



Four Friends, ages 13 and 14

What have you been doing this week?

Asim: After school today, we came to the park. Two of us were playing baseball, and two of us walked around making videos.

Why are you making videos?

Alex: Because it's fun, something to kill time.* We put them on YouTube.

What are you doing in school this week?

Mahmoud: CST preparation. That's California Standardized Testing. Everyone in second through eleventh grade takes the test. It helps decide what classes you get to take next year. The preparation helps us get ready for the test.

What do you do on weekends?

Des: Go to the mall.*

Alex: Buy clothes.

Asim: I play video games. I go on the computer a little. Sometimes I hang with* my brother, or I hang out with my friends.

How do you get money to buy clothes?

Des: From Mom.

Asim: I have a job painting. I paint houses on weekends with my uncles, and when I get money, I use it to buy clothes.

Alex: I work at East Oakland Regional Park. We go and paint benches, pull up weeds, make the park cleaner. I get money, and then I buy clothes, or food (I'm a junk food* junkie*), or I might take these friends to the movies.

Is there anything you want to say to kids in other countries?

Des: Stay safe.

Alex: Have as much fun as possible. Learn to turf. (It's a kind of dance.)

Asim: Hmm. Don't go to the bad stuff, like drugs or alcohol—or war.

Mahmoud: Admire the little things.

A Few Words

Kill time: If you kill time, you do things that aren't really boring but aren't really useful either.

Mall: A large shopping area with many shops.

Hang, hang with, hang out with: These are very informal words. They mean "talk to and enjoy being with friends without doing anything special or exciting."

Junk food: This is food (often for snacks) that tastes good but isn't very nutritious.

Junkie: A slang word for a person who is addicted to something or who can't stop using something.

Discussion Questions

1. Do you enjoy junk food? What do you do to stay healthy? Do you have any habits that you think aren't really healthy?
2. Mahmoud says, "Admire the little things." What are some of the little things in life that make you happy? Why are they special to you?