# UNIVERSIDAD DE CUENCA



## FACULTAD DE FILOSOFÍA, LETRAS Y CIENCIAS DE LA EDUCACIÓN

## CARRERA DE LENGUA Y LITERATURA INGLESA

## "APPLICATION AND EVALUATION OF U.S. CULTURE READING ACTIVITIES TO ENHANCE ENGLISH LEARNING IN NINTH GRADERS AT TÉCNICO SALESIANO HIGH SCHOOL"

Trabajo de investigación previo a la obtención del Título de Licenciada en Ciencias de la Educación en la Especialización de Lengua y Literatura Inglesa

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# RESUMEN

El tema de esta investigación es "Aplicación y Evaluación de Actividades basadas en la Cultura de los Estados Unidos para mejorar el aprendizaje del inglés en los estudiantes de Octavo Año de Educación General Básica del Colegio Técnico Salesiano". Este trabajo involucra la creación y desarrollo de actividades basadas en la Cultura de los Estados Unidos para mejorar la destreza de la lectura en una lengua extranjera.

El enfoque metodológico de esta investigación consiste en tres métodos: bibliográfico, cualitativo y cuantitativo. Estos dos últimos métodos ayudaron a describir y analizar los datos obtenidos en la prueba de diagnóstico (pre-test) y la prueba final (post-test) aplicadas a los grupos de control y tratamiento antes y después de la intervención en el bloque curricular 2.

Los resultados de la investigación evidencian el alcance de estas actividades contextualizadas a la cultura americana para promover la destreza de la lectura en un grupo particular de estudiantes.


**Palabras claves:** Cultura Americana - Adquisición del Lenguaje – Lectura – Idioma Extranjero

# ABSTRACT

The topic of this research is "APPLICATION AND EVALUATION OF U.S. CULTURE READING ACTIVITIES TO ENHANCE ENGLISH LEARNING IN NINTH GRADERS AT TÉCNICO SALESIANO HIGH SCHOOL". This work was designed in order to create reading activities based on U.S culture to enhance the reading skills in ninth graders at Técnico Salesiano High School.

The methodology approach applied in this research involves the following: bibliographic, qualitative, and quantitative methods. The bibliographic method was used to create the Literature Review section, which contains relevant information that supports this research from academic articles, books, journals, and websites.

On the other hand, the qualitative and quantitative methods helped to describe and analyze the data obtained from the pre-test and post-test applied to the control and the treatment groups. It is important to mention that the pre-test was applied according to the high school curricula system; at the beginning of block N° 2 students were taught by the researches using lesson plans and readings. At the end of block N° 2 a post-test was applied. All these reading activities used in the development of the project were related to U.S culture. In addition, a booklet containing a series of activities was designed before starting the tests and the lesson plans.

To conclude, the use of different readings and activities based on American Culture were very useful to design the lesson plans, the warm-up

activities, and the booklet itself. Furthermore, the students felt motivated and interested in learning, reading, and talking about a different culture.

**Key words:**

American Culture - Reading Skill - Language Acquisition - Foreign Language

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## DEDICATION

This monograph research is dedicated to my mother, a strong and gentle soul who taught me to trust and believe in myself and who taught me that even the largest task can be accomplished if it is done one step at a time. I am grateful for all her support and wise advice. I need to thank especially to my research partner Tamara for all her kindness and patience every single day. Thanks for being the best.

*-Natasha*

**DEDICATION**

This monographic research is dedicated to the most amazing mother in the world, Sandra. I know that without you nothing of this could have been possible. I really appreciate your day-to-day effort I have no words to say *Thank you Mom!* To my father, Mario, for all his advice, confidence, and patience. To my lovely husband Edy, who supports me in every step to reach each goal of my life. To my sister and all my beautiful family, who always care about me and give me enthusiasm and encouragement. Finally, to my dogs, my four feet friends, for their unconditional love.

*-Tamara*

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We want to express our sincere involvement in this project since the beginning of this major. We always had in mind the idea of conducting a study involving U.S Culture, so the decision to follow this road together was the best choice that we could ever take in academic terms.

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Besides, we want to thank "Técnico Salesiano" High School, its Director, teachers and students for giving us the opportunity to work with them and to collaborate in this process, especially ninth graders (class A) thank you guys for these amazing days shared with you.

## INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, unfortunately, some people think that culture should not be part of language teaching, because the traditional methodology has influenced such process. For example, ninth graders at Técnico Salesiano High School focus learning on the structure of the language but not the culture itself. Culture and language are interrelated and language is used as the main medium through which culture is expressed (Cakir 3). Therefore, including cultural aspects of the English-speaking countries in the EFL classroom will help students better understand the language, its background and how it is used.

In that way, through reading the students will feel motivated to learn about the language because their curiosity will increase due to the variety of readings based on U.S. culture. Regarding a traditional perspective of education, students emphasize the learning process in areas such as phonology, morphology and syntax, which are indeed necessary, but which should include Culture as a fundamental aspect in the learning process.

When people learn a language, they are not acquiring the language in a semantic way. They learn about the people who speak it, how they live and all the things related to cultural aspects. The language is not just semantics but culture, and it involves customs, religion, food, art, music, etc.

# THE PROBLEM

## 1.1    TOPIC

"APPLICATION AND EVALUATION OF U.S. CULTURE READING ACTIVITIES TO ENHANCE ENGLISH LEARNING IN NINTH GRADERS AT TÉCNICO SALESIANO HIGH SCHOOL"

## 1.2    DESCRIPTION OF THE PROBLEM

According to our experience as college students, we have realized that culture has not been included to promote learning in the EFL classroom in schools and high schools.

Consequently, when students learn English as a foreign language, they isolatedly just learn how to speak, read, and write in English. Nevertheless, teachers do not emphasize on the teaching of culture which will allow students to learn a language in context.  Furthermore, studying culture plays a useful role in general education and it is a way to improve our knowledge of the English Language.

## 1.3    JUSTIFICATION

The problem is basically that learning English as a foreign language is a process in which the four skills are developed in an isolated way.

This research work aims at designing didactic material – reading activities – based on U.S culture to be used in EFL classes. Readings will help students to learn some basic aspects of the culture of that nation; in the same way, they will develop the four skills in context.

Through readings, students will feel motivated to learn about language because their curiosity will increase due to the variety of readings based on U.S culture. Bearing in mind that students have been part of a traditional education, culture is a fundamental aspect in the learning process. To summarize, culture is an essential aspect when people start learning a new language because it leads to real communication in context.

## 1.4 OBJECTIVES

### General Objective

- To evaluate the effectiveness of U.S. Culture Reading activities as a tool for enhancing English in Técnico Salesiano High School.

### Specific Objectives

- To analyze the curricular planning to determine the contents to be covered.

- To analyze, select and adapt relevant readings so that they are suitable for the level students have.

- To promote learning through the use of readings based on U.S. Culture for ninth graders at "Técnico Salesiano High school".

- To assess the effectiveness of the treatment.

# CHAPTER ONE

## 1.1    LITERATURE REVIEW

Learning a language is much more than grammatical rules, vocabulary, and pronunciation. In other words, it is the process of achieving the ability to communicate with people of other cultures; people must be able to understand the difficulties which exist beyond language itself. It is this knowledge which helps foreign language learners to understand native speakers and properly express themselves in certain situations.

In a study conducted by Biljana MišićIlić in 2004, it is suggested that language is influenced by its culture. A language is known through its culture so it means that the study of a language and its culture are interrelated. On the other hand, the students should be aware of the differences in the sound system between their mother tongue and the new language. There are some sounds that do exist in one language, but do not in other languages, so the language used is real and it is important to realize that every language is different in terms of communication among people.

However, the study of any language by itself seems senseless if the students do not learn anything about the people who speak the language or the country where it is spoken. In terms of motivation, the study of culture makes students more interested in learning. Moreover, it increases students' curiosity in order to know or understand lifestyle, costumes, traditions, etc; all these things are considered important. In a study conducted by Maria del Carmen Méndez García, it was shown that customs, traditions, and lifestyle

are things that are in the mind of EFL students when they are learning the target language, so they start to imagine how it would be to live in a different country with a different language and culture.

Conversely, it is suggested that vocabulary is fundamental to English language teaching because without sufficient vocabulary students cannot understand other ideas. Wilkings (1972) stated that "without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed" (111-112).

As Schmitt (2010) noted "learners carry around dictionaries and not grammar books" (4). Teaching vocabulary helps students understand and communicate with others in the target language.

However, in a study conducted by Thawn Khai, it is mentioned that culture is important for learning.  The purpose of communication is to distinguish one culture from other. In the language process, the students are not only learning the language by itself, but also the culture of this specific group. "Studying culture gives students a reason to study the language as well as rendering the study of L2 meaningfully" (Stainer).

Due to culture, students have more chances to understand the language and acquire it easily (Khai 3). The purpose of Thawn Khai's study is to provide the necessary information for the foreign language teachers and learners, so in this way, they can establish a good connection between the language and its culture.  Also, it is important to mention that language is part of culture and that culture is part of a language. These two terms are intrinsically related and they cannot be separated.

Language is a social phenomenon which is related to social and cultural values. It means that every culture has its own traditions, customs, and lifestyle that vary from one culture to another.

Language is not complete if it is not related to culture. It is important to understand the relationship between language and culture because it is the central part of the language learning process. In real context communication, the forms and structures of a language themselves cannot convey meaning. It is language in its cultural context that creates and provides meaning within a cultural background. Students and the culture in which meaning is created have an influence on the way in which possible meanings are understood. Learning to communicate in another language involves developing awareness of the ways in which culture and language interplay (Liddicoat et al. 1).

As a conclusion, language and culture are interrelated because the study of a language through this perspective has many benefits since EFL students know about the target language and everything being part of it. Furthermore, learning cultural aspects is important in communication since the language that students learn in the classroom is not authentic. People can misunderstand messages, so learning about culture is essential in order to interpret and transmit clear messages (e.g. idioms can cause confusion when understanding messages and conveying meaning). In addition, students need the ability to interpret different socio-cultural aspects that are representative of each culture such as traditions or many language expressions. However, foreign language teachers should teach English based on the background of a country and not only on learning the language itself.

## 1.2. THE ETYMOLOGY OF CULTURE

Through years culture has been viewed as one of the most important aspects when people learn a language. There are many reasons why culture is vital in the learning process. It is therefore essential that learners start by providing understanding concerning its etymology. Many years ago culture was regarded as the cultivation of the soul or mind. Over the years, since the eighteenth-century German thinkers gave the term two meanings. The first one, is seen as a unique identity of any country and the second one is the full expression of the authentic self.

Moreover, according to the website *Boundless,* culture has a central concept in anthropology: it encompasses "the range of human phenomena that cannot be attributed to genetic inheritance."

Nonetheless, the two meanings of culture still have importance. One of them, how humans are able to interpret and represent experiences through symbols; the second one, the most commonly known, which refers to the different ways of life in different parts of the world. It is also true that the term conveys a meaning of "material culture, i.e., all the intangible things in a society such language, customs or traditions. That is why language and culture both emerged as a means of using symbols to construct social identity, having coherence among any group of people.

At this point of the research, culture has different meanings and definitions. The word "culture" comes from the Latin *cultus*, which means *care*, and from the French *colere* which means *to till* as in "till the ground".

There are many terms that stem from the word culture. For example, there is the term *cul* which suggests some kind of a religious organization. Besides, according to Henry Pratt Fairchild, in his *Dictionary of Sociology and Related Sciences*:

> "[C]ulture is a collective name for all behavior patterns socially acquired and transmitted by means of symbols; hence a name for all the distinctive achievements of human groups, including not only such items as language, tool-making, industry, art, science, law, government, morals and religion, but also the material instruments or artifacts in which cultural achievements are embodied and by which intellectual cultural features are given practical effect, such as buildings, tools, machines, communication devices, art objects, etc."(80).

Culture is well known as beliefs, behaviors, objects, and other characteristics common to the members of a particular group or society. Culture is the means by which people and groups can define themselves. The term "cultural material" previously mentioned includes: language, customs, values, norms, mores, rules, tools, products, organizations, and institutions.

Culture involves being well-educated and the existence of levels of culture. The first level is high culture; it concerns the *upper class* and involves classical music, theater, fine arts, and other sophisticated activities. People call themselves the *upper class* due to their cultural capital; it means, high education, knowledge, and verbal and social skills, necessary to have the enough stuff to go ahead in society. This refers to how people interact in such a way as to share a common culture. Also, the term *society* can refer to people who share a common culture in a particular place. On the other hand, *low*

*or popular* refer to middle classes that involve sports, movies, television sitcoms, American music, and food.

Culture and society are related because the first consists of a set of aspects within a society, whereas a society consists of the people who share a common culture. In addition, according to Edward T. Hall "culture provides the overall framework wherein human learn to recognize their thoughts, emotions, and behaviors in relation to their environment."

## 1.3 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CULTURE AND SOCIETY

Culture has two types: one of them is "material culture", which is any physical object that people create and give meaning; for example, clothing, schools, technological devices, etc. The other one, is "non-material" culture, which are thoughts, beliefs, behaviors, etc; that people have learned as part of the culture that they live in. Moreover, it includes politics, economics, language, rules, customs, family, religion, values and knowledge.

Culture and society have an element. This element is language. In this case, it is important to know the concept of language – language is a set of symbols which people use to communicate any message they want to. Of course people who live in the same society share the same language, i.e., that language and culture cannot be separated. They both make one vital element in a society and without one of them there will be nothing.

Consequently readings involving cultural aspects make the students better understand the texts and their ideas for an appropriate communication. Different research works evidence cultural schemata to improve understanding, reading comprehension while promoting reading and learning.

In a study conducted in Iran, the English teachers of the Faculty of Foreign Languages conclude that a text is empty and without meaning when no cultural background is involved. Therefore, the readers bring the new knowledge to the reality making real associations according to what they read. There is a term called "cultural nativization of a text" that states it is better to change the text to specific cultural words that can be more familiar to the reader and facilitate reading comprehension.

Alpteking established the term "cultural nativization" and defined it as "sociological, semantic and pragmatic adaptation of the textual and contextual cues of the original story into the learner's own culture, while keeping its linguistic and rhetorical content essentially intact" (499).

Furthermore, there are some studies which use *this cultural background* or cultural *nativization* in readings. One of these studies was conducted by Alptekin at the University of Turkey with 98 advanced EFL students. There were two groups, a control group and a treatment group. The first group read the original text and the second group read the cultural adaptation reading.  One of the conclusions was that the cultural adaptation in the learning process is a substantial element that helps EFL learners for a better comprehension and also helps teachers to create new textbooks based on cultural background.

The results also show that readers prefer and put more emphasis on reading stories with English cultural background and of course this makes students improve their reading comprehension. The cultural nativization has an important function because it makes the reader get familiar with the text and understand what it says. As we know, language and culture are related, so

cultural nativization responds to this because students learn a new language and learn a new culture. Besides, according to Razi (2003), the cultural nativization has a major effect if it is supported by short English stories.

However, some students disagree to cultural nativization, for the reason that the stories that they read are not real. Setareh says, "I disagree with cultural nativization because by reading English stories I expected to adventure a new world not reminding me of my own culture".

Besides, Mina considers that the original text is better that the modified one and the new text is an artificial text (Tavakoli, Shirinbakhsh and Rezazadeh 1587).

Aside from this consideration, the English learning process had a positive effect when readings based on cultural aspects were involved. This has changed the way how students acquire a foreign language since it is not the language itself but all the aspects that make it meaningful and interesting.

## 1.4 THE IMPORTANCE OF READING IN THE LEARNING PROCESS

Reading is an essential part of language. It is a fundamental skill to develop a new language; however, many people assume that reading is boring and just a waste of time. The truth is that EFL students should develop reading skills when they are learning a new language as stated by educational researchers who have found that there is a strong relationship between reading and being successful. It means that a student who is a good reader has more probabilities to succeed.

Good readers can better understand sentences and the organizational structure of a piece of any essay. They can comprehend, follow arguments, identify the main ideas and supporting ideas as well as the purpose of a text, and they can also interpret the meaning of many of the unknown words through the context.

In terms of vocabulary length, reading is important because people who read more have a large amount of vocabulary and can acquire this through reading extensively. "Research findings in applied linguistics and reading research consistently show a strong correlation between reading proficiency and academic success at all ages, from the primary school right through to university level: students who read a lot and who understand what they read usually attain good grades" (Pretorius 2).

Most students do not like reading, but they do not know that through reading, they can learn about the world and different cultures. Moreover, through reading students can develop their imagination, something that nowadays is being lost. Reading significantly develops the mind of a student while giving an effective tool to put away stress and boredom. Instead, students may consider that reading is a useful way to acquire and improve their vocabulary in speaking and writing.

It is commonly known that even in our language, reading is seen as an important tool because it can be educational and it can open up new worlds to enrich your life. However, while learning a foreign language, in this case English, reading has additional benefits that can help you to learn the language faster and to have a better comprehension.

Bearing in mind the ways how people learn a new language, reading will help develop language awareness and the correct use of sentences, which will gradually be acquired as our native language. The human mind tends to use sentences that have been already seen; learning a new language implies that we must learn in the way we acquired our native language, i. e., by imitation, trial and error and a lot of input (listening and reading). When reading a lot and paying attention to the new vocabulary, students will be able to start using new vocabulary and phrases in their daily speaking and writing without much effort. In addition, learners will start developing language awareness and feeling what sounds good and what sounds unpleasant, just as we do in our native language.

## 1.5 READING STRATEGIES

Every language has its own skills to develop, so in English, reading is an essential skill for learners and there are some reasons why reading can help to learn a new language. For example, the permanent repetition of words and phrases in reading helps to learn and remember new vocabulary, and of course to learn grammar structures. Reading can help to follow the rhythm and intonation of the English language and it will eventually come naturally and the learner will be able to identify when a sentence is not correct.

Many L2 learning theories consider that using reading strategies or techniques would improve students' reading skills. Reading Strategies are mental operations, which activate students' understanding. These reading strategies include guessing the meaning through context, recognizing cognates,

word families, skimming, scanning, predicting, activating previous knowledge, making inferences, identifying the main idea and the supporting ideas.

As teachers, we must include pre-reading activities to motivate students to develop their reading strategies. Some of these strategies are related to brainstorming, imagining the text just by the title or illustrations. On the other hand, post-reading strategies are related to activities such as summarizing the reading in their own words or comprehension questions to get the gist of the text.

There are some ways to prepare students for the reading process; for example, asking them to answer a series of questions or identify words related to the reading material. These reading activities are divided in three:

### 1.5.1 Pre – Reading Activities

In this stage students should answer some questions by guessing or predicting something about the passage.

### 1.5.2 While - Reading Activities

Here it is necessary that students extract specific information to understand the main idea of the passage and guess what the text is about. Also, they do not have to pay attention to the parts that they do not understand.

### 1.5.3 Post – Reading Activities

At this step, the students have to summarize the content of the passage and continue to the follow-up activity to find the most important sentence in each paragraph, use their imagination to write a different ending and express their attitude or opinion about the story.

## 1.6 TYPES OF READING

According to Brown (1989) there is a classification concerning several types of reading.

- Oral
- Silent

I. Intensive

a. Linguistic

b. Content

II. Extensive

a. Skimming

b. Scanning

c. Global

### 1.6.1 Oral

It refers to speaking aloud and it has sense when it is considered as a communication in which someone wants to give a message to a specific receptor.

### 1.6.2 Silent

It improves the students' understanding because it helps to concentrate on what they are reading. When students read silently, they can form mental pictures about of the topic. Also, they do not need to read one word at a time or understand each word. Nowadays, it is important to encourage the silent reading in students, in that way, they are learning to develop the strategies they need for reading fast, and with a better comprehension.

Silent reading helps to develop the skills of reading for a purpose, focusing on understanding the content, without paying attention to pronunciation. It teaches the students how to guess the meaning of unfamiliar words from the context.

Within the silent reading, we can find intensive and extensive reading. Intensive reading is used to teach or practice specific reading strategies or skills. The text is treated as an end in itself. Extensive reading, on the other hand, involves reading large quantities of material directly and fluently. It is treated as a means to an end. It may include reading just for pleasure or reading technical, scientific or professional material. Extensive reading has a more important purpose, compared to intensive reading in broadening students' knowledge.

Intensive reading is sometimes called "Narrow Reading" because it covers a narrow area comparable to extensive reading. It may involve reading selections or several texts about the same topic by the same author. When this occurs, content and grammatical structures repeat themselves and students get many opportunities to understand the meanings of the text.

Extensive reading implies to read long texts or large quantities for general understanding, with the intension of enjoying the texts. The main objective of this kind of reading is to get an overall understanding of the material. Students are more concerned with the meaning of the text than the meaning of individual words or sentences.

Intensive reading, on the contrary, is usually a classroom-oriented activity in which students focus on the grammar or semantic forms. In this case, intensive reading is a process where the students usually read the material which is related to their level. Reading is a complex process and it demands the knowledge of correct pronunciation, word recognition, and comprehension skills.

## 1.7 COGNITIVE BENEFITS

Reading offers several benefits, since reading is a cognitive process that stimulates the exchange of information and knowledge. It is scientifically proven that reading exercises the mind, so brain muscles are used in reading. What people use in their body continuously develops. This is why reading is associated to academic success. The more you read, the more you obtain knowledge of the world. Learning about new things, new places, new people, and new culture expands knowledge and vocabulary, improving your writing and comprehension.

Reading develops self-esteem, making learners comfortable and confident while speaking.  Reading helps developing imagination, which provides the most creative representation of the words in your head. In addition, reading develops concentration in order to understand the story that is being read.

Reading improves memory you remember every detail of the plot in order to understand the material. This is a good exercise for your memory skills. Reading gives power because if you know how to read will let you know what

you are doing; but if you are a nonreader, you can be an easy prey for liars, story-maker, and master manipulators.

Concerning as benefits for people who read is to live new experiences through literature and science fiction, so the reader has the chance to feel emotions that may take a long time to discover and it helps to feel empathy. However, a lot of students do not like to read even if the text is interesting or funny because they think that readings are just a task for school.

# CHAPTER TWO

## 2.1 METHODOLOGY

For the purpose of this work, the authors first analyzed a series of bibliographic resources in order to determine the relevance of culture as an essential part of language and vice versa. In addition, the importance of reading in context was analyzed in order to support the aims of this research project. The Literature Review Section was organized considering information from academic articles, books, journals, and websites.

A pre-test was then applied to ninth graders at Técnico Salesiano High School in order to determine the level of English knowledge that the participants had at the beginning of this project. The pre-test was designed considering the content of the curricula block 2 *Your Life*. The test was a diagnostic one that helped to identify the level in both groups. After that, according to the lesson plans designed by the teachers of the institution at the beginning of the year, the researchers selected and adapted the readings, concerning the curricular planning to cover the whole *quimestre*.

Different readings about U.S. Culture were adapted to the level of language knowledge that students had, having in mind the contents of the unit to be taught. The authors considered those readings could be attractive for ninth graders, i.e., aspects like age and interests were involved. The readings were collected from books and internet sources.

The authors worked with two groups – a control group and a treatment group. It is important to mention that the control group as it is commonly done continued working with the material they already had. The treatment group, on
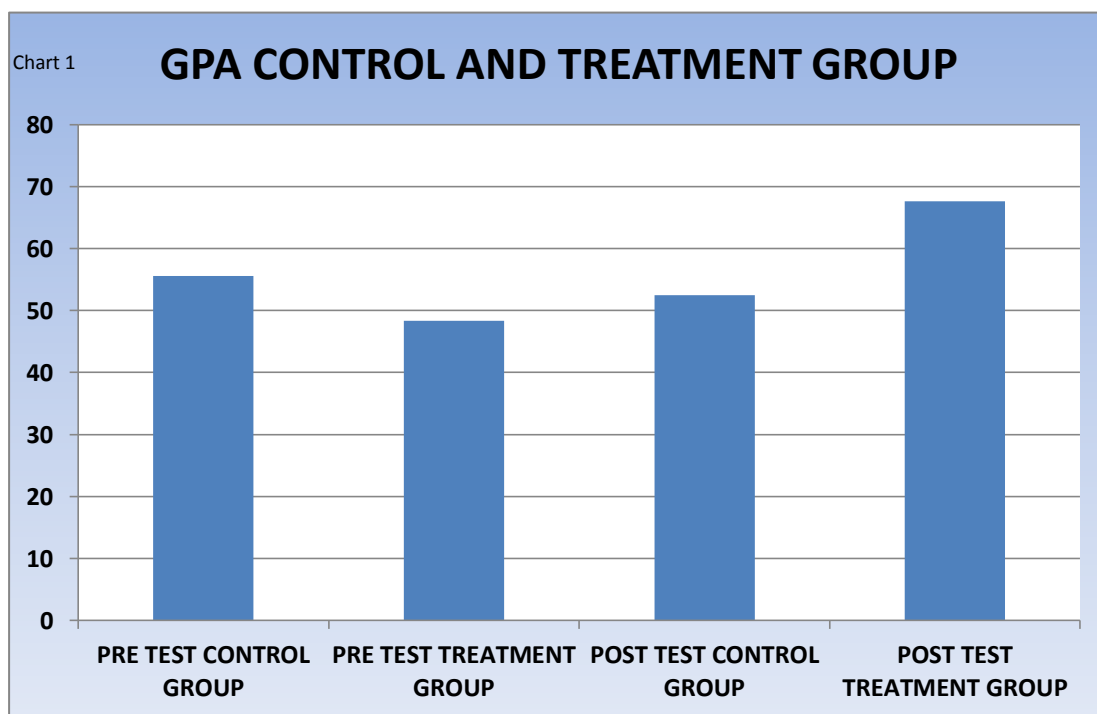
the other hand, was taught the curricula block 2 *Your Life*, having as reinforcement the readings and activities proposed in this work.

At the end of the *quimestre*, a post-test was be applied in order to compare the results. Consequently, the data was tabulated using charts to show a comparison and a contrast of the results between a treatment group and the control group. Finally, the analysis of the charts determined if the readings applied were effective.

# CHAPTER THREE

## 3.1 RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Chart 1

### GPA CONTROL AND TREATMENT GROUP

| | PRE TEST CONTROL GROUP | PRE TEST TREATMENT GROUP | POST TEST CONTROL GROUP | POST TEST TREATMENT GROUP |
|---|---|---|---|---|

The chart indicates the average between the control and the treatment group in the pre-test and the post-test. In the control group, the pre-test shows a higher score. It is important to mention that the researchers did not intervene; the students received classes in the traditional way with the same professor. According to the results, the control class did not have any radical change. However, the result of the post-test increased in percentage. Hence, the readings really made a change in the control classes that the students were used to have.

Besides, not only the readings called the attention of the students, but the media material (videos) related to each topic that was shown in each class and that the students enjoyed for learning English, and of course, learning about the culture as well. The videos and the readings were a great combination; the videos were first shown and then the readings were used to

review previous explanations. In the traditional class (control group), games, grammatical rules were used in the same manner; however, in the treatment group language was taught through its culture and with authentic readings. Likewise, the American culture has an influence in the English learning as a foreign language and it also places an important role in our culture because students tend to relate both cultures and compare one to another.

### 3.2 RESULTS OF THE CONTROL AND TREATMENT GROUPS PRE-TEST

**Question 1:** Circle the correct indefinite article a/an in the following words.
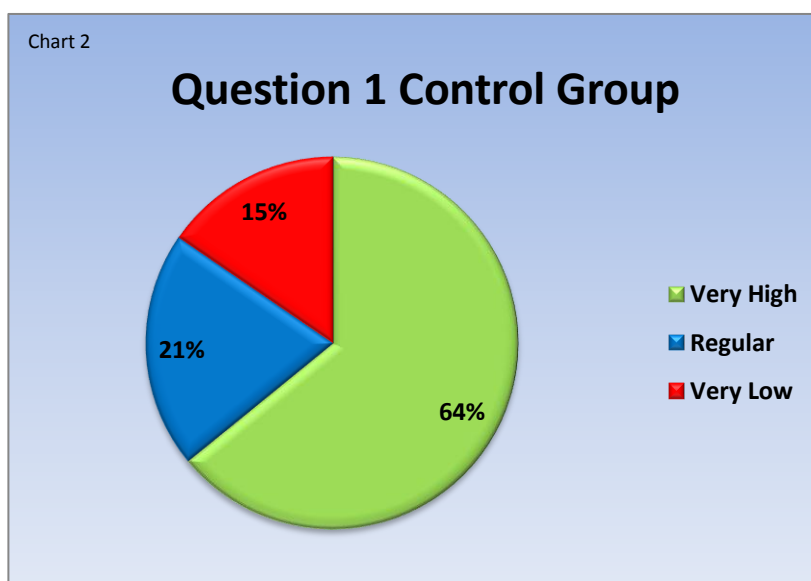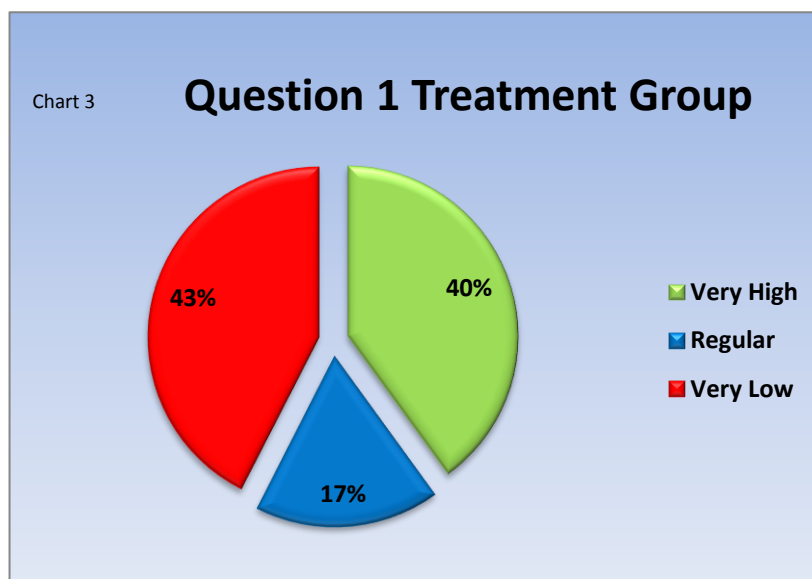
Chart 2

**Question 1 Control Group**

- Very High: 64%
- Regular: 21%
- Very Low: 15%

Chart 3 — **Question 1 Treatment Group**

The graph shows the students' performance with relation to the use of the indefinite article. It can be seen that in the control group there is higher percentage of students that have a very clear idea about the use of the indefinite article. On the other hand, in the treatment group there is less understanding about the rules of the indefinite article. In English, the two indefinite articles are *an* and *a*. You use one or the other, depending on the first sound of the word following the article. Students tend to confuse words such as *wine* because they think that the initial sound is (u) and for this reason they choose *an*. They are not aware that we use *a* when the next word sound starts with a consonant, or before words starting in *u* and *eu* when they sound like *you*. In the same way they are not aware that they must use *an* when the next word starts with a vowel *(a,e,i,o,u)* or with *a* mute *h*. In the treatment group, we can see that the amount of students that do not know how to use the article is higher.

The readings based on the famous landmarks were useful for the students to identify the correct indefinite article. Parts of the reading are the following: "The Hollywood Sign is a truly one of the top attractions in California with a great story behind it" or "A visit to the Lincoln Memorial is truly an amazing experience, especially at night when the memorial is beautifully lit up" make it easier to understand the appropriate use of the indefinite article in context i.e., with interesting information about places to visit in U.S.A, which are attractions for many people around the world. In this case, the famous landmarks help students to develop language structures without any established rules and the process becomes unconscious.

**Question 2:** Write the plural form of the following nouns

Chart 4

## Question 2 Control Group

0%

36%

64%

- Very High
- Regular
- Very Low

Chart 5 — **Question 2 Treatment Group**
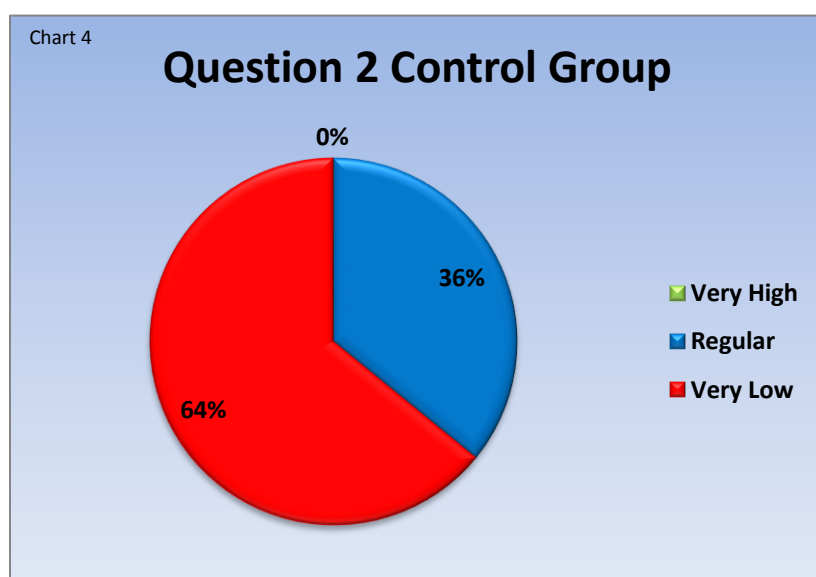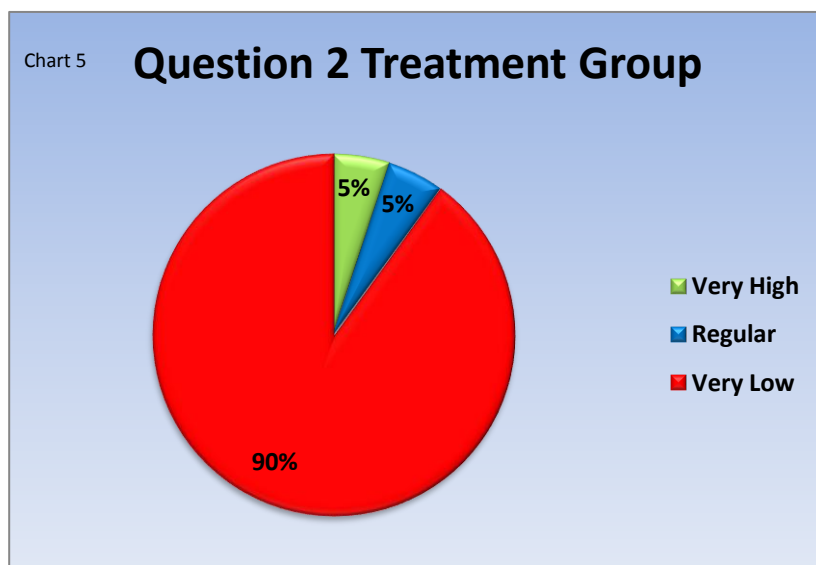
According to the graph we can say that both groups have a very low performance in question two that is about plural nouns. The students tend to generalize the rule of the plurals because most nouns make their plurals by simply adding *-s* to the end of the word (e.g. holiday / holidays, pumpkin / pumpkins). However, in the use of some nouns, they need to know the rules that the endings change if the noun ends with a consonant plus *-y*, the pluralization of a noun is made by changing *-y* to *–i and then adding -es*. (e.g. family / families, story / stories, party / parties). If the noun ends in *-ch, -s, -sh, -x, or -z*, the pluralization of the noun is made by adding *-es* (e.g witch / witches). There is another possibility that if the students are dealing with irregular plural nouns, they must consider a completely different way to form plurals; this is why they are called exceptions. (e.g man/ men, woman / women, child / children).
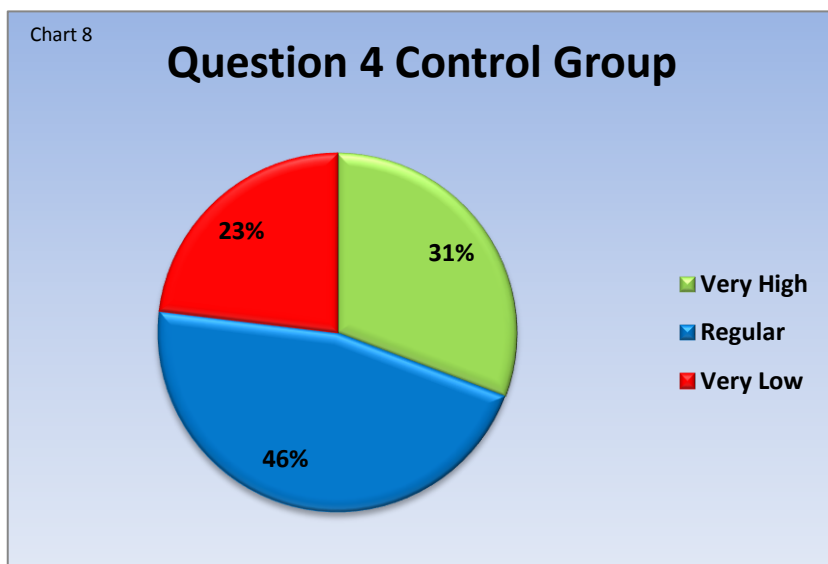
**Question 3:** Look at the pictures and complete the sentences using the words in the boxes.

Chart 6

## Question 3 Control Group



- 16%
- 33%
- 51%

Legend:
- Very High
- Regular
- Very Low

Chart 7

## Question 3 Treatment group



- 5%
- 33%
- 62%

Legend:
- Very High
- Regular
- Very Low
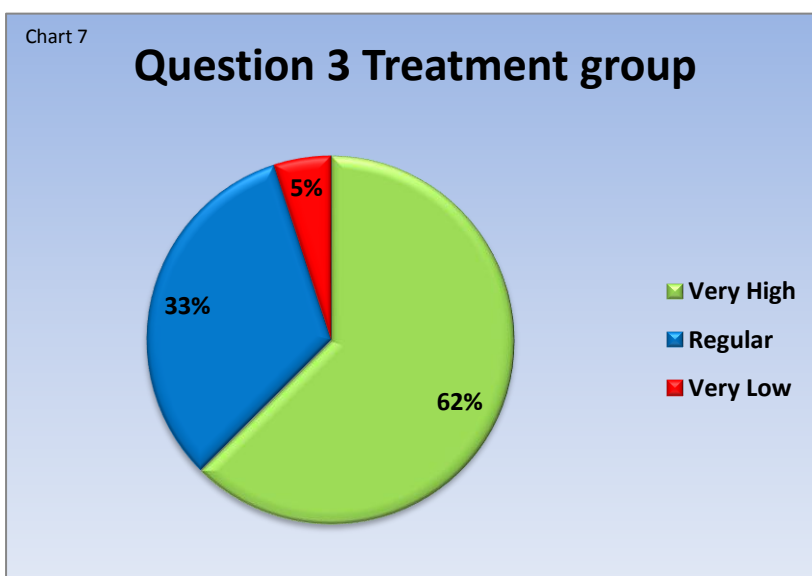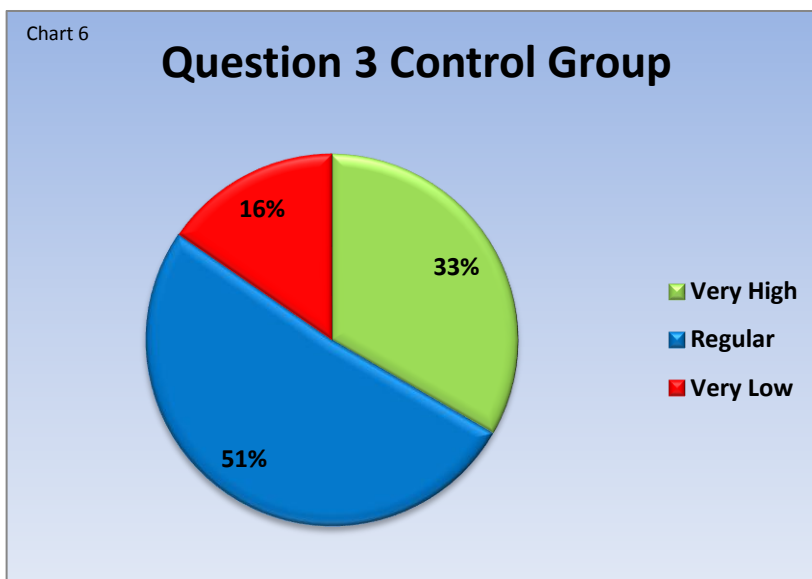
Question three is related to the use of the demonstrative adjectives. Here the performance of the students in both groups is not bad because they are close to reaching a full understanding of it, but sometimes they confuse the use of *this* and *that* (used for singular) and *these* and *those* in the plural. Generally speaking, we use *this* and *these* to refer to people or things, which are close to the speaker and *that* and *those* to refer to people or things that are more distant, either in time or physically. The reading activities that were

applied were about holidays; in the readings, they could easily identify the demonstrative adjectives.

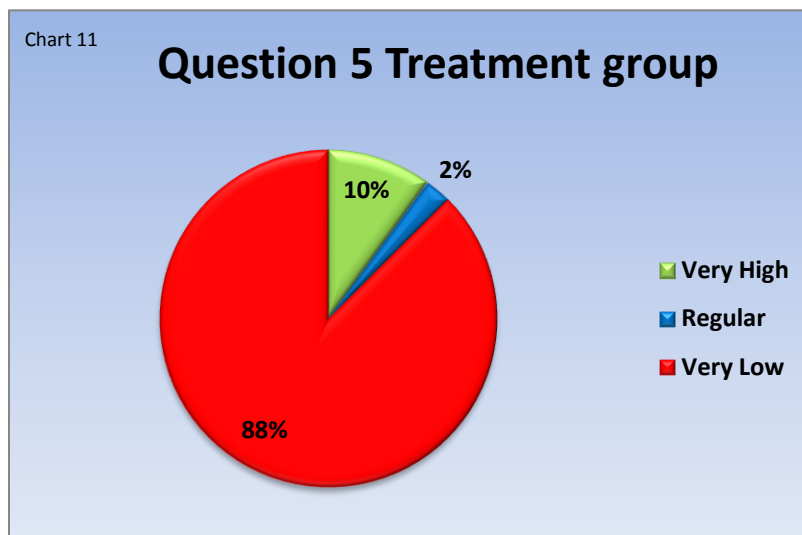**Question 4:** Look at the menu and complete the questions *using how much is… and how much are…*



Chart 8

**Question 4 Control Group**

- Very High — 31%
- Regular — 46%
- Very Low — 23%



Chart 9

**Question 4 Treatment Group**

- Very High — 25%
- Regular — 40%
- Very Low — 35%
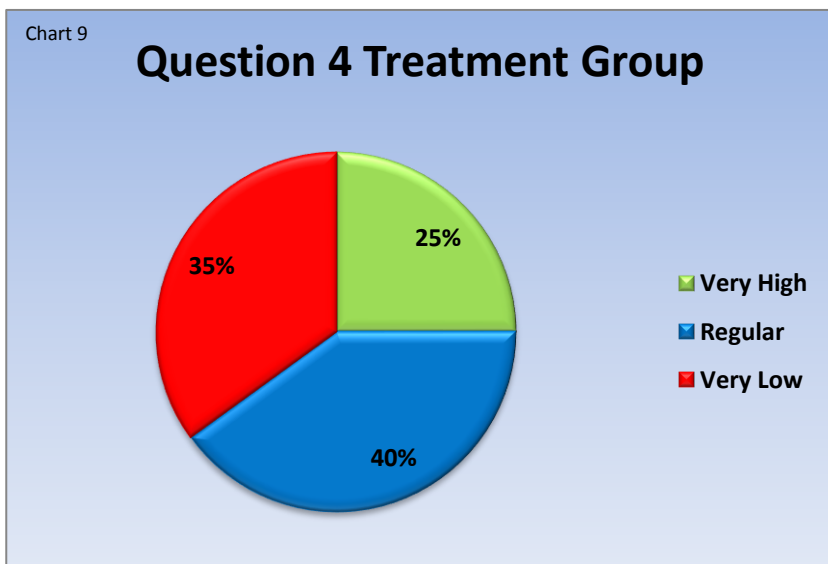
In the chart, it can be seen that in both groups the performance is low and the percentage shows that the majority has a regular understanding of the use of *how much… is* and *how much …are.* The participants often got confused because they did not realize when to use a singular or plural noun, considering if they were dealing with countable or uncountable nouns. In the pre-test, the

students were asked to complete questions using *how much… is* and *how much …are*. They have a menu in which countable and uncountable nouns were presented and they have to choose the correct alternative to complete the questions (e.g. How much are the chicken wings? But most of them wrote how much is; the same happened with nouns like hamburger and frech fries). In addition, the students had to answer those questions, mentioning their prices, by using *it is*… or *they are…*

In the reading activities, a menu where they could see the list of the food and the prices similar to the one that they had in the test, was used. The American food is well-known around the world, so it is a helpful for learn about prices.

**Question 5:** Fill in the blanks with the possessive singular or plural noun.



Chart 10
**Question 5 Control Group**

0%

5%

95%

- Very High
- Regular
- Very Low

Chart 11

**Question 5 Treatment group**

- Very High
- Regular
- Very Low

10%
2%
88%
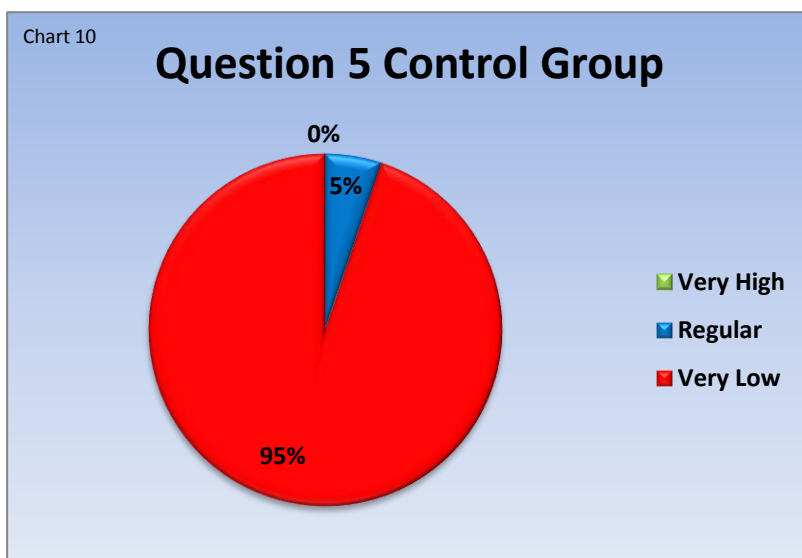
According to the graph, it can be stated that the students did not know about the appropriate use of possessive singular or plural nouns, because most of the answers were inappropriate. In the test, they were asked to fill in the blanks with the possessive singular or plural nouns, having in mind that possessive nouns are those that show ownership or possession. Normally these nouns would be singular or plural but in the possessive form, they are used as adjectives to modify another noun or pronoun. For example, in the test, students found sentences such as *Susan loves her Halloween costumes*. Therefore, students have to rewrite this sentence showing possession; e.g., *Susan's Halloween costume is pink and black*. Here *Susan's* is a possessive noun and it shows that the noun *costume* belongs to Susan.

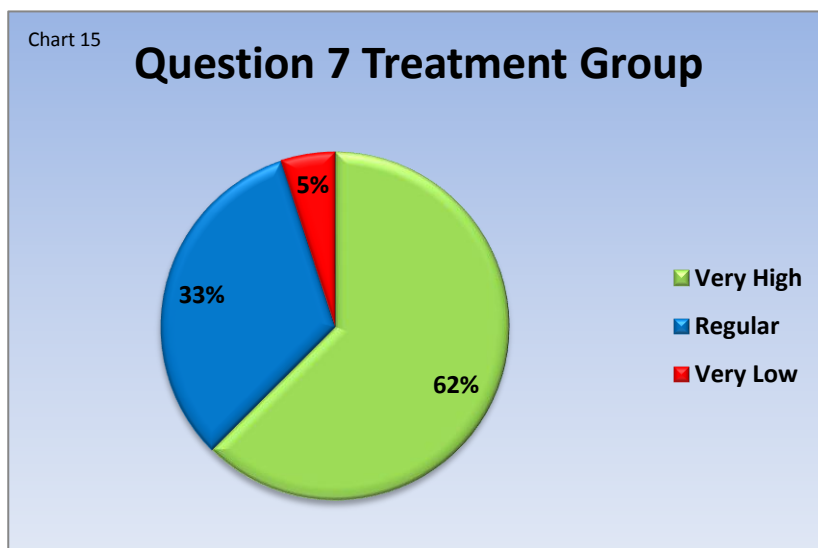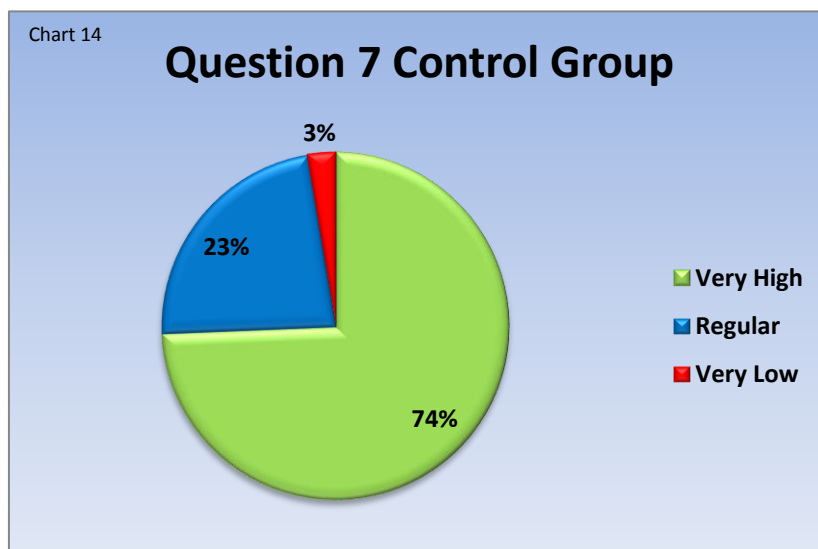**Question 6:** Fill in the blanks with the possessive adjective.

Chart 12

# Question 6 Control Group



15%

44%

41%

Very High

Regular

Very Low
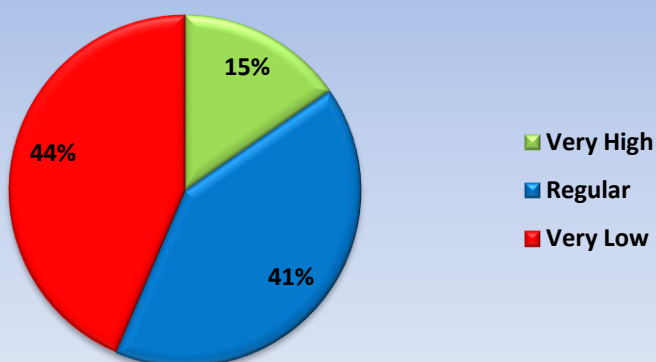
Chart 13

# Question 6 Treatment Group



15%

48%

37%

Very High

Regular

Very Low
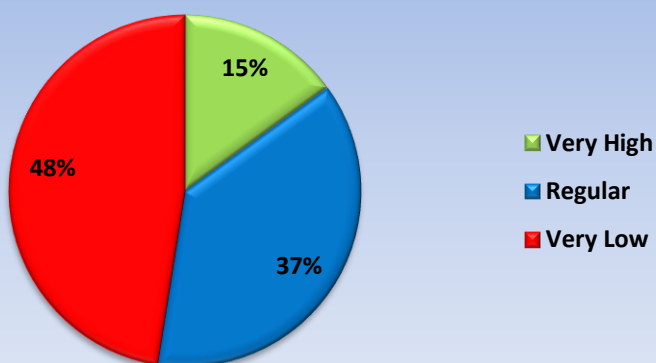
The graph shows that the percentages are similar in both groups, which means that only very few students understood this question and were able to fill in the blanks with the correct possessive adjective according to the sentence. In this question there are sentences about holidays like Christmas, Eastern, Halloween, etc. Also, the results show that students do not distinguish between *his* and *her*. For example, in a sentence about George Washington students used *her* instead of *his;* in other example, concerning American people the students wrote *your*, but the correct answer was *their*.

**Question 7:** Write the colors that you see in the picture.



Chart 14
**Question 7 Control Group**

3%
23%
74%
- Very High
- Regular
- Very Low



Chart 15
**Question 7 Treatment Group**

5%
33%
62%
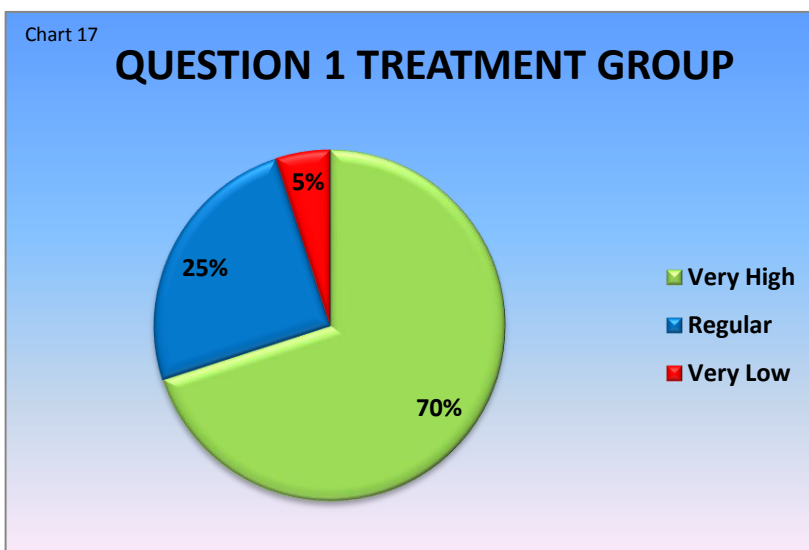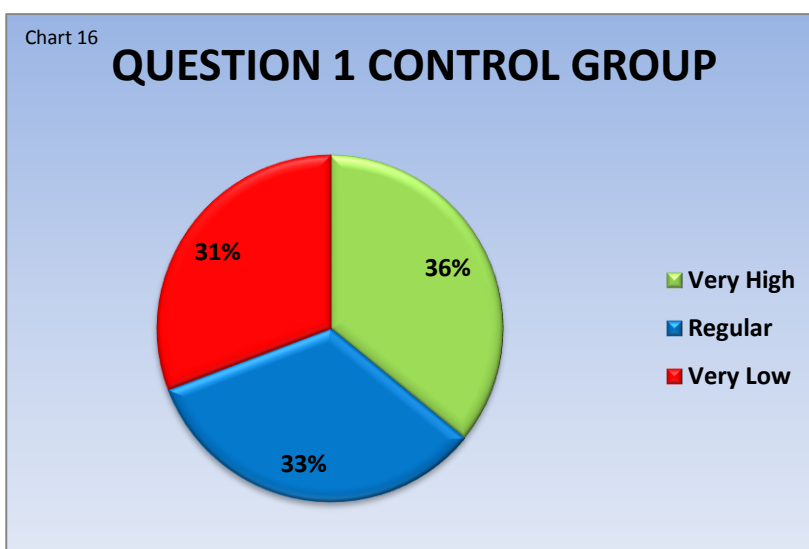- Very High
- Regular
- Very Low

In this question the graph shows that the majority in both groups got a high percentage. This question was about identifying in writing down the names of the colors shown in a picture, thus they had to write the corresponding color name. There were some students that confused the names of the colors in the spelling such as white, black, orange instead of writing the correct color names, students wrote words that sounded like this [wǐth], [bläk], [ôrˈĭnsh], [ôrˈĭnshə] That is the reason why there is a considerable percentage of students that perform inaccurately in this question. In this activity, colors were used in

context, considering that Halloween is a holiday celebrated every year and that due to the variety of customs that people dress a lot of colors emerge. The pronunciation and the spelling have to be reinforced in every day class and in this way the students started to appropriately pronounce and write the colors names.
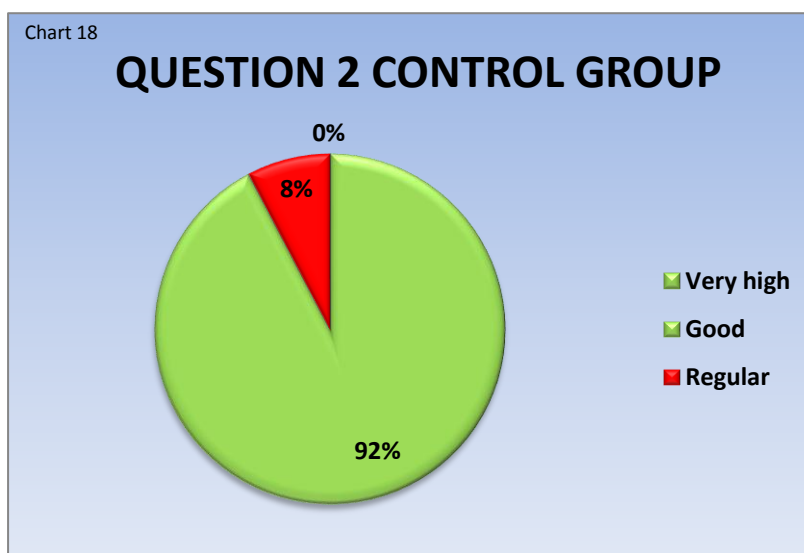
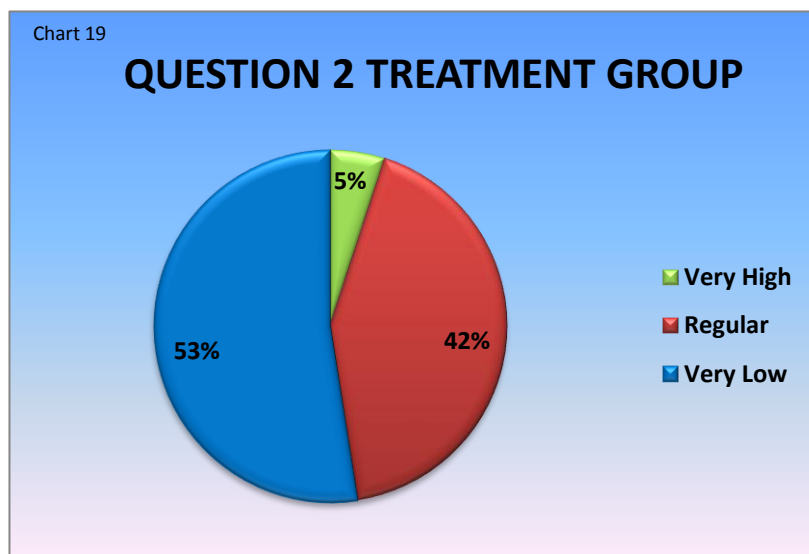### 3.3 CONTROL AND TREATMENT GROUPS POST- TEST RESULTS

**Question 1:** Circle the correct indefinite article *a/an*.

Chart 16

**QUESTION 1 CONTROL GROUP**

- Very High — 36%
- Regular — 33%
- Very Low — 31%

Chart 17

**QUESTION 1 TREATMENT GROUP**

- Very High — 70%
- Regular — 25%
- Very Low — 5%

Concerning question 1, the graph shows the students' performance with relation to the use of the indefinite article. It can be seen that in the treatment group there is a higher percentage (70%) of students that have a very clear idea about the use of indefinite articles. Additionally, in the control group there is less understanding about the rules of the indefinite article (as it is known, there are two indefinite articles *a* and *an* ). Their use of them depends on the first sound of the word that comes after the article. Students tend to confuse the sounds of the words. They are not aware that they have to use *a* when the following word sound starts with a consonant; and that they must use *an* when the next word starts with a vowel sound. The results evidence that the participants in the treatment group had a few mistakes in the use of the indefinite article, and that they clearly understood the rules in context, i.e., on cultural readings which make the learning process easier and fun.

**Question 2:** Write the plural form of the following nouns

Chart 18

### QUESTION 2 CONTROL GROUP



- Very high
- Good
- Regular

0%
8%
92%

Chart 19
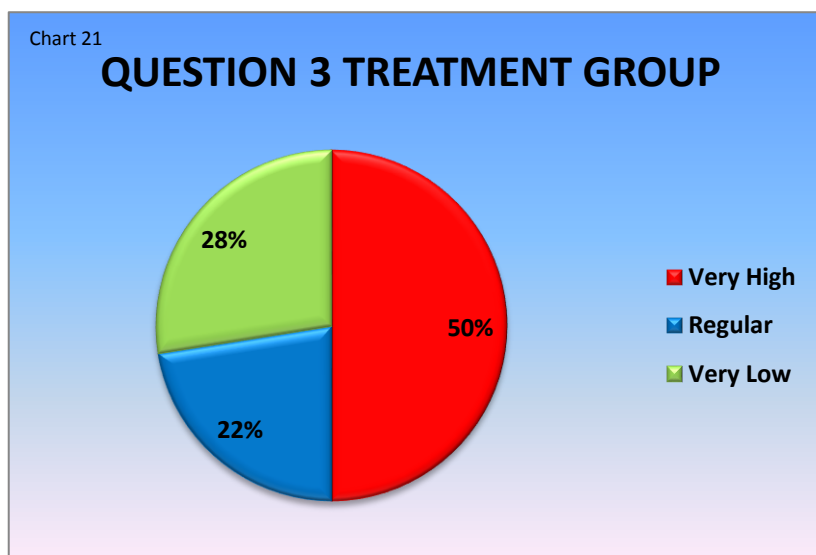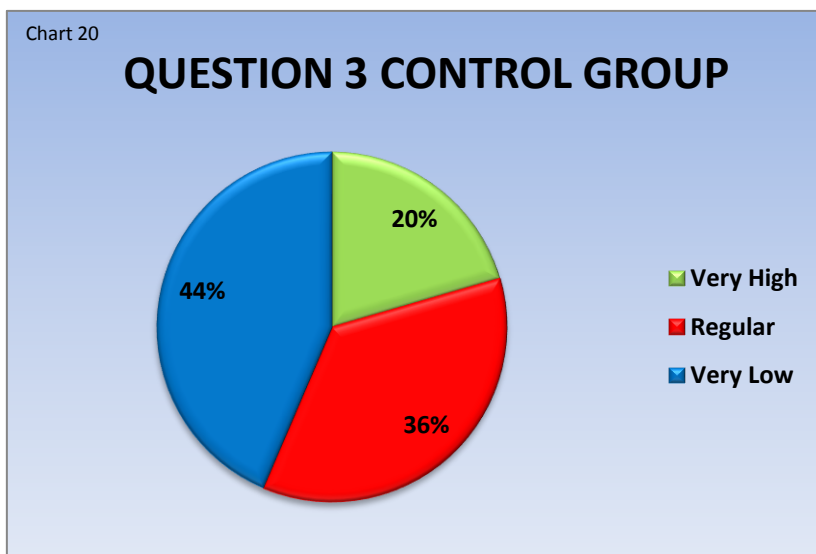
**QUESTION 2 TREATMENT GROUP**



The scores on question number 2 show a low percentage of *very high* grades in both the control and treatment group. Nevertheless, it can be suggested that the treatment possitevily influenced the participants even though this influence just represents 5%. Learning plurals are a hard topic for high school learners, but with the help of cultural nativization using English readings this topic becomes a little bit easier. The common mistake that the students have is to generalize the rule by adding *-s* to all the nouns. Two of the common mistakes done by the students were the follows *man – mans or witch – witchs*. In this question the researchers used a list of nouns based on American holidays. Some of these nouns were *pumpkin, witch, child, concert, holiday,* among others.

Furthermore, the treatment group better understood and applied these rules due to the variety of new input based on culture. This allowed the teacher to catch the students' attention, who were able to relate the ending of the words and recognize the nouns and their plurals.
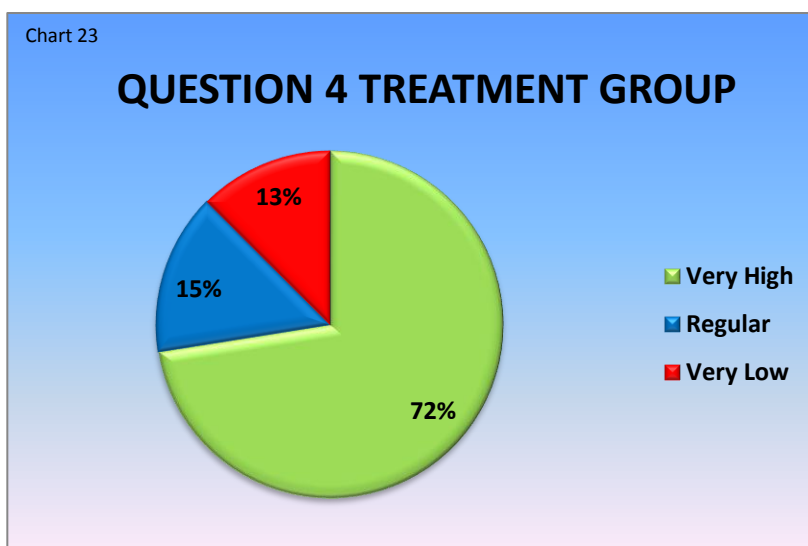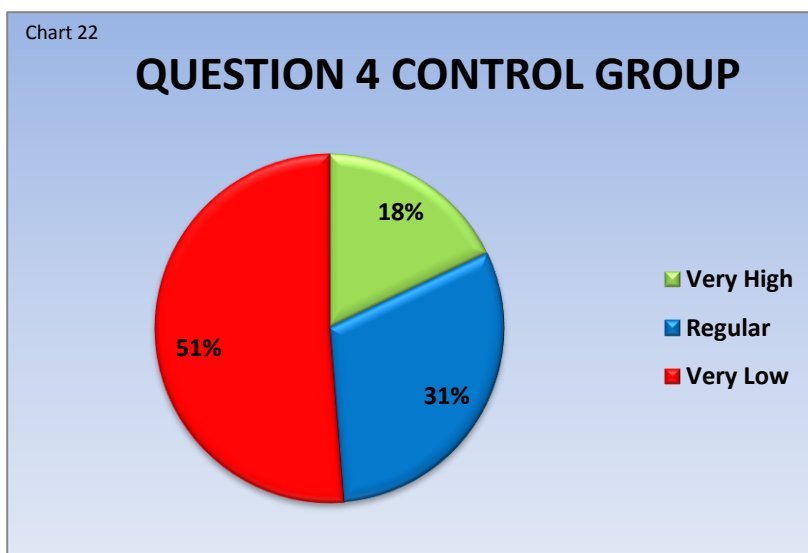
**Question 3:** Look at the pictures and complete the sentences using the words in the boxes.



Chart 20

**QUESTION 3 CONTROL GROUP**

- Very High
- Regular
- Very Low

20%
44%
36%



Chart 21

**QUESTION 3 TREATMENT GROUP**

- Very High
- Regular
- Very Low

28%
50%
22%

As it can be seen in the chart, the treatment group had a better performance in terms of the use of demonstrative adjectives. In the treatment group, the results are greater, since 50% of the class was able to realize when to appropriately use *this* and *that* for singular and *these* and *those* for the plural. On the other hand, the control group was not able to deal with the use of demonstrative adjectives, showing again that reading based on interesting topics related to culture make the learning clear and effortless. Concerning the
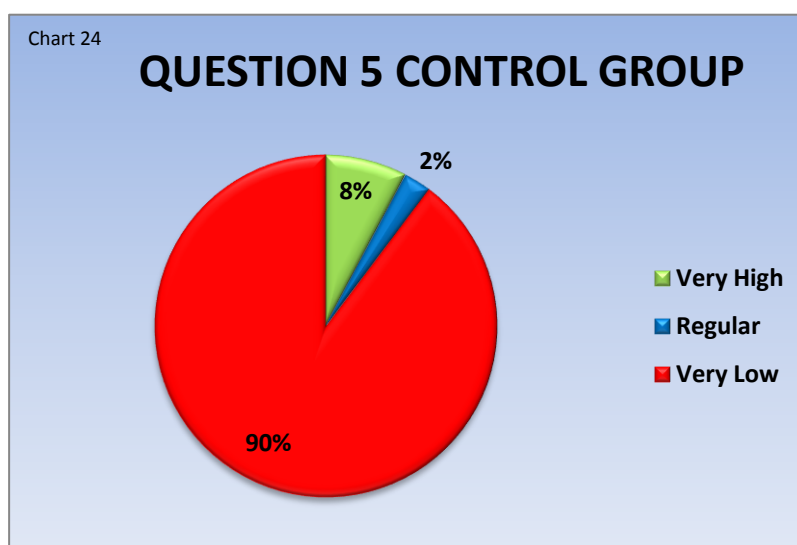
control group, the low score evidence that only a few students got a clear idea of the rule. In this question, it is essential to mention that students in the control group not only confused the right option (*this, that, those, these*) but also they were not able to choose the correct noun. This happened because students in the control group did not know the new vocabulary since; it was part of the treatment.
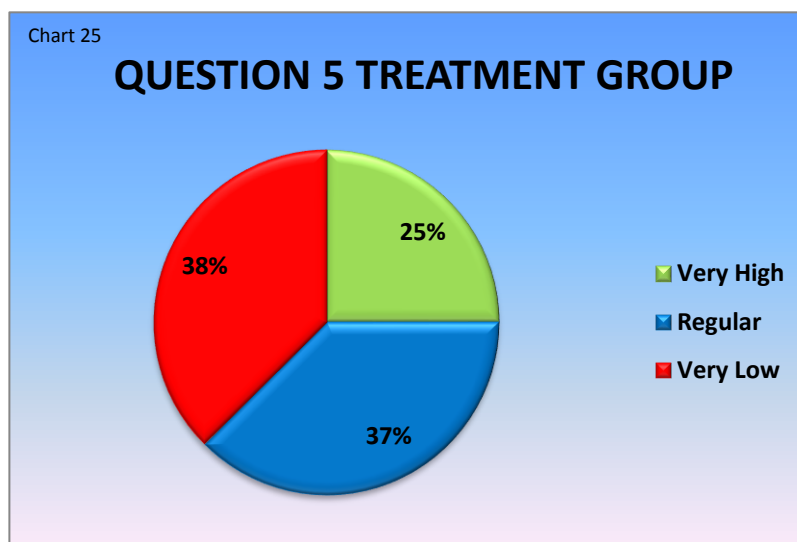
**Question 4:** Look at the menu and complete the questions using *how much is…?* and *how much are*…?



Chart 22

**QUESTION 4 CONTROL GROUP**

- Very High: 18%
- Regular: 31%
- Very Low: 51%



Chart 23

**QUESTION 4 TREATMENT GROUP**

- Very High: 72%
- Regular: 15%
- Very Low: 13%

This question is related to American food and prices, so the researchers used a traditional American menu to focus on the rule of *how much is?* and *how much are?*. Information about food and prices is used in every part of the world and of course in the U.S is not the exception. This topic really helped students to use the rule in context and therefore to understand that *how much is…* is used with singular nouns and *how much are…* with plural nouns. Considering the results in both the control group and the treatment group, it can be stated that in the control group only few students understood the difference between *how much is* and *how much are* , obviously with common mistakes. For example, in the question *How much is the French fries?,* the students did not differentiate the plural noun French fries. In the treatment group, indeed there were mistakes but they were fewer. In the test, students had a menu with food and prices and they had to choose *how much is* or *how much are* according to the noun. The final results of the post-test were very satisfactory in the treatment group.

**Question 5:** Fill in the blanks with the possessive singular or plural noun

Chart 24

**QUESTION 5 CONTROL GROUP**

- Very High
- Regular
- Very Low

8%
2%
90%

**Chart 25**

**QUESTION 5 TREATMENT GROUP**
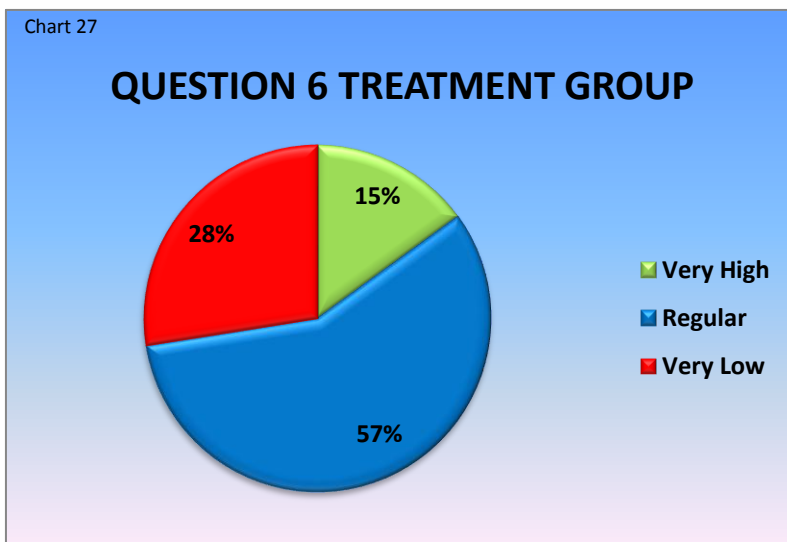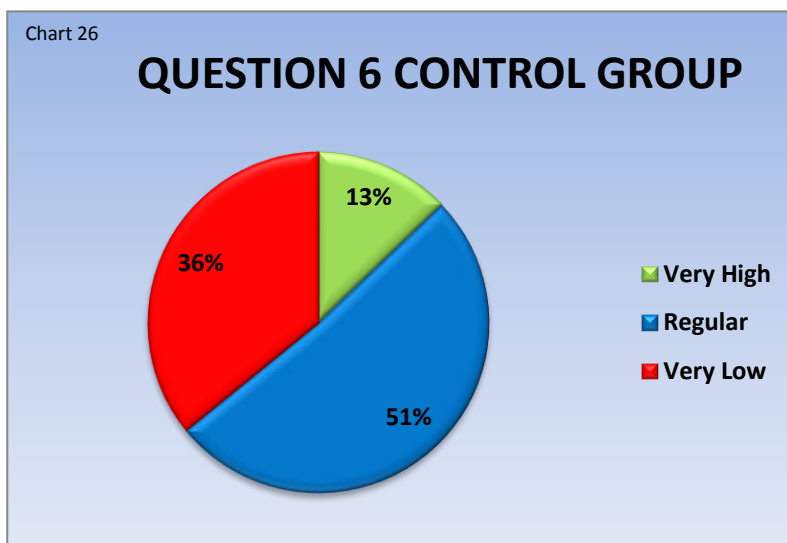


25% — Very High
37% — Regular
38% — Very Low

The chart indicates students' performance with relation to possessives and the use of the apostrophe. The control group had a lower percentage and the treatment group had a significant result. According to the rule, singular nouns show ownership by adding *'s* after the possessor; for example, *the boy's costume*. Also in the case of singular nouns ending in *-s* the ownership is shown by adding *'s* (e.g. Tomas's house).  In the plural the ownership is shown by adding *'s* after the plural; for example, *the children's house*. The possessive form shows that something belongs to someone and this can refer to things, people, animals, etc.

Twenty five (25%) percent of the students in the treatment group performed appropriately in the use of possessives with the apostrophe; however, this percentage reveals that students confused the possessive followed by apostrophe with the possessive adjectives that is used to show who owns or "possess" something. For this reason in the test most of the students wrote (my, your, his, her, its, our, their). The results confirm that the treatment classes were more effective than the control classes.
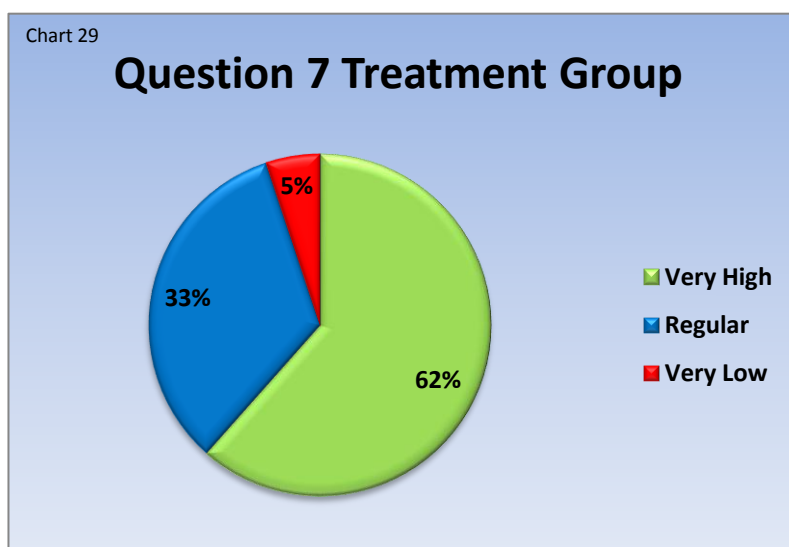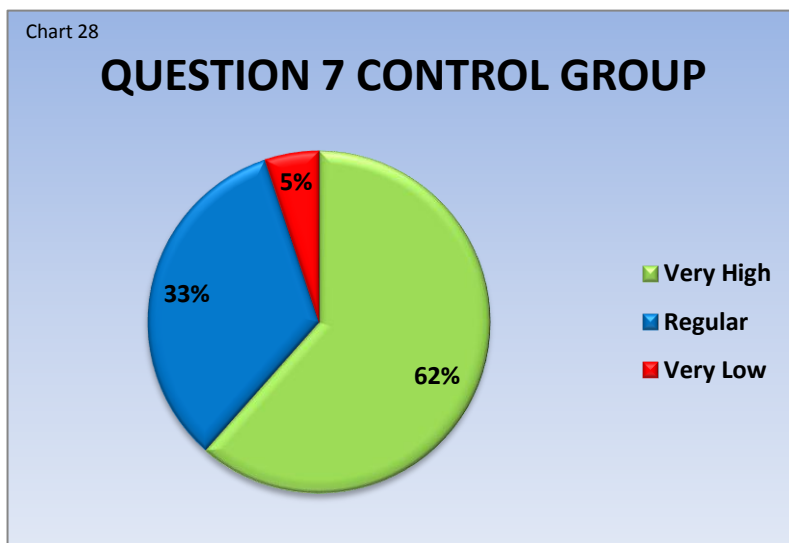
**Question 6:** Fill in the blanks with the possessive adjective.

Chart 26

## QUESTION 6 CONTROL GROUP

13%

36%

51%

■ Very High
■ Regular
■ Very Low

Chart 27

## QUESTION 6 TREATMENT GROUP

15%

28%

57%

■ Very High
■ Regular
■ Very Low

Question number 6 evaluates the use of the possessive adjectives as it can be seen the students in the treatment group performed better than those in the control group; nevertheless, the difference is only 3 percent (3%). Both groups had problems recognizing which possessive adjective corresponded to each pronoun. Even though the examples were clear and they provided a reference, students just wrote down the same subject instead of changing it into the possessive pronouns (e.g. *my, your, his, her, its, our, and their*). Therefore, the importance of adapting stories based on culture makes that common readings have sense for the students and in this way they construct meaning and knowledge by themselves.

**Question 7:** Write the colors that you see in the picture.

Chart 28

## QUESTION 7 CONTROL GROUP



- ■ Very High
- ■ Regular
- ■ Very Low

Chart 29

## Question 7 Treatment Group
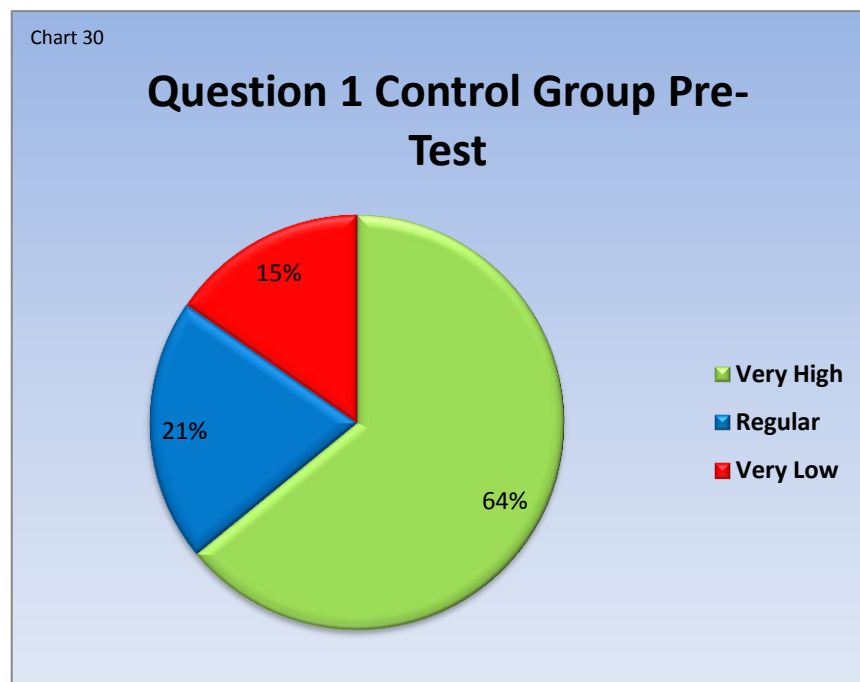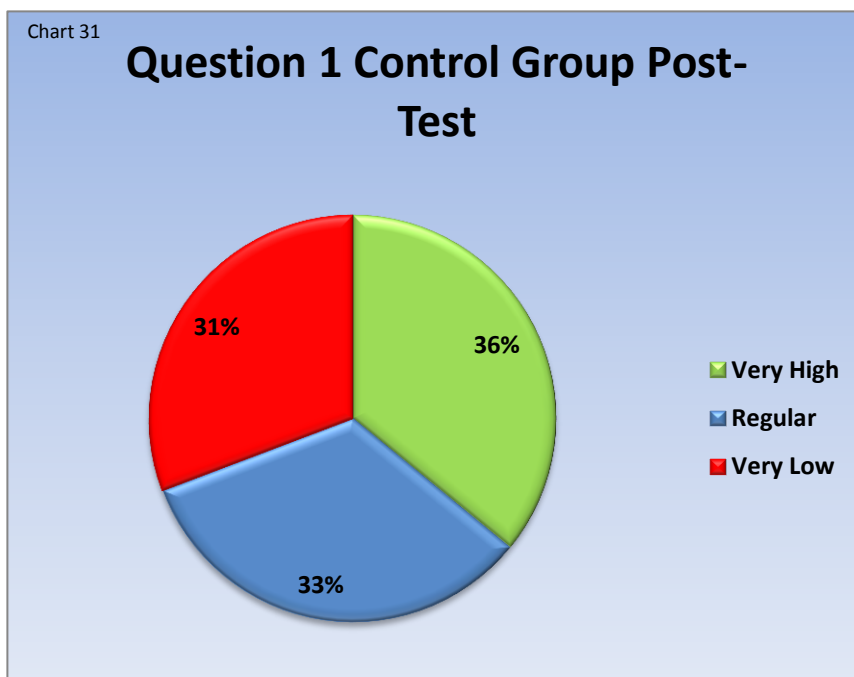


- ■ Very High
- ■ Regular
- ■ Very Low

This question is related to colors and since the participants are children, colors and their names are more likely to be acquired in the target language. The results show that in both groups sixty-two percent of the students recognized color names appropiately. It is important to mention that students could write down color names but their spelling was based on the fact that they wrote in the same way they spoke. Let's considere two clear examples of this: the word *white* was written down the way it is pronounced in Spanish [wīt] or *orange* which was written down [ôr'ĭch]. Promoting learning of colors and their names was through readings of American Holiday "Halloween". Although, orange and

black colors are the most used in this holiday, children were not able to write down their names appropiately. In the reading they also had information about different customs that children wear. For example, in a princess dress, the color pink is the basic one: in a pirate or a witch, the black color is the one; cinderella or any fairy customs have green, light green, and blue on them. The color white is obviously seen in the ghost costum.

## 3.4 COMPARISON OF CONTROL GROUP PRE-TEST AND POST-TEST

**Question 1:** Circle the correct indefinite article a/an in the following words.



Chart 30

Question 1 Control Group Pre-Test

- Very High
- Regular
- Very Low

15%
21%
64%

Chart 31

## Question 1 Control Group Post-Test



Very High
Regular
Very Low

Concerning indefinite articles, it can be stated that learning was not promoted and that students were highly confused. The graphic shows that in the pre-test the control group sixty-four percent (64%) of the students could choose the appropriately indefinite article in the pre-test; however, in the post-test they were not able to perform this activity, which seems to be easy. The reasons cannot be determined by the authors of this work since they were in charge of the treatment group.

**Question 2:** Write the plural form of the following nouns.

Chart 32

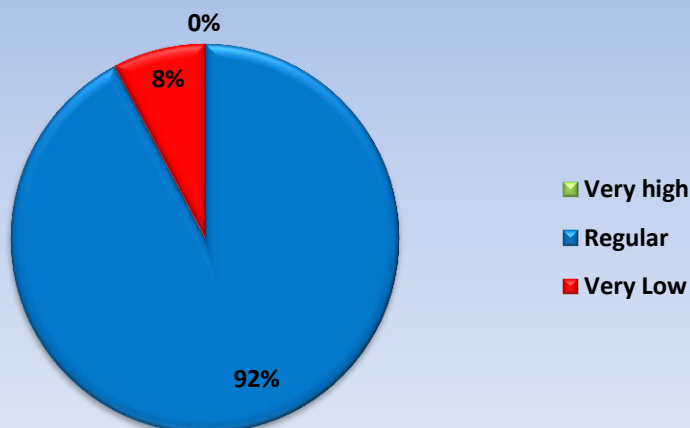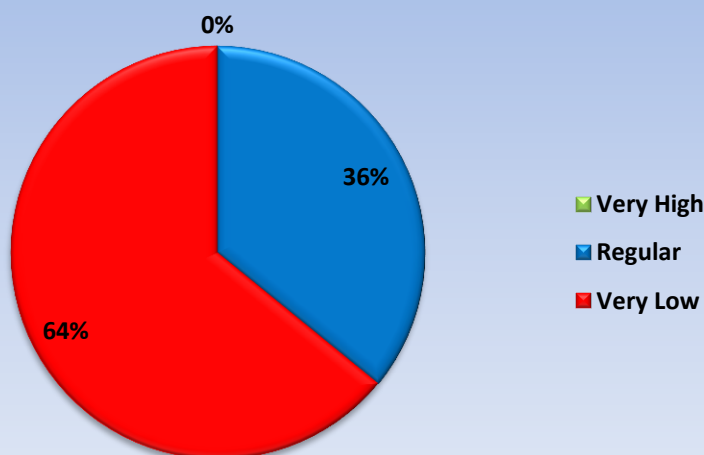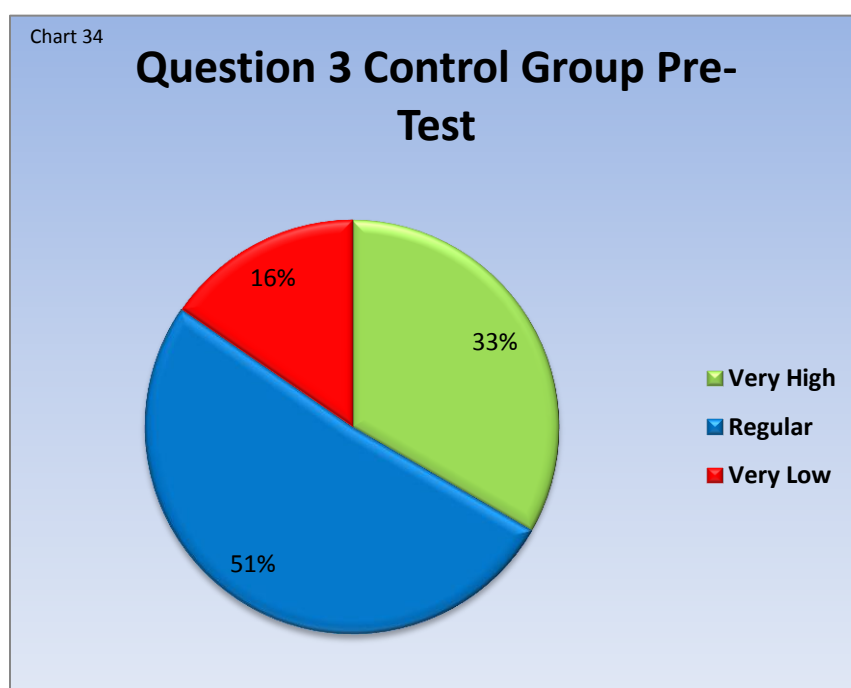### QUESTION 2 CONTROL GROUP PRE-TEST

0%

8%

- Very high
- Regular
- Very Low

92%

Chart 33

### Question 2 Control Group Post-Test
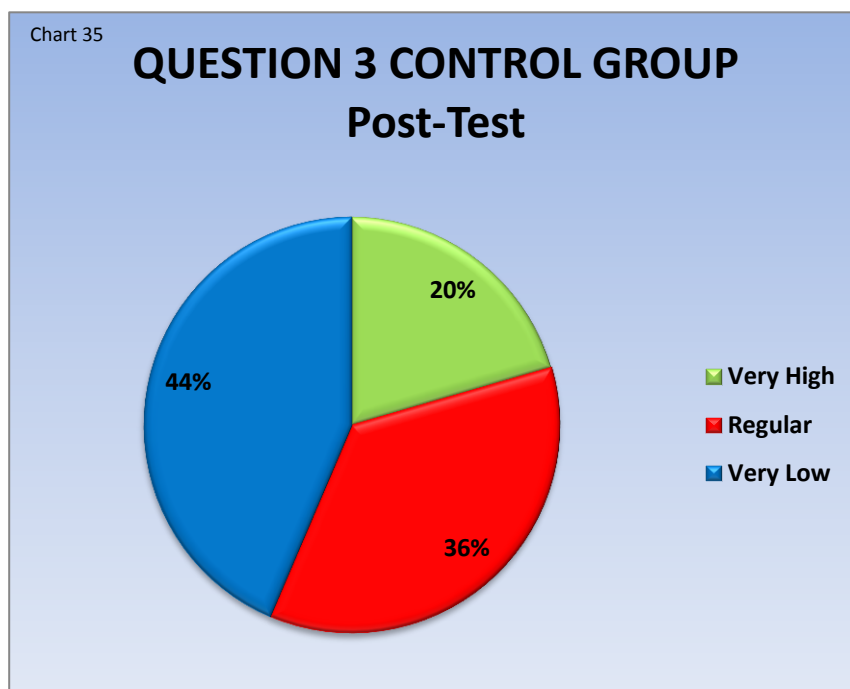
0%

36%

- Very High
- Regular
- Very Low

64%

The first graph shows regular performance of the control group students in the pre-test and a very low performance of the same group in the post-test. These results required a critical analysis due to the fact that learning was not promoted in the EFL classroom. The main reason for having such low results is that control group students continued working in a traditional way that did not

allow them to perform activities in context, i.e., students tended to generalize pluralization of the nouns just by adding -*s* to all the nouns. Since the participants in the control group were not exposed to readings, the application of grammar rules was limited to memorizing information rather than finding a clear example in context. (e.g. nouns ending in *sh, ch,* and *x).*
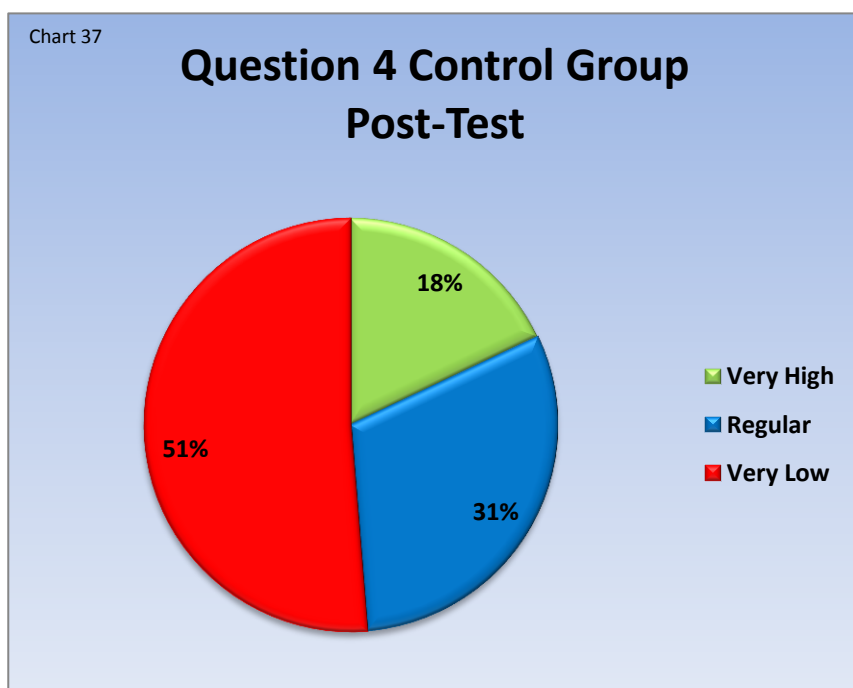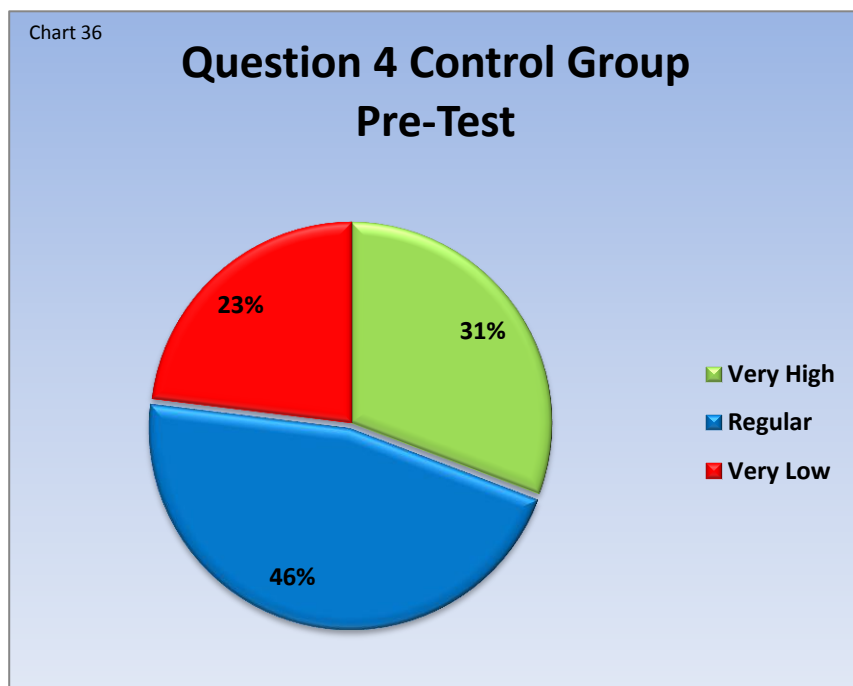
**Question 3:** Look at the pictures and complete the sentences using the words in the boxes.

Chart 34

**Question 3 Control Group Pre-Test**

16%

33%

51%

Very High

Regular

Very Low

Chart 35

## QUESTION 3 CONTROL GROUP
## Post-Test



- 20%
- 44%
- 36%

Legend:
- Very High
- Regular
- Very Low

The graph evidences that the learning of demonstrative adjectives was not achieved since as it can be seen thirty-three percent of the students had a *very high* performance in the pre-test whereas only twenty percent of the participants had a *very high* performance. This indicates that the traditional methodology used in the control class was not effective and therefore other learning strategies must be applied in the EFL classroom. One of the main difficulties experienced by ninth graders was that they confused the plural form of demonstrative adjectives, so that they misunderstood *those* and *these* – in both the pre-test and the post- test the pictures showed a person pointing at the objects.

**Question 4:** Look at the menu and complete the questions *using how much is…? and how much are*…?



Chart 36

**Question 4 Control Group Pre-Test**

- Very High — 31%
- Regular — 46%
- Very Low — 23%



Chart 37

**Question 4 Control Group Post-Test**

- Very High — 18%
- Regular — 31%
- Very Low — 51%

In question 4, the scores indicate that the students could not appropriately use the expressions *how much is…?* and *how much are…?* although the rule is apparently clear. The common mistake was that in most

cases students used *how much is…* followed by a plural noun instead of *how much are* ( e.g how much is the French fries? instead of how much are the French fries?).

This wrong application of the grammar rule also affected students' performance at the time they had to provide a reply. Since students asked incorrect questions like those mentioned above, their answers were inappropriate as well. (e.g. *how much is the french fries* it was followed by *it is for $ 4,70* ). Contrasting the results with the treatment group, the authors of this work can suggest that control group students made more mistakes due to the fact that they did not have these expressions in context.

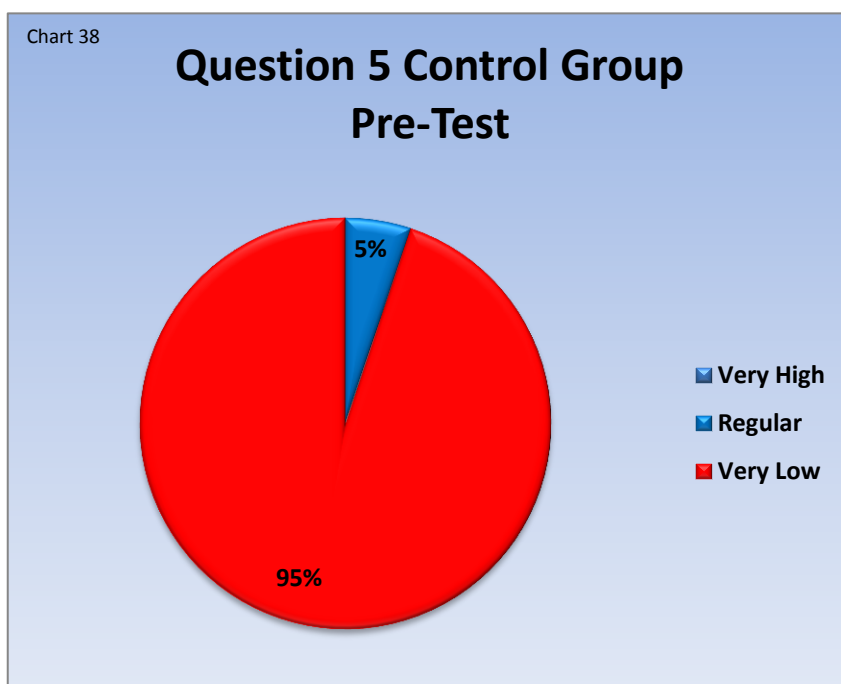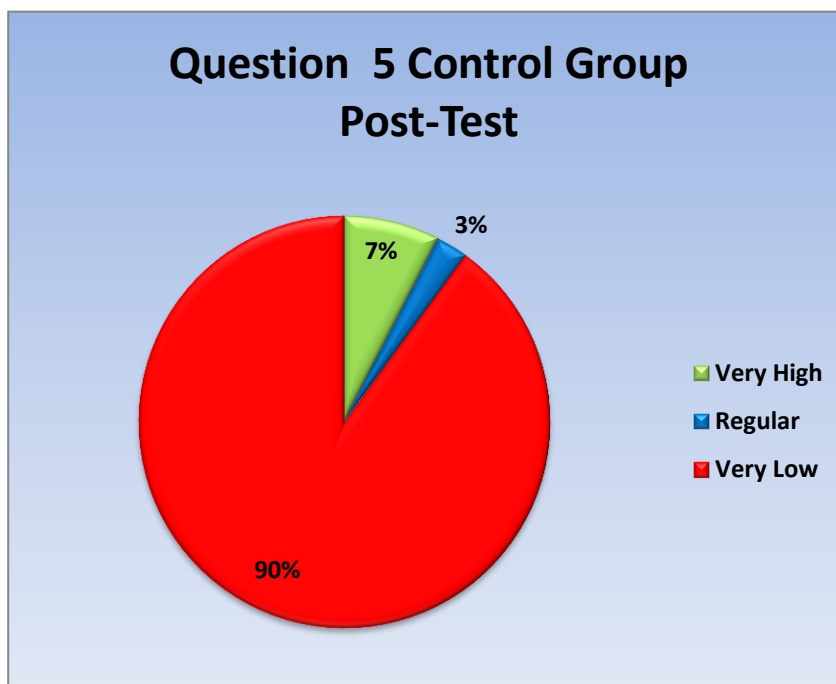**Question 5:** Fill in the blanks with the possessive singular or plural noun.
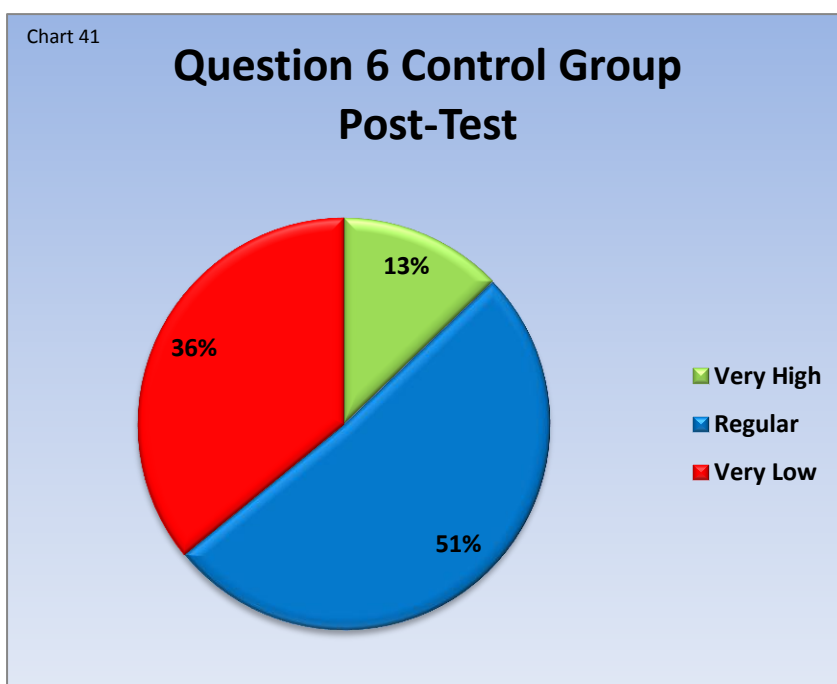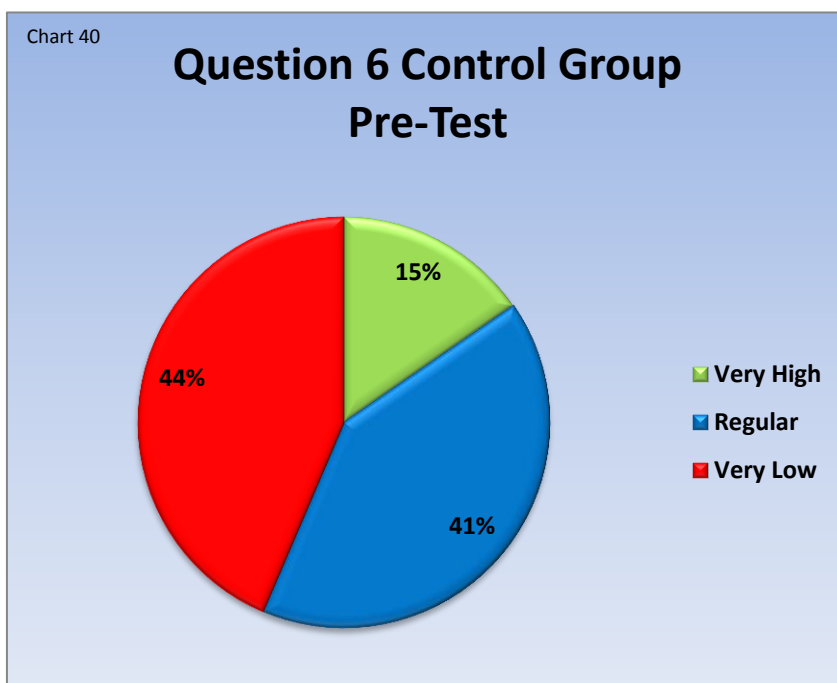
Chart 38



Chart 39

---

The graph shows that in the pre-test none of the students had a high performance in the use of possessive nouns followed by an apostrophe. The results in the post-test evidence that seven percent of the participants improved their performance; however, the traditional methodology once again appear to be ineffective. As illustrated in the graph, ninety-five percent and ninety percent, in the pre-test and post-test respectively, are the percentages corresponding to *very low* performance. Students were asked to read a series of sentences (e.g.. Mike likes to make Eastern eggs. _____ eggs are colorful.) and changed those sentences using possessive nouns followed by an apostrophe to indicate ownership (e.g. My grandmother's turkey is delicious). Nonetheless, the students confused the common contractions *it's, you're* with the possessive form. This normally happens when English teachers teach the possessive form using the traditional method in which students just memorize
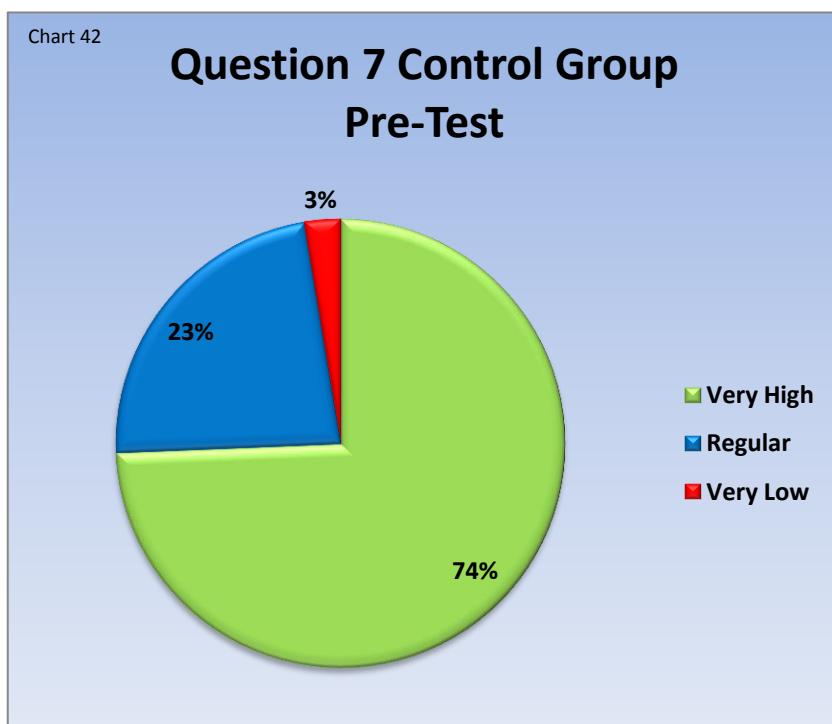
information, without including interesting readings and activities having cultural aspects.

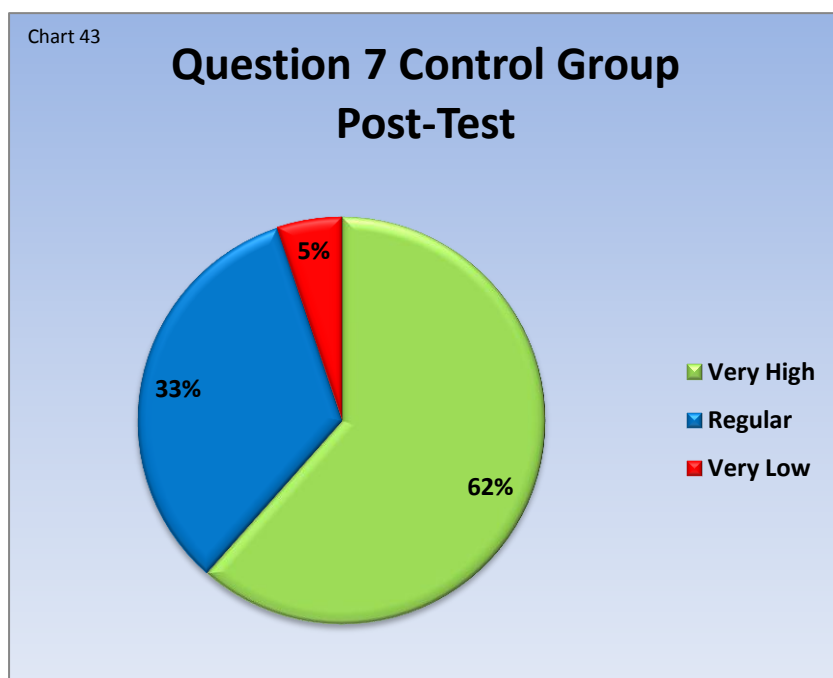**Question 6:** Fill in the blanks with the possessive adjectives.

Chart 40

## Question 6 Control Group Pre-Test

- Very High
- Regular
- Very Low

15%
44%
41%

Chart 41

## Question 6 Control Group Post-Test

- Very High
- Regular
- Very Low

13%
36%
51%

Concerning possessive pronouns – *my,his,her,its,your,our,their* – the results showed that students were not able to appropriately perform the activity in which they were asked to fill in the blanks with the corresponding pronoun, considering the subject in the sentence. The control group shows a common mistake: they simply do not know which possessive pronoun complements the ownership of a subject. As illustrated in the graph, fifteen percent of the students had a very high performance in contrast to thirteen percent in the post-test.

**Question 7:** Write the colors that you see in the picture.



Chart 42

Question 7 Control Group Pre-Test

3% — 23% — 74%

Very High — Regular — Very Low

Chart 43

**Question 7 Control Group Post-Test**

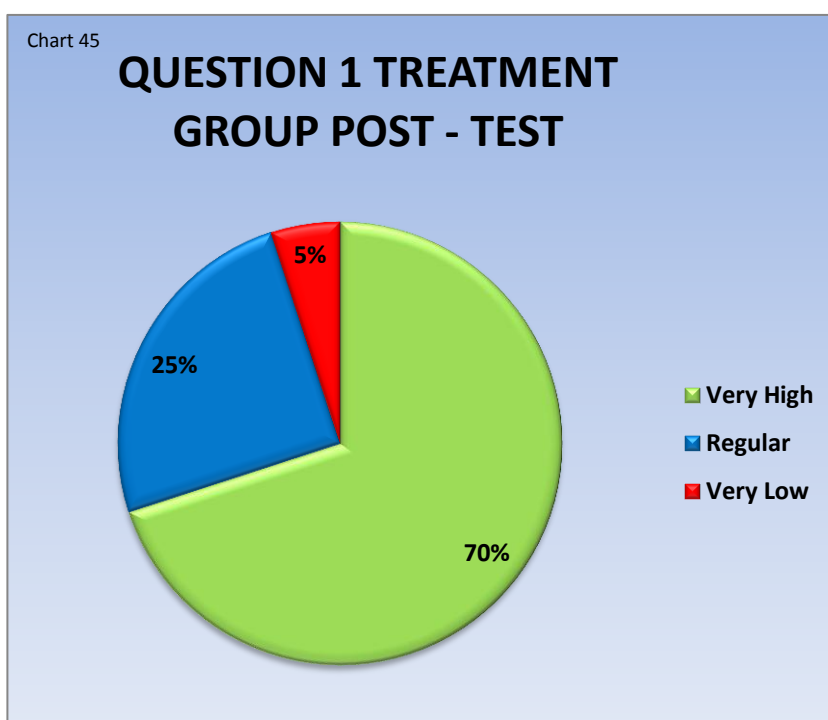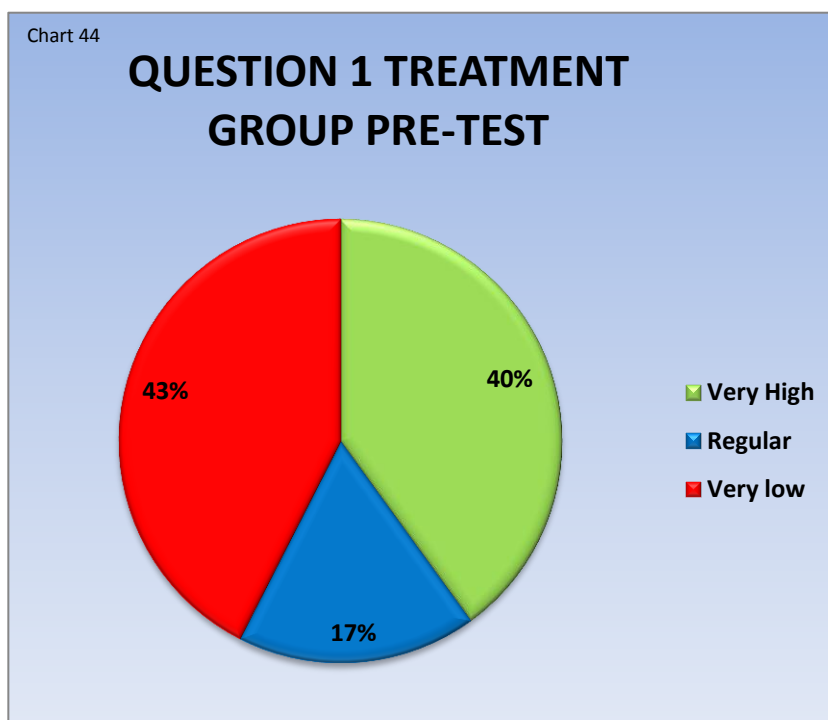- Very High
- Regular
- Very Low

5%
33%
62%

The results evidence that students' knowledge about colors was better in comparison to the grammatical aspects previously discussed since students, seventy-four percent in the pre-test and sixty-two percent in the post-test, reached a high performance. In this section, children were asked to write down the names of the colors in relation to a picture showed by the researchers, that picture being related to Halloween vocabulary. It is important to mention that the mistakes in the test were concerning spelling as cases mention before, i.e., students wrote the names exactly the way they are pronounced [ôrˈĭnsh] [wĭt] [pĭnk] [bläk], etc.

## 3.5 COMPARISON TREARTMENT GROUP PRE-TEST AND POST-TEST

**Question 1:** Circle the correct indefinite article a/an in the following words.



Chart 44

**QUESTION 1 TREATMENT GROUP PRE-TEST**

- Very High
- Regular
- Very low



Chart 45

**QUESTION 1 TREATMENT GROUP POST - TEST**
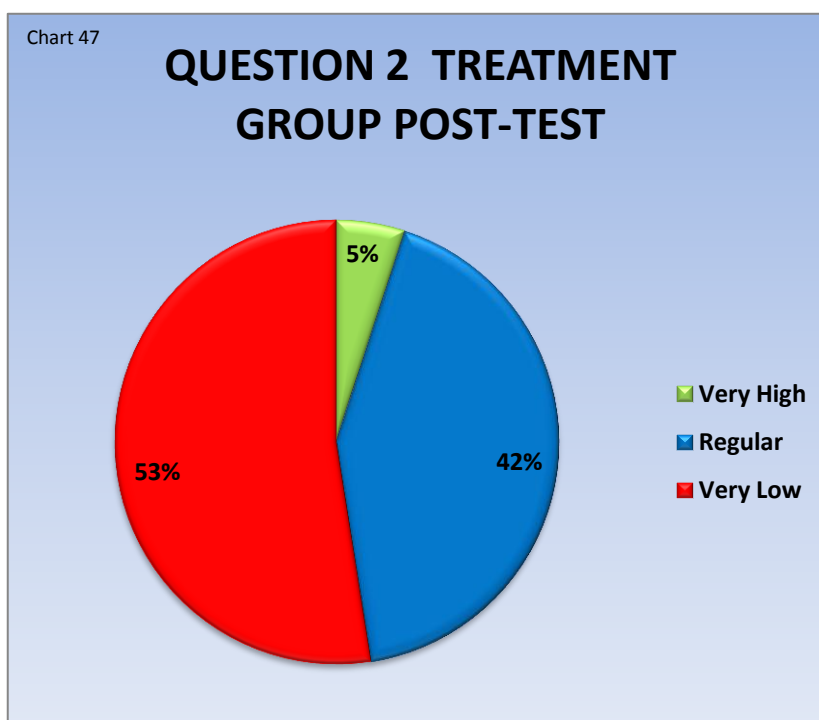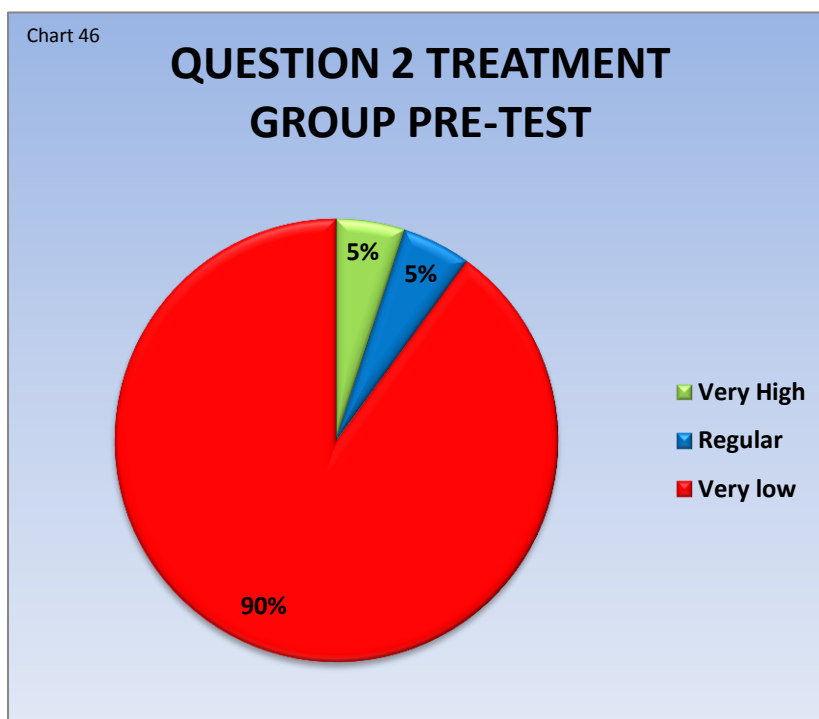
- Very High
- Regular
- Very Low

In the first question, the scores in the treatment group significantly changed as illustrated in the graph, there is a difference of thirty percent, which means that he development of students' knowledge concerning the indefinite article increased comparing the pre- test and the post-test.

It is important to mention that in this group, the researchers taught the subject during one curricular block using the activities and the readings based on U.S Culture. As a result, the chart shows that there is a considerable improvement in the use of the indefinite article. The majority of the students understood the rule when they had to choose *a/an* according to the first sound of the following word. It is evident that the activities and the classes provided by the researchers were useful and therefore students could acquire the correct knowledge of this topic.
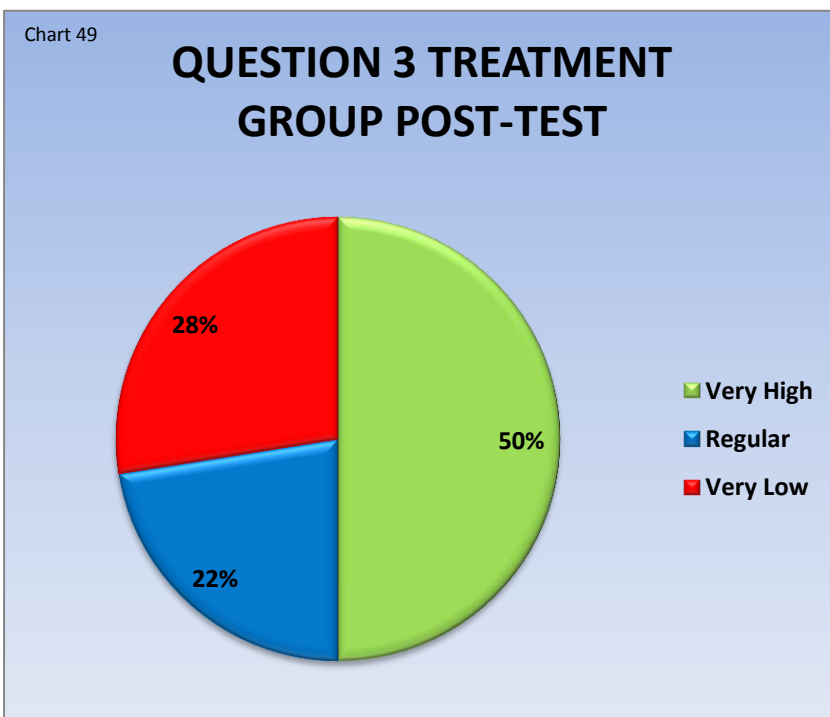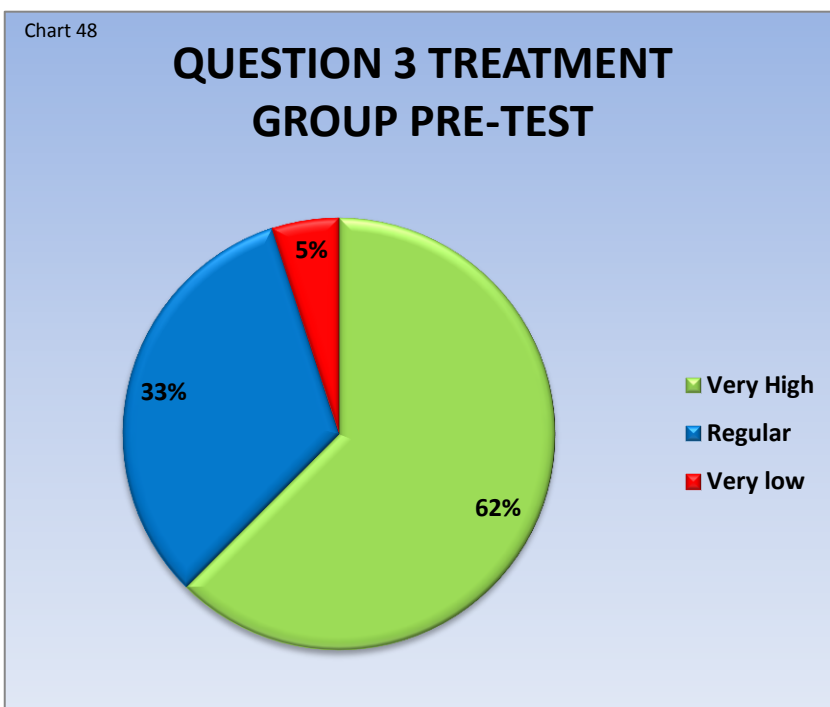
**Question 2:** Write the plural form of the following nouns

Chart 46

## QUESTION 2 TREATMENT GROUP PRE-TEST

5%
5%
90%

- Very High
- Regular
- Very low

Chart 47

## QUESTION 2 TREATMENT GROUP POST-TEST

5%
53%
42%

- Very High
- Regular
- Very Low

The graph shows that a high performance in the use of plurals was not achieved. Therefore, for this question the authors will analyze the percentages obtained with relation to regular performance five percent of the participants had a regular performance while in the post-test forty-two percent of the participants

showed this regular performance. Even though students did not have a high performance in terms of pluralization, the increase in the percentage corresponding to *regular* evidences that students pay attention to new nouns and their plurals when cultural readings are involved.

**Question 3:** Look at the pictures and complete the sentences using the words in the boxes.

Chart 48

**QUESTION 3 TREATMENT GROUP PRE-TEST**

- Very High
- Regular
- Very low

5%
33%
62%

Chart 49

**QUESTION 3 TREATMENT GROUP POST-TEST**

- Very High
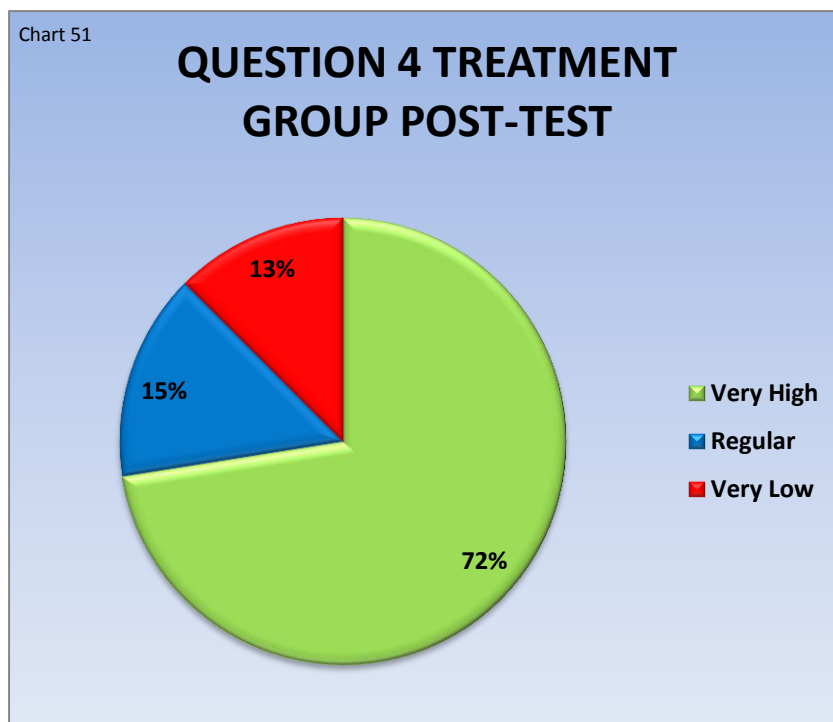- Regular
- Very Low

28%
50%
22%

In question three concerning demonstrative adjectives the graph shows that the scores decrease twelve percent. The researchers assume that the lack of authentic material prevented students from properly understanding which demonstrative adjective was to be used. Authors like Provensal, Cadario, and Gordon refer to the teaching culture through authentic material; for example, videos of American daily lives so the language is contextualized. As Cadario mentioned "students are invited to reflect on cultural awareness and learn cultural content simultaneously" (2008).
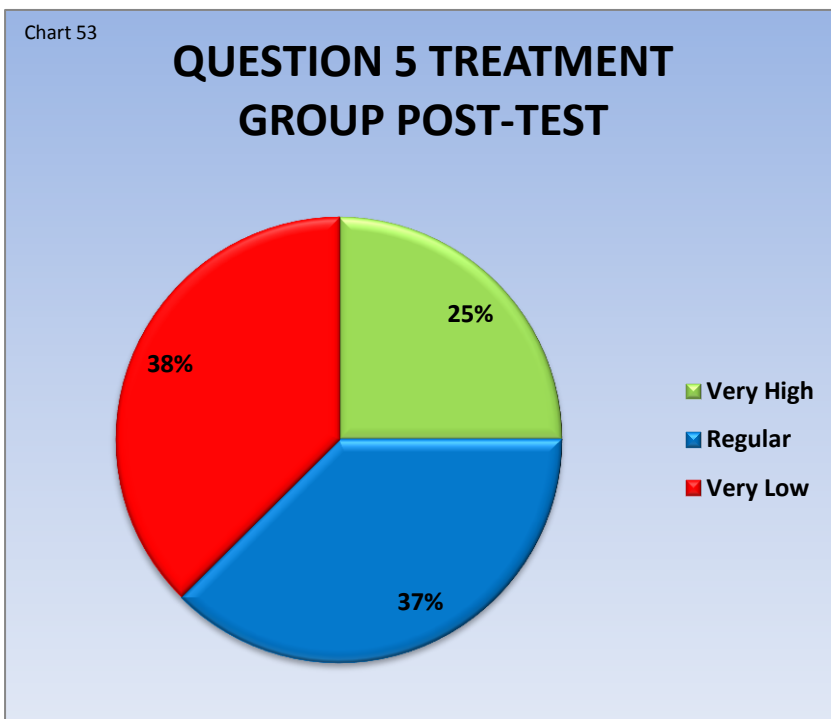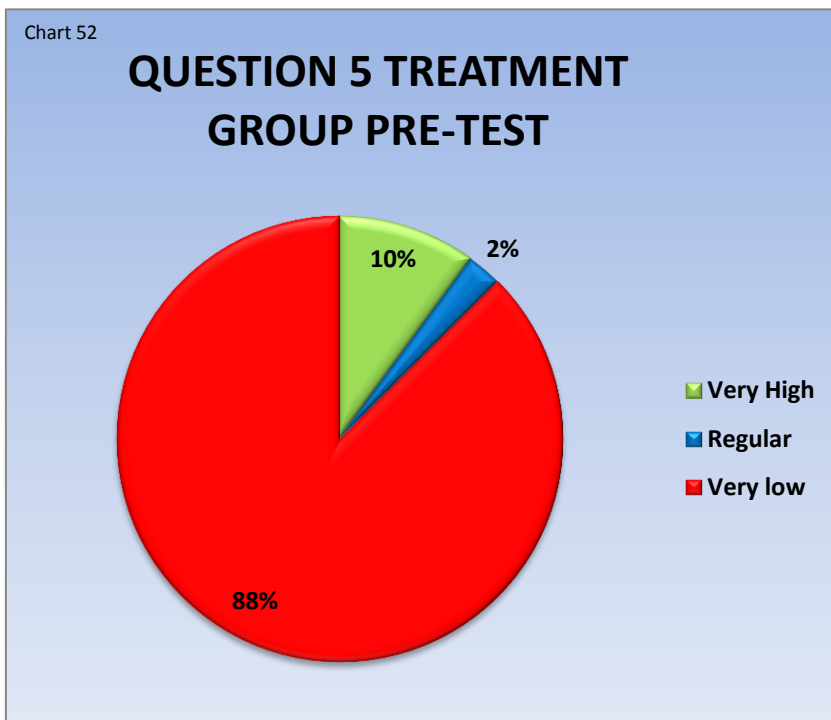
**Question 4:** Look at the menu and complete the questions *using how much is…? and how much are*…?

Chart 50

**QUESTION 4 TREATMENT GROUP PRE-TEST**

25%

35%

40%

- Very High
- Regular
- Very low

Chart 51

**QUESTION 4 TREATMENT GROUP POST-TEST**

- Very High
- Regular
- Very Low

13%
15%
72%
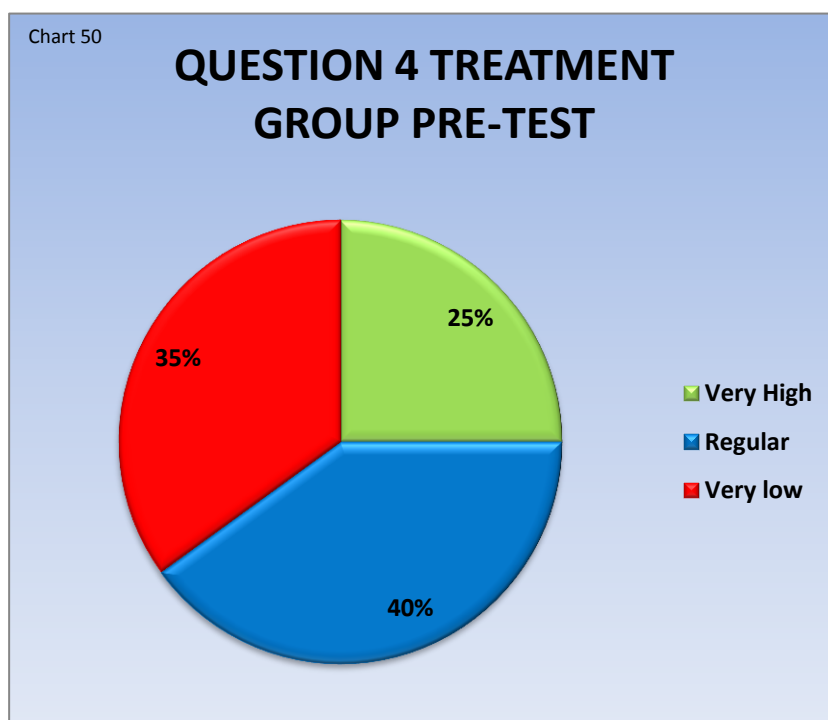
In this question the graph shows that the performance of the students highly improved – twenty-five percent in the pre-test and seventy-two percent in the post-test – which means that the activities provided by the researchers were really useful to cover this topic. The researchers used readings about food and menus where the students could find different kinds of typical food from the United States and their prices. In addition, there were activities related to the readings in which students were asked to identify the kind of food, the entrees, main dishes, desserts, drinks, etc. To form questions using *how much… is and how much… are* the researchers used singular and plural nouns, so that the students had to choose if it was necessary to use *is* or *are* in nouns such as French fries, soda, vanilla mustard, coffee, water, hamburger, etc. In addition, they had to answer those questions using *it is* or *they are* to specify the price.

**Question 5:** Fill in the blanks with the possessive singular or plural noun

Chart 52

## QUESTION 5 TREATMENT GROUP PRE-TEST



- Very High
- Regular
- Very low

10%  2%

88%

Chart 53

## QUESTION 5 TREATMENT GROUP POST-TEST



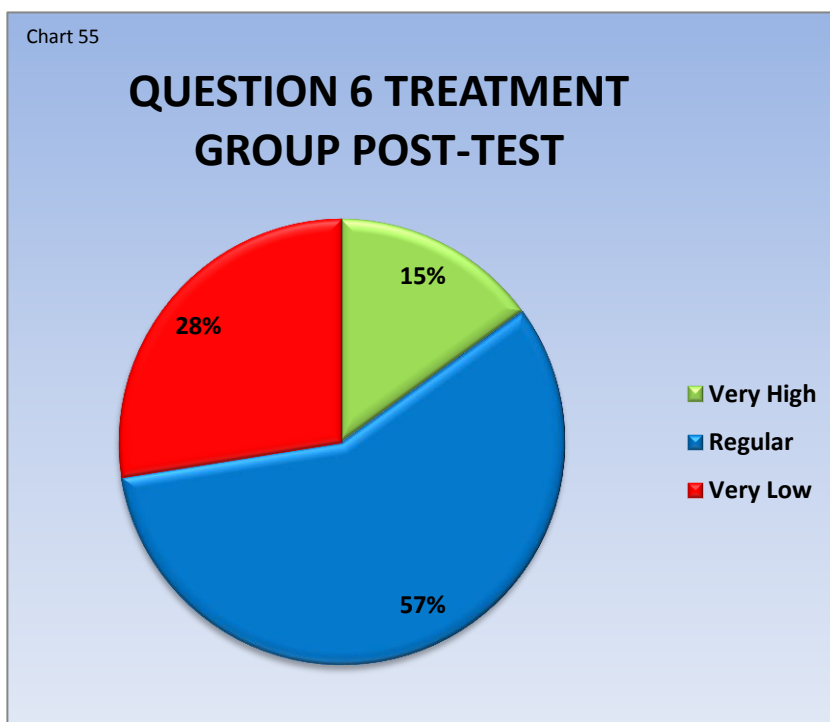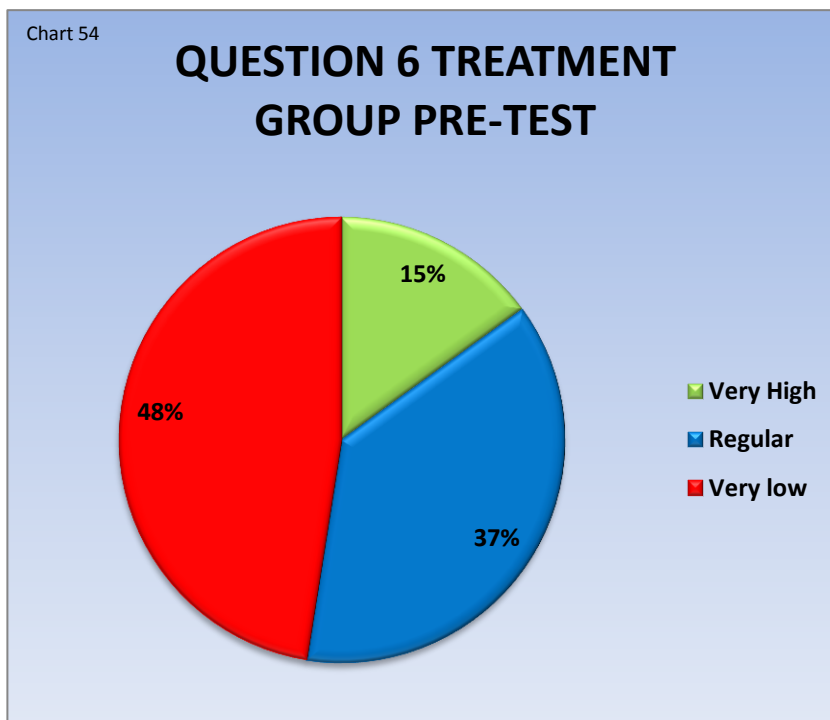- Very High
- Regular
- Very Low

25%

38%

37%

Comparing the results between the pre-test and the post-test and according to the graph, it can be suggested that there was improvement (high

performance) in the use of possessive singular and plural. The graph shows that ten percent of the participants had a high performance whereas in the post-test twenty-five percent of the participants had a high performance as well. The students could understand a series of sentences in which they were asked to provide other sentences using nouns plus apostrophe and *s* to show possession, expressing that something belongs to someone. The material provided by the researchers was focused on holidays and common activities that people from U.S.A do.
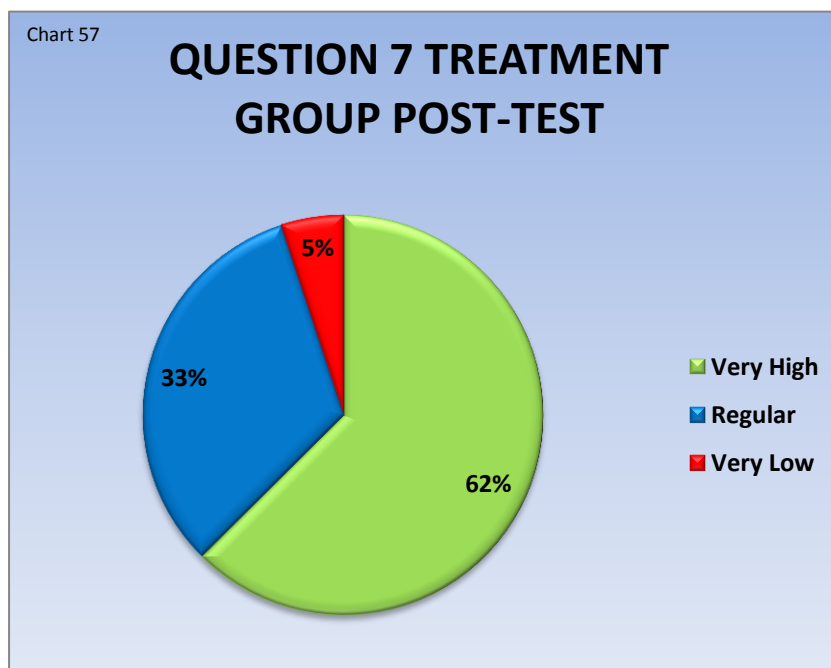
**Question 6:** Fill in the blanks with the possessive adjective.



Chart 54

## QUESTION 6 TREATMENT GROUP PRE-TEST

- Very High
- Regular
- Very low

15%

48%

37%



Chart 55

## QUESTION 6 TREATMENT GROUP POST-TEST

- Very High
- Regular
- Very Low

15%

28%

57%

Concerning the use of possessive adjectives, the graph indicates that there was no difference in the percentages related to high performance. Therefore, the authors must analyze the results obtained in the regular scale. In the pre-test, thirty-seven percent and in the post-test fifty-seven percent of the

students. It is essential to mention that students' mistakes had to do with their inability to recognize the possessive adjective corresponding to a specific noun.

**Question 7:** Write the colors that you see in the picture.

Chart 56

## QUESTION 7 TREATMENT GROUP PRE-TEST

5%

33%

62%

- Very High
- Regular
- Very low

Chart 57

## QUESTION 7 TREATMENT GROUP POST-TEST

5%

33%

62%

- Very High
- Regular
- Very Low
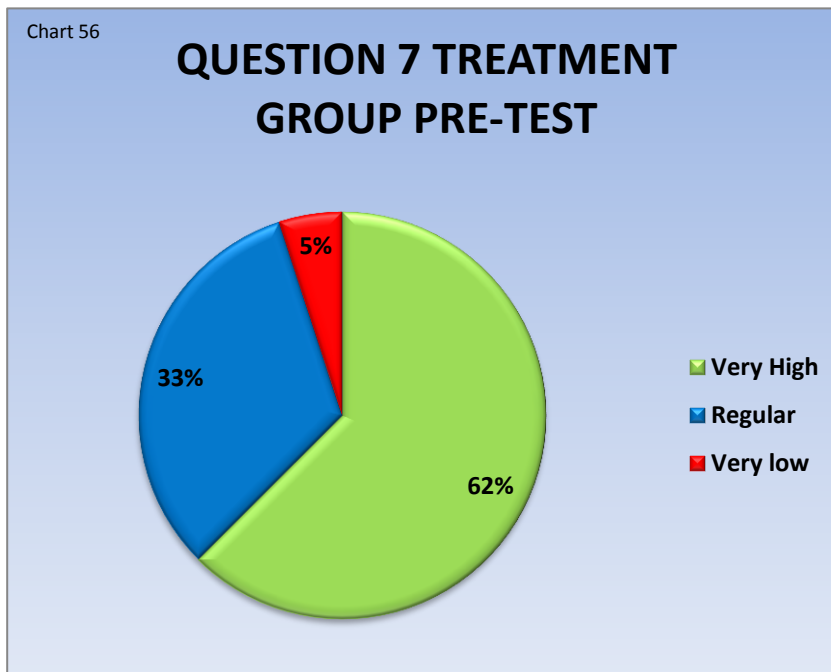
According to this graph in question 7 the results of the post-test were the same as in the pre-test so it means that the students still had spelling errors. For teaching colors the researchers used different videos that became multimedia tools to promote learning. It must be stated that students are

different and therefore each one has different ways to learn. However, many of the students learnt by observing how Halloween is celebrated and which the most common customs are. Concerning spelling, the authors are conscious that this is a process that needs time for improvement.

# CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This research project shows that the use of readings based on American Culture creates a new perspective during the teaching and learning processes in the EFL classroom. These readings with different content and within a different methodology make the students want to learn while feeling motivated to know about a different culture, allowing a natural acquisition of language aspects (e.g. grammatical rules).

The pre-test and the post-test contributed the researchers to determine if the readings based on U.S culture and their adaptations had positive effects for promoting the learning of the English Language, in terms of students' specific level of knowledge. The results clearly show that the readings did make a change in the treatment group, in contrast to the control group, in which the results were relatively low.

After the application of the treatment, the results evidence the effectiveness of the activities used by the researchers according to the students' needs in the treatment group. Learning a new language through contextualized readings provide students with different contexts that allow them getting involved in the culture of a country, the U.S.A in this case.

It is relevant for the authors of this work to mention that during the process, we felt that students wanted to know more about American culture and that their effort for learning was evident. Therefore, we strongly recommend the implementation of these kinds of activities in the EFL classroom for promoting learning of the target language.

## APPENDICES

## APPENDIX 1: PRE – TEST

1. Circle the correct indefinite article a/an in the following words.

- a / an  appetizer
- a / an  bill
- a / an  dessert
- a / an  entree
- a / an  tip
- a / an  menu

- a / an  restaurant
- a / an  waiter
- a / an  wine
- a / an  salad
- a / an  important person
- a / an  chef

2. Write the plural form of the following noun

Example          egg    -    eggs

| | |
|---|---|
| family | ……………….. |
| holiday | ……………….. |
| story | ………………… |
| man | ………………… |
| pumpkin | ………………… |
| witch | ………………… |
| concert | ………………… |
| parade | ………………… |
| child | ………………… |
| party | ………………… |
| woman | ………………… |

3. Look at the pictures and complete the sentences using the words in the boxes.

| That, these |
|---|

| Apple, pumpkin |
|---|

_____is a _____

---

These, Those



_____ are _____

Flowers, Fireworks



This, That



_____ is _____

Picnic, Meeting



This, That



_____ is a _____

Car, Barbecue

| This, That | Fair, Movies |
|---|---|



_____ is a _____

4. Look at the menu and complete the questions *using how much is… and how much are…*



## **MENU**

Pumpkin Cake…………………………. 2.50$

Chicken sandwich ……………………………………….3.99$

Valentine`s cake ………………………………… 10.75$

Salad …………………………………… 4.70$

Chicken wings …………………………6.99$

Hamburger and French fries……………….. 8.30$

Example:

How much is the pumpkin cake?
    It is 2.50.

1. How much _____ the _____ ?
   They are 6.99.
2. _____ the salad?
   It is _____.
3. How much _____ the _____.
   _____ 8.30.
4. _____the valentine`s cake?
   _____.
5. How much ____ the _____?
   _____4.70.

5. Fill in the blanks with the *possessive singular or plural noun.*

   Example:

   

   My friend has extracurricular activities at school.

   My *friend's extracurricular activities* include going to the zoo.

   

   Susan loves her Halloween costume.

   _____ Halloween costume is pink and black.

Mike likes to make Eastern eggs.

_____ eggs are colorful.



My grandmother cooks the in every thanksgiving dinner.

_____ turkey is delicious.



Kate is happy for her graduation.

_____ graduation is on Saturday.


6. Fill in the blanks with the possessive adjective.

| my | your | his | her | our | their |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

George Washington stayed in ____ presidency 8 years.

American people love _____ animals.

____ favorite holyday is Christmas.

Jane prepares the Eastern eggs with _____ children.

Students in _____ first year in high school are called freshman

7. Write the colors that you see in the picture.

**APPENDIX 2: POST – TEST**

1. Circle the correct indefinite article a/an in the following words.

   - a / an  pizza
   - a / an  nickle
   - a / an  orange juice
   - a / an  dessert
   - a / an  popcorn
   - a / an  baby seat
   - a / an  ice cream
   - a / an  wine
   - a / an  salad
   - a / an  sandwich
   - a / an  chicken
   - a / an  dime

2. Write the plural form of the following nouns. Add (s, es, or ies)
   Eample               flag     -        flags
   family        ………………..
   holiday       ………………..
   story         …………………
   man           …………………
   pumpkin       …………………
   witch         …………………
   concert       …………………
   parade        …………………
   child         …………………
   party         …………………
   woman         …………………

3. Look at the pictures and complete the sentences using the words in the boxes.

   | That, this |

   | Bill, Coins |

_____is a _____

These, Those

Coins, Drinks





_____ are _____

This, That

Pumpkin, an apple pie





_____ is _____

This, That

Menu, Bill

_____ is the _____

| This, That | Menu, Tip |
|---|---|



_____ is the _____

4. Look at the menu and complete the questions *using how much is… and how much are…*



# MENU

Vanilla custard……………. 3.50$

Mexican Taco ……………………………….6.99$

Double cheese burger ……………………… . 7.75$

Cesar salad ………………………………… 4.7

French Fries…………………………………3.00$

Chocolate ice cream and cake………5.30$

# DRINKS

Soda……1.50$      Water……….1.00$     Coffee…..2.00$

Example:

> How much is the double cheese burger?
> It is 7.75.

How much _____ the _____ ?

It ____ 3.50$.

_____ the salad?

It is _____.

How much _____ the _____

_____ 1.50$.

_____french fries?

_____.

How much _____ the _____?

_____2.00$

5. Fill in the blanks with the *possessive singular or plural noun.*

Example:

My friend has movie time at school.

My *friend's movie time* is every friday.



The children love her ghost costume.

_____ ghost costume is white, black and red.

Mike receives 10$ from his father.

_____ 10$ is very appreciate.



My grandmother cooks the in every thanksgiving dinner.

_____ turkey is delicious.



Kate is happy for her Christmas party.

_____ Christmas party is on Saturday.

6. Fill in the blanks with the possessive adjective.

| *my* | *your* | *his* | *her* | *our* | *their* |
|------|--------|-------|-------|-------|---------|

Abraham Lincoln stayed in ____ presidency 8 years.

People pay their things with _____ money.

____ favorite holiday is Thanksgiving.

Jane prepares the Eastern eggs with ____ children.

Susan love ____ princess costume.

7. Write the colors that you see in the picture.

**APPENDIX 3: BOOKLET**



# AMERICAN CULTURE
# READINGS AND ACTIVITIES



**USA 2015**

1.1. New Year's Day
19.1. Martin Luther Day
16.2. Washington's Birthday
25.5. Memorial Day
3.7. Independance Day
7.9. Labour Day
12.10. Columbus Day
11.11. Veterans Day
26.11. Thanksgiving Day



**Designed by: Natasha Abril and Tamara Arias**

## NEW YEAR'S DAY  January 1st

This holiday is similar to the Ecuadorian new year´s day. People wish each other a happy and prosperous new year.

**Birthday of Martin Luther King, Jr** The third Monday in January.

Martin Luther King's birthday was a recognized African-American clergyman who fought injustice and made efforts to win civil rights for many people. These people were Afro-American slaves and they were treated in the worst way. However, he won battle through nonviolent means.
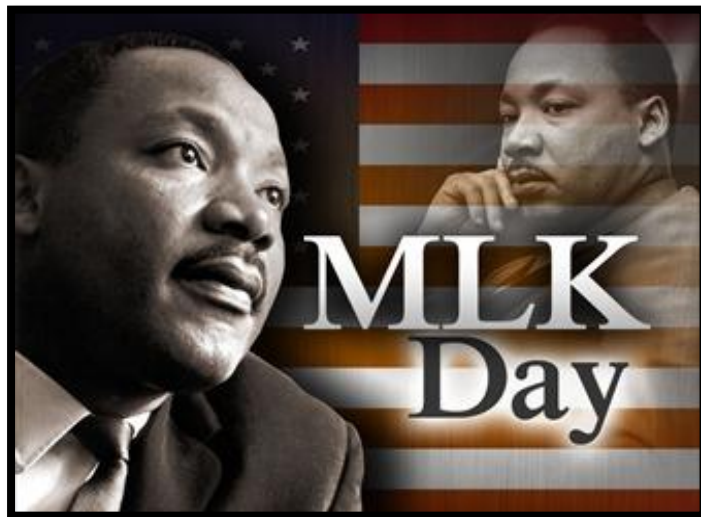
## Washington's Birthday Third Monday of February

This day is in honor of George Washington, the first President of the United States. It is also called Presidents' Day and it is dedicated to the legacy of former presidents.



## Memorial Day  The last Monday of May.

This is dedicated to the people who died during the American Civil War. Americans remember how a lot of American patriots were killed in wars to build their nation.

## Independence Day   July 4th

This holiday honors the Declaration of Independence in 1776. Generally people go on picnics and attend patriotic parades, concerts, barbecues and fireworks displays.



## Labor Day The first Monday of September

The entire nation's working people make this day special and they have parades. In addition, this day marks the end of the summer vacation season and the beginning of the school year.



## Columbus Day Second Monday of October.

This commemoration is committed to Christopher Columbus who landed on the New World on October 12, 1492. President Franklin D. Roosevelt proclaimed it in 1937.



## Veterans Day November 11th

This holiday was originally called Armistice Day, traditionally in honor of Americans who served during World War I.

## Thanksgiving Day  4th Thursday in November

The story says that in the fall of 1621, the Pilgrims held a three day feast to celebrate a bountiful harvest. Nowadays many Americans regard this event as the nation's first Thanksgiving.  Thus, this day has become a national tradition in which people have dinner with lots of food such as: roast turkey, cranberry sauce, potatoes, and pumpkin pie.



## Christmas Day December 25th

Catholics commemorate the birth of Jesus Christ.

During this time it is common to see houses and yards full of colorful lights and Christmas trees. People usually exchange gifts and wish the best to each other.



## Valentine's Day February 14th

Despite Valentine's Day is not a holiday, it is a famous day for many people.
It is a romantic day in which people give cards, letters, flowers or presents to their partners.

## Easter Sunda[...]

In this date people who believe in Jesus Christ's resurrection decorate eggs. These eggs can be real eggs, or plastic ones; chocolate or other materials are also used. Easter eggs are hidden from children, who have to find these eggs that have been supposedly hidden by a rabbit or hare.



## EXERCISES

**Match the Holidays to their corresponding date.**

New Year's Day                                    November 11th

Birthday of Martin Luther King, Jr        Third Monday of February

Washington's Birthday                          February 14th

Memorial Day                                       July 4th

Independence Day                               December 25th

| | |
|---|---|
| Labor Day | The last Sunday of the Holy week |
| Columbus Day | The last Monday of May |
| Veterans Day | January 1$^{st}$ |
| Thanksgiving Day | The third Monday in January |
| Christmas | Second Monday of October. |
| Valentine's Day | Fourth Thursday in November |
| Eastern day | The first Monday in September |



St Valentine's day    Easter    July 4th    Halloween    Thanksgiving    Christmas

# MOST FAMOUS LANDMARKS IN USA

There are many famous top destinations and natural landmarks in USA. If you are curious about them, let's read the following.

# HOLLYWOOD SIGN

The Hollywood Sign isn't just one of the most famous landmarks in USA, but also one of the most recognizable sign in the world.

The Hollywood Sign is **a** truly one of the top attractions in California with **a** great story behind it.

For those of you who don't know, the Hollywood Sign once read Hollywood land. In the early 1920's was first raised as **an** advertisement slogan, though around the early 1950's the City of Los Angeles acquired the sign and dropped off the 'land' part.

# LAS VEGAS WELCOME SIGN



Just like the Hollywood Sign, Las Vegas Welcome Sign is **an** iconic landmark that is recognized around the world.

The actual sign reads: **"Welcome to Fabulous Las Vegas Nevada."**

Las Vegas Welcome Sign was first raised in the early 1960's and it is today **a** tourist attraction in the USA.

# GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE



The Golden Gate Bridge is another landmark that is instantly recognizable at home and abroad, which isn't surprising since the Golden Gate Bridge is simply breathtaking sight, especially at night!

It's not surprise then that the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco would rank on our list as one of the most famous landmarks in US as it offers incredible views of the sea and the infamous Alcatraz prison.

# MOUNT RUSHMORE NATIONAL MEMORIAL



The Mount Rushmore Memorial is located in Keystone South Dakota. Mt Rushmore monument is a memorial to honor former Presidents of the USA: George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, Theodore Roosevelt and Thomas Jefferson.

# THE LINCOLN MEMORIAL

Th... one of the most awe inspiring sights, and most popularly remembered as the site where Martin Luther King gave its famous "I have a dream" speech.

A visit to the Lincoln Memorial is truly **an** amazing experience, especially at night when the memorial is beautifully lit up.

# EMPIRE STATE BUILDING

The Empire State Building in Manhattan Island has been immortalized forever as **a** pop culture icon in movies such as "King Kong" and "Independence Day".

The Empire State Building is **a** recognizable building and **a** top attraction that boasts **a** great observation deck where you can get impressive views of New York City.

# STATUE OF LIBERTY

The Statue of Liberty is recognized across the world as **a** symbol of freedom.

The Statue of Liberty structure was actually **a** gift from France to the United States in recognition of the friendship between the two countries.

The Statue of Liberty is located in Liberty Island in New York City, and it's **a** popular icon instantly recognizable both in the US and internationally.

# EXERCISES

**Read the passage and circle the correct indefinite article *a / an***

The **Las Vegas Strip** is a stretch of South Las Vegas Boulevard in Clark County, Nevada internationally known for the concentration of resort hotels and casinos along its way. Many of the largest hotels, casinos, and resorts in the world are located on the Las Vegas Strip. Fifteen of the world's 25 largest hotels by room count are on the Strip, with a total of over 62,000 rooms.

**A/ An** Casino



**A/ An** Hotel



**A/ An** Ferris Wheel

**A/ An** Aquarium



**A/ An** Amusement park



**H**alloween, the last day of October, has a special significance for children, who dress in funny or ghostly costumes and knock on neighborhood doors shouting "Trick or Treat!".

People use to dress as **black** pirates and **pink** princesses, **white** ghosts and **red** witches; all hold open bags to catch the candy or other goodies that the neighbors drop in.

Since the 800's, November 1st is a religious holiday known as All Saints' Day. The Mass that was said on that day was called Allhallowmas. The evening before became known as All Hallow evening, or Halloween. Like some other American celebrations, its origins lie in both pre-Christian and Christian customs.

Today school dances and neighborhood parties called "block parties" are popular among young and old alike. More and more adults celebrate Halloween. They dress up as historical or political   figures and go to masquerade parties. In larger cities, costumed children and their parents gather at shopping malls early in the evening. Stores and businesses give parties with games and treats for the children. Teenagers enjoy costume dances at their schools and the more outrageous the costume the better!

Certain pranks such as soaping car windows and tipping over garbage cans are expected. But partying and pranks are not the only things that Halloweeners enjoy doing. Some collect money to buy food and medicine for needy children around the world.



## SCRAMBLED PUMPKINS

**Unscramble these pumpkins to figure out the hidden message:**



_ _ __ _ _          _ _ _ _ _
_ _ **11** _ _          _ _ _ _ _
**1        2          2        9**
**8        5**

__ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __
6   23   19      17   10   15   20      3      5      1   2



__ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __
16      8      22      7



__ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __
4      1   13      14      21      24

## Answer the following questions

- What color is the witch's hat? _____
- What color are the pumpkins?_____
- What colors does a pirate's costume have?

  _____
- What are the most common colors in Halloween?

  _____
- What colors does a princess like?
- _____
- What color is a ghost?

  _____

## Halloween Riddle: Use the numbers above to fill in the riddle.

What do monsters have for breakfast on Halloween morning?

— — — — — — — —    — — — — — — — —
1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9    1   1   1   1   1   1   1   1
                                     0   1   2   3   4   5   6   7

                — — —    — — — — —
                1   1   2    2   2   2   2   2
                8   9   0    1   2   3   4   5

# HOW TO ORDER FOOD IN A RESTAURANT

The American culture is a "restaurant culture". Americans love eating out, getting out and getting deliveries.

There are many ways to order food in U.S.A, let's see some of them.

## Hostess

- Hostess: "How many will you be tonight?" or "How many people are in your party?"
- Diner: "Just two" or "two people".

## Drinks

- Waiter: "Can I bring you some water?" or "Can I get you some water?" or "Would you like tap or bottled water?"
- Diner: "Sure, we'll have some water please. Tap is fine." or "Yes. I'd like some bottled water please"

## Ordering Salad

- Diner: "I'd like to have the chef's salad, please."
- Waiter: "What kind of salad dressing would you like?"
- Diner: "What are my options?" or "What kind of salad dress have?"
- Waiter: "We have:
  - Balsamic Vinaigrette
  - Blue cheese dressing
  - Caesar dressing
  - French dressing
  - Ginger dressing
  - Honey Dijon
  - Italian dressing
  - Ranch dressing
  - Russian dressing
  - Thousand Island dressing"

Diner: "I'll have Caesar dressing, please."
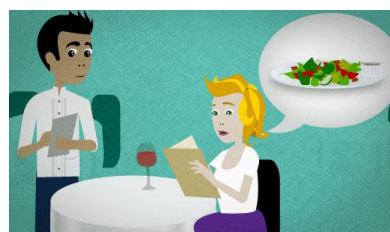
# Ordering Food

- Waiter: "Would you like to hear the specials for tonight?" or "We have some specials this evening…"
- Waiter: "Are you ready to order?"
- Waiter: "Do you have any questions about the menu?"
- Diner: "We're ready to order. I'd like to have the steak please."
- Waiter: "How would you like that done?" or "How would you like that cooked?"
- Diner: "**Medium**, please."
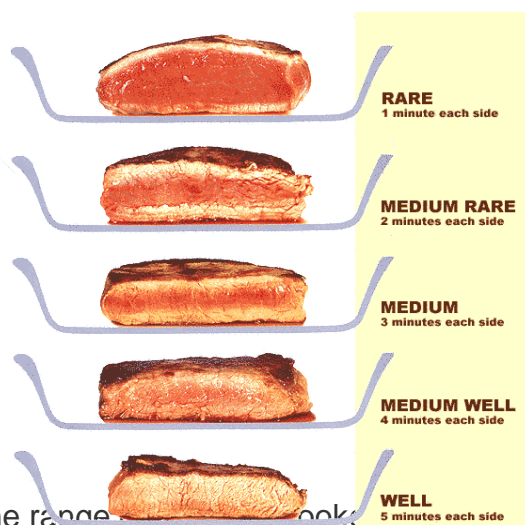
**COOKING STEAK**



RARE
1 minute each side

MEDIUM RARE
2 minutes each side

MEDIUM
3 minutes each side

MEDIUM WELL
4 minutes each side

WELL
5 minutes each side



I said well done!

why thank you!

The range of steak cooking (from least cooked/to most cooked):
**rare –> medium rare –> medium –> medium well –> well done**
However, because of health regulations, some restaurants will not cook your meat less than medium well!

## Vocabulary at Restaurants

**Appetizer**: The small dish before your main course.



**Bill**: Also called "**the check**, ... ed to pay for your meal.
**Check**: The check is also called *the bill*. It tells you how much you have to pay for your meal.

**Booster seat**: A child's seat placed on a chair to allow the child to sit at the table (see also *high chair*).

**High chair**: a booster seat.



**Bus boy**: The person who cl               off of the table.



**Dessert**: The last sweet dish of           trée.



**Entrée**: The main course.

**Hostess/Maitre d'**: The person at the front of the restaurant who greets you and seats you at a table.

**Menu**: the list of food and drink options available to order.
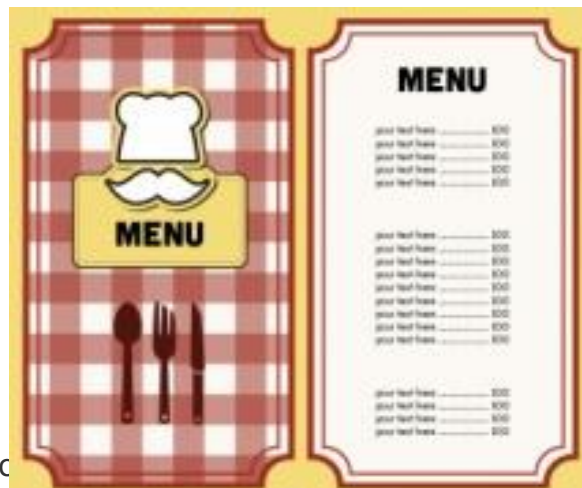


**Party**: The number o



**Tip**: Usually 15% (20
Waiters and waitresses rely on this money as their income.



**Waiter/Waitress**: The person who takes your order and serves you food.

**Wine List:** The menu showing all of the wine options you have.

# Food Exercises

## MENU

### MAIN COURSES

CHEESE BURGER......................... $4.39
DOUBLE CHEESE BURGER......... $4.99
CHICKEN CURRY WITH RICE... $3.99
MACARONI CHEESE................... $4.19
SEAFOOD SALAD...................... $4.49
EGG SALAD.............................. $3.99
FISH AND MUSHROOM PIE...... $4.69

### PIZZA

CHICKEN PIZZA...........$4.55

MUSHROOM PIZZA...... $4.60
FOUR CHEESES PIZZA. $4.10
MEAT PIZZA................. $4.75
SEAFOOD PIZZA.......... $4.75

### DESSERTS

ICE CREAM......................... $1.99
(VANILLA, CHOCOLATE, STRAWBERRY)
BANANA CAKE.................... $2.39
FRUIT CAKE........................ $2.29

### FRUIT

APPLE.............. $0.59
ORANGE........... $0.59
BANANA........... $0.69
PEAR............... $0.69
MIXED FRUITS. $1.29
(3 FRUITS)

### DRINKS

ORANGE JUICE.............. $0.99
APPLE JUICE................. $0.99

TEA............................... $0.59
COFFEE........................ $0.59
WATER.......................... $0.49

## Reading skills practice: At the restaurant - exercises

Look at the menu and do the exercises to practise your reading skills.

**Preparation**

Write the correct word in the boxes below the picture.

| mushroom | fruit cake | ice cream | cheese burger | coffee | salad |
|----------|-----------|-----------|---------------|--------|-------|
| seafood | pizza | curry | macaroni cheese | tea | chicken |

The birthday cake is traditionally highly decorated, and typically covered with lit candles when presented. The number of candles represent the age of the celebrant. The person whose birthday it is may make a silent wish and then blow out the candles. After that, the person can open the presents. The birthday boy/girl traditionally gets to eat the last piece of the cake.

# The Birthday Celebration, a tradition that never ends

In America, people celebrate the birthdays of famous people such as Martin Luther King, Jr., Abraham Lincoln and George Washington.

In the United States, birthday parties are often accompanied by colorful decorations, such as balloons and streamers; a birthday cake is often served with candles and the lucky song "Happy Birthday to You" cannot miss.

At children parties, they have balloons and streamers that are hung up and lots of friends are invited to the party. There are always presents, cakes and ice cream.

There are other options to celebrate birthdays; for example, inviting the guests to the restaurant or bar is one of the special birthday programs, arranging parties at home, or at work. In addition to parties, it is common for people to receive gifts on their birthday. Popular gifts include toys, books, jewelry (e.g. necklaces, clothes or sneakers), flowers, cell phones, tablets, CDs, computer games, money, etc.

KEEP CALM

I Accept

Birthday Presents ANYDAY...!!!
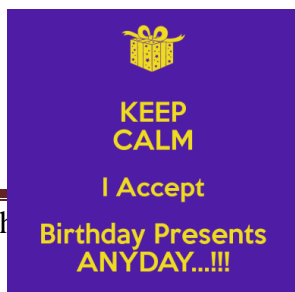
**BIRTHDAY TRADITION**

Some children receive birthday "spankings", which were originally based on superstition, but today they are not more than a birthday joke. Hundreds of years ago, spankings were given for each year of the birthday child's life.

At one time, it was considered back luck if the birthday celebrant was not spanked because it was believed that spankings could "soften up the body for the tomb."

Singing "Happy Birthday to You" has also been a long-standing tradition on birthdays as well. It was written by two American sisters, Mildred J. Hill and Patty Smith Hill in 1893, and has been translated into several languages around the world.

Unlike the girls' 15th Birthday in Ecuador, in the United States the Sweet Sixteen parties are held for the girls

# NATIVE AMERICANS BIRTHDAYS

The Winnebago Indians have a big birthday celebration and anyone can attend; people know about birthday parties through word of mouth. These parties can last all evening.

They can eat whatever they like for their birthday and what has been made for them. The cake is taken around and shown to the guests and it is considered an honor to be asked to cut the cake.



After the meal the children play a hand game. This is played with the help of an adult who holds a bone or a stone in one of his or her hands so that the children have to try to guess where it is.

# The Birthday Celebration Activity

**Answer the questions according to the reading.**

- What are the different options to celebrate a birthday?
  _____
  _____

- What are the popular gifts that people receive in their birthdays?
  _____
  _____

- What are "birthday spankings"?
  _____
  _____

- What are the names of the sisters that **wrote** the popular song "Happy Birthday"?
  _____
  _____

**Make a brief summary of how Native Americans celebrate their birthdays.**

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

# AMERICAN MONEY

# COINS

## ONE-CENT COIN (PENNY)

| | |
|---|---|
| Abraham Lincoln, the 16th President | Lincoln Memorial |

## FIVE-CENT COIN (NICKLE)

| | |
|---|---|
| President Thomas Jefferson | "Monticello," a large home that Jefferson designed and built for himself |

## TEN-CENT COIN (DIME)

| | |
|---|---|
| President Franklin Roosevelt | Torch, Olive Branch, Oak Branch |

## TWENT-FIVE-CENT COIN (QUARTER)



| President John F. Kennedy | Eagle from the presidential seal |

## FIFTY-CENT COIN (HALF DOLLAR)



| President George Washington | Eagle |

## ONE DOLLAR-COIN(GOLDEN DOLLAR)



| President George Washington | The Statue of Liberty |

**BILLS**

# ONE-DOLLAR BILL

| | |
|---|---|
| | |
| George Washington (1st U.S. President) | The Great Seal of the United States |

# TWO-DOLLAR BILL

| | |
|---|---|
| | |
| Thomas Jefferson (3rd U.S. President) | The signing of the Declaration of Independence |

# FIVE-DOLLAR BILL

| | |
|---|---|
| | |
| Abraham Lincoln (16th U.S. President) | The Lincoln Memorial |

# TEN-DOLLAR BILL

| | |
|---|---|
| Alexander Hamilton (1st Secretary of the Treasury) | U.S. Treasury Building |

# TWENTY-DOLLAR BILL

| | |
|---|---|
| Andrew Jackson (7th U.S. President) | The White House |

# FIFTY-DOLLAR BILL

| | |
|---|---|
| Ulysses Grant (18th U.S. President) | *What is on the back?* U.S. Capitol |

# ONE HUNDRED-DOLLAR BILL

| | |
|---|---|
| Who is on the front? | What is on the back? |
| Ben Franklin (Statesman) | Independence Hall |

# What you do not know about American people!

I don't Know

**Many people can drive for many hours just for visiting relatives or friends. A guy drove 16 hours just to visit his family.**

**People are able to buy anything they want at Walmart.**
**You can find a needle or a gun!**

**Every teenager gets obsessed with the pomp and the circumstances surrounding prom. They are really careful about any detail for that great day.**

**Coffee, coffee, coffee everywhere.**
**Drinking coffee as you go to work**
**or meanwhile you are working.**
**American people love coffee.**



**American people eat hearty breakfasts every day. You**
**can find in your plate some bacon, pancakes, meat,**
**eggs, juice, milk and cornflakes all together.**
**Sometimes they eat both breakfast and lunch together.**

# How is the education system in the United States?

American students spend 6 hours a day, 5 days a week, 180 days in school.



In the United States, children start preschool or nursery school at the age of 4 or under, and kindergarten when they are 5 years old.

During their free time, children spend much time watching television, listening to music or playing computer games.



In addition, are volunteers in community service organizations that help to take care of the elderly, the handicapped and hospital patients. Taking care of the environment is an activity that children enjoy doing as well.

Schools provide American children with much more than academic education. More than 80% of all students participate in extracurricular activities, such as sports, student newspapers, drama clubs, debate teams, choral groups and bands.

Today, almost 90 percent of American students attend public elementary and secondary schools. The other ten percent attend private schools; in this case, children's families afford their education.

In high school, a student in his or her first year are called freshman; in his second year, sophomore; in his third year, junior; and in his last and fourth year, senior. The students have the opportunity to choose their classes.

After that, students have a variety of subjects. Therefore, students must fulfil a certain number of credits in order to graduate and be awarded with a High School Diploma. In Ecuador, there was no final examination to graduate. Nowadays, it is a requirement.

These chart shows the progression students follow through the primary and secondary school systems in the United States.

| Grade | Age |
|-------|-----|
| Kindergarten | 5-6 |
| 1 (first) | 6-7 |

## APPENDIX 4: SAMPLE LESSON PLAN

**UNIDAD EDUCATIVA TÉCNICO SALESIANO**
**ENGLISH DAILY PLAN**

**INFORMATIVE DATA**
**Subject**: English Language
**Teacher**:
**Level:** Eight A
**Curricular Block Nº:** 2 "YOUR LIFE"
**Skills with performance criteria/competencies:** Refine understanding of the integrated skills using the learned grammar.

**Time estimated:** a week    (90 minutes)

**Date:**
**Type of work:**  Group work / Individual work.
**Location:** Environment
**Objective:**  Feedback
**Target activity:** Common objects, indefinite article, demonstrative adjectives.
*Number of activities: 3*

## *LEARNING CYCLE*

| Learning cycle | CURRICULAR BLOCK Nº 2 YOUR LIFE English around the world | ACTIVITIES | PARTICIPANTS STU. | MED. | RESOURCES, TEACHING AIDS AND/OR SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS | TIME min. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **EXPERIENCE:** | *Common Objects* | Warm Up: Hangman  Game: Vocabulary about common objects  Spell some words. Video: Top 10 United States Landmarks | x | x | Board Pictures | 90 min. |
| **REFLECTION:** | *Indefinite Article* | Read the American holidays and most famous landmarks in USA readings. | x | x | Board Pictures Worksheets Internet | |

---

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Demonstrative Adjectives.* | Underline the demonstrative adjectives in the reading. Know about some important places in USA. | | | |
| **CONCEPTUALIZATION.** | | Grammar Revision: Indefinite Article, Demonstrative adjectives. | X | X | Board, Marker, Pictures, CD, CD player, Book. |
| **EXPERIMENTATION:** | | Worksheets. Practice reading skills with readings based on U.S Culture. | | X | Book Worksheet, Pencil. Board, Marker, Readings. Internet |
| **EVALUATION:** | | Worksheets Write a short paragraph. | x | x | Book, notebook. Pictures |

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