

Describe an experience of waiting for a bus at a bus stand.

I usually go to school in my neighbour's ramshackle old car. As such I am not subjected to the much talked about rigours of a bus or train journey. However, the other day, my neighbour went on a vacation. I was left all alone to face the horrid experience of going to school by bus.

It was raining heavily. Even then I stepped out of my house with a very jaunty air. There was a light in my eye and a song on my lips: "Raindrops keep falling on my head". I went to the bus-stand in this happy mood and lumbered up to the queue. It was a lung one.

I waited and waited for the bus to come. It was almost like waiting for the Promised Land. Buses kept coming and going but the ravishing beauty at the head of the queue was still there, almost gummed to her spot. I dished out a little of my much-praised patience and waited.

The scenery at the bus stand was quite amusing for me. An old man was going round selling cakes. Many of them were standing and chatting with each other. Perhaps this was the only free time they could find to talk important issues of the day. One common thing which I observed among the youngsters at the bus stand was keeping them occupied with their favourite mobile phones. In fact some of them had earphones plugged into their ears and they were completely cut off from what was happening around them.

By now I came to know several people in the queue. They were all irritated. I tried to cheer them up a bit, but to no avail. Soon after this, I tried to while away the time by solving a crossword puzzle. In the meanwhile, one more bus arrived. The queue moved up fast and I was about to get in. But at that very moment a local citizen jumped the queue and got in, and I was left out as the bus moved away.

Another bus came after 15 minutes. It was packed like sardines in a tin. I tried to get in but I was summarily pushed out by the hefty conductor. I just could not risk fighting the fellow. So I did not say a word and waited at the head of the queue.

The bus queue, by now, had become elephantine. Soon there was a fight. I saw a youngish fellow being manhandled by a mountain of a man. The former gave his adversary a couple of light blows and ran away. The big man shouted: "Pick pocket! Pick pocket!" The pick pocket was seen running into a moving bus and disappeared.

By now I had made a big fool of myself. I had wasted a lot of my time for nothing. Now I would be late to school. I was scared of being late for school. Finally the bus arrived. I hopped into it as it stopped and got myself a seat. After a short while the bus started moving.

ARTICLE : How to Prevent the Spread of Dengue Fever

Lately there have been several cases of dengue fever in our neighbourhood, Taman Berjaya. As a long-time resident, it saddens me to see my neighbours falling ill due to this disease. We can easily curb the rampant spread of the disease by adopting a few preventive measures.

First of all, we should spend at least 10 minutes to clean our surroundings, both inside and outside our house. Destroy all mosquito breeding sites. Throw away all empty cans or unused containers into proper bins. If they are left outside, they may collect water if it rains. This will of course attract the dengue mosquito to lay eggs in the stagnant water. Try not to collect water in pails in your house too. If you must, then remember to put lids on the pails.

You should clean all gutters, drains and ditches regularly so that water can drain away. Mosquitoes cannot breed in continuously running water. Replace water in vases, pots and pet feeding dishes often. This will stop mosquito eggs from growing into adults.

Another preventive measure is to keep the grass trimmed at all times to eliminate cool, hiding places for adult mosquitoes, if you feel that hiring a grass cutter often is not within your budget, you can always buy your own lawnmower. It may cost money to keep your grass trimmed, but I feel it is a small price to pay if we want to prevent the spread of dengue fever.

You can also use anti-larvae chemicals, such as Abate to protect you and your family from dengue. You can get them from the supermarket or grocery shops. These anti-larvae chemicals do not cost much and are safe to use in drinking water. When you and your family go outdoors, it would be wise to use mosquito repellent. This too can be purchased at supermarkets or grocery shops and do not cost much.

Finally, if you or your family members have a fever, chills or headaches, it would be wise to immediately see the doctor. Do not dismiss these symptoms. They may not necessarily be dengue fever symptoms, but there is no harm in making sure that they are not.

I would like to end my article by saying that contracting dengue fever is no laughing matter. Therefore, we should all cooperate to curb the spread of this dangerous disease.

Describe a picnic by a waterfall

Picnics are a fabulous way to have fun and enjoy mother nature. With that in mind, my parents decided to go for a picnic at the Tanjung Karang Waterfall located just off the PLUS highway. My brothers and I have been pestering our parents to take us there for weeks and we were thrilled when they finally agreed.

The waterfall area was such a picturesque sight, with different species of plants and birds surrounding the waterfall. A myriad of species of birds could be seen perched on towering trees. I was taken aback at the stunning view of the 30-foot high waterfall which cascaded to the bottom. The large rocks beside the waterfalls were arranged in a peculiar manner and seemed to jut out while paying no heed to gravity. All these details when combined mesmerised my family and I.

As my parents began to set up the picnic, my brothers and I jumped straight into the icy-cold waters. Although crowded, my brothers and I found a nice quiet spot a little further upstream. To our dismay, the water was very shallow and barely reached our knees. Nonetheless, we had a splashing good time spraying each other with water guns while taunting each other at our below-par marksmanship. We tried to re-enact many gun-firing scenes from our favourite movies, shooting and moving in slow motion in various stances. Our silly antics made many people laugh.

Soon, it was noon and we left the now tepid waters for the comfort of a small hut by the waterfall where our parents prepared lunch. As I munched heartily on my delicious burger, I admired the spectacular view of the sun's glossy reflection on the smooth water surface. Even rocks with the slightest amount of water splashed onto it glistened as the sun's rays hit them. An amazing sight and feeling it was and it took some time for the beauty to sink in.

My brothers and I resumed swimming for a few more hours before having to pack and leave. I saw numerous flocks of birds returning to their nests high up on the trees. It was such a peaceful and serene place. I now understand why people love to go picnicking by the waterfall.

Describe the night market in your town or village

Night markets or *pasar malam* can be found everywhere in Malaysia, from big cities like Kuala Lumpur to a small town like Slim River, where I live. In my town, the night market is held once a month along the street in the middle of the town. The whole street is closed to traffic on the first Saturday of every month. This is the only night when the town comes alive.

The first to arrive at the site are the hawkers, stall owners and wholesalers who come in lorries and vans to unload their goods. The next hour is spent arranging their wares on their makeshift stalls. Soon, the whole place is transformed into a big shopping centre, brightly illuminated by fluorescent lamps and colourful bulbs.

Many shoppers flock to the night market to get their vegetables. There are a few vegetable stalls offering fresh vegetables at affordable prices. Housewives would quickly snap up the fresh vegetables after some bargaining. Later in the night, one can buy these vegetables at discounted prices as vendors try to finish their stock for the night. It is funny to see them trying to outdo one another, shouting on top of their voices, "Satu ringgit, tiga ikat..."

Apart from vegetables and fruit, there are also food stalls. The aroma of freshly fried chicken, *ayam panggang*, *yong tow foo*, fish balls, and laksa is enough to tempt any fussy eater. As for children, there are ice cream stalls, burgers, and sweets of all shapes and sizes.

At the other end of the street, there will be a few textile stalls. There is also a famous second-hand stall which sells cheap jeans and jackets. For those who cannot afford to get a new pair of jeans, this is the place to shop. There is also a famous *makcik* who sells trendy clothes, colourful scarves and tudung of various patterns and colours.

Shoppers who flock to the night market come from as far as the nearby towns. Some are here to shop and hunt for bargains while some are here to take a leisurely stroll on a Saturday night. The youngsters would take this time to hang out with their friends, enjoying the fiesta-like atmosphere.

Some nights, one can come across interesting personalities who try to sell their wares with a microphone, encouraging and urging buyers to choose any three items for RM10. One can also come across the medicine man, crouching mysteriously in one corner, selling medicine to cure some illnesses or to increase one's strength.

By 10.30 p.m. the crowd slowly dwindles. Usually, there is litter everywhere. Our night markets are quite different from the flea markets of Europe. They offer not only cheap items for sale but also a variety of goods. One can call it a 'one-stop shopping centre' of Malaysia.