

My first year in Vietnam was weird



When I left Melbourne to live in Hanoi it was really weird. I missed the traffic lights in Melbourne. There weren't any in Hanoi and they needed them because of the crazy motor bikes going everywhere, even on the footpaths. The worst part about Hanoi was the bad smell outside our house where the taxis parked.

Another thing was, I missed playing footy. In Hanoi I started Tae Kwon Do. But I wanted to be a footy player when I grew up.

On the first day of school, my brother and I went by cyclo, which was a bit like a baby pram. I was surprised because everyone in the streets had black hair. I felt shy at school. I didn't really like the first year.



After the first year I started going to the Lycée, because I wasn't happy at the International school. But it was hard to learn to speak French and after a while I wanted to go back to the English school. I think I was pretty mixed up. Mum said I could change schools again if I was still not happy at the end of the year.

Later on in that year I met Jono, another Aussie who also went to the Lycée. My French got better and then I started to settle in and be very happy.

Now I have a black belt in Tae Kwon Do. I can speak French and some Vietnamese. I love Vietnamese food, especially phở and bún bo. I have friends from Vietnam and many other countries. I adore Vietnam. It is my home and it is not at all weird.

D'Arcy Hipgrave, aged 8

Lucinda Willshire

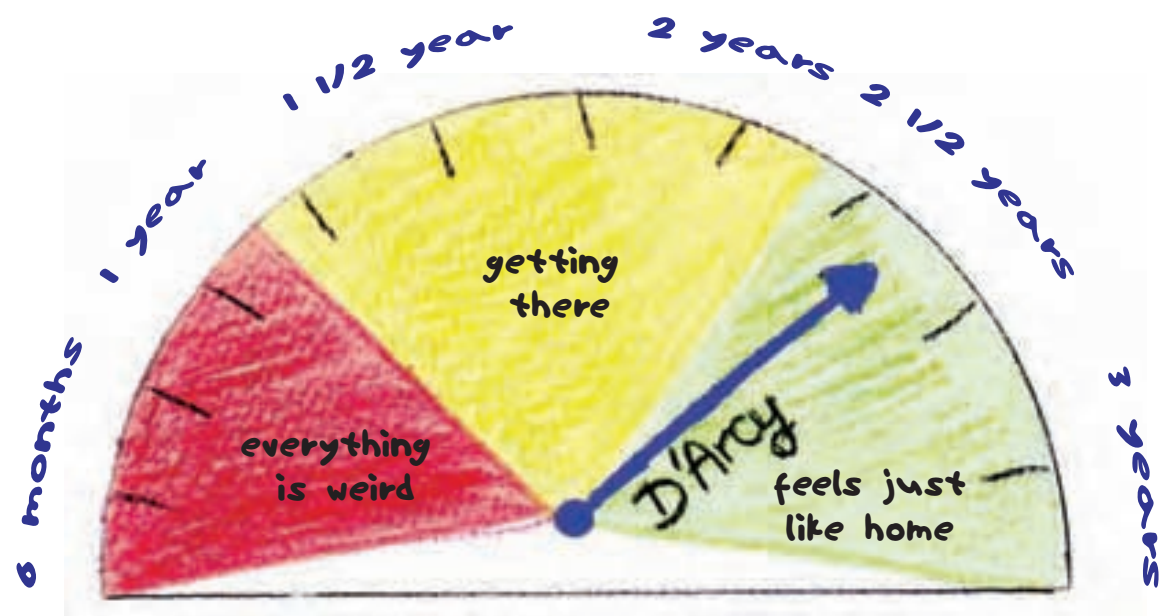




Activity: Weirdometer

It was weird for D'Arcy when he first moved to a new place. Then, as time went on, things became familiar and it eventually felt like home to him.

D'Arcy put himself on a Weirdometer so he could see how things can change over time.



He then listed things that explain his changing feelings.

Things I miss doing: **crossing at traffic lights, playing footy.**

Things I find weird: **bad smells, motor bikes on footpaths, cyclos, everyone has black hair.**

New things I like: **learning new languages, Tae Kwon Do, Vietnamese food, Jono.**



Can you put yourself on your own Weirdometer?



List or draw things that explain your own changing feelings.

things I miss doing:

things I find weird:

new things I like:

My seventh birthday party

This morning we were filling the goodie bags for my brother's seventh birthday party and I said, "When I turn seven I want my birthday party to be at Fun Dazzle." That is my favourite fun place. And then Mum just said, "Well, we won't even be here, we are going to move back to Brazil next year."

But I didn't want my party in Brazil! I started to cry.

Mum was worried that I didn't like Brazil, but it wasn't about that - I thought no one would be able to come to my party. Brazil is so far!

Mum gave me a piece of paper and suggested I make a list of people who could come. I thought it was a silly idea. I asked Mum, "Do you think Ethan could come to my party in Brazil? Do you think Austin is going to come?" The whole party suddenly seemed hopeless.

As we were tying up the bags, I was still feeling sad and Mum insisted I get started with the list. One thing is for sure, if I have a party in Brazil I want my granny to come and my cousins. We have lots of fun when we are together. So there would be: Maria Clara, João Paulo, maybe also Lavinia. She will be old enough.

Mum suggested adding my new friends I'll make at my new school. We haven't met them yet, but Mum says we will.

Francisco Menezes, aged 5

Bárbara Menezes



Activity: birthday party plan

You can use this template to plan your own birthday party.

-----'s birthday party plan:

place:

guest list:

favorite party foods:



fun activities:

decorations:



present wish list:



Slurping soup is fun

Slurp! Slurp! Slurp!

I hear Mama's voice. "Ole! You're four years old now. Stop slurping your soup. What will Oma think when she comes to visit?"

I live in Beijing.

We've been here for two and a half years and Oma is my granny. She lives in Germany. She never slurps soup. She uses a spoon.

I tell Mama, "But Ayi slurps her soup". Ayi is my nanny.

Mama says, "You're right Ole. There are different ways of eating food. We use a knife, fork and spoon. Ayi uses chopsticks and some people eat with their hands."

"Wow, really Mama, with their hands! I'd like to try that too."

Mama likes it best when I eat my food the German way. But I had fun slurping my soup and Michel our cat likes to slurp too.

Slurp! Slurp! Slurp!

Ole Gemmer, aged 4

Ulrike Gemmer



Activity: utensils you use

What would you use to eat these foods? Draw a line from the food to the utensils.





Activity: tackling spaghetti

Show five different ways to eat spaghetti

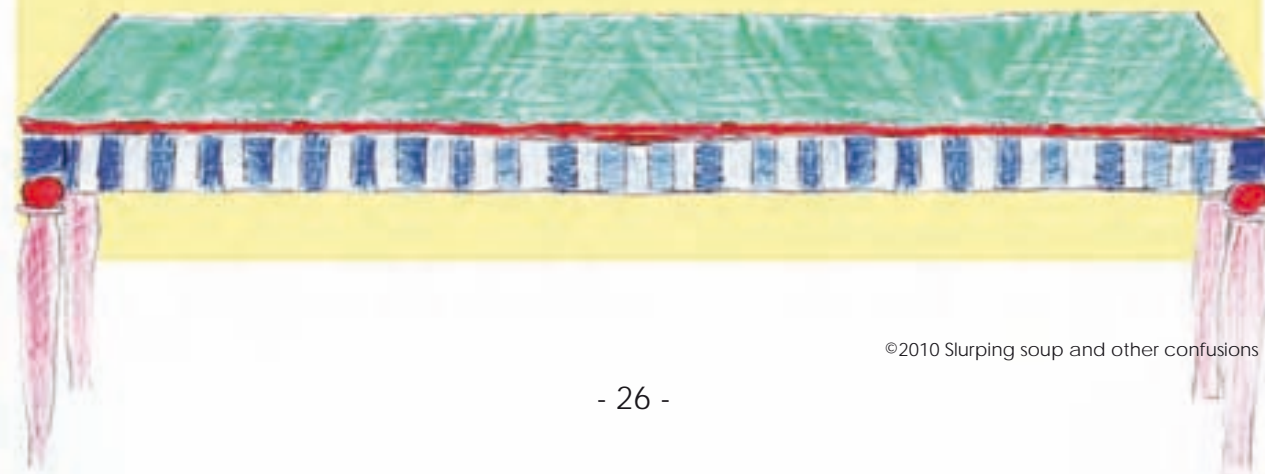


Activity: food rules

Read the examples of mealtime rules from different cultures. Put a check next to your family rules. If you know different rules that any of your friends have, write their name next to it

- ☐ Burp at the end of the meal
- ☐ Use a knife and fork with your food
- ☐ Push your chair in at the end of the meal
- ☐ Clean your hands before you eat
- ☐ Bring your plate to the kitchen after your meal
- ☐ Mop the sauce from your plate with your bread
- ☐ Tuck your napkin into your collar
- ☐ Sit on the floor at mealtimes
- ☐ Eat sweets first
- ☐ Kids eat before adults
- ☐ Family eats together
- ☐ Always eat with the right hand
- ☐ A meal is not complete without rice
- ☐ Soup for breakfast is a good start to the day
- ☐ Don't play with your food
- ☐ Chew with your mouth closed
- ☐ Finish everything on your plate

Which of these customs would you like to try?



Missing my family

I miss my family ever since we left Pakistan. I used to have all my family around me: my grandparents, my aunts and uncles, my cousins. Now when Mama and Baba are busy, there's no one to answer the questions I think up.

They were there when I wanted to hear a story, when I wanted to know how germs make me sick, and even when I wanted to know if monsters existed. When I was bored my Mamoon (mother's brother) showed me how to colour 'My Little Pony' drawings on the computer. When I wanted to go see the ducks, my Zahra Khala (mother's sister) would take me to feed them. There were loads of other relatives' homes to visit when I wanted to.

If there was a fight with a friend, there was always someone to talk to. But now I need to wait for Mama and Baba to be home, and to be free to talk or listen.

I used to cry a lot when I missed the family back home. I would get upset when Mama would not have time to play with me. One day I got so upset I said, "I want to go back. I am packing right now, send me back tomorrow, Mama, I don't like it here!"

Mama finally understood that we just had to solve this problem. We both had to work hard to find some good ideas, because I was so bored and lonely. We brainstormed together and asked our family for ideas.

The first thing I did was to learn how to call my family on the phone. Mama wrote all the family's numbers on a board above the phone and I try and call them sometimes if I need them. Then my Mamoon had another good idea. He asked my parents to buy a camera for the computer. My brother and I now chat to our family on the PC. I can discuss my ideas and stories and problems with anyone I want to.

It helps my younger brother, Swaleh too. He now knows who they are. He even calls them their proper names, instead of calling everyone "Auntie".

Hafsah Zaman Mehdi, aged 6

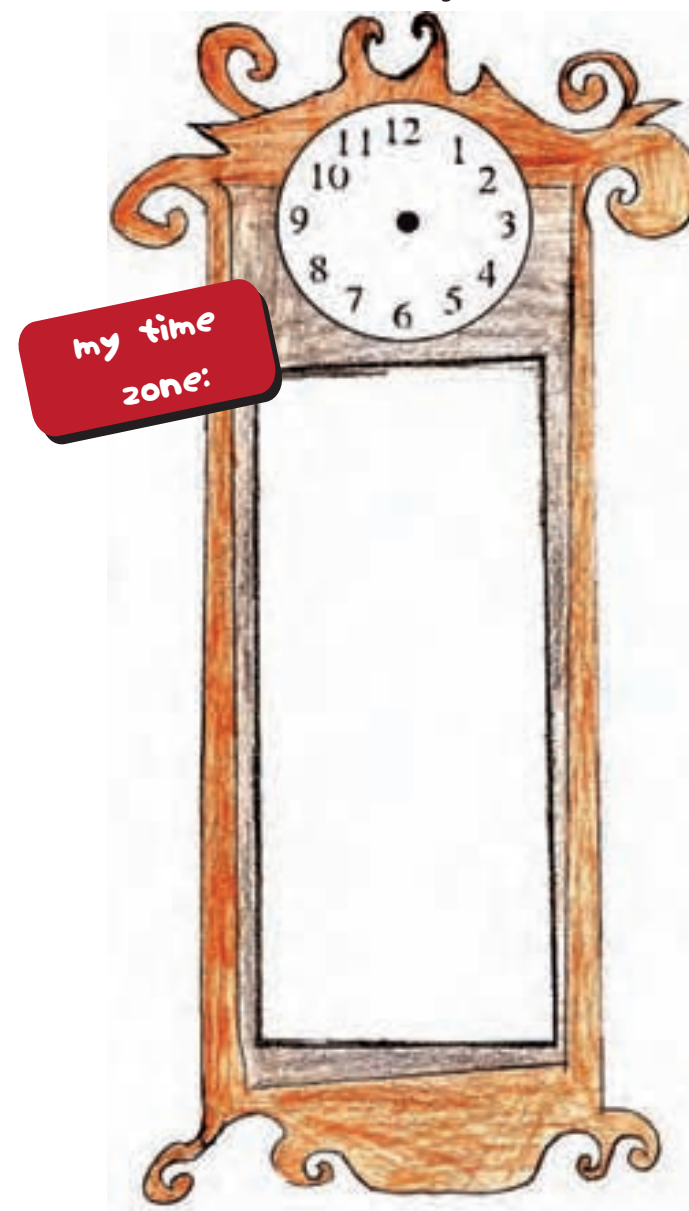
Maryam Afnan Ahmad



Activity: time zone

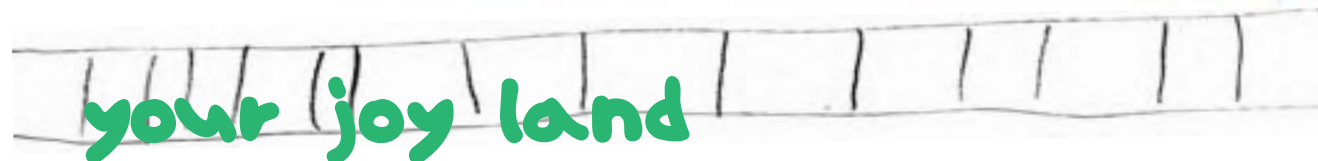
Are your relatives in a different time zone?

Show the times on the clocks and draw what you and your relatives are doing at this moment.





Hafsah feels better by drawing what she plans to do with all the family when she is with them next.



Draw what you would like to do with your family.



Activity: keeping in touch

Brainstorm ideas for keeping in touch with your relatives. Brainstorming means coming up with a lot of ideas without worrying whether they are good or not. It's like letting a storm loose in your head.

So let that storm loose:

