A First Year High School Student

Levantine Arabic transcript:

أنت طبيب يا سلام فولي، كيف اليوم العادي عنك، يعني لما يتصحي الصبح، لما يتروحي من المدرسة، شو الطبيعته؟ يعني

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English translation:

Anas: Hello, Salam.

Salam: Hello.

Anas: Tell me, Salam, what do you read in school?

Salam: I’m in my first year of science studies in high school. There are many subjects, like biology, physics, chemistry, math. Some things are hard, and some things are easy -- I mean it depends on the subject. Physics, for example, is really hard. Very few girls do well in it. Math this semester is pretty easy, I’m doing okay there. Arabic is easy, and English is easy -- I mean they’re going okay.

Anas: Ok Salam, tell me: what’s a normal day like for you? When you get up in the morning, when you go home from school, what kinds of things do you do?

Salam: I get up in the morning and change and have breakfast sometimes (sometimes I don’t have breakfast; it depends on how I feel). I go and change into my school clothes. I go to school. Most days we have six classes. I come home at 1:30. Every day is different from the rest. But I go home at 1:30, have lunch, pray, start to study, and then sometimes I sleep early if I have to study the next day. Sometimes I sleep late and I get up the next day, go to school, study –

Anas: Okay, Salam, tell me: the homework that teachers give you and the tests they give you -- what are they like? How are the homework and the tests?

Salam: You know, the homework is usually solving problems or questions or getting outside work from the internet from other places or the library. Or we do homework and things like that. As for the tests they are -- they tell us about them a week ahead of time so we can prepare for them. They tests are usually -- the final tests take time and studying. But the everyday exams don’t take much time, and they are easy.

Anas: Okay Salam, what do you like most at school?

Salam: I like P.E. the most, and I like math too.

Anas: Why do you like math? What are the reasons that you like math?
Salam: Because you need to think for math. You have to use your brain and do things. P.E. is the same way; you have to use your body and muscles.

Anas: Okay Salam, what do you like the least about school?

Salam: Physics.

Anas: Why don’t you like physics?

Salam: Because the subject is confusing. It’s hard to understand. We try and try to understand it, but, no matter how hard we try, it is still hard for us. Physics is hard.

Anas: What did you learn the most about that you like a lot? Was there anything special to you that you learned in school?

Salam: Technology is a new subject. It’s really great. We study computers and basic computer functions. This is the first year that they’ve taught this, because it’s a new subject. We’ve had fun in it, because it’s something new to get to know. This is the first year we’ve been exposed to it.

Anas: What’s the hardest thing – the hardest new subject that you learned regardless of what class it’s in – any subject in a class that’s been hard for you?

Salam: In technology we have a data structures subject – it’s a hard subject, and you need to be a college student to understand it. They’ve given it to us because it’s a short topic, but it really needs more time, so it’s hard for us to understand it.

Anas: Okay, Salam, when you go home from school (you go to school and you come home), what do you do before you go to bed?

Salam: First of all I pray and I start – sometimes I watch TV. Then I read until I get tired of studying, and either I go hang out with my family -- I eat, I watch TV, and then I come back. If I have more studying to do, I finish it, and I go to bed.
**About CultureTalk:** CultureTalk is produced by the Five College Center for the Study of World Languages and housed on the LangMedia Website. The project provides students of language and culture with samples of people talking about their lives in the languages they use everyday. The participants in CultureTalk interviews and discussions are of many different ages and walks of life. They are free to express themselves as they wish. The ideas and opinions presented here are those of the participants. Inclusion in CultureTalk does not represent endorsement of these ideas or opinions by the Five College Center for the Study of World Languages, Five Colleges, Incorporated, or any of its member institutions: Amherst College, Hampshire College, Mount Holyoke College, Smith College and the University of Massachusetts at Amherst.

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