

French: The Path to a More Profound World View

When I entered 7th grade, my school offered its students the opportunity to learn a foreign language. Little did I know as a 12-year-old that my choice in taking French class would so profoundly change the way I look at the world and the way I express myself today.

My experience in French began as one of pure delight. At first, I enjoyed learning the words for different things in my environment as well as basic sentences of expression. Slowly, as I acquired the ability to form full sentences and engage in simple dialogue, I began to appreciate the beauty of communicating in such a timeless language as French.

My freshman year in high school, the delight I felt in speaking French grew into a love of learning about French culture. Having the opportunity to learn about French culture opened my heart to seeing value in other ways of life outside of the Midwest-American lifestyle I had always known. No longer was French just a language to speak.

As I continued to study French throughout the rest of my high school years, I learned to appreciate not only the beauty of the French language, but also France's food, geography, lifestyles, art, music, and the most fascinating of aspects to me, its history. Junior year I was blessed with the opportunity to travel to France with two of my teachers and several of my classmates. For 10 days I lived with a family in Lyon and then for four days my classmates and I explored Paris. This experience was absolutely life-changing. By being immersed in the rich and charming French culture, I learned how to express myself more fluently in French, be more courageous in getting to know new people, become more open-minded to different ways of living, and be more appreciative of the uniqueness of people from around the world.

Because of my studies being so rigorous in college I have not been fortunate enough to have the time to continue my studies in French, but I am still greatly impacted by the experiences I had in high school and middle school while learning French. I am more open-minded and thoughtful about the many cultures that exist in our world as well as much more fluent in expressing myself in English. Whenever I run into my friends from French class, we always reminisce about all of the fun-filled memories we have of our time spent learning about France. *Vive la France* and *vivent* French Programs in schools!

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