

Where is your hometown?

My hometown's in Hanoi, which is the capital city of Vietnam. It's located in the north of the country, not really that far from the southern Chinese border.

Is there much to do in your hometown?

Oh yes, there's certainly lots to do there as it's a fairly big city. If you like going out in the evening there are a lot of good restaurants and bars. If you prefer cultural activities there are museums and art galleries. But if you like nature there are lots of other things outside of the city which are easy to reach.

What are the people like in your hometown?

They are mostly quite friendly, but as with most big cities everyone is often busy so it may seem as if they are not interested in speaking or having a chat. But if you live there you know that most people are quite happy to have a chat if they have time and will help you if needed.

Studies

What are you studying at the moment?

I'm studying history at university. It's a four year course, and I started it three years ago, so I have just one year left. I'm enjoying it a lot so it will be sad to finish.

What do you like most about your studies?

We learn about many things from the past such as politics and wars, but I like learning about how people lived in the past the most. It's amazing to see how our lives have changed so much from the past up until now. In some ways our lives have got much easier now, but in other ways the simplicity of life in the past made people much happier. Learning about all that is fascinating.

What do you hope to do in the future when you have finished?

I'm not sure at the moment, but I may go into teaching. This is why I'm doing the IELTS, as I intend to carry on and do a Masters in a specific area of history. I'll probably decide for sure what to do when I have completed that.

Work

What is your job?

I currently work as an office manager at a large marketing company. I've been in the job for about five years now. I'm usually assigned to work with a specific business in order to improve their sales through various marketing strategies.

Do you have to work with other people?

Oh yes, all the time. It's a big office and we all have to work as a team if we want to achieve results. I have colleagues I need to liaise with such as the graphic designers and I also have administration staff who work under me. And of course I also have to work alongside the companies that we provide marketing for. So yes, I definitely have to work with other people.

Do you think you will change jobs in the future?

Well, that's not something I'm thinking about at the moment as I really enjoy what I do and it's a really good company to work for. The pay is good and they have other good benefits such as flexi-time and end of year bonuses. But that said, change is always a good thing, so I can't see me being there forever. I'm sure I will change one day.

Leisure time

What do you like to do in your free time?

I do quite a lot of sport actually. I play football mostly - on Wednesday nights and Sunday afternoon with a local team. I also play tennis and squash when I can but I don't really get the time to do them as well every week. I work quite hard at the moment, so I don't get a lot of free time unfortunately.

Have your leisure activities changed since you were a child?

Not a great deal actually. I used to love playing football when I was young as well - I played a lot at school. Though of course I did all the other things kids loved to do such as going out on bike rides after school and things.

Do you prefer to spend your free time alone or with other people?

It depends on my mood really. I think most people need some time on their own. Sometimes my work is quite stressful and I spend a lot of time there with others, so it's good to just get home and relax and read a book or something. But I get bored if I am alone too much so I like to go out and meet friends in the evening or play football.

Trains

Do you like to travel by train?

Yes, I quite like them. If you are on a train you can relax and look out the window, read, use your laptop - it's all quite comfortable. On the bus it's more difficult to do those things because there is less space and the movement can make you travel sick too. The only problem with trains in my country is that they are often delayed or late. That can ruin your journey.

Where do you usually go by train?

It's usually on long trips across the country if I want to visit friends or I have an appointment somewhere. For short journeys around where I live or to work it's much easier to drive or take the bus. As I said before, you can do things such as read on the train so it's good for long journeys.

When was the last time you travelled by train?

Er....I'm not quite sure, let me think. It was a while ago now. I think the last time was last year when I went up to see some friends I had not seen for a while in the north of the country. Yes, that was it. It was a journey of about 3 hours and I had to change trains once during the journey. The first train was a bit crowded and noisy as I think there were people on there going to a football match, but it was an ok trip most of the way..

Time

Are you good at managing your time?

Actually I'd say I'm not too good! I don't really have a system in place to organize things. I know some people have an electronic organizer or use some device to plan what they are doing but I don't do that. But I always make sure I am on time for appointments and things like that, and I meet deadlines and get things done.

How do you manage your time?

As I said, I don't have any specific system in place to manage my time. For example, if I am at work and I have a lot of cases, I just go through them each day and decide which I need to tackle first. At work we do have an online diary which I guess I use, so in that sense I do manage my time to an extent.

When is it most important for you to manage your time?

I think it is probably when you are at work. When out of work, it's not really going to affect things too much, or at least only yourself, if you are late to meet friends or for an appointment, or if you are getting things done in your house. But at work, it will cause problems if you don't manage your time effectively because you could miss deadlines or miss appointments. You could lose your job. So at work is when it is most important to manage your time.

Books

What kind of books do you like to read?

I mostly like to read biographies. I'm not sure why but it is interesting to read about people's real lives, especially when they have had interesting lives and have had to deal with many problems. I do read fiction as well, but I often find it difficult to get hold of a book that I really like. I also like reading about books to do with current affairs.

Do you read the same kind of books now that you read when you were a child?

Not really, no. Actually I didn't read that much when I was a child, but if I did it was mainly fiction books, such as fairy tales. Things like The Lion, The Witch, and the Wardrobe. Fantasy things.

When do you think is the best time to read?

I think any time is ok, but when I read I like to concentrate, so I can't read for a short time like on a bus ride like some people do. I like to put time aside to enjoy it. So if I have some free time at the weekend I might read for a few hours. And I nearly always read before I go to bed - this really helps me to sleep.

Art Galleries

Are there many art galleries where you live?

No, not that I know of. I live in a small town so I don't think there are any, though we do have a few museums and other cultural institutions. In our capital city there are quite a few art galleries, however.

Did you like to go to art galleries when you were a child?

I've never been that interested in art to be honest, so not really. We were taken to one as part of a trip when I was at school. It has a lot of paintings from famous artists from our country. It was quite interesting to see I guess but I've not been to any since.

Should people have to pay to go to art galleries?

I think it depends really. If possible they should be free because if people do have to pay they are less likely to go and see it. But on the other hand these things cost money so a small fee may be necessary if it can keep the art gallery going and keep it open. Ideally though the government should pay for this as I believe this kind of thing is paid for by our taxes.

Swimming

Can you swim?

Yes I can. I learnt at school when I was about 7 years old. Swimming lessons were compulsory at our school, like most schools I think.

Are there many places to swim near you?

Yes, there are a few public swimming pools. There is the main indoor one at a big sports complex in the center of town. There are also a couple of outdoor ones, but you can only use them in summer as it is too cold in winter. One is a big one in a park, the other is a much smaller one.

Do you think everyone should learn to swim?

Of course, I think it's very important. Firstly, you spend much of your life on holiday by water, for example, when you go to the beach on holiday, so you won't be able to enjoy

yourself with your friends if you can't swim. Also, for safety reasons it's very important. You often hear about sad accidents involving young children so it's very important.