

A

## I am an ESL Student

*I am an ESL student ...*

I did not choose to be here, or to leave my friends, or to leave my home  
I do not look like my brother or my sister, I look like me, and that is normal, it is you who looks strange  
I am very fortunate because at the end of the day I will have two or three languages

*you see, I am an ESL student ...*

I like blue jeans - the first time I saw my national dress was at a Multicultural Night at my new Canadian school  
I do not live on strange ethnic foods, I like ice cream, pizza, Coca Cola and junk food  
I am not by birth-right a mathematics or science scholar

*you see, I am an ESL student ...*

I am a child en route to adulthood and that trip will be as challenging for me as any other young person  
I am not by ethnic definition a gang member, a cheat, a male chauvinist, a suppressed female, a bad driver, a compulsive gambler, or part of a close-knit extended family  
I am not learning disabled, educationally retarded or in need of fixing, I just don't speak, write or read English well, but that will change

*you see, I am an ESL student ...*

I am as unique as any Canadian-born young person and as a group my friends and I are as different and as similar as any group of young people  
I would prefer to attend my neighbourhood school and to become part of my community  
I have parents who are very involved in my education, they may not, however, share your definition of involvement

*you see, I am an ESL student ...*

I am not responsible for the sins of my father or his father  
I, like you, have a personality that has been shaped, in part, by my culture; my parents, like your parents, have personalities shaped by their cultures, therefore we are different, And therefore, both of us must remember that our personalities are neither good or bad, they just are what they are  
I come from a culture that is not without racist aspects, I have as much to learn about living in harmony as you do

*you see, I am an ESL student ...*

I have a need to love and to be loved, to praise and to be praised, to correct and to be corrected

*you see, I am an ESL student.*

Neil Horne