

ESOL VOICES: Student Spotlight

Anastasiia Danylyshyn

Anastasiia Danylyshyn is an ESOL student from Ukraine. She and her parents have lived in the United States for one and a half years. Anastasiia plans to study radiologic technology at MCC. In this story, Anastasiia writes about the first time she and her friends hiked to the top of Mt. Hoverla, the tallest mountain in Ukraine.



Anastasiia Danylyshyn

A Memorable Journey

I opened my eyes, and it was still dark in the room. I could not wait to get up, but it was too early. I was looking forward to the following day, and because my heart was beating so fast, I could not sleep. Therefore, I started counting numbers 1, 2, 3, 4... and fell back asleep.

My alarm clock woke me up, and that meant the most expected day had come. It was already possible to hear birds singing outside the window even though the clock was showing only 6 a.m. Additionally, the clear sky predicted the sunny weather.

I quickly dressed up and made a backpack with the necessary stuff: a tent, a sleeping bag, a flashlight, a knife, a rain poncho, bottles of water, snacks, a warm sweater and an extra pair of sneakers. Then, I called my friends to say that I was ready for our little trip.

We all met each other at the bus station. My four friends and I got on the bus and departed from our town. They were so sleepy that they fell asleep. I looked through the window at the beautiful landscape and remembered how we had planned the trip. It was the end of the school year. All of us wanted to have an

unforgettable experience so that our answers to how we spent our summer would not be boring. That is why we had planned our trip to the Carpathian Mountains. In addition, we set a goal to climb the highest mountain – Hoverla. That was not a big surprise since everybody knew that the Carpathians are one of the most beautiful places in Ukraine. The idea sounded very exciting.

Our bus arrived, and we eventually reached a small town that was located not far from the Hoverla. We got off the bus at the right stop and went to a small forest. There, we set up our tent which was not an easy task. After we organized all of our belongings, we went to take a look around the area.

The air seemed so fresh that I wanted to breathe in as much as possible. We heard the sound of water and headed to it. Arriving, we saw a quick flowing river. We came up closer to taste the water. It was very cold and so transparent that we could see the stones at the bottom. As it was a beginning of the summer, there were a lot of pretty flowers. Some of them were light blue as the sky with violet cores. Some flowers

had a beautiful pale yellow color, which I had never seen before. All those shades and tones of the river, grass, and flowers created a wonderful landscape. The smell of the nature was pleasant, too.

Once we came back to our little camp, we decided to have a snack. Among the wildlife, it seemed that we were very hungry. One of my friends had brought a volleyball, and we played with it for a while. All of us were talking for a long time and did not notice how time passed. It became darker, so we went to collect dry branches of the trees to make the fire. We gathered them all into a pile; then we added some paper and lit it. We were sitting and singing songs by the fire. The sky was full of bright stars, and, at that moment, I wanted to stop the time.

We took the sausages and began to fry them over the fire. We were all laughing at Valery, who burned her sausage. Another friend said, "If Valery lived a thousand years ago without electricity, she would be definitely hungry all the time." After those words, we all cracked up. The sausages were so tasty that we wanted some more.

We went to the tent to sleep after the fire was extinguished. It was something new for us all. Sleeping in the sleeping bags on the ground was not convenient, but we did not have a choice.

The next day we all woke up and had a quick breakfast. The morning was bitterly cold and very dark. I took the warm sweater that did not let me freeze. We folded our tents and bags and went to the mountain. People told us the mountain was not very high, and it was not very difficult to hike it. They had also suggested how to go up the hill, so we started our journey.

The temperature went up, and it was already hot, but the first hour we were hiking in a forest where it was cool. In the beginning, everything seemed very easy. It was like walking up the stairs. Fortunately, we found

many water streams, where we got cold fresh water. After the forest, a path began with stones and bushes. It became difficult to hike among them, especially for us, people who did not have any experience at all.

From time to time, we sat on the stones to rest and look at the landscapes. The green forests and the blue sky made a magnificent view. Because of a change of air pressure, it became harder to breathe, but we already saw the top of the mountain. We were very tired, but the goal was very close. Well, it seemed to us.

The last two hours before the peak were the hardest. The sky became cloudy, and we did not want to get into the rain at all. The last steps to the top seemed impossible. We were clutching on our hands and knees. Now, it seems ridiculous to me, but, at that moment, we only wanted to

get to the top somehow. When we all got there, we fell on the ground to breathe and relax.

From Hoverla, we saw the rest of the mountains and incredible views. It was a place of fairytale beauty of amazing landscapes. We were impressed looking around, and I felt myself on the top of the world. Those four hours of exhausting walking were worth that feeling.

Everything seemed impossible until it was done. In our case, we realized that each other's support brought us together to reach a common goal. We were happy on our way back home.

That experience has become a memorable journey and the beginning of our new tradition. We have continued to hike Mt. Hoverla every year since our first trip.

ESOL Voices a collection of stories written by ESOL students at Monroe Community College. Each semester, we highlight students from different regions around the world. Look for a new story in the Tribune each month. We hope you will find these stories interesting and inspiring.

Katie Leite & Pamela Fornieri, ESOL Program, October 2017
