

# New American Voices

America is known as a place of opportunity where people from other countries come to better their lives. A group of Shannon Peña's ELL students explain how moving to the U.S. from another country has altered their lives, and how life now is different from life in their hometowns. With the aid of ARROW reporters and KUOW's Radioactive youth media program, the students recorded their voices and captured their experiences. If you're lucky, the next page may include an audio CD of their exclusive accounts.

Mumina Juma  
Sophomore

Language: Somalian

"Writing the essay helped me to write better. When I got feedback, it helped me fix things and become better."



I was born in Kenya, and I have lived in the United States for five years.

The houses in Kenya, where I'm from, are different than the houses in the United States. They are built in different ways; they're shaped in a different way, some are smaller and some are bigger. In Kenya, we didn't pay any house rent, light or water.

In Kenya, there was no light in the houses and if you wanted water, there was tap water near the house. It is the women's responsibility to get water for their families, wash the whole family's clothes by hand, and do the cooking and cleaning with the water they brought. Since that, we moved to Nairobi.

Nairobi is like the United States but more beautiful, with tall buildings, animals walking around, the ocean big and wide, and people walking to many different places. But still, we didn't pay house rent, light or water because we lived in the house my dad built for us in Nairobi.

Nairobi is the capital and the largest city of Kenya. It also known as the "Green City in the Sun," where every African people love because it's so big and beautiful. Most of the people live there, that's why my big brother visits there every two years. When I

graduate from high school, I will be going to Nairobi for a visit one day.

When we came to the United States like three month later, we started paying our rent when the rent man came to our door and asked us for the house rent. One thing I don't like about the United State is that you have to pay for everything like for goods and services. Plus I don't like the weather. It's so cold and I'm not use to cold weather.

The only thing that I like in the United States is going to school and learning so many things that I didn't use to know, like speaking English, reading and writing. When I came to the United States I didn't even know how to write my own name, but now I know all that kind of things.

I miss my homeland and one day I would like to go back and see what has been changed. One thing I missed in Kenya is the weather. How it used to be so hot all the time and how the sun was shining every morning so bright and warm it feels like you're in heaven. But when I came to the United States and landed in New York I felt the coldness when I got off the plane. It felt like I was in Antarctica.