

ADULT LITERACY COMMUNITY

Quarterly articles, features, and highlights



Grow time...Spring is here!

Let's celebrate adult learning goals, growing literacy and language abilities, and writing efforts.

Page 8, describes our program's student writing project starting now: April - July 1, 2025. Learners at all levels and abilities who want to participate will need support and guidance from their learning partner to improve writing skills at their tutoring sessions April - July 1st. All submissions received by July 1st, will be featured in a published writing collection and student authors will be recognized at our program celebration and book release event in Fall/Winter 2025.

April is time to talk about goals! Here's a reminder to all learning partners to take time in April to discuss and update each learner's program goals. Be sure to: celebrate progress and goals met, discuss new goals and focus areas for the next six months, and then plan your future sessions together focused on those goals shared as *most important* by the adult you are working in partnership with.

Thank You,

A. Adams

**Adult Literacy Supervisor
Sonoma County Library**

WHAT YOU'LL FIND INSIDE:

- **HIGHLIGHTS**
- **GLOSSARY**
- **INTERVIEWS**
- **IDIOMS**
- **STUDENT WRITING**
- **AND MORE!**

American Culture Corner

Easter!

Easter is a Christian holiday that celebrates the **resurrection** of Jesus. Christians often celebrate by going to church.

In addition to Christian observances, there are also other celebrations of Easter as a time of renewal and the start of spring.

Easter egg hunts are enjoyed by children and adults alike: Plastic eggs filled with candy, money, or other small **trinkets** are hidden around a yard or specific area so people can search for and collect as many as they can fit in their baskets.



An Easter egg hunt before it begins



One depiction of the Easter Bunny

Children get excited about a visit from the Easter Bunny, who is a folkloric figure and symbol of Easter who brings Easter eggs and gifts, typically in a basket.

It is common to have a big celebratory meal on Easter, either a lunch or a dinner.

Cinco de Mayo

Cinco de Mayo or the fifth of May is a **faux** Mexican holiday which is celebrated more in the US than in Mexico. It has become associated with the celebration of Mexican-American culture.



Glossary

resurrection: coming back to life after death

trinkets: small items or ornaments, not of great value

faux: not real or genuine; made to seem like something else

epithet: a descriptive word or phrase used in place of the name of a person or thing

prowess: skill or expertise in a specific field or activity

dyslexia: a learning difference that affects how a person is able to read, write, and spell

kernel: a seed

kernel of an idea: having a small idea begin and grow in your mind

suspicious: causing distrust of someone or something.

Who Were They?



Louis Armstrong 1901 - 1971

Louis Armstrong was an American trumpeter and vocalist. His career spanned five decades, and he was one of the world's greatest jazz musicians.

Born and raised in New Orleans, Armstrong was heavily influenced by the jazz in New Orleans. He played in various bands in New Orleans growing up and in 1922, he moved to Chicago to join jazz musician Joe Oliver's Creole Jazz Band. This time in American history was called the "Roaring Twenties" and Chicago was quickly becoming the home of jazz.

During his time in Chicago, Louis developed a unique style and played solos people loved to hear. Louis' singing voice was distinctive with a rich, gravelly tone.

Check out this video of Louis Armstrong playing the trumpet and singing the song *A Kiss to Build A Dream On* live at the BBC in 1968: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fZ0OOHLWo4w>



*"To be a great champion, you must **believe** you are the best.*

If you're not, pretend you are."

LEFT: Muhammad Ali reacts after his first round knockout of Sonny Liston during the 1965 World Heavyweight Title fight.

Muhammad Ali, born Cassius Marcellus Clay Jr., was an American professional boxer and social activist. Widely acknowledged as the greatest heavyweight boxer of all time, he was known by the **epithet** "The Greatest."

At 18, Ali demonstrated his boxing **prowess** and won a gold medal in the light heavyweight division at the 1960 Summer Olympics. He turned professional later that year.

In elementary and high school, Ali struggled with **dyslexia**, which made reading, writing, spelling, and graduating very difficult. Despite these struggles, Ali used his sharp mind, quick wit, and charisma to connect with others. "The Greatest" was a champ in overcoming challenges in and beyond the boxing ring. His story inspires countless individuals to keep striving for their goals.

Student Writing

Island of the Blue Dolphins Book Review

By Norma, Tutor Virginia Reuter

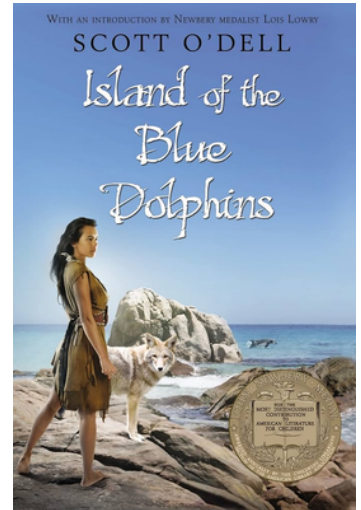
This book is about one of the girls who lived on an island off California.

When a boat came to get her people [to take them off the island], the girl didn't see her brother. She decided to jump into the sea and swim [back] to the island. [She found] Her brother was sleeping.

There were many wild dogs that the Russians left behind [on the island]. The girl waited for her brother in the afternoon [but when] her brother did not return, she went to go look for him the next day and found he was dead from a wild dog attack. In her anger, she tried to kill the lead dog [but] he did not die.

[With time] The [lead] dog decided to stay with her [and] she was not alone, [and she took care of the lead dog]. She stayed fifty years at the island [before] white people came to the island, and she left the island with them.

I think that she was a very strong person because she lived many years alone. She survived with the wild dogs. She learned to provide food and built a place to live. She made tools to feed and protect herself.



Upcoming Adult Literacy Tutor Meetup Opportunities!

If you are an actively matched tutor who would like to join the next in-person Tutor Meet-up Training Lunches, please SAVE THESE DATES (invites will be sent via email prior to each date):

Monday, June 9, 2025

1:00 pm – 3:00 pm

(Central Santa Rosa Library)

and

Monday, August 11, 2025

1:00 pm – 3:00 pm

(Central Santa Rosa Library)



April 1st Tutor Meetup Group

Student Writing

My Story

By Jamie Campman, Tutor Dana Jacoby

Coach Coleen called me and my son Ruben to see if we wanted to join them at Special Olympics summer games.

Ruben and I played tennis in Summer Game's. I played good and won gold. Ruben also brought silver home.

It took place in San Jose. We played tennis over 2 days and played against 5 people.

For me that was a big deal. To be in a new environment and people. I overcame my fear.

Happy that I got to do it with my son Ruben.



Jamie and her son Ruben



Jamie and Ruben's medals

What is the Special Olympics?

The Special Olympics is the world's largest sports organization for children and adults with disabilities. It provides year-round training, activities, and events. Events are held locally, nationally, and regionally.

It is an organization that can help participants reach their goals, keep active, and get to know others. According to Jamie, the author of *My Story* (above) it is a good organization for support and socializing.

Recognition of Writer-to-Writer Challenge Participants

Congratulations to Learners **Martha** and **Rafael**, who both participated in the 2025 state-wide Writer-to-Writer Challenge with support from their respective learning partners: Cynthia and Brian.

The Writer-to-Writer Challenge was designed to encourage reading and writing by asking adult learners enrolled in library literacy programs across the state of California to read a book in English and write a letter to the author about the impact the book had on them.

Martha read *Frida Kahlo* (The Great Hispanic Heritage Series) by authors John Morrison and Jamie Pietras, and Rafael read *The Hangman* by author Louise Penny.

A panel of judges is now reviewing all the letter submissions and will select finalists in four categories. Winners will be announced in late May 2025.

Good luck and great job, Martha and Rafael!

Get To Know Learner LuLu Perez



LuLu Perez

What are some of your hobbies?

I like to go to the mountain and walk barefoot.

What are some of your favorite things to do in the springtime?

Sow seeds in my vegetable garden. Help my medicinal plants.

What book are you currently reading?

The Body is Not an Apology by Sonya Renee Taylor. It's a beautiful book.

What is your favorite book?

El País de Jauja by Francisco Segovia

What is your perfect day?

To be with all of my family.



Lulu's favorite book can be borrowed through LINK+

Interviewed by Marcos Soriano

Like many of our English language learners, LuLu Perez appreciates the one-on-one nature of the program. Most of her relationships, both in her work life and her personal life, are with Spanish speakers, and because of that she feels her chances to speak English are somewhat limited. Having access to an individual tutor gives her an opportunity to practice her English conversation skills and build her fluency. LuLu has also taken ESL classes through providers such as La Luz Center in Sonoma, and she likes how individual tutoring enhances classroom instruction, deepening her understanding of the English grammar and vocabulary she learns in class.

LuLu has been involved with the Adult Literacy Program for around a year. She was matched with a tutor through the English Language Partners Program for much of that time, though the match recently ended because the tutor left the area. "I liked working with her," LuLu says. "We did a journal together. I'd write down words and she'd check my understanding of them." LuLu has also participated in our online Conversation Class, but now that her original tutoring match has ended, her primary interest is in being matched with a new tutor. "It doesn't matter if it takes time," she says. "Being on the list is worth the wait."

LuLu's desire to improve her English comes from her desire to connect with and serve her community. She works as a birth doula, a massage therapist, and as a community health worker with the Botanical Bus. "It's literally a botanical bus," she says. "We work by going to various places in the community and providing different services: therapies, acupuncture, workshops." The bus has many herbalists on staff who offer plant-based medicines and can refill herbal prescriptions. Clients pay a \$5 donation for a consultation, but no one is turned away for lack of funds. Anyone interested in the Botanical Bus services can call 707-800-2182 for more information, and to make an appointment.

"I love working with the community," LuLu says. "It's something that motivates me, and it's also what motivates me to learn more English. Sharing [knowledge] with another person is a beautiful thing."

Note: Lulu's interview was conducted in Spanish; all quotes are translations.

Get To Know Tutor Alan H.



Alan H.

What is your favorite book?

East of Eden by John Steinbeck

What are you reading right now?

I'm reading *The Jungle* by Upton Sinclair. I'm actually listening to it.

What is your favorite TV show?

Pawn Stars on the History Channel

What are some of your hobbies?

Hiking and making vegetable soup

What is your favorite vegetable?

Broccoli!

What's your favorite summertime activity?

I live near the Russian River, so favorite summer activities include swimming in the river, floating down the river, and lounging by the river.



People floating down the Russian River

Alan has been a tutor for two and a half months in the Adult Literacy program and is already finding: The "most rewarding thing has been getting to know a new person...[my learner is] a cool guy and super motivated."

Alan joined the Adult Literacy Program because he enjoys working with adults, "I feel they are uniquely motivated to learn or achieve their academic or career goals." In addition to being an Adult Literacy tutor, Alan works as a substitute teacher in K-12 schools. He compared his work to tutoring like this: "K-12 students are required to be in school. With adult learners, there is a sincere motivation to learn and meet their goals."

Alan's biggest challenge in the literacy program has been finding things that actually help his learner. Alan says that "in school there is a curriculum and sometimes kids respond to things and sometimes not. I feel lots of support from the literacy staff and the materials provided, but everyone has unique needs, and I want to make sure my learner's time is not being wasted—feeling like I'm actually helping him; that has been challenging for me."

Alan's advice for learners about achieving their goals is straightforward: Reach out for help. "If my learner never reached out about the program, we would never have known about him. I know for myself it can be hard when I need help with something." Asking for help, "opens the doors to lots of new opportunities."

Alan is no stranger to new opportunities and experiences. He shared that one of his proudest moments was when he was in college and decided to study abroad in India. "It started as a small **kernel** of an idea. I kept at it – getting the application together, going to the orientations, getting vaccinated, buying airplane tickets, etc." At the time, Alan was young, and he was leaving the US for India for 6 months: "It was scary, but I was very proud of myself for going through with it. It turned out to be an amazing experience."





Student Authors of the *Stay With Me* anthology were honored at a book release program celebration in October 2024

Learners, are you ready to become published authors?

Each year, the Sonoma County Library Adult Literacy Program publishes a Student Writing Collection featuring stories submitted by learners. We encourage all our learners to write on ONE of the following topics for our 2025 collection:

Topic 1: Who has been kindest to you in your life? Reflect on that person and how they helped you/made you feel. Tell us their story.

Topic 2: When did you first fall in love? Share your love story!

Topic 3: What does your future hold? What are your hopes for what the future holds for you and others?

All writings should be under 300 words. Submissions DUE July 1st, 2025. We will accept short stories/essays (under 300 words), poems, etc. on this topic/theme. Submissions can be hard-copies, hand-written, typed, email attachments, etc.

For Tutors & Learners: We hope all learners will submit their writing for this collection. This voluntary project provides an opportunity to focus on the literacy skill of writing to build vocabulary and writing structure skills through practice with supportive tutor instruction and feedback during your regular sessions. Learners and their tutors have until **July 1st** to work on this writing, go over instructional edits, and improve writing skills and knowledge.

Final writings should reflect the abilities of the learner and help them communicate clearly in their own voice. Tutors should help learners with vocabulary and punctuation when needed and definitely help them make their ideas clear to others. The goal is to preserve the learner's unique voice and improve writing skills so their stories can be widely shared and enjoyed.

Send in/Submit the following by: JULY 1st, 2025

1. The under 300-word writing submission
2. A completed/signed release form (see insert in this newsletter for release)

Send both together via email: literacy@sonomalibrary.org

Or mail to: Sonoma County Library Adult Literacy
Central Santa Rosa Library
211 E St.
Santa Rosa, CA 95404



Tell Me A Story: Adult Learner Writing Collection April 1, 2025 – July 1, 2025

RELEASE FORM: Writing, Photo & Filming Release

I hereby give the Sonoma County Library permission for the use of: photographs, video taken of me and/or my family, or writings created by me, to be used by the Library for educational or promotional purposes, without compensation to me. I agree that I will receive no compensation for this release of my:

- Writing(s)
- Photograph/Video/Film images of me/my family

PRINT FULL **NAME:** _____

Mailing
Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email : _____

Your **Signature:** _____ Date: _____

BELOW - WRITE EXACTLY how you want your name to appear in Print in the Book:

_____ (Author)

_____ (Tutor/Instructor)

Please attach this COMPLETED release form to your Student Writing
Submission(s) (300 words or less) and

Turn **BOTH documents in TOGETHER** via email: literacy@sonomalibrary.org
or

Mail to: Sonoma County Library Adult Literacy
Central Santa Rosa Library
211 E Street, Santa Rosa, CA 95404

Student Writing

We love to publish learner writings in our Community Newsletter. If you want to send us something for publication, please email it to us at: literacy@sonomalibrary.org

What I like to do in my Free Time if I had Extra Time

By Elizabeth Salazar, Tutor Sheldon Reber

First, what I like to do if I had extra time, I would like to walk more often in Taylor mountain because I love nature. I like to see the beautiful flowers that grow in the mountain, the shapes of the tree. I also like to see the animals that walk there: like cows, squirrels, snakes, some birds flying and some other animals that walk among the plants and trees. I like to see people walking with different kinds of dogs, very beautiful. Also I would like to know more about plants -- the nutrients and the benefits for the body and how to use them.

I also like to swim, but I only know how to float on my back just a little bit. But if I have more time and extra money, I will pay for swimming lessons to learn more and lose the fear when my feet no longer touch the ground and I am already in the deep.



Lupines are some of the flowers you might see on Taylor Mountain or in other Sonoma County Regional Parks

Another important thing I would like to do is to have more time with my two sisters who live in Richmond and my brother too. We don't live far from each other but the reason we don't see each other very often is because of work. My brother works from Monday to Saturday all day. And my sisters work three days a week and also have their families and things to do during the day. I do see my sisters more often because we go to church or because of our children who like to be together.

The only moments we share more time with all the family is on Mother's Day, Thanksgiving, and sometimes on birthdays or special occasions when my mother comes from Mexico or my sister comes from New Mexico or another nearby relative comes.

I would like to spend more time with my sisters and sometimes have a day just for us to go for a walk or for shopping together, going to eat, or just having a moment to share.

Celebrate Your Work Together

All entries generated from tutor reports -
THANK YOU!

- Two learners completed submissions for the annual Writer2Writer challenge.
- Learner passed her citizenship test! She said that the adult literacy ESL program was integral to her approach and that our work together made her comfortable and confident at the immigration office.
- Learner acquired new employment which will allow her to speak and listen to significantly more English during the work week, which was one of her goals.
- Learner is a pleasure to work with and is very astute. He has been making good progress and he exhibits a high motivation to learn. He is also taking English classes at SRJC, and this is helping him accelerate his learning process.

Get to Know the Conversation Class Facilitator



Lien Cibulka

Interviewed by Leti Soria

Lien's passion for teaching English is evident in her commitment to facilitating conversation classes and tutoring two adult learners. She was eager to jump into these volunteering roles when she joined the Adult Literacy Program one year ago because she "can relate to the challenges of learning a new language and culture."

When asked about who has inspired her the most, Lien says it's her parents. "[They] lost everything in the Vietnam war, immigrated to a new country and raised 9 children to become caring citizens." She shares: "Growing up I helped translate for my family and our community so I decided to get my TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) certification to continue helping other immigrants adapt to their new lives."

She focuses on the practical ways learning English benefits her tutees: "They can see how language really impacts their lives, from applying for financial aid to getting a driver's license to being able to talk to their supervisors. So we work on those skills in addition to the English workbooks to provide them support for their everyday situations." She favors additional resources like YouTube videos, plus "websites like Google Maps are a great way for learners to show and talk about their neighborhood and the community they come from."

She also points out the value of conversation: "We are all learning simply by just talking and listening." Her dedication is bolstered by seeing the progress learners make. "I am rewarded each week from watching my students improve with every session. It also makes me reflect and be appreciative for all the opportunities I was given from learning English. I hope the program will continue to enrich the lives of all the tutors and learners through this partnership."

Now that it's Spring, you can find Lien "hiking and biking the beautiful trails in Sonoma County and [enjoying] the wildflowers bloom." Her idea of a perfect day involves "hiking on a beautiful trail and then a picnic lunch with a view, then later watching the sun set over the sea." For lunch, she might have Thai food and pick up a book by Barbara Kingsolver, one of her favorite authors.

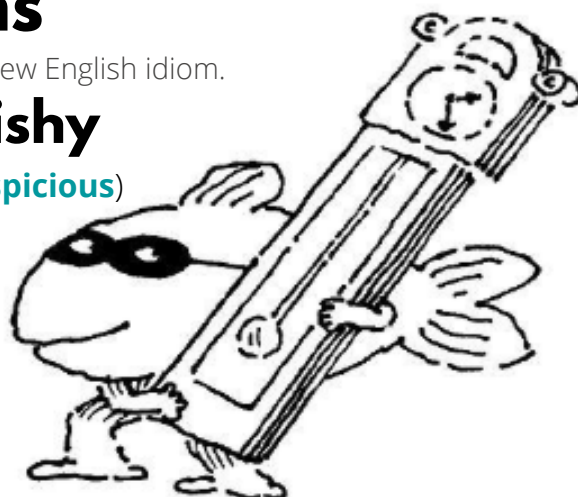
Idioms

Each newsletter, we will bring you a new English idiom.

That's Fishy

(strange and **suspicious**)

Hmm, that's **fishy**...I could hear voices inside the apartment until I knocked, then it was completely silent.



Teaching Idioms

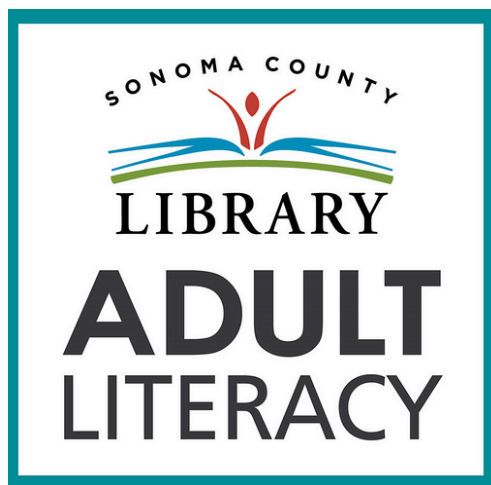
Take a look at how tutor, Lisa, is helping her learner learn idioms! See if it is something you'd like to try with your own learner:

"We look at common idioms from the Word Wall website (there are other sites that include both Spanish and English forms of idioms in both countries). Usually, my learner will come up with the equivalent or near-equivalent Spanish idiom for the common English ones that we discuss. It gives us a great opportunity to laugh at the common expressions in both of our languages."

<https://www.digitalpolyglot.com/blog/30-mexican-spanish-idioms-for-understanding-everyday-humor/>

English and Spanish Idioms

English Idiom	English Idiom Meaning	Spanish Idiom	Translated Spanish Idiom
When pigs fly	Very unlikely to ever happen	Eso pasará el 31 de Febrero	It will happen on February 31
Cat got your tongue?	Can't speak	Te comió la lengua el ratón?	Did the rat eat your tongue?
Airing dirty laundry	Sharing someone's secrets	Sacar los trapitos al sol	Taking laundry into the sun
A piece of cake	Very easy	Es pan comido	It's eating bread
To turn a blind eye or to turn a deaf ear	Pretend not to notice	Dar el avion	Giving you an airplane (flying over the conversation)
That finally clicked; I got it	Suddenly understanding or discovering something	Me cayo' el veinte	I realize 20 (from the 20 cent falling into the telephone in a phone booth)
Spare no expense	Pay any amount of money to achieve something	Tirar la casa por la ventana	Throw the house out of the window



Adult Literacy Office

Our office is located inside the
Central Santa Rosa Library, 2nd floor
211 E Street
Santa Rosa, CA 95404

Adult Literacy Hours

Our office is open Monday - Friday
10 AM - 3 PM
You can reach us at (707) 544-2622 or
literacy@sonomalibrary.org

How to Submit Your Work

Submissions to the Adult Literacy Community newsletter are welcome! We cannot guarantee publication, and materials cannot be returned. Please include your name, address, and phone number. Student writings and photos can be sent by email to: literacy@sonomalibrary.org

How to Get Involved

New Learners: Call 707-544-2622

New Tutors: Call to preregister for an upcoming new tutor orientation. 2025 trainings are posted:
sonomalibrary.org/visit/locations/adultliteracy/volunteer

Ongoing Classes Open to All:

Join our Conversation Classes for
practice speaking English at all levels.
Classes take place on Zoom on the
following days:

Wednesdays 11:00 AM - 12:30 PM

Thursdays 1:00 PM - 2:30 PM

Register for classes at
sonomalibrary.org/conversation

Upcoming Library Holidays 2025:
April 20 - Library Closed - Easter Holiday
May 26 - Library Closed - Memorial Day
June 19 - Library Closed - Juneteenth