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MOTIVATED FOR MY FAMILY

DIEGO SALAZAR

Life in America is difficult. It is hard to learn English and to get used to life here. It is also difficult to know that I can’t visit my family in Mexico when I want.

I am working hard at a restaurant job. I am doing food prep and washing dishes at a restaurant and get paid $10.00 an hour and I work 60 hours a week. I work long hours and want to get more experience so I can get paid more. The working conditions aren’t so bad but I live far away from my job and transportation is slow and uncomfortable. But I stay motivated for my family as I continue to help them.

I am also taking English classes at Make the Road New York because I believe that learning English will help me communicate with people and help me find a better job. I feel content because I can take care of myself. If I continue to work hard and study, I can continue to help my parents in Mexico and I will be able to progress here in America as well. My goal is to give my parents, myself, and my kids a better future.

If my family is fine in Mexico, I’m good and happy living far away for now.

Diego Salazar is 22 years old, and he came to the U.S. in 2011. He is a student at Make the Road New York in Staten Island, NY.

BEFORE YOU READ:

The word “used” can be very confusing in English. It has very different meanings, and it is pronounced differently! Here are three definitions of the word “used”:

1. It is the past tense of the verb “to use.” For example: I used a knife to cut the carrots. (Pronounced yoozd.)
2. It means to become accustomed to something. For example: At first, it was hard to work nights, but then I got used to it. (Pronounced yoost.)
3. It means that you did something habitually in the past. For example: We used to go swimming every day in the summer. (Pronounced yoost.)

When you read, underline the word “used” when you see it. From the context, which definition of the word is the author using?

AFTER YOU READ:

DID YOU KNOW that federal law requires employers to pay workers time-and-a-half if they work more than 40 hours per week? Do you think Diego earns time-and-a-half for the 20 extra hours he normally works each week? Why or why not? What might stop him from earning time and a half?

CALCULATE his pay if he receives $10 per hour for 60 hours of work, and then calculate it if he earns time-and-a-half for his overtime hours. What is the difference?

When employers do not pay their workers a full salary, it is called wage theft. LOOK at the image and READ the caption. Look up the Restaurant Opportunities Center <http://rocunited.org> and find out more about what they do. LEARN MORE about wage theft on p. 13.