____

6) What does the text say about afternoon activities at Johanna's American high school?

- a) Johanna took part in various activities.
- b) Most students do sports.
- c) Many kids learn Latin and German just for fun.
- d) You can choose from a number of activities.

7) What did Johanna like about Americans and their way of life?

- a) Americans: _____
 - b) American way of life: _____
-

8) How has her stay abroad helped her English?

9) What effect did her stay abroad have on her writing in English?

10) What is Johanna's situation like now?

- a) She still feels at home in the US.
- b) She visits her second family every Christmas.
- c) She is still in contact with the second family.
- d) She plans to go to America again.

11) The title of the article is "A Year Abroad". Choose the most fitting subtitle.

- a) Friendly Americans
- b) Sweet home America
- c) Learning English the easy way
- d) New experiences

Wortschatz: Choosing a career – job profiles

Back home Johanna starts thinking about her future career. What will she choose? To start with she draws up a table and looks at different job possibilities.

Fill in the missing words in this grid. Use each word or expression only once. Check your entries for spelling mistakes.

	place of work	job	typical work they do
0	<i>school</i>	teacher	<i>teach pupils</i>
1		stewardess	
2	police station		
3			prepare meals
4		mechanic	
5	hospital		
6		travel agent	
7	department store		
8		architect	

Teil II (Additum)

Leseverstehen: *Driving lessons*

All American teenagers look forward to learning to drive. After you pass the test it's great – mobility at last. But before all that you have to learn from the beginning. You better make sure you get an instructor you can really trust. Here's Sue's experience.

I'd always been nervous about learning to drive. I didn't think I'd be a good driver, certain I'd be too terrified to go over ten m.p.h. When I was finally old enough to get my license, I signed up with a private driving school, the same one my brother John had used. I wasn't surprised when I got the same instructor, Frank.

John said Frank was funny and easygoing. I knew that Frank was Cuban and very religious, but I didn't know that he dressed like a Hell's Angel¹ most of the time. Walking down my driveway to meet him my heart speeded up and my steps slowed down. Frank just handed me the keys for the little red car and said "Go on!" Loud music in Spanish was coming from the speakers. It was "Amazing Grace" – a religious song.

Frank was not very encouraging. He didn't say much, except to tell me when to turn. But he liked singing gospel songs as we sped onto the highway, or as we drove along narrow country roads.

Frank also loved to shout, usually in Spanish, to warn people: "Stop before you kill us all!" He never shouted at me. But he did call me "*Señorita Tortuga*" (Turtle Girl) when I was going five miles under the speed limit on an unfamiliar road. I was shocked when the car suddenly speeded up on its own, until I realized that Frank was controlling it.

I don't know how much I learned from my lessons with Frank. He never told me anything except that I was going to kill him, and to turn right at the next crossroads. One day he didn't say anything, so I stopped and asked Frank where to go. "To the end of the world. Always straight to the end of the world", he said in a thick Spanish accent. Frank put in a tape. I could only make out a few of the words with my school Spanish: "Este es peligroso, peligroso! PELIGROSO!" someone shouted. This is dangerous, dangerous, DANGEROUS!

After hours of listening to Spanish sermons² and gospel songs, Frank gave me my final certificate. It was a standard certificate, except that Frank had filled it in with beautiful calligraphy³. I was surprised that Frank could write so beautifully.

adapted from: Michelle Sommers: Short stories for teens – Intermediale Level. Speak easy Publications. Stuttgart: Klett 2000. S. 15



¹ *Hell's Angel* – motorbike gang whose members usually wear black leather and jeans

² sermon – talk given in church by a pastor

³ *calligraphy* – beautiful handwriting

- 1) Who are the main characters of the story?
 - a) Frank and John
 - b) Frank and Sue
 - c) John and Sue
 - d) Frank and Jean

- 2) Where does the story take place?
 - a) in Spain
 - b) in Cuba
 - c) in the U.S.A.
 - d) in Mexico

- 3) Who tells the story?
 - a) a married woman
 - b) a teenage girl
 - c) an old lady
 - d) a divorced woman

- 4) What's Frank's job?
 - a) a car seller
 - b) a gospel singer
 - c) a driving instructor
 - d) a Spanish teacher

- 5) How does Sue feel during the lessons?
 - a) nervous
 - b) sad
 - c) surprised
 - d) disappointed

- 6) The lessons are always
 - a) boring
 - b) unusual
 - c) ordinary
 - d) easy

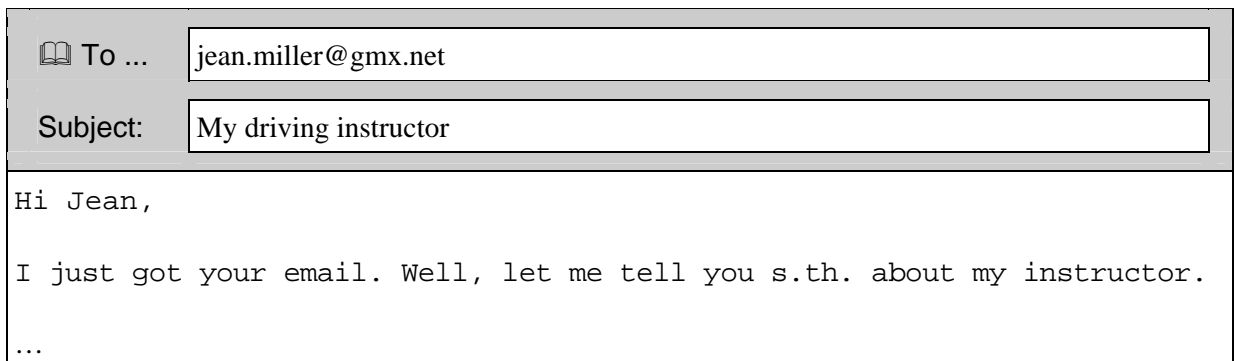
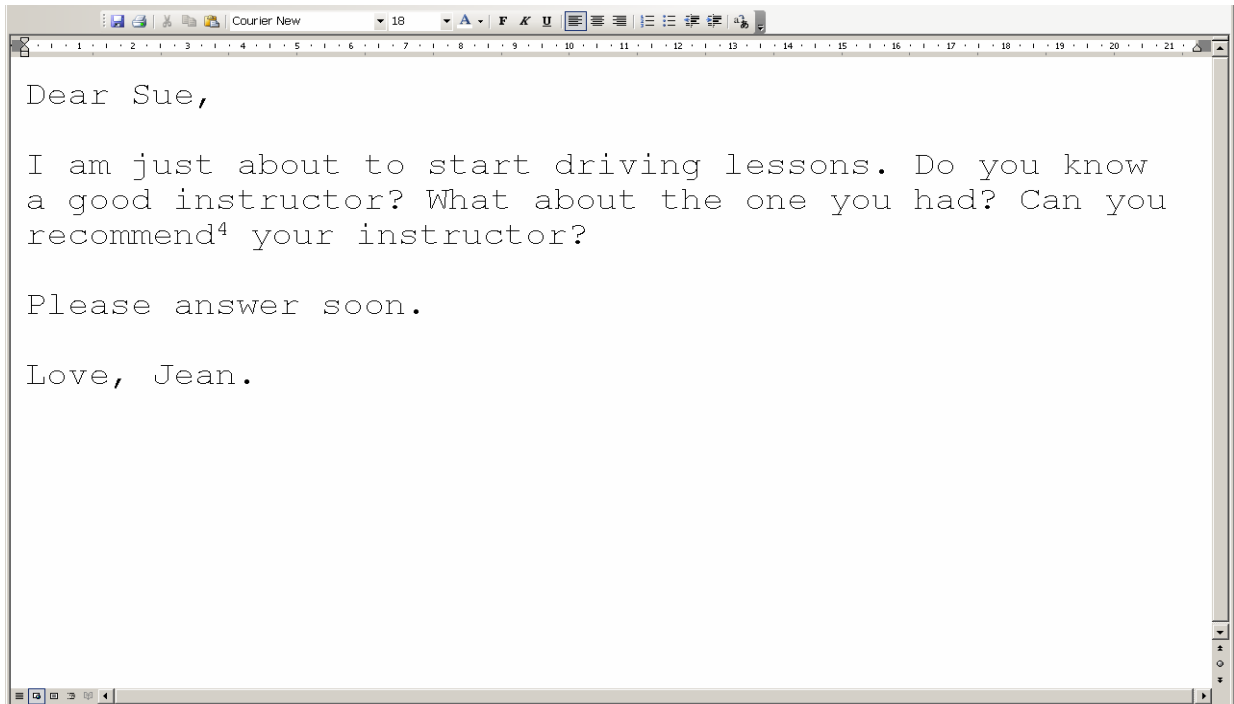
- 7) Why did Frank call Sue "Senorita Tortuga"?
 - a) Because she was going too slow
 - b) Because she was going on an unfamiliar road
 - c) Because she always wore green clothes
 - d) Because he wanted to teach her Spanish

- 8) What is special about the certificate?

Schreiben: *Driving lessons*

1) Characterize Frank. What is special about him? Write at least 70 words.

2) Sue got an email from her friend Jean. Answer Jean's email. Write at least 100 words.



3) As you know, in many American states you can get your driver's license when you are 16. Should teenagers in Germany be allowed to get their driver's license at that age, too?

- What are the pros and cons?
- Should there be any restrictions?

Give your opinion and write at least 100 words.

⁴ to recommend – empfehlen