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Person to Person in France

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Exploring France

During my studies in France I have met many people from all over the world. I am in a unique situation where once every two weeks I meet one to three new students who stay for a week or two from all over the world. I have made connections with each individual and have valued the experience. One person in particular that I have made a connection with is the daughter of my host parents; her name is Laura-May. She is a French-British 18-year-old girl in her last year of high school and has been around students from America studying abroad since she was ten years old. As she prepares for her new life adventures in college, she has expressed her reflection on the past eight years to me.

Upon interviewing her she explained some of the main differences she has noticed over the years between the French and Americans. The two main topics she talked about were how she doesn't understand how Americans can drink large and various cups of coffee in one day, and why they are in such a hurry in the morning and during meals. She and her parents will sit down every morning together and they will drink a cup of coffee and talk. For her that will be the only cup of coffee she will drink all day, and it will be "très petite." She explained to me that the time they spend together in the mornings are very valuable and it will help set them up for a successful day, yet the Americans rush through it. She finds it weird that American students will have multiple cups of coffee in one sitting, and sometimes even take one to go. Personally, I don't drink coffee, but I would say I am a little rushed eating breakfast in the morning. Often times I will eat toast while walking to class, though I do enjoy the time that I do get to spend with my host family in the mornings eating breakfast together, and it calms me and prepares my mind for the day.

One thing that I discovered we have in common is our taste in movies and music. We both listen and watch the opposing culture's productions. Within the first couple weeks of being in France I could hear her music through the walls and found interest in many of the songs. During the interview I

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asked her if she listens to American music or watches our films, and I was surprised to find out that she loves them. We shared different artists with each other and found out that we had plenty of similar interests. The reason why I was shocked to know that we had similar tastes in music is because Americans typically only listen to music in English, and I thought we were the only ones to enjoy our music. Hearing that she liked both French and American music opened my mind up to listening to other cultures' music, and I have found a great appreciation for all styles of music.

Interviewing Laura-May has helped me further understand and appreciate the country that I live in. It has given me different perspectives on our diverse world and a greater understanding of it. I have learned that I should take more time in the mornings to eat breakfast and talk, because it opens the mind and sets you up for a productive day. I also find it funny how they don't understand the large amounts of coffee we consume, because I don't understand it either. I am also very pleased to know that other countries appreciate our culture and enjoy our music and films. Overall bring abroad and talking to people from other cultures has been enlightening and informative.