



Brian, 14

What have you been doing this week?

I've been having parties lately, like baby showers and stuff. I've been studying a lot. I've been playing ball with the neighbors, basketball.

Why have you been having baby showers?

Because we just had a little baby. He was born on Easter.* He's cute. He was born early, because he was supposed to be born on May 2. He's the smallest thing I've ever seen. He's like a doll. He weighs just a little bit more than five pounds.*

So you didn't have a usual kind of Easter, did you?

No, we took Mom to the hospital. She went in about 1:00 am and the baby came at about 10:00 pm. I stayed home and take care* of the little kids with my brother and uncle. We cleaned the house to surprise mom.

Please explain what a baby shower is.

It's when you have a party for a woman who is pregnant, and they bring gifts like diapers and baby food and clothes. We did games for the adults. We played Spanish music for the people to dance. We made some hamburgers and hot dogs* and passed out cake.

What classes are you taking?

Science, social studies, math, language arts, reading lab, guided studies, that's when they help you study, and health.

What languages do you speak at home?

Spanish and English.* With my brother, I speak English because we are used to English, but with my mom, I speak Spanish. With my dad, I speak both. We talk both languages, really. I was born in Puerto Rico, and I was about seven when we came to the mainland U.S. I didn't speak English. We were in Wisconsin, and there aren't a lot of Spanish speakers in Wisconsin. The teachers would take me out of class to learn English.

Is there anything that you are looking forward to doing this summer?

We'll probably go to Myrtle Beach this summer. It's a whole family trip. We go to the beach or hang out at the pool at the hotel. We go out to eat and to the fun park. It has roller coasters and stuff.

Next Friday is the eighth grade dance. It's like a prom* but for eighth graders.* You take a date.* You dress in a suit,* and you go to the dance and have fun there. They'll have music and a DJ.*

Is there anything that you'd like to say to kids in other countries?

I hope you follow your dreams and never stop believing or trying.

A Few Words

Easter: A very important celebration for Christians. It always comes on a Sunday in the spring.

Five pounds: About 2.25 kilograms.

Take care: This is a "slip of the tongue." Brian meant to say "took care of."

Hot dogs: A popular kind of sausage sandwich.

Spanish and English: Brian's family, like almost 50 million Americans, is Hispanic. He was born in Puerto Rico, and his family speaks both English and Spanish.

Prom: Most high schools in the U.S. have a special, formal dance party for the students who graduate. It is called a prom.

Eighth graders: Students in their eighth year of school. They are usually thirteen or fourteen years old.

Date: When a boy asks a girl to go to a party with him, she is his "date" for the evening.

Suit: Formal men's clothing, such as what a businessman wears.

DJ: This stands for disc jockey and means the person who chooses and plays the music, often for a radio program but also for parties.

Discussion Questions

1. When was the most recent time a new baby came to your family? How did your family and friends celebrate?
2. How did you learn English? What were the first English words that you learned? Do you enjoy learning English, or is it difficult and uninteresting for you?