



# SICK CROSSOVER

A cultural and linguistic exchange  
between Catalan and Belgian students



# FIRST ONLINE MEETINGS: PADLET AND GATHER TOWN MEETING



We started this project in November 2023. We had not met our Belgian partners so we were asked to introduce ourselves through a Padlet board, so we could start getting to know each other a little bit. The teachers created a Padlet where we were supposed to introduce ourselves, tell our names, talk about our hobbies, and where we lived...

A few months later, we, the Spanish students, were split into 6 different teams and prepared some projects about different topics, connected to the European Youth Goals (Mental Health and Wellbeing among teenagers, Sustainable green Europe, Quality learning, Moving Rural Youth Forward, Information & Constructive Dialogue and Quality Employment for All). We had to take into account our Belgian partners, so we prepared and sent them questionnaires about our different topics in order to improve our projects.



Later, after all our previous work and, once we had almost finished our projects, we met them via an online app, Gather Town. It is like a video game, where there are different rooms. Each of our teams joined some of the Belgian students, depending on what topic they were interested in.



**GATHER TOWN**



Then, after the video call, we collected all their ideas and used them to improve and finish our own projects.

At first, we did not understand what we were doing and the purpose of it. But, this online meeting let us meet each other and improve our projects. We had a good time during the hour we spent talking to the Belgian partners.

# A WEEK OF LEARNING TOGETHER: SHARING CULTURES



Last week, Ins Castelló d'Empúries High School welcomed 15 students of 2nd Bat from KS Diest High School from Dest in Belgium. It was a special time where the students of the elective subject of English oral and written skills got to learn from each other and have fun.

The main objective of this project was to speak in English with students from a different country who don't speak Spanish or Catalan. Another objective was to learn about the differences between the Spanish and the Belgian education system. And finally, another objective, also connected to the cultural exchange was that we learned about the differences between their meal timetables and ours..



During the week, the Belgian partners did lots of cool stuff with our school. They prepared workshops with other classes of 2nd, 3rd, and 4th of ESO and 1st and 2nd of Bat, these were developed either in English or French. In these workshops they prepared activities to show us their life in Belgium, they also prepared some games to practice our English or French and they also prepared a survey on mental health among teenagers. Finally, they also discussed with the students of first Bat about the similarities and differences between Spanish and Belgian A-Levels.

They also asked to attend some of the subjects they are doing in their school to see the differences and similarities in the curriculum so some of them took part in the Philosophy class, Catalan literature, Latin, P.E., Geography, Spanish history, Economy and Maths.



# Monday: Meeting with the Belgium partners for real

On Monday 22nd of April it was the first time we met the Belgian students for real. We met them on the inside patio of our school, and we only had 30 minutes to be with them, since the meeting took place during our break. We were very excited to finally meet them, after having been in touch online for months.



During the meeting, we did an activity, made by the Belgian students, which we had some questions, and we needed to find someone with these characteristics for example one question was "Do you prefer a shower or a bath" doing this activity we had the opportunity to lose shyness, nervousness and got to know each other better. At first, we were all a little shy, but after some minutes everything was alright and everyone was having a great time. Then, after we finished this activity, we exchanged some little gifts



They gave us t-shirts they had made in their school. They are really nice t-shirts, they are green and have their school's logo on one sleeve, and in the back there is the outline of Spain and Belgium and a cross that is pointing to the place that we met. Then, we gave them a tote bag with soap and a notebook inside of it from the town hall, and each one of them got one. Later, some of our classmates told them about what we were going to do the next day in Figueres.





The objective of this first meeting was for us to get to know each other better, but we did that during all the week. Nevertheless, after those 30 minutes with them, we were really excited and happy.



# Tuesday: Figueres Treasure Hunt and Dalí Museum



On Tuesday, 23rd of April, we went to Figueres, and there, we did two main activities.

The first was a treasure hunt that we had prepared. We had selected important spots in Figueres: The fruit market, the bomb shelter, Dalí's childhood house, the monument of Narcis Monuriol and Sant Jordi's Day, because it was on that day when we went to Figueres.



The Belgian students were divided into different groups, and they had to locate on a map all the spots we had previously picked at school. In every spot, there were 3/4 of us who gave information about the spot. When the Belgians got to the spot, we marked it on their map. The main goal of the hunt was to learn about significant sites in Figueres, and the team who got all the spots first was the winner.



After this, we visited Dalí museum, where we were accompanied by a guide who told us in English the essential aspects of Dalí's paintings and his life. We learned a lot about this artist.

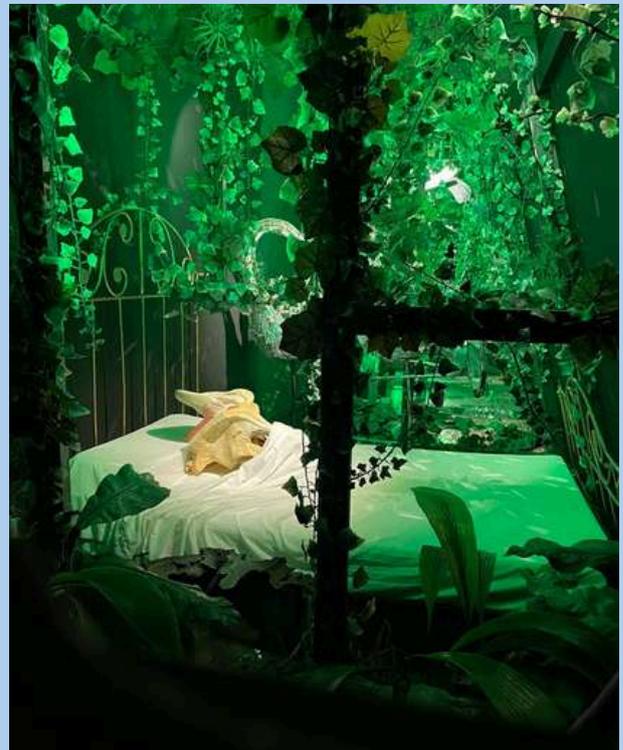
Then, after the visit, we took our stored backpacks and the teachers invited all of us to an ice cream. Finally, the Belgians stayed in Figueres, and we returned to Castelló d'Empúries by bus before half past two.



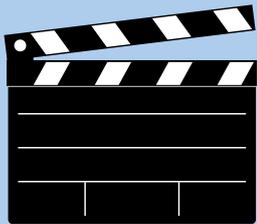
# Tuesday: Lunch time and ice cream



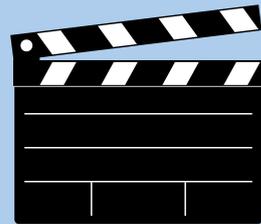
# Tuesday: Dalí Museum



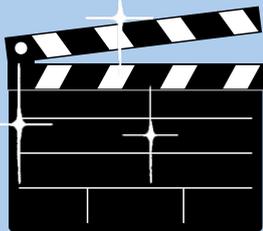
# Tuesday: Figueres Treasure Hunt



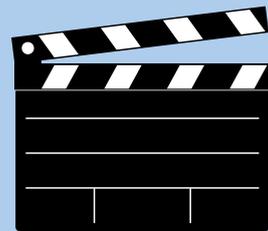
**Market and statue**



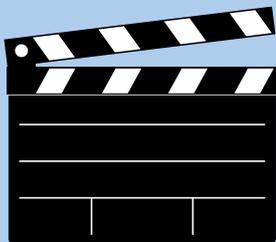
**Dalí's childhood house**



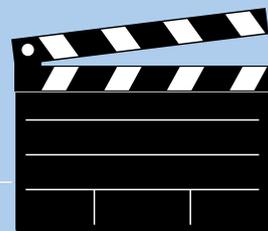
**Bomb Shelter**



**Sant Jordi**



**Game Rules**

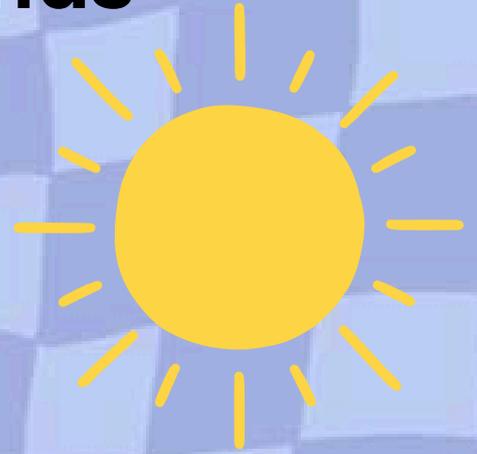


**Monturiol's Statue**

# Cycling trip to the Empordà wetlands



On 24th April, the students of French of 4th of ESO went cycling from Castelló d'Empúries to the wetlands of l'Empordà, with the Belgian partners. The teachers that went on the trip were: the French teacher, Jaume Jové; the English teacher, Eli Salleras and the Belgian teacher, Marieke Nijs.



The students cycled to the park of Trabuc while the Belgian partners were waiting for them to play "pistoler", which is a good game to meet new people. After finishing the game, they cycled together to the wetlands to learn about nature, animals...

Once they got there, they also played a game, which we had played on Monday 22nd. It consists of a sheet of questions where they had to ask the Belgium partners about their personal life, such as if they play any instrument, when they were born. After that, they had breakfast and then, they had a guided tour in French along the wetlands. Later, they went up to the rice silos, a grain storage, called Mas Matà, where you can have amazing views of the wetlands. Finally, they cycled back to the high school.



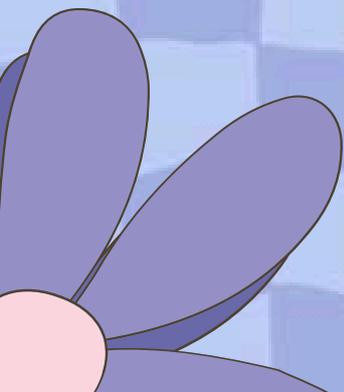
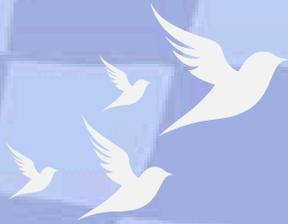


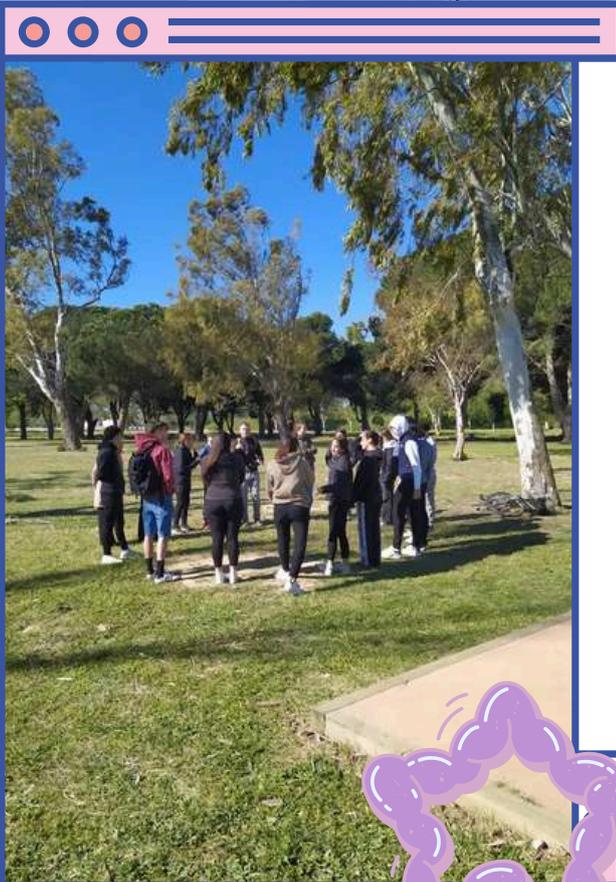
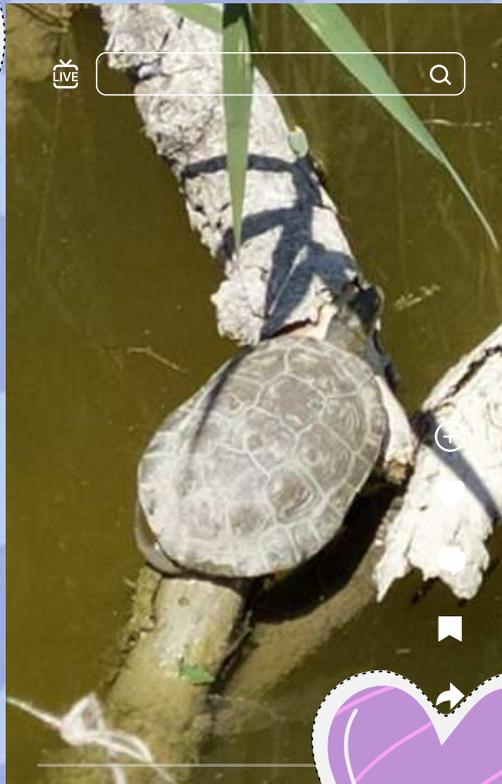
After having asked these students about the trip to the wetland they agreed that the experience was very good, also the Belgians partners were very sociable, and they really enjoyed talking and asking them questions, even though it was difficult to break the ice.



On one hand, some teachers think that it was a hard trip because of the north wind, called Tramuntana, and because there were a lot of students to organize the activities. On the other hand, it was useful for the students since they learnt and they lived a new experience.

The downsides were that the day was very windy, and it was difficult to cycle, so it might have been better if they had gone by bus or on foot. Also, the Belgian teacher, Marieke got lost in the wetlands, but after a while they could find her.





# Thursday

## BOARD GAME



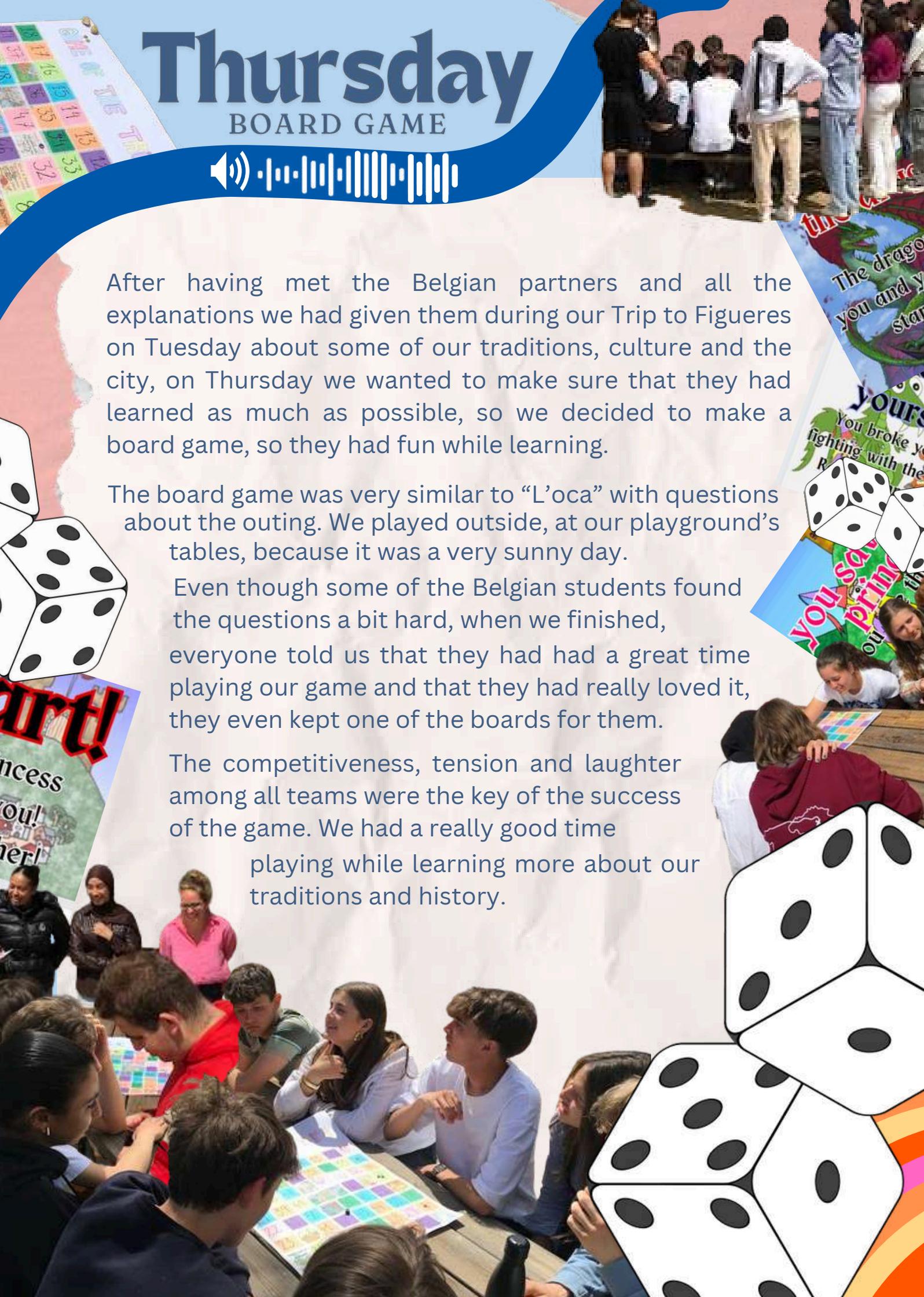
After having met the Belgian partners and all the explanations we had given them during our Trip to Figueres on Tuesday about some of our traditions, culture and the city, on Thursday we wanted to make sure that they had learned as much as possible, so we decided to make a board game, so they had fun while learning.

The board game was very similar to “L’oca” with questions about the outing. We played outside, at our playground’s tables, because it was a very sunny day.

Even though some of the Belgian students found the questions a bit hard, when we finished, everyone told us that they had had a great time playing our game and that they had really loved it, they even kept one of the boards for them.

The competitiveness, tension and laughter among all teams were the key of the success of the game. We had a really good time

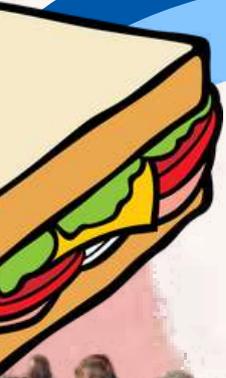
playing while learning more about our traditions and history.





# Thursday

LUNCH TOGETHER



After class, all of us decided to have lunch in Castelló, because we all thought it was a great idea to spend more time together, so we decided to go to a restaurant called “JR” . We were a lot of people, and they had to prepare a huge table for all of us and even with a very long table we didn't all fit in the same one, so we were pretty close.

After lunch, we showed them a few places around Castelló, such as the Basilica and some other main streets.

They were very grateful to us for all the places we were showing them because they hadn't had any time to visit Castelló, even though they were coming to our high school in Castelló every day.





## FRIDAY: BELGIAN DINNER

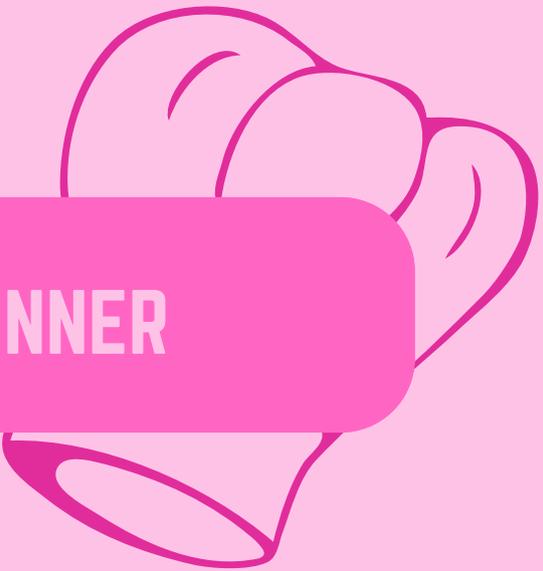


On Friday 26th of April, it was the last day that the Belgian partners were in Castelló d'Empúries, and they decided to invite us to their place to have a Belgian dinner with traditional Belgian food.

We met them at six p.m at their place in Empuriabrava, but they hadn't finished cooking all the food so we waited a little, and we talked with them about the week, among other things. When the food was ready, they told us what we were going to eat. It was a three-course meal.

The first one was pompoensoep, a tomato and pumpkin soup, with meatballs. The second one was called vol-au-vent with mashed potatoes, it was a dish that contained puff pastry and inside there was chicken with a mushroom sauce. Afterwards, we had three different desserts. There was koekskestaart, like a cake made with butter biscuits, and butter and some chocolate sprinkles on top, and a chocolate mousse. Also, two of us brought tiramisu.



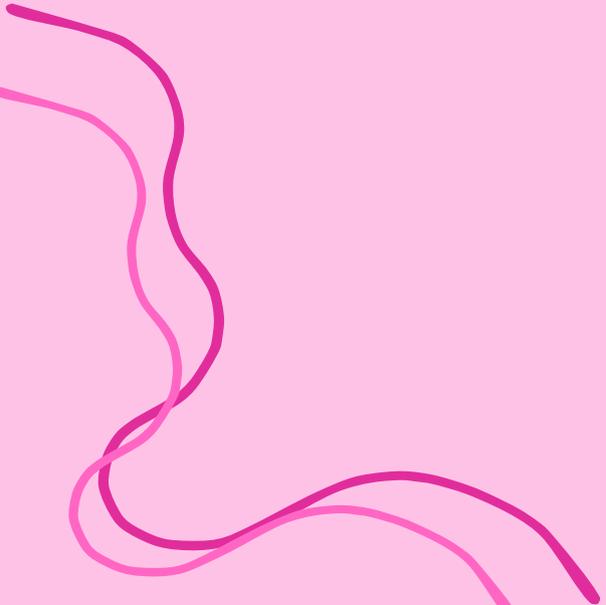


## FRIDAY: BELGIAN DINNER

For most of the night, there was music playing in the background, and we talked, and everyone had a great time. It was the activity that we all enjoyed the most. Even though having dinner at seven in the evening was a bit strange for us.

When we finished the dinner, we waited some time because they had to do the dishes and clean everything. At 9 p.m some of us left but some other students had a little night out with the Belgian students.

To sum up, everyone had a great evening, and it was a very beautiful way to share our culture.





**Vol-au-vent**



**Pompoensoep**



**Dessert:  
Koekskestaar**

# INTERVIEWS

We prepared some questions for the Belgian students asking them about their experience here in Alt Empordà. These are some of their answers to our questions.

The first day, when they arrived at our school, they felt a bit strange, because everyone was staring at them when they were leaving their bikes in the interior patio. One of them said she liked attending the Philosophy class, a subject 2nd Bat students don't have in Belgium. Talking about Nietzsche with our teacher was a highlight. Another thing they were surprised by was the difference in meal times between Belgium and Spain, we had lunch and dinner with them, and we found out they have lunch at 1 pm and dinner at 6 pm.



They enjoyed visiting the Wetlands and taking part in the Sant Jordi tradition, but wished they could have interacted more with the Spanish students. They thought some activities could be improved, like making the board game questions easier and dealing with bad behavior from some high school students. Overall, they had fun and would recommend the trip to other students from their school. They especially liked cycling to the Wetlands and feeling welcomed, despite feeling a bit awkward at first.

# CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the exchange between Ins Castelló d'Empúries High School and KS Diest High School from Diest, Belgium, was a great experience for everyone. Through speaking English, we learned a lot about each other's cultures and schools.



The main goals of the project, like improving English skills, learning about differences in education between Spain and Belgium, and sharing our cultures, were accomplished through different activities. These included the trip, the board game, and the dinner.

Our favorite part was dinner, where we had plenty of time to chat and exchange our thoughts about different topics. It was a great time since we had the opportunity to try Belgian traditional dishes and desserts.

Finally, the exchange was a fantastic chance for us to learn, practice languages, and make new friends from another country. It showed how working together and understanding different cultures can be really important and rewarding.



Thanks to all the students and teachers  
who made this project possible.

