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Person to Person in England

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Nottingham, England
12/12/19

Life in The United Kingdom

Eric lives just a few rooms down the corridor from me. He is 19 years old and in his first year at University of Nottingham studying biochemistry. A local to the Nottingham area, Eric grew up on a wheat farm a few miles out of the city and has a younger brother and sister. Eric has always loved rugby, has played since he was a kid, and is now playing for the University of Nottingham team. Growing up on a farm, Eric is very close to his family and normally spends a lot of time with them. Since I am from a very small town and live some distance out of town, love of family is a value that Eric and I share. I also found it to be very interesting comparing the similarities and differences between rugby and American football with him.

One large cultural difference between the U.S. and the U.K. is that public transportation is much more widely used in the U.K. I have found myself using buses as my primary mode of transportation here because they're cheap and will almost always be able to get me to where I need to go. Another cultural difference is in the academic system in the U.K. Whereas in the U.S. students will be graded on several essays, exams and homework assignments throughout the year, in the U.K. all of the grade is put on one or two assignments/exams that are due at the end of the semester. This leads to students being able to party for much of the semester and then do all their studying towards the end of the semester and over Christmas break. I also have concerns that this way of doing things could result in grades that are not representative of what the student learned in the class. If the student was having a bad day or the exam was

poorly written, the student could have learned a lot in the class and still not have gotten great marks.

The interview experience taught me both ways that I am lucky to have grown up and gone to school in the U.S. and ways that U.S. culture could be changed that I think would be for the better. For example, as a student of politics, climate change and possible ways to fight it are an area of interest to me. If the U.S. put effort into improving its public transportation systems, that could prevent an enormous amount of carbon emissions. It was also interesting to see how U.S. culture has often been inspired by British culture, which makes sense because the U.S. was founded by British colonists. These cultural inspirations were illustrated to me in my interview through sports: American football was inspired by rugby, and baseball was at least partially inspired by cricket. After the interview I was left both proud of my own culture and eager to see how it could be improved through lessons from other cultures.