

VOICES

Some **assistants** participating in the program share with us their **EXPERIENCES** and **impressions**. Discover **unique places** in different parts of **Spain.**

FOREIGN LANGUAGE ASSISTANTS



GOBIERNO DE ESPAÑA

MINISTERIO DE EDUCACIÓN Y FORMACIÓN PROFESIONAL

INDEX



ANDALUCÍA

Cádiz.....	3
Córdoba.....	6
Sevilla.....	7

ARAGÓN

Huesca.....	8
-------------	---

ASTURIAS

Oviedo.....	8
-------------	---

CASTILLA Y LEÓN

Palencia.....	9
Soria.....	9

CEUTA Y MELILLA

Ceuta.....	10
Melilla.....	11

COMUNIDAD VALENCIANA

Alicante.....	12
Valencia.....	13

ANDALUCÍA

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María Garzón



Cádiz

Los Barrios

Living in Los Barrios was one of the best things that ever happened to me. Yes it is not Madrid or Barcelona but the best thing about living in a small town like Los Barrios is that you get to experience the south's raw culture. You eat, live, breathe and get to see first hand the typical lifestyle and culture of Andalusia. For example the holidays such as Semana Santa, Feria and Romeria where you get to watch traditional processions, dance flamenco and have great food. The area is also great for travelling and you have places like Seville, Gibraltar, Tarifa and Morocco nearby, which are all very unique. This little town captured my heart not only by its beauty

but also by its people. The teachers at school were all so friendly and helped me with anything. I never felt alone and I met lots of people and built meaningful friendships.

My experience teaching in the schools in Los Barrios has been gratifying in many ways. One of them was being able to contribute to the students' path to learning English. Motivating and demonstrating to them the importance of learning English through fun and interactive activities. Enriching their knowledge by talking to them about where I come from, motivated the students to participate and be genuinely interested. The best part is that in their mind you are a friend and they look up to you, which motivated me to be a good example of someone who can come out of their comfort zone to achieve something they never thought they would be able to do. This for me was one of the best things I could do for myself.

My advice for anyone starting a new journey in Los Barrios is to come with an open mind and an open heart. Get involved in everything, don't miss out on anything. There are also many other language Assistants in Algeciras and La Linea that are going through the same thing as you that you can always count on if times get rough.

So I dare you to find the beauty that lies beneath this precious town called Los Barrios. You will not regret it.

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Cádiz

Ubrique

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David



VER VIDEO

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ANDALUCÍA

Cádiz

Arcos de la Frontera

My personal experience was composed of living two years in a small town of roughly 30,000 inhabitants called Arcos de la Frontera in the province of Cadiz, and two more years (currently on my fourth) in an even smaller town of 5,000 inhabitants called Prado Del Rey, which is just 30 km away from Arcos. This was important to me as I still keep in touch with the friends I have in Arcos de la Fra. My first impression was completely novel. I had seen pictures online of the town Arcos and it looked gorgeous. When I got here my expectations were met based on what I had seen online. People were very nice and I quickly found myself

acquainted with the school staff. They are the first group of people you really get to know. As time passed by I was invited to various hiking trips in the nearby Sierra de Grazalema, skiing trips in Sierra Nevada, and trips to the beaches which were an hour away. I love outdoor activities, so I had found my spot. The small towns of the Sierra: Benamahoma, Grazalema, Benaocaz, Villaluenga del Rosario among others, are really a sight to see. The beaches such as Playa de Bolonia, Caños de Meca, and El Palmar are untouched beaches just waiting to be explored. When the time came to renew, I had no doubt I wanted to spend another year. The deciding factor was the friendship I had attained amongst the staff, and the many activities that I participated in. Each January I made the decision to renew at the same place. However, as I understand, they only let you be in the same place for two years. I was fortunate enough to be given Prado Del Rey, which allowed me to start anew in a different place while keeping my ties with Arcos.

I learned a lot about the country's history including the obscure era of the Dictator Franco, which most people are unaware of. I learned about the old currency they used to use, and the cost of living and how it has changed. I learned about their political system, political parties, and their views on the bullfights. I learned that they like to sit down and have a coffee and not think about what you have to do next while you are having your coffee. Needless to say, they are not lazy just because they take siestas. They have a different work schedule, and they put a lot of effort into enjoying the present. In a nutshell, they have a slower pace of work which eventually reduced my mental stress by about half, they have made me rethink my life objectives and now that I will be going back to the U.S. in this new Trump era, nothing can stress me out. Oh, and going to a bar at noon doesn't automatically stigmatize



ANDALUCÍA

Cádiz

This year I'm lucky enough to be working as a language assistant in Cádiz, in two schools - one primary and one secondary. Cádiz is a gorgeous ancient port city at the southern most point of Spain, home to buzzing streets, old plazas and sandy beaches. I live in the old town - or the casco antiguo - which is where I spend the majority of my time because my schools are here too.

On my very first day in Spain, my coordinator Angustias gave me such a warm welcome with a paseo around the old town. A week or so later was my first day at the secondary school, Cornelio Balbo, where I was given a tour by some students. They were confident, friendly and keen to talk to me... and it really made me excited to get going and start leading classes!

My responsibilities and level of involvement vary from day to day. One day I might be sat by the side of the classroom, occasionally correcting pronunciation, and the next I might be leading a whole session with something I'd prepared earlier. The teachers here are always flexible and happy to help you out.

I developed my own bank of popular classroom activities, the most successful of which either involve music, moving around the classroom or some kind of competitive element. The students are also involved in a lot of extra curricular activities like surfing, local sporting competitions and music - there's a local junior conservatoire where students study dance and music outside of school.

Every day they make me smile with their cheeky wit and fiery Spanish 'duende.' Despite their feistiness they're also incredibly affectionate, and I'm equally as lucky with my colleagues, all of whom welcomed me with open arms - after first mistaking me for a student in the staff room! One of my highlights so far was going to the staff Christmas social where we spent the evening eating canapés, drinking cervezas and dancing salsa!

Cádiz's location, together with my 12-hour week, monthly 700€ salary and Erasmus grant allow me to travel guilt-free. In the four months I've been away, I've been to Morocco, Córdoba, Granada, Madrid, Seville, Málaga and Aracena, with plans to go to el País Vasco and Valencia soon!

If you're lucky enough to be able to choose a specific school, I urge you to choose one of mine...that's Cornelio Balbo if you're interested in secondary teaching, or Celestino Mutis for primary.



Charlie Reston



ANDALUCÍA



Córdoba

Lucena



VER VIDEO



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VER VIDEO



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Córdoba

Puente Genil



VER VIDEO

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ANDALUCÍA

Sevilla

Elise Davis



<http://myadventuresabroadelise.blogspot.com.es/>



My first five weeks as a Language Assistant in Sevilla have been fantastic! I've met loads of new people, made some lovely new friends, realised that I CAN go to social events where I don't know anybody, and also that I am enjoying my work in the secondary school and am able to learn from my mistakes, put the bad days behind me, and focus on the good ones, which are definitely the majority.

[...]

I have also been really enjoying the social life that I have found in Sevilla as I have been spending a lot of time going out to parties with my friends, going out to try various Spanish cuisine, going to the cinema, relaxing in the beautiful parks in Sevilla, and generally really making the most of living in such a lively, exciting, and sociable city.

[...]

I have a big trip to Morocco and the Sahara Desert coming up in just three weeks time and I will also be posting about my experiences of the Easter week in Sevilla and La Feria de Abril as these are both very beautiful and fascinating experiences to have in Sevilla. For this reason I would like to share them with you and also post some pictures so that you can see some of the traditional festivals and customs of Sevilla.



Augustus Thomas



<http://ceipsansebastian2006.blogspot.com.es/>



A day in the life of an auxiliar de conversación in San Sebastián (Albaida del Aljara) is fun. Whenever I enter a class all the children know that Teacher Gus has come to play games, share stories, and be a stickler for pronunciation.



Sevilla

Albaida del Aljara



Alexandra Rayo

<http://blogsaverros.juntadeandalucia.es/>



My time at IES Ostippo in Estepa has been a positive experience thus far. It's my first time in a small Andalusian town, and it's definitely been interesting! Each day starts off with me hiking up a steep mountainside, passing through the small pueblo of white houses, and feeling the brisk breeze through my many layers. Once I arrive at work I'm usually greeted by both students and coworkers alike with a friendly, "Good morning, teacher!" And so begins my day.



Sevilla

Estepa

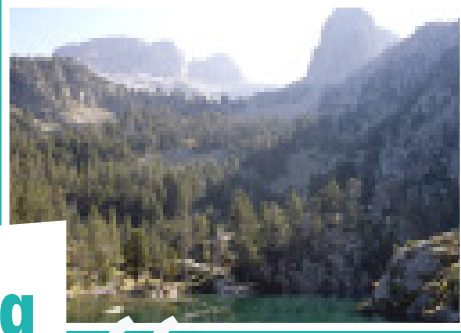


ARAGÓN

Catalina Hoadaley Lawrence

Huesca

Benasque



I have been living in Benasque for almost four months and I have been able to adapt well to the village. I feel fortunate that I was able to come here to Benasque because the people here are friendly, kind, and are willing to help. I believe these qualities make Benasque a special place and as a person who is from a different country, this makes life here so much easier and enjoyable. Furthermore, I am working in both the primary and secondary schools and my experience has been great. Not only has it been a pleasure for myself to help and work with the children of all age groups, but working with teachers who are passionate about what they do is an inspiration to me.



Benny Ussyshkin

ASTURIAS

Inspired by the notion of wanting to experience life in Spain in a different light, I opted to change provinces this year. I currently live in Oviedo, the capital city in the northern province of Asturias. Living in a medium sized city has proven challenging in its own ways. Making friends, and/or finding other English speakers is certainly not as easy as it was in Madrid, so if this is a priority for you, take note. Living here also comes with a host of benefits: incredible landscapes, mountain/beach access (which I've benefited from by going outdoor climbing/surfing, for the first time in my life), an authentic subculture/language (Asturian/Bable, with only about 100,000 native speakers), friendlier people (sorry, Madrid!) and ease of movement (you can walk anywhere).



VER VIDEO

Oviedo



CASTILLA Y LEÓN

Elisabeth



Palencia

Guardo

Cuando llegué a Guardo, nunca imaginé que mi vida iba a ser así. Desde el primer día me sentí como en casa, aunque Guardo es muy diferente de donde vengo. Al llegar aquí, me quedé impresionada por la naturaleza del lugar. Después, cuando fui al instituto y al colegio, los alumnos fueron muy simpáticos conmigo. Un día, fui con dos de mis alumnos y su familia a comer un cocido típico de la zona. Otro

día, fui con otro padre de un alumno a pasear por la montaña. También con los otros profesores conocí el pueblo y hicimos cosas como pasear, ir a comer, etc. Me encanta mi trabajo en el instituto y uno de los colegios en Guardo. Ellos me dan la oportunidad de realizar las actividades que quiero, como hablar de los temas que a mi me interesan, realizar manualidades y muchas más cosas. En conclusión, estoy muy agradecida por la oportunidad de vivir esta experiencia.



Soria

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VER VIDEO



CEUTA

Charlot Chanabier

Bonjour les filles et les garçons,

Moi c'est Margot, je suis étudiante en Sciences Politiques et suis assistante de Français à Ceuta pour l'année scolaire 2016-2017. Alors, Ceuta c'est une enclave espagnole dans le nord du Maroc, à 1h de Tanger. Si le destin, enfin l'administration du ministère, te propose Ceuta comme destination pour l'année prochaine, je t'en prie lis ce billet !

Ceuta n'est pas une ville comme les autres c'est indéniable. La situation géographique te permet d'aller au Maroc comme si tu allais faire tes courses chez Carrefour, c'est dingue non ? Envie d'aller manger du poisson frais dans un petit port de pêcheurs ? Envie d'aller visiter les villes impériales et te perdre dans les médinas parmi les plus belles du monde ? Envie de manger une tortilla et du chorizo a la plancha le midi et un tajine le soir ? Bienvenue chez moi. D'un point de vue scolaire, tu es quand même là pour être professeur(e), le public est extraordinaire. En toute honnêteté, les élèves sont curieux, respectueux, et encore curieux ! La majorité des élèves parlent deux langues, le marocain, le darija, et l'espagnol. Quoi de mieux qu'être professeur(e) face à des élèves qui représentent l'avenir de notre société, soit la diversité culturelle et linguistique ? A Ceuta tu pourras en apprendre davantage sur le contexte migratoire qui est également très présent dans cette ville européenne sur le continent africain. Beaucoup de réfugiés qui passent par Ceuta sont francophones, alors personnellement, j'ai des copains qui viennent de Guinée Conakry, du Cameroun, du Bénin, du Sénégal, du Maroc, de l'Algérie... sans parler des ceutis et de leur accueil chaleureux.

J'espère que, comme moi, tu viendras voir cette ville qui a été berbère, portugaise, espagnole!



Ceuta



VER VIDEO





MELILLA

Hope Johnson

¿Qué conocimientos tenías de Melilla antes de venir a vivir aquí?

¡No sabía nada sobre Melilla antes de venir! Creo que por eso que fue un 'shock cultural' cuando llegué.

¿Qué razón te impulsó a solicitar Melilla como destino de esta experiencia profesional?

Elegí venir a Melilla para mi año en el extranjero porque me encantó la idea de una ciudad con una mezcla de culturas y tradiciones. Pensé que sería emocionante ver a todas estas culturas coexistiendo juntas en un mundo donde, a veces, estamos tan divididos.

¿Qué es lo que más te gusta de Melilla?

Me gusta mucho la gente porque en Londres, muchas personas son muy groseras. Y también, el tiempo; ¡me gusta el calor!

Cuando, de vuelta a tu país, a tu ciudad, alguien te pida que le hables de Melilla, en muy pocas palabras dirás que "Melilla es....." (acaba la frase)

Melilla es una ciudad de contrastes. Para mí, es como un rompecabezas. Hay muchas piezas distintas representadas en las distintas culturas, comidas y lugares pero todo parece conjugarse en una manera muy bonita.



VER VIDEO



Inaya Chauvin



VER VIDEO

No conocía Melilla antes, tan solo conocía que era una zona peculiar por su ubicación en el norte de África y que está directamente vinculada con problemáticas de inmigración. No obstante, fue mi primera elección porque me interesaba descubrir su diversidad cultural.

Tengo la suerte de vivir al lado del mar y eso es un lujo para mí. Lo que más me sorprendió de Melilla es que, aunque sea una pequeña ciudad, goza de entornos muy diferentes (playa, parques, plazas, parques...) y cualquier lugar se puede alcanzar paseando. Basta mirar arriba y te encuentras con edificios modernistas preciosos. También, me encanta tener la oportunidad de viajar fácilmente tanto en España como en Marruecos.

Trabajar como auxiliar de conversación en Melilla se inscribe completamente en mi proyecto de continuar mis estudios con una tesis doctoral en la didáctica de idiomas. Es la primera vez que enseño mi lengua materna y comparto mi cultura con estudiantes de diferentes edades con el mismo nivel.

De vuelta a mi país diría que Melilla es una ciudad encantadora y acogedora en la que puedes vivir agradablemente.





MELILLA

Victoria Graves

My name is Victoria Graves and I have been a language assistant at the EOI in Melilla during the academic year 2021-2022. I chose Melilla because I wanted to experience a lesser-known side of Spanish culture and I definitely have not been disappointed. I was a little nervous before arriving, but I have had nothing but positive experiences since arriving.

Melilla is a multicultural city and is very different from the other parts of Spain that I have visited before. There are some interesting museums, plus the opportunity to attend different festivals.

The people here are incredibly friendly and as it is a small city, it is easy to assimilate into the local community and to make friends. After a few months, you will always be bumping into people you know. I have been volunteering with a local reforestation group and ornithology group.

The weather here is very nice all year, and for those of us used to a colder climate, it never gets really cold (although the locals would disagree with me). Melillans, like in other parts of Spain, enjoy spending time outdoors - having a coffee on a terrace, walking on the beach or relaxing in the park - and it is possible to do this all year round. The pace of life is much slower than in the UK and there are many cafés where you can enjoy some tapas or churros and chocolate on a sunny afternoon. I highly recommend choosing Melilla for a language assistant placement. It will be a unique chance to discover a different side of Spain.



Inaya Chauvin

I came to Melilla with next to no knowledge of the city. Upon arriving, Melilla's beauty certainly exceeded my expectations. The city's beaches, parks, and buildings are similar to other Spanish coastal cities that I've visited. La Vieja, Parque Forestal Juan Carlos I, and the paseo surrounding the city's coast have been some of my favorite spots during my time here.

While living in Melilla you are eligible to receive a Melillan residency discount on flights and ferries within Spain, thus I've had the opportunity to fly to other Spanish cities at a discounted rate.

My schools have been great hosts and for me the assistant role has offered me an opportunity to explore the possibility of pursuing a career as a teacher going forward. Furthermore, I've been very fortunate to work with teachers who are passionate about what they do and committed to the success of their students.

Between my colegios, the local university, and other language assistants I haven't had much trouble making connections and friends while in Melilla. The international community within Melilla isn't very sizable, but in many ways I believe this has pushed me outside of my comfort zone and encouraged me to spend my time among locals and Spanish university students. I'm certainly grateful for my time in Melilla and I believe I'm



Laure Jumelais

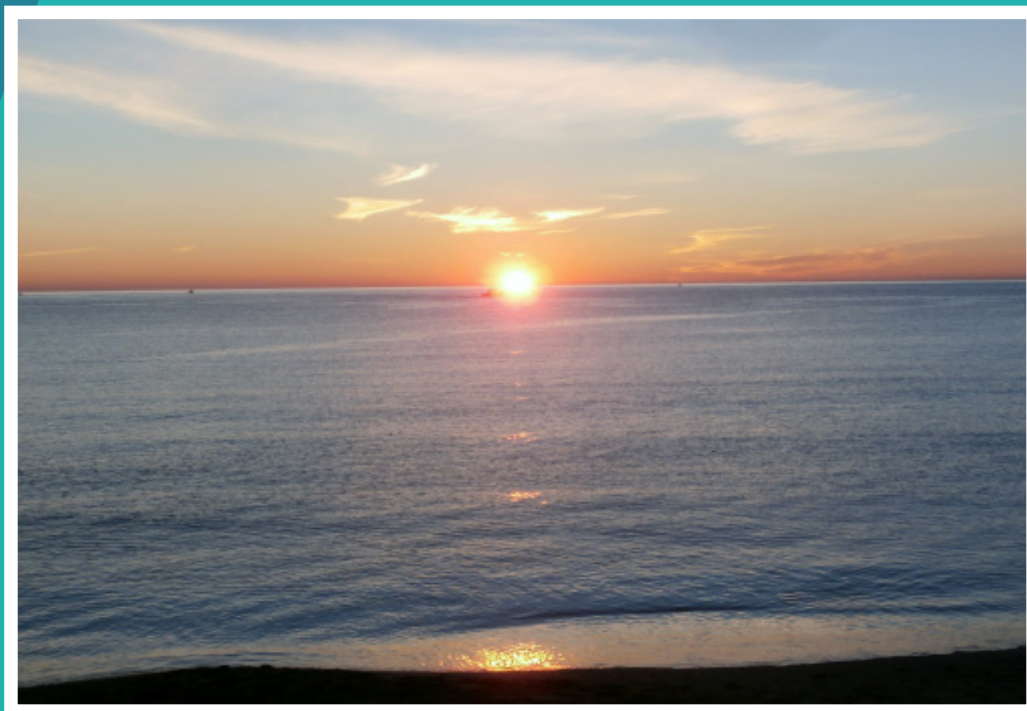
Si vous êtes un peu découragé.e ou effrayé par ce que vous pouvez avoir entendu sur Melilla et sa jumelle Ceuta, vous serez certainement (enfin je l'espère) rassuré.e par mon expérience.

Melilla est effectivement une ville assez petite que vous apprendrez à connaître rapidement. Sa taille moyenne rend tout accessible à pied. C'est l'idéal pour allier balades et trajets quotidiens. Après quelques démarches administratives simples (avec lesquelles je pourrai vous aider), vous obtiendrez le sta résident/e de la ville, ce qui signifie de sacrées réductions pour vous échapper temporairement de Melilla et découvrir ses voisines péninsulaires, Malaga, Motril et Almeria, accessibles après une petite nuit dans le ferry ou à peine 40 minutes d'avion. Enfin les paysages marocains vous attendent à quelques kilomètres. 2 pays pour le prix d'1 !!

Amateurs de sport, vous allez trouver votre bonheur ! Vous pourrez courir tout le long du littoral et les nombreux parcs. N'hésitez pas à vous inscrire dans un club de votre choix, cela n'en fera que plus de rencontres. Vous allez rencontrer un petit groupe d'auxiliaires qui vont vite devenir vos acolytes de découvertes. La ville organise aussi pas mal d'évènements festifs, culturels et associatifs. La vie nocturne est vraiment chouette aussi. Je pourrai continuer longtemps comme ça. La cuisine est très bonne, le rythme de vie est différent de la France mais vraiment reposant. Vous apprendrez a tepar comme un espagnol et boire el té con hierbabuena comme nos voisins marocains.



COMUNIDAD VALENCIA



Amandine Jacques



Alicante

Almoradí

Este es mi segundo año como auxiliar de francés en el instituto Azud de Alfeitamí, situado en Almoradí, un pueblo pequeño ubicado a unos 40 minutos de Alicante. El día de mi llegada en el instituto, todo el mundo me acogió con entusiasmo, como si formara parte de la gran familia de profesores que ya se conocían entre todos desde años.

Con la otra auxiliar de inglés, nos invitaron a comidas de profesores a principios del curso, nos propusieron excursiones para visitar un poco los alrededores, y algunos nos invitaron a su casa para comer. Son personas muy amables y acogedoras.

En cuanto a las actividades en mi tiempo libre, varían mucho. En efecto, he visitado bastantes lugares alrededor del pueblo en el que vivo. Tengo que admitir que el pueblo en el que vivo está muy bien situado, porque está rodeado por ciudades bastantes grandes como Torrevieja, Elche, Alicante... y dado que vivo a 5 minutos de la estación de autobuses, es muy fácil y cómodo desplazarme para irme de compras, para pasear cerca del mar o irme al cine... También tengo amigos que estudian en Valencia, así que algunas veces me voy de viaje allí y como no trabajo los lunes y martes, me da tiempo irme de viaje y volver.

Los jueves por la tarde, voy a casa de la directora para dar clases particulares a su hijo y sus amigos. Es otra experiencia muy enriquecedora, tanto para mí como para ellos, porque así permite crear vínculos más cercanos y desarrollar otro método de aprendizaje.

El primer año de trabajo, con los profesores y la directora del instituto, nos fuimos una mañana al ayuntamiento para conocer al alcalde de Almoradí. Nos acogió en su despacho, y hablamos de la experiencia como lectora de lengua. Fue muy amable. Sigo muy contenta con haber renovado este curso, los profesores y la gente del instituto es maravillosa, y creo que lo que más importa cuando estamos en un país que no es nuestro, es sentirse como si estuviéramos con nuestra familia.



COMUNIDAD VALENCIA



Alicante

Denia



Gabriel Pena

I encourage you to choose Valencia community because it is well communicated to the rest of the Spain because of the train system, so even if you are pretty far from Madrid and Barcelona, there is a train that stop here in Denia and in most of the other smaller cities.

It is well communicated with the rest of the country. (...) During the weekends that is what I like to do, travel to all these coast cities.



VER VIDEO



Jemma Packham



Valencia

Guadassuar

Me llamo Jemma, tengo veinte años y vivo en Inglaterra en una ciudad que se llama Reading. Estoy trabajando en un colegio de infantil y primaria, CEIP Balmes, que está en un pueblo pequeño que se llama Guadassuar a unos 30 Km de Valencia.

Vivo en un piso en el centro de Valencia muy cerca de la estación del Norte. Lunes, martes y miércoles voy en tren a la escuela. El tren es muy barato con un abono mensual y el viaje dura unos treinta minutos más o menos. El pueblo no tiene una estación de tren y por lo tanto uno de los profesores me recoge cada mañana, y me acerca a la estación por la tarde. Trabajo lunes, martes y miércoles. Lo cual me permite disfrutar de un fin de semana muy largo y hacer muchas excursiones por toda España.

Durante las clases, trabajamos en grupos de cuatro o cinco niños, hablamos en inglés, hacemos y contestamos preguntas. A mediodía como con algunos profesores en el comedor escolar. Para mí, es muy útil porque me permite mejorar mi español y aprender nuevas palabras. Todos los profesores son muy acogedores y amables y me ayudan en todo lo que necesito.

En mi tiempo libre, doy una clase particular con dos niños pequeños una vez a la semana, voy al gimnasio, me reúno con otros auxiliares que están trabajando en Valencia, exploro la ciudad y mis amigos y yo hacemos varias escapadas, por ejemplo un día alquilamos un coche y fuimos a Málaga para pasar el fin de semana. Además, en verano podremos pasar más tiempo en la playa durante nuestros días libres.

Valencia es una ciudad con mucha vida nocturna y mucho ambiente tanto de día como de noche. Moverse por toda la ciudad es fácil y barato con el sistema de transporte público, por ejemplo con el metro. La arquitectura de la ciudad es preciosa y todos los edificios son grandes. Debo mencionar la comida también, la paella valenciana y las tapas son típicas en España.

