



Interview with Ange

Conducted by Manny Pierre, Teacher

Section 1

How old are you, Ange?

I'm 10 years old.

You were born in Haiti. Why did your family move to America?

I was born in Haiti. But there wasn't enough work for my dad and my mom in Haiti. From the time I was three until I was five, my dad wasn't there. He was in Chile. He was working there with his brother. Because I was little, my mom didn't know what to do. Then, when I was five, my dad sent my mom a check so we could go to Chile. My dad already had a house that he had rented. We moved to Chile and lived there for two years.

After about two months there, my dad said it's time for me to go school so I could learn Spanish. I didn't know what Spanish was or what country I was in, but when I was 5 years old I learned how to speak Spanish. We lived in Chile from when I was five until I was seven.

Tell me about your journey.

There was a long experience between Chile and the United States. First, we had to travel to Colombia. In Chile, we took a bus, then we went on an airplane to Colombia, where there was another bus. On that bus, we were sent to where the boats were so we could cross the ocean to get to Panama. We waited for five days before we could get on the boat to Panama. Before we went on the boat, we got a tent. In Panama, we would live in the tent in a refugee camp.

In the boat, I fell asleep. When I woke up, we had arrived on land in Panama. We got a snack, and I saw a mountain. I asked if we were going to the mountain. They said yes. We stayed in the mountains in Panama for six weeks. Then we could finally leave the mountain.

And then we took a bus to different Spanish speaking countries. I went to Honduras, Guatemala, and Mexico. We

lived in each country for one week so we could prepare ourselves to go to the next one.

Finally, it was time to go to America. We took a plane, and when we got to America we took another bus. Then I took a taxi so we could come to where my grandpa lives in Boston, Massachusetts.

How did you feel on the plane ride to the United States?

It was good because I got to sit with my sister and we got to watch TV. You know how there's iPads on the chairs? We got to watch and eat whatever we wanted from the plane. That was a happy thing. I liked it because I had never been on a plane. I wanted to go up high. I saw the clouds.

What are the strongest memories that you have from your trip from Haiti, to Chile, to America?

The boat part. I liked that when I entered the boat, the water of the ocean started splashing me on my face and my clothes. My dad said to lie down so it didn't get on my whole body. I was happy that I was on a boat for the first time. I fell asleep there, and then I got out of the boat when we arrived on land. It took about an hour to get to land.

I also remember going to other Spanish speaking countries. I got to learn new Spanish words that I didn't know.

Interview with Ange: Section 2

Tell me about school when you first came to America.

We had just moved from Chile. So I was nervous when my dad and my grandpa told me they found a school for me. The first day I was going to school I said I wasn't ready. I said I wasn't going to go. I was nervous because I was going to meet new kids, and I didn't know if they spoke Spanish, and I didn't speak English.

When my family brought me to school, my grandpa told the people in the office that I was in third grade. Then, the principal showed me the classroom. When I came to the classroom, I saw you, and ...

You were surprised?

Mm hmm. I felt really nervous, and I didn't know how I was going to talk. When I came in, everyone was in a circle on the rug, and everybody was staring at me. I didn't know why. You told me to put away my backpack. I didn't know where to put it, so somebody showed me. Then I went to the rug, and you guys said to introduce myself. I didn't introduce myself because I didn't know how to say it, and I didn't know what you were saying. Then when you said something in Haitian, I understood it because I speak Haitian. That's when I knew what to do, because you were

translating it for me in Haitian. I thought, “Does this teacher know how to speak Haitian Creole, or am I dreaming?”

All of the classmates were speaking Spanish. That's when I said, “Oh!” I said, “Do you guys speak Spanish?” in Spanish, and then I started talking to them. I was able to talk to them.

How did teachers help you?

Teachers helped me because some of them do know Spanish, so that's how I knew to talk to some of the teachers.

How did you make friends? How did other kids help you in school?

I made friends by speaking Spanish.

When it was recess time, one of them used to play with me and show me around the yard, so I could play new games that I didn't know in English. They were teaching me how to play tag and other stuff. Also, they helped me know things that you said in class.

Interview with Ange: Section 3

What's different from the first day you came to America and now?

The languages I speak are different now. I loved Spanish until I started speaking English. I was proud of myself that I learned to speak English. I always help my father translate now. Now I know English much better.

What's it like to be able to speak three languages?

It's good, but I don't speak three languages. I speak four: French, Haitian Kreyòl, Spanish, and English.

What are some ways your life and your family's life have changed since coming to America?

The changes have been really good. My dad got to look for new jobs, and my mom had somewhere to work, too.

How is being Haitian being important to you and to your family?

I get to help my dad and my mom translate things in their languages.

What were your favorite foods in Haiti and Chile, and what is your favorite food now?

In Haiti: rice and beans

In Chile: empanadas with flour and chicken inside of them

Right now, I like french fries, chicken nuggets, and cranberry juice.

What is a favorite memory of your life in Haiti and Chile?

I have so many pictures of Haiti in my backpack. I bring them to school with me. They make me remember how it was. My favorite thing in Haiti was when I was a kid, at my kindergarten school, they always used to have a pool party. I used to take pictures there.

What do you like about living in America?

I get to learn new things and get to make things by myself. When I grow up and I'm a teenager, I get to have a job.

What do you want people to know about Haiti?

Knowing languages. If you know a language, like English, and you move to Haiti, now you know two languages. So now you can get good jobs. That's the funnest thing about Haiti.

Also, in Haiti, many people don't have houses or enough food. When I came here, I appreciated that I had those things.

What do you want people to know about Chile?

In Chile, everywhere that you go you see water. There's a park with a whole bunch of stores. People put umbrellas up and put stuff that other people want to buy. Right next to the stores, you see water. I always went there when my mom was doing her job. Everywhere you go in Chile you see water!

Do you know other kids who have an immigration story like yours?

Not exactly, but one of our fourth grade teachers had a new student that was in Haiti and then went to Chile and then came here.

Why do you think it could be useful for other kids to hear your story?

So kids know more about different experiences that people have. It's good for people to see that not everybody has the same type of life. Some of them were born here, some of them were born in different countries. I went to many countries to come here.

Why do you think it might be good to know about more places?

So you can get more jobs as a teenager. If you have more languages, you go to a job and they say, "Can you speak this language?" you can say, "Yes, I can."