

IN ENGLISH Education

AT POZNAN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY



XVII NATIONAL OLYMPIAD OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE FOR STUDENTS OF TECHNICAL UNIVERSITIES

The Centre of Languages and Communication,
the organizer of the 17th National Olympiad of the English Language for Students of Technical Universities,
cordially invites all the students of Poznan University of Technology to take part in this annual event.

National Olympiad of the English Language for Students of Technical Universities is an English competition
that draws students of Technical Universities from all over Poland.

The primary objective of the Olympiad is to assess the knowledge of the English language,
basic technical English lexicon and the fundamental knowledge about English speaking countries among students
of technical universities.

National Olympiad consists of two stages: the first stage is carried at technical universities around Poland,
whereas the finals take place at Poznan University of Technology.

We encourage all students and the faculty members to both take part and follow this year's competition.

<http://www.clc.put.poznan.pl/olimpiada-jezyka-angielskiego/>

Margo Heston

What should we know about you?

I am a native of Los Angeles, California, the daughter of two actors and the sister of twin siblings, two years younger than me. While at Johns Hopkins University, I studied Biomedical Engineering, served as a Residential Advisor to around 100 students in the dormitories, and acted in, directed and marketed 15 theater productions on campus. Today, I am an alumna of Theta Tau, a professional engineering fraternity, and a member of the Order of the

Engineer, committed to always practicing my profession toward the best result.

Aside from engineering, I am passionate about learning in general; I am constantly looking for new educational podcasts, and love finding new adventures in all forms. I have a soft spot for YouTube, as it is a fantastic platform for communication and exploring topics ranging from astronomy and world crises to comedy and make-up tutorials, and has led to a community of content creators that I highly admire. It very well may work itself into my teaching while here.

Why did you choose Poland?

Poland seemed like a fitting option for a number of reasons. When I was applying for the Fulbright fellowship, this country's profile specifically asked for candidates from engineering backgrounds; of course, this suited me, given my field of study and my desire to explore new avenues using my education. I was also motivated by familial origin, as my ancestors were Polish Jews that left the country over 100 years ago. I am the first family member to return to Poland, and would like to both track their lives geographically and learn about the country's religious arena as it stands today. So far I am very impressed to see how rapidly the country is growing in the European and global scenes, in scientific, political and cultural areas.

Can you tell us something about yourself?

While I am an engineer by trade, I spent most of my life studying the performing arts; in fact, most of my peers and teachers in high school thought I was going to university for dance. I studied dance, singing and acting for 15 years, competing during high school and spending most of my extra time in the studio, working on technique. All of this was despite the fact that my parents urged me never to pursue the arts as a career; I suppose our family just cannot leave performing behind us.

During these years of intensive study, I decided to develop perfect pitch, which means that I can produce any tone on command, without reference to another one. They are permanently stored in my head for retrieval, so I can tune a choir without instruments. I don't know how useful this will be in the future, but it certainly is a good party trick for music lovers.

Is it difficult to receive a Fulbright scholarship?

How did you get it?

The Fulbright fellowship is one of the most prestigious programs in the world; while the scholarship operates in over 155 countries, the application process is very competitive, as each country offers few awards compared to the number of candidates. I would not be a good judge of whether the scholarship is difficult to receive, but I can say that the application is certainly time-intensive. I started mine seven months prior to its due date, and I spent the



majority that process writing 2 essays, each one page in length. By contrast, medical school applicants write closer to 10 short essays, so I might argue that the Fulbright asks for more attention to concise and carefully polished writing. Of course, I have never applied to medical school myself, so this is just a conjecture.

After submitting the application, I waited three months for the United States Department of State to alert me as to whether they considered me a strong candidate to represent our country. Once I had been selected for finalist status, the Polish Commission in charge of Fulbright fellowships received my application. The commission then evaluated me based on my written components and an in-person interview to determine whether they wanted me to teach in their education system. Following the interview, I waited another 2 months or so until I received notice of my grant receipt. All in all, the process took around a year.

What are the advantages of the scholarship?

The fellowship provides benefit to at least three parties: the United States Department of State, the grantee, and

the host country. The State Department selects for grantees that they believe will positively represent the country professionally and personally, and will promote cultural exchange during their time abroad. The grantee gets to make connections in an entirely new environment, strengthen their language, research and teaching skills, and grow in other unforeseen ways. The host country (particularly the host communities) participate in cultural exchange, both formally and informally. In many cases, such as Poland, these countries also send scholars to the United States to fully engage as partners in the operation; this leads to strengthened individuals from both countries, and encourages a more active and cooperative international community.

Your major is biomedical engineering, so can you tell us what do you specialize in?

Most of my research involves studying learning trajectories of individuals who work with a deficit; while earning my Bachelor's degree, I have focused most on adults with hearing loss. In graduate school, however, I would like to broaden this inspection to include people with learning disabilities and neurodegenerative disorders. Through quantitative research of brain plasticity in these situations, it may be possible to design behavioral techniques that promote faster learning of integrated skills and prevent or even reverse neurological effects of aging. To this end, I have worked on developing an auditory training application for deaf adults, to help them learn how to use newly received hearing devices like cochlear implants and hearing aids.

What do you hope to learn here?

As a recent graduate from university, I am interested in learning firsthand about the college experience in Poland: how students spend their time, how they regard academic expression and policies, and why certain resources may or may not be provided. I spent a good deal of my last two years at university engaged in developing student communities and improving comfort and care so as to aid academic achievement, so this topic is very important to me. I would also like to explore the deaf community in Poland, both how it operates internally and how the hearing population regards it from an external view. Beyond that, I am excited to absorb everything I can about the culture of this

country; I hope to travel a fair bit to obtain a more nuanced perspective (and of course, a scenic experience).

What did you find the most interesting when you first came to Poland?

I found the widespread pride in Poland's culture to be most endearing; in the United States, history varies widely from state to state, so in my experience people tend to know less about each region and the country in general. From what I have seen here, however, history is an integral part of individuals' identity, and I really enjoy learning about that.

What shocked or surprised you the most?

I think the prevalence of shopping centers was most striking to me. In the States, we shop more often at individual shops, sometimes organized in an outdoor group but most often just in a commercial district, with no collective factor like the shopping center. Here though, one can pick up this week's groceries, buy a new computer and check out this season's fashion trends all in one place, and everywhere around the city. Furthermore, proliferation of these centers is very interesting; I'm not sure where the consumers come from, but there must be a market for them, indicated by the sheer number of malls.

How did you adapt? Have you had any help settling in?

I think there have been three key features that have helped me settle into Poznan: firstly, I had some time prior to the teaching year to navigate obstacles like obtaining a tram card and establishing a routine. Secondly, I spent a weekend with some fellow teachers, touring the city by foot and learning about Poznan's and Poland's history. I consider this a turning point in feeling comfortable among the new surroundings, because with this context I felt connected to the people and understood about how history has influenced actions today. This experience encouraged me to reach out and find connections within the community, so far in the form of joining classes at the Polish Dance Theater in Stary Rynek. During college I had to quit dance in favor of pursuing my engineering studies, but now that I have rejoined a group I feel like I'm coming home. Dancing here further contributes to my appreciation of the city and

country, and I get more immersion in the Polish language, increasing my vocabulary and giving me more confidence to speak up.

What is your experience of Poland so far?

Everywhere I go, people are so welcoming and willing to help in whatever way they can; they are patient when I struggle to communicate, and their faces light up when I manage a simple exchange. From a newcomer's perspective, this environment is really encouraging, because I know the consequences are minor when I flub.

Particularly with architecture in mind, old lives right alongside new, gracing Poznan with a quaint aesthetic and conveying the people's pride in their history. I love this feature of the city, because it provides a visual timeline that you can follow just by walking around. Everything is so densely situated, in that if you look carefully, there is always another niche to explore; I don't anticipate being bored here, ever.

Interview with our second Fulbright scholar, Stephen Moore, is going to be published in the next edition of Education in English

False friends **quiz**

False friends are words from different languages that sound similar, yet they have a different meaning. Polish and English have quite a few of these. They often make learning difficult and confuse learners. Try taking the quiz to see if you can distinguish between the pairs of words.

1.

A. My mother caught a flu and had to visit a physician / physicist.

B. Physicians / physicists study all kinds of physical phenomena.
2.

A. I went to work and forgot my report. I must have left it on my desk / board.

B. I need to buy several desks / boards to build a birdfeeder.
3.

A. The vehicle suffered in the accident, but the actual / current damage was greater than initially thought.

B. I never watch news. I don't even know who the actual / current prime minister is.
4.

A. The foreign guests were invited to visit a car fabric / factory.

B. She always makes her own clothes and manages to buy beautiful fabrics / factories.
5.

A. My parents brought me several souvenirs / memories from their trip to Egypt.

B. My best childhood souvenirs / memories are associated with playing with my friends.

KEY: 1A physician; 1B physicists; 2A desk; 2B board; 3A actual; 3B boards; 4A factory; 4B fabrics; 5A souvenirs; 5B memories.