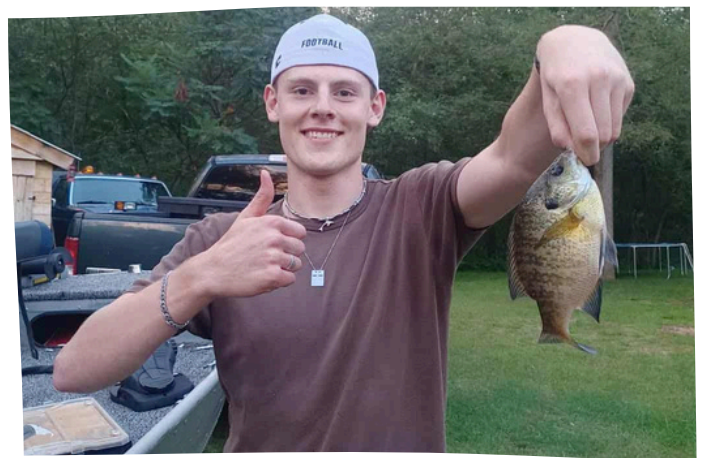




Council for Educational Travel USA

Student Pre-Departure Orientation Workbook



***“We’re on a mission to transform lives
through cultural exchange.”***

**Revised March 2026
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

• Welcome Message & CETUSA Overview	1
• Getting Support: Your Local Coordinator & CETUSA Staff	2
• For Help & In An Emergency	3
• About the US: Geography, Climate, History, Culture	4-5
• Modern American Culture	6
• Regional Differences Across the U.S.	7
• Culture Shock, Stereotypes, Expectations & Cultural Differences	8-12
• Your Rights and Responsibilities as an Exchange Student	13
• Becoming Part of Your Host Family	14-16
• Student Life in Your U.S. High School	17
• Managing Your Money & Budget	18-21
• Managing Your Insurance	22
• Bringing It Together; Your First Weeks	23-25
• Practicing Personal Safety	26-27
• Standards of Conduct Review	28-30
• Knowledge Check: CETUSA's Program Rules	31-32
• CETUSA Standards of Conduct	33-34

WELCOME MESSAGE



Stephanie Smart

CETUSA Executive Director

On behalf of everyone at CETUSA, we're thrilled to welcome you to your exchange program. As you prepare for this exciting journey, it's completely normal to feel a mix of emotions—anticipation, curiosity, maybe even a little nervousness. That's all part of what makes this experience so meaningful. This orientation is designed to help you feel confident, informed, and ready to make the most of your exchange year. While every student's journey is unique, the right preparation and mindset can set the stage for an unforgettable adventure filled with growth, discovery, and connection. Use this workbook to take notes, reflect on what you're learning, and start imagining the experience ahead. We're so excited to support you every step of the way—and we can't wait to welcome you to the United States soon!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Smart".

CETUSA OVERVIEW

Council for Education Travel, USA (CETUSA) is a nonprofit international student exchange organization coordinating exchange experiences for high school students, university students and young professionals. CETUSA is a U.S. Department of State Exchange Visitor (J-1 visa) sponsor organization based in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Our mission is “reaching out to encourage a lifelong journey of global peace and understanding” for the students, host families and communities that are part of the exchange experience.

AS YOU BEGIN, REMEMBER...

- **You are an ambassador.** The impression that you make will shape how people perceive you, your home country, your natural family, your overseas agency, and CETUSA.
- **Expect and embrace challenges.** Many students look back on their exchange program as one of the most rewarding experiences of their lives. Even so, challenges and mistakes are to be expected and provide valuable opportunities for growth.
- **Keep a positive attitude.** Confusion, culture shock and homesickness are very normal. Naming your feelings while keeping a proactive mindset will help you through challenging moments.
- **Be willing to adapt.** Openness to new experiences helps you build relationships and confidence!
- **Use your support team.** You are the first priority of your local coordinator and CETUSA!

GETTING SUPPORT: YOUR LOCAL COORDINATOR & CETUSA STAFF

Your Local Coordinator or “LC”

As your agent discusses the CETUSA Local Coordinator, fill in the blanks.

Your Local Coordinator:

- Chooses to place and supervise students because _____.
- Is a _____ between you, your host family, your high school, and the CETUSA corporate office.
- Will act as your _____, _____, and _____.
- Is your _____ contact for any questions, concerns, or problems. You can always ask for assistance from your Local Coordinator.
- You must always let your Local Coordinator know about any _____ plans.
- Your Local Coordinator is required by US Department of State (DOS) regulations to speak with you and your host family separately, via telephone every _____ weeks.
- Your Local Coordinator must meet with you in-person at least every _____ weeks.
- You can contact your Local Coordinator _____.

Your Regional Director or “RD” and Student Support Services

Regional directors supervise and support local coordinators in their geographic area. If you need help and cannot reach your local coordinator, contact your local coordinator’s regional director. If there is an emergency and you cannot reach your local coordinator or regional director, CETUSA provides a 24/7 Emergency Phone Number. You can contact CETUSA Student Services at 1-888-238-8701 (or 1-888-CETUSA-1).

FOR HELP & IN AN EMERGENCY

For help, or in an emergency, contact your Local Coordinator _____.
If you are unable to reach him or her, you may call your Regional Director. If it is an emergency and you cannot reach your Local Coordinator or Regional Director, call the CETUSA Student Services Emergency line at 1-888-238-8701 (or 1-888-CETUSA-1). If you or someone else is in immediate danger of serious illness, injury or death, call 911 before making any additional calls.

The CETUSA office has a __- hour _____ phone service for instances when you cannot reach your local coordinator.

This phone service is to be used only in case of a serious accident, illness, or emergency which _____ until the following workday.

Always carry your Local Coordinator's phone number, Regional Director's phone number and _____ with you.

NEED HELP?

- 1 For all general questions, concerns, contact your Local Coordinator.
- 2 If you cannot reach your Local Coordinator, and the issue **cannot wait** until the next business day, contact your Regional Director or the CETUSA 24-Hour Emergency Phone Service at **1-888-238-8701 (1-888-CETUSA-1)**.
- 3 **911** first! Do not hang up with 911 until you are directed to do so by the 911 operator. After the call is complete, contact your Local Coordinator.

In all 50 states, dial **911** for police, fire department, or emergency medical care.

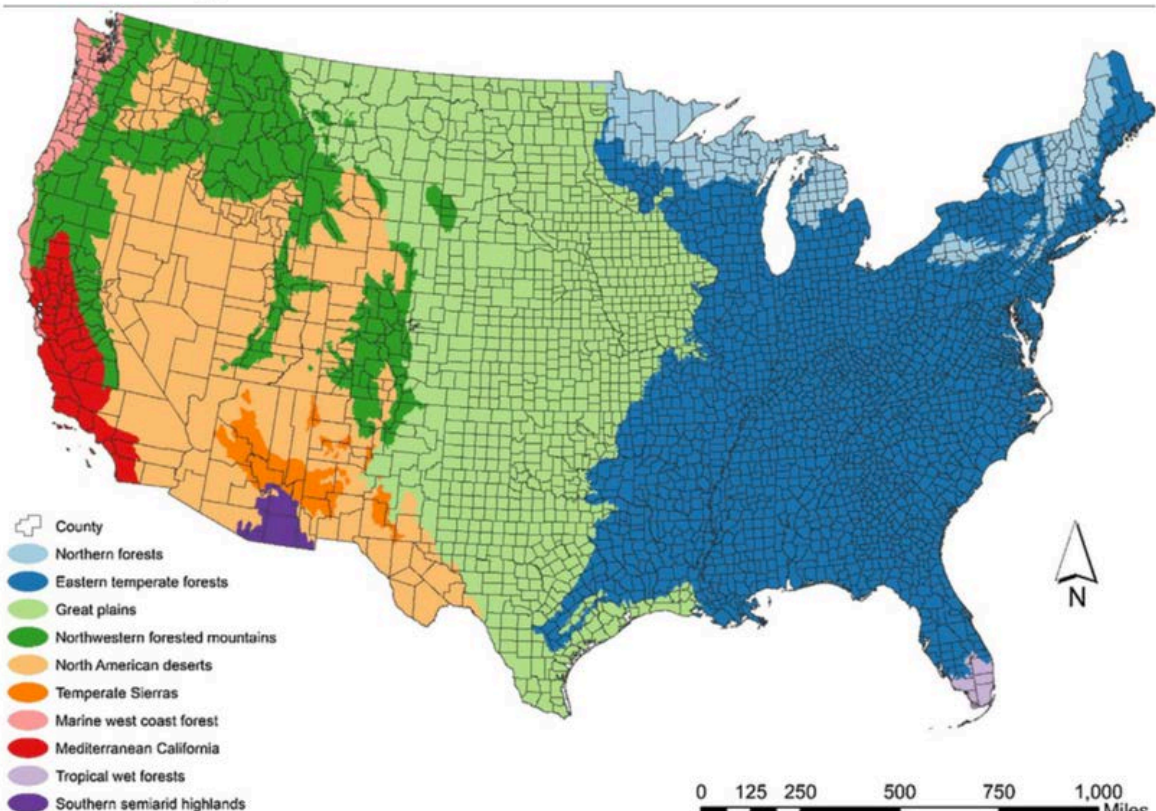


ABOUT THE UNITED STATES: GEOGRAPY & CLIMATE, HISTORY & CULTURE

Geography & Climate

The continental U.S. (the 48 states other than Alaska and Hawaii) is bound by the Atlantic Ocean to the east and the Pacific Ocean to the west, with much of the country's population living on these two coasts. The U.S. shares its northern border with Canada and southern border with Mexico. The expansive size and varied geography of the U.S. creates incredible diversity in climate. From the dry deserts of the Southwest (Arizona, New Mexico, etc.) to the cool, forested slopes of New England (Maine, Vermont) the U.S. offers a variety of landscapes and climates. Depending on where you are, you may encounter enormous lakes, deep canyons, expansive deserts, dense woodlands, subtropical forests, vast prairie, and more.

Eco-regions for the Conterminous United States

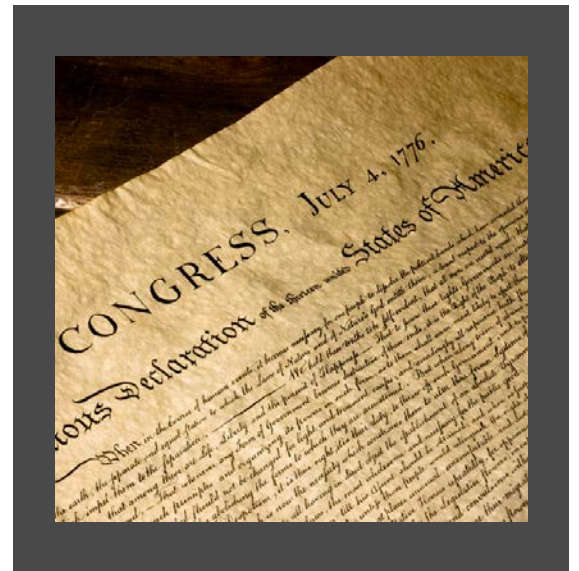


Reference: Planning for community resilience to future United States domestic water demand - Scientific Figure on ResearchGate. Available from: https://www.researchgate.net/figure/United-States-Environmental-Protection-Agency-Level-I-Ecoregions-for-the-conterminous_fig1_309898747 [accessed 31 May 2025]

ABOUT THE UNITED STATES: GEOGRAPY & CLIMATE, HISTORY & CULTURE

History & Culture

- Native Americans were the only inhabitants of the land now known as the U.S. until the 1500s.
- Much of the land that is now the U.S. formerly comprised thirteen British colonies. During the American Revolution (1775–1783) some colonists rebelled to form a new nation. The United States of America was formed after the Continental Congress adopted the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776 which formally established that the former colonies, now "states" were no longer under British rule.
- The U.S. underwent one Civil War from 1861–1864. The war ended with a victory of the northern states, which remained loyal to the Union (U.S. government). The end of the war brought a permanent end to slavery in the U.S.



Today the Declaration of Independence is housed at the National Archives Museum in Washington, D.C.

Just as the varied geography of the U.S. allows for a wide range of climates, its complex history has given rise to an incredibly diverse culture. European exploration of what is now the U.S. began in the 1500s, and over the centuries, millions of people from around the world have immigrated—often seeking new opportunities or freedom. These newcomers brought with them unique cultural traditions, which continue to shape the modern American culture.

However, the story of the U.S. also includes deeply painful chapters. Continued displacement and oppression of Native American peoples devastated tribal communities. Additionally, not all who came to the land that is now the U.S. did so by choice; an estimated 388,000 people were forcibly brought from Africa through the transatlantic slave trade. Despite the injustices faced by Native Americans, enslaved people, and their descendants, the cultures of Native American, African, and Caribbean people continue to endure and enrich the cultural landscape of the U.S. to this day.

Today, the U.S. is described as a “melting pot,” where cultures from across the globe come together. Depending on where you are in the U.S., you may encounter aspects and fusions of many global cultures!



MODERN AMERICAN CULTURE

CULTURE: OBVIOUS OR NOT?

Like any culture, American culture has aspects that can be observed with the five senses. You will be able **see** American culture through fashion and art, **taste** American foods, and **hear** American music. These are the more “obvious” parts of culture.

But there are also parts of culture you can’t detect with your senses—like the traits, beliefs, and values that form social norms. Understanding the common traits, beliefs, and values of American culture will help you understand the mindset behind the behaviors you observe. For example, in the U.S., students may interact more casually with their teachers than is typical in your home country. This is due in part to American ideals of social equality low power difference. Let’s examine a few more aspects of U.S. culture that you are likely to encounter:

AMERICANS: CULTURAL NORMS

- Americans tend to be outgoing and friendly, especially in rural areas. It is not uncommon for Americans to chat briefly with people they do not know well.
- Though most cities use public transit, many Americans are dependent on cars.
- Americans usually stand an arm’s length away in conversation. Standing closer is uncomfortable for most Americans.
- Though discrimination exists in the United States, the United States was founded on the conviction that people of all races and genders are equal in society.
- Individuality and free speech are valued, but religion, politics, and deeply personal topics are generally avoided in polite conversation.
- Americans value individual achievement, personal freedom, and self-reliance.
- Religion is central to the lives of many Americans. Christianity is currently the most common religion. Many Americans also follow Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Agnosticism, and Atheism.

REGIONAL DIFFERENCES ACROSS THE U.S.

The land that comprises the United States encompasses about 3.53 million square miles (9.15 million km²). A land mass the size of Germany could fit into the modern United States about 26 times! Due in part to this huge expanse of land, the environment, lifestyle and culture of one region of the U.S. may be observably different than another. Below are brief summaries of five major regions in the U.S.

The Northeast includes the region of New England (Maine, Vermont, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Connecticut) and the Mid-Atlantic States (New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, etc.)

- Four distinct seasons
- Major cities (New York, Washington D.C., Boston, Philadelphia)
- Concentration of Ivy-league universities

The South includes Alabama, Mississippi, Georgia, South Carolina, etc.

- Subtropical, humid climate
- Distinct foods (gumbo, fried foods, desserts) and music including jazz and rock
- Relaxed, family-oriented lifestyles

The Northwest includes Oregon, California, Washington, etc.

- Pleasantly cool weather
- Emphasis on nature-based activities
- Cosmopolitan cities

The Southwest includes Arizona, New Mexico, Nevada, etc.

- Dry, hot climate
- Western culture including ranching, rodeo, cattle driving
- Cultural influence from Native American tribes, Mexico, and Central America

The Midwest includes Michigan, Wisconsin, Ohio, Minnesota, etc.

- Rolling farmlands
- Picturesque towns
- Large industrial cities (Detroit, Cleveland, etc.)

CULTURE SHOCK STEREOTYPES & EXPECTATIONS

The version of the U.S. that you have seen on television or social media is likely very different from the U.S. that you will experience in real life. Many first-time visitors to the U.S. are surprised when they find that some aspects the U.S. do not match their expectations. Without even knowing it, you may have unrealistic expectations of the U.S. or American people that are based on media stereotypes.

“Culture Shock” describes the discomfort that arises when we encounter a culture that we’re not used to, or a culture that doesn’t match what we expected! Culture shock can’t be eliminated entirely. However, you can prepare yourself for immersion in a new culture by adopting more realistic expectations, and being ready for moments when something about your exchange program doesn’t fit your expectations.

What are some realistic and unrealistic expectations of life in the U.S.?

Realistic Expectations

Unrealistic Expectations

In what ways are you prepared to respond when an aspect of your exchange program is not what you expected?

CULTURE SHOCK

CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

Many exchange students have expectations about the U.S. that are based on what they are used to in their home country. That makes sense! It is difficult to base expectations on something that you have not experienced before! To reflect on how cultural norms in the U.S. might be the same - or different - from those in your home country, complete the charts below.

	Norms In the U.S.	Norms In Your Home Country
School and Friends		
Rules of behavior		
Extra-curricular activities		
Role of school counselor		
Dating		
Social activities and curfew		

CULTURE SHOCK

CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

	In the U.S.	In Your Home Country
Dining & Meals		
Meal times		
Kinds of foods		
Table manners and conversation		
Cleaning up after a meal		
Offering to pay, who pays going out		

CULTURE SHOCK

CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

	In the U.S.	In Your Home Country
Family & Home		
Transportation (Getting a Ride)		
Curfew		
Gender roles		
Manners		
Household chores		

CULTURE SHOCK

CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

	In the U.S.	In Your Home Country
Hygiene		
Frequency of bathing		
Frequency of washing hair		
Frequency of washing clothes		
Use of deodorant, teeth brushing		
Appropriate dress		



YOUR RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES AS AN EXCHANGE STUDENT

YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO:

- **Bodily autonomy and privacy.** No person may direct you to share physical contact, show any part of your body, cut your hair, or undergo any activity that makes you feel unsafe.
- **Religious freedom.** Although your host family may invite you to participate in their faith traditions, no person may compel you to act in contradiction to your religious beliefs or participate in religious practices.
- **Contact your Local Coordinator and/or CETUSA.** You do not need permission to contact your Local Coordinator or CETUSA. You are CETUSA's first priority.
- **Refuse labor.** Although you are expected to participate in routine household chores, you have a right to refuse labor including childcare or animal care. You do not "owe" your host family labor, services, or compensation for your exchange program.
- **Access your phone and passport.** No person may take away your phone or passport. Your host family may require you to dock your phone in a common area at certain times.

YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR:

- **Following CETUSA's Code of Conduct.** It is your responsibility to ensure that you do not engage in any activity that violates CETUSA's Code of Conduct.
- **Respecting your host family's property.** You are responsible for maintaining a clean living space, respecting off-limit areas, and not damaging property.
- **Following school and host family rules and state and local law.** So long as a rule does not violate your rights, CETUSA policies, or DOS policies, you must follow house rules and school policies, even if you do not agree with them or if they differ from rules in your home country. You must also follow all local and state laws that apply to your location.
- **Budgeting appropriately.** Your host family is responsible for providing you with a separate sleeping and study area, three meals per day and basic transportation. Your host family is not responsible for providing the lifestyle that you may be used to.

BECOMING PART OF YOUR HOST FAMILY

You've already learned about the diversity of life in the U.S. This diversity is reflected in the variety of Americans who volunteer to host an exchange student! Each host family is unique. Some have planned schedules, some have more casual timelines. Some share meals together, others eat at different times. Some families are quiet and reserved, others may seem loud and energetic.



WHY DO THEY HOST?

Despite their differences, many host families welcome an exchange student into their home for similar reasons. Below are some common reasons U.S. citizens choose to host an exchange student.

Host Families Want To...

- Help you develop valuable life skills and achieve a lifelong dream
- Build a meaningful relationship with you
- Learn about your culture and share their own culture and traditions with you

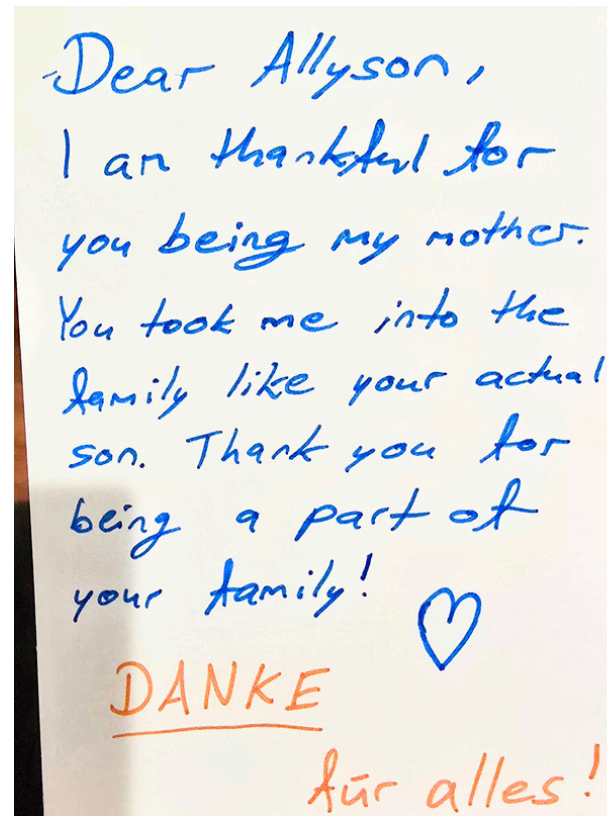
Remember, all host families are volunteers. They do not receive any money or financial assistance for hosting. Any costs they incur are paid from their own funds.

BECOMING PART OF YOUR HOST FAMILY

EXPRESSING APPRECIATION

There are so many ways to show appreciation for your host family. Most cost little to no money.

- Say “thank you for _____.” It’s great to say, “thanks” but being specific about what you appreciate means even more.
- Some holidays observed in the U.S. are considered **very important** family holidays. A few examples are Christmas, Hanukkah, Easter, Thanksgiving, Mother’s Day and Father’s Day. Birthdays are also considered “family holidays” by many families. A simple card expressing what your exchange program has meant to you will be treasured by your host family. The simple, but sincere note pictured here was written by an exchange student on Thanksgiving Day.
- Although it is not required, if you can afford to purchase a small gift, snack, or beverage for your host family, this is very appreciated!
- One of the best ways to show appreciation to your host family is to spend time with them daily. Ask them about their lives and traditions, and listen to what they share.
- Share your culture with your host family! They are eager to know about your language, foods, holidays, customs and experiences. This is what cultural exchange is all about!



MY IDEAS FOR SHOWING APPRECIATION:



BECOMING PART OF YOUR HOST FAMILY

Even with good intentions, it is natural for challenging situations to arise from a change in the household dynamic. How you respond in these situations is important. Choose a few of the scenarios to role play. Consider eye contact, tone of voice, and body language.

- Your host parent provides you with food you would never eat at home.
- You want to go somewhere, but your host family will not or can not drive you.
- Your host family expects you to spend a lot of time with them.
- You are tempted to argue with your host brother/sister as you would your own sibling.
- Your host family is struggling to understand your English.
- Your host family limits the amount of orange juice you can drink.
- Your host family expects you to help take out the trash and do other chores.
- Your host family sets a curfew that is earlier than you are used to, and always wants to know where you are and who you are with.

As your agent explains host families, fill in the blanks with the information you receive.

- Your host family is a _____ host family. Your host family receives _____ reimbursement. You should have _____ expectations of your host family's abilities.
- A volunteer is someone who donates their time and receives no _____.
- Your host family has agreed to provide you with _____ and _____. Anything additional is provided at the discretion of the family according to their budget.
- Your family's lifestyle will likely be _____ from what you are used to at home. It is the _____ responsibility to adapt to the host family's lifestyle.
- Students are expected to live as a _____.
- You are expected to keep your room _____, make your bed and accept household chores.
- You should _____ to help with chores

STUDENT LIFE IN YOUR U.S. HIGH SCHOOL

H.S. ACADEMICS

Students are required to maintain at least a “C” average. Each high school may use a slightly different grading scale using a letter-based system. The below percentage ranges are common, but may vary across schools and school districts.

A: 90–100%

B: 80–89%

C: 70–79%

D: 60–69%

F: Below 60% (generally considered a failing grade).



H.S. SOCIAL LIFE

Though making friends may feel daunting at first, the vast majority of CETUSA students report making meaningful friendships! While some of your classmates may be shy, especially if they perceive a language barrier, they are also likely to be very curious about you and your culture. Becoming involved in school clubs and activities, including homecoming, theatre performances, and high school sports games are great ways to make friends.

H.S. EXTRACURRICULAR

U.S. high schools typically offer a range of extracurricular activities. Whether it is a competitive sport, cheerleading, debate, theatre, band or choir, there is likely an extracurricular activity at your U.S. high school that fits your interests. You may also be able to join groups including the yearbook committee or school newspaper. Your school counselor can advise you on the variety of extracurricular activities available.



MANAGING YOUR MONEY & BUDGET

MANAGING YOUR MONEY

What is the required amount of money you must have available to you each month?

List ten (10) expenses that you are responsible for during your exchange program.

What three (3) needs does your host family cover?

While you are in the U.S., where should you keep your money?



MANAGING YOUR MONEY & BUDGET

MANAGING YOUR MONEY

What should you do if you are low on funds?

Scenario: You want to buy an expensive dress (or suit) for prom. However, if you make the purchase, you will not have enough money to buy your ticket for an amusement park that you are visiting with your host family next week. What should you do?

Are you allowed to borrow money from your host family? Is your host family allowed to borrow money from you?

Besides keeping cash, what other ways can you store, track, and spend money in the U.S.?

MANAGING YOUR MONEY & BUDGET

USING A BUDGET

Your minimum monthly budget required by CETUSA is \$250 per month, but some budgets may be larger. A simple monthly budget tracker, like the one on the next page, can help you be sure that you have enough money to pay for everything you need. If you do not have enough money to pay for your expenses because you spent too much on recreation or shopping, contact your natural family. Do not assume the host family will pay for the remainder of the month. This is a situation you absolutely want to avoid.

It is okay for your host family to pay for shopping, dining and activities if they offer, but your host family should never be put in a situation in which they are pressured to cover your expenses because you did not budget well.



- Thank your host family when they offer to pay for shopping and activities.
- Respect your host family's financial limitations.
- Be aware that your personal budget may be larger than your host siblings. Consider this when making large purchases.



- Assume your host family will pay for expenses that are your responsibility if you run out of money.
- Forget to thank your host family when they offer to pay for shopping and activities.
- Purchase more products than you can reasonably store or ship home.



Students are required to have a minimum budget of \$250 per month!

MONTHLY BUDGET

MONTHLY INCOME MIN. \$250 PER MONTH	\$
--	----

FIXED EXPENSES	BUDGET	SPENT	SEASONAL EXPENSES	BUDGET	SPENT
Personal Items (Toiletries, Haircut, etc)			Winter Apparel		
Restaurants and Dining Out			Apparel for Winter Formal		
Preferred Snacks and Foods			Apparel for Prom		
Entertainment and Recreation			Prom Dinner		
Phone Bill			Prom Tickets		
School lunch			Prom Photos		
Recurring Subscriptions			Graduation or Convalidation		
Clothing			Class Pictures		
Extracurricular Expenses			Homecoming		
Medical Expenses			Sports Supplies		
Any Seasonal Expenses from "Seasonal Expenses" Column			Yearbook		
			Travel/Souvenirs		
			Gifts (Holiday, Thank You, Farewell)		
MONTHLY TOTAL:		\$	SEASONAL EXPENSE TOTAL:		\$

TOTAL BUDGETED FOR MONTH:	\$
----------------------------------	----

TOTAL SPENT:	\$
---------------------	----

+ OR -	\$
---------------	----

Note:
Seasonal expenses are listed as examples only. Your own seasonal expenses are likely to be different.

MANAGING YOUR INSURANCE

As your agent discusses the your insurance coverage, fill in the blanks.

Your Insurance Coverage:

- Covers _____ and _____ that may occur during your program.
- Will generally not cover _____, _____ or _____ conditions.
- You will be provided with an Insurance ID _____. Keep this with you at all times.
- Ask your LC for help accessing your insurance. But for specific questions about insurance claims and reimbursement, contact _____, not CETUSA.
- _____ are responsible for ensuring healthcare providers are promptly paid.

Use the word bank below to identify four (4) expenses that insurance does and does not cover.

Broken Eyeglasses / Sprained Ankle / Antibiotics for Ear Infection / Tooth Extraction / Treatment for Pre-Existing Medical Condition / Emergency Room Care After An Accident / Dental Cleaning / Treatment for Minor Burn

Insurance Covers:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Insurance Does Not Cover:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

NOTES:



BRINGING IT TOGETHER

YOUR FIRST WEEKS

You have already learned a lot about your CETUSA support team, U.S. culture, your host family, and high school. Think about how you might begin using your knowledge to take the best action in the first weeks of your exchange program and beyond. Write your notes below each question.

What are the academic requirements of your exchange program, and what should you do if you begin to experience difficulty meeting these requirements?

You feel a little bothered by a situation with your host family. Your safety is not at risk, but you feel a little frustrated and confused. Considering the support available to you, what next steps should you take?

What is expected of you in your host family's home?



BRINGING IT TOGETHER YOUR FIRST WEEKS

Your host family asks that your cell phone be docked in a common area during certain hours of the day. You can still access your phone in an emergency, but when you feel homesick you like to spend a lot of time in your room with your phone. What should you do?

Why is it important to be careful with how you treat matters of religion in your host family and community? What are respectful ways to manage religious differences?

Something a member of your host family does bothers you, but you have the feeling your host family and local coordinator are “best friends.” Should you talk to your local coordinator about how you’re feeling?



BRINGING IT TOGETHER **YOUR FIRST WEEKS**

What is “culture shock” and what might it feel like it?

What should you keep in mind when learning to adapt to your new family and new foods?

What is CETUSA’s policy on high school graduation?

PRACTICING PERSONAL SAFETY

PERSONAL SAFETY QUIZ

Protecting your personal safety during your exchange program includes many of the precautions that you already follow in your home country. You may need to take additional precautions during your exchange year. For example, in some parts of the U.S., there are areas that are not safe to travel by foot, especially alone. Additionally, you will encounter an entirely different community of people. Although we want to expect the best in others, it is wise to avoid putting our trust in people too early.

Answer the following True or False questions about personal safety:

- Teachers and school staff do not care if you are being bullied. T or F
- A person who seems normal and friendly is safe to be alone with. T or F
- Your host family should always know where you are. T or F
- It is okay to share personal information with friends online. T or F
- Constant pressure to do something is a “red flag.” T or F
- It is normal for teenagers to travel alone anywhere in the U.S. T or F
- If you are afraid for your safety, it is okay to make a scene to get help. T or F
- Alcohol and drugs increase the risk of sexual assault. T or F
- It is safe to handle a gun if it is not loaded. T or F

PRACTICING PERSONAL SAFETY

1. Before leaving home, I:

- a) Get permission from my host parents, and have a plan for safe transportation home.
- B) Leave, but text my host parents my location later.
- c) Leave a note, they can call me if they need me.

2. If a person insinuates or suggests an inappropriate sexual relationship:

- a) Keep it to yourself, a one-time indiscretion is not enough to create a fuss.
- b) Laugh it off, but take note of the interaction.
- c) Get to a safe place and tell your Local Coordinator and host parents.

3. If I'm out with friends and they are drinking alcohol or using drugs.

- a) Enjoy one drink, but stick to one.
- b) Ride home with one of my friends who seems sober.
- c) Call my host parents and ask them to pick me up.

4. I suddenly realize I am lost. I:

- a) Keep walking or use GPS until I find my way.
- b) Call my host parents.
- c) Ask a stranger for directions.

5. An adult in my home, community or school asks me about my dating life and gives me long hugs whenever they see me. They make an effort to act friendly, but this doesn't feel right.

- a) Do nothing until the person says or does something obviously inappropriate.
- b) Find a reason to avoid this person.
- c) Tell my local coordinator and host family about the behavior.

T/F Answers:

Teachers and school staff do not care if you are being bullied. - **FALSE! Schools have strict policies that prohibit bullying.** / A person who seems normal and friendly is safe to be alone with. - **FALSE! People with poor judgement and/or bad intentions can seem normal and safe at first. Get to know people before placing trust in them.** / Your host family should always know where you are. - **TRUE! Your host family should always know where you are, and how to reach you.** / It is okay to share personal information with friends online. - **FALSE! Sharing personal information online can make you vulnerable to cyber crime, stalking, harassment.** / Constant pressure to do something is a red flag. - **TRUE! You have the right to say "no" and have your answer respected.** / It is normal for teenagers to travel alone anywhere in the U.S. - **FALSE! - Though American teenagers may visit local places alone, generally it is best to travel with friends and your host family.** / If you are afraid for your safety, it is okay to make a scene to get help. - **TRUE! If someone is making you feel unsafe, or if you are at risk of harm, it is okay to get the attention of others however necessary.** / Alcohol and drugs are risk factors for sexual assault. - **TRUE! The victim is never to blame for sexual assault. At the same time, using alcohol and/or drugs raises the risk of becoming the target of an assault.** / It is safe to handle a gun if it is not loaded. - **FALSE! Many people in the U.S. own guns and are trained in their safe handling. However, hundreds of accidental firearm deaths occur each year in the U.S., typically when a gun is discharged during cleaning, unsafe handling, or while being mistaken for a toy. You should not handle a firearm (gun) under any circumstances during your program year.**

Multiple Choice Answers:

1-(a). 2-(c). 3-(c). 4-(b). 5-(c).

STANDARDS OF CONDUCT REVIEW

What are the CETUSA Standards of Conduct and why must you follow them?

Can students obtain their driver's license and/or drive a motorized vehicle during their exchange program?

What type of paid work is permitted during the exchange program?

STANDARDS OF CONDUCT REVIEW

What is CETUSA's policy on tobacco use? If you violate this policy, what are the consequences?

What is CETUSA's policy on alcohol use? If you violate this policy, what are the consequences?

What is CETUSA's policy on recreational drug use? If you violate this policy, what are the consequences?

STANDARDS OF CONDUCT REVIEW

What is CETUSA's policy on dating?

Why should you not form an exclusive dating relationship with one person during your program?

What type of travel is permitted during your program?

KNOWLEDGE CHECK

CETUSA'S PROGRAM RULES

Take the Knowledge Assessment on this page and the next page to test your knowledge of CETUSA's program rules.

Insurance

You should give your host family a copy of your insurance information. T or F

You should keep copies of the claim form and identification card. T or F

Your insurance covers all illnesses and injuries, except pre-existing conditions. T or F

Dental, eye, and well-care are generally not covered. T or F

If you have a problem with insurance, you should call the insurance company. T or F

Religion

You are encouraged to participate in religious activities with your host family. T or F

If you do not wish to participate in your host family's religious activities, it is okay. T or F

Work

Your J-1 visa does not permit you to work legally in the United States. T or F

You may take unofficial work of less than 10 hours per week. T or F

Unofficial work includes baby-sitting, tutoring, and yard work. T or F

Smoking, Drinking and Drugs

Smoking and possession of tobacco products is prohibited by CETUSA. T or F

State law may permit students under the age of 21 years to consume alcohol. T or F

Drugs like marijuana are permitted as long as they are legal in your state. T or F



KNOWLEDGE CHECK

CETUSA'S PROGRAM RULES

Travel

If you travel overnight, you must inform your Local Coordinator. T or F

Travel for more than 2 days requires your natural parent's written permission. T or F

Travel with your host family, Local Coordinator, school, church, or a vetted person over 25 years of age may be allowed with your host and natural parent's permission. T or F

Travel by yourself is permitted. T or F

Program End

The CETUSA program ends 7 days after the last day of school. T or F

You must return home at program end, which is 7 days after the end of school. T or F

5-month students may decide to stay another semester without prior permission. T or F

These are the Standards of Conduct for The Council for Educational Travel USA

Receiving Organization Name

Students (“Rules”), that are referred to in Section J of the Program Agreement. Terms capitalized and used in this document have the same meaning as established in the Program Agreement.

We, the undersigned Participants, understand that while on the Program and in the hosting country, Student must adhere to and abide by the following Rules during the Program. (These are in addition to any rules the Host Family may establish for living in their home.) Any infraction may result in review of Student’s Program and possible early dismissal from the Program and immediate repatriation (return) of Student to his/her home country at the expense of the Participants.

Academic and Cultural Exchange Program

1. ATTENDING SCHOOL

- The Student is on an Exchange Visitor visa and must attend school regularly and obey all school rules.

Excessive absences or a truancy letter from the school will be grounds for a formal review of the Student’s Program by the Receiving Organization management.

- Student is expected to actively engage in schoolwork and to fully participate in all classes, completing all as assigned, regardless of enrollment status in home country.
- As a participant of the Program, Student is expected to speak English at school and during extra-curricular activities.
- The Student is expected to maintain a minimum, overall grade point average of a “C” and to pass all courses. Failure to do so will result in a formal review of the Student’s Program by the Receiving Organization management and may result in early dismissal.
- If the school or the Receiving Organization determines the Student needs a tutor in order to be successful on their Program, the Receiving Organization will help to arrange for such a tutor. The cost for tutoring will be the sole responsibility of the Participants.
- If the Receiving Organization receives an official complaint from the school regarding the Student’s attitude or behavior, it will result in a formal review of the Student’s Program by the Receiving Organization management and may result in early dismissal.
- Dismissal, suspension, or expulsion of the Student from their high school will result in early termination of the Student’s Program.

- The Receiving Organization does not guarantee that Student will receive a diploma or be able to participate in graduation.
- To be successful on the Program, the Receiving Organization encourages Students to become a part of the high school community by speaking English, joining activities, and taking part in class discussions.

2. MEDICAL NEEDS AND TREATMENT

In addition to any medical and mental health needs that were disclosed as part of the application, Student also is responsible to disclose to the Receiving Organization any such needs that arise while on Program. Student is responsible for taking any prescribed medications and following any required treatments with respect to any and all such needs. Student also is expected to follow the directions of any physician or mental health professional with respect to such needs.

Host Families and Their Homes

3. HOST FAMILY RULES

Each Host Family has its own rules which help it to function effectively. It is imperative that Student makes every possible effort to understand what his/her Host Family expects and the rules governing the household. Student must be respectful to his/her Host Family. Disrespectful behavior toward Host Family and/or repeated violation of their rules may cause the Student's Program to be formally reviewed. If problems or concerns arise, it is important that Participants communicate concerns directly to the Receiving Organization or Sending Organization/Agent. Furthermore, Student's activities must be approved by the Host Family. Student must use good judgment and follow Host Family rules for keeping the Host Family informed about where and with whom the Student is, and when the Student will return home.

4. STUDENT'S MONEY

Student is responsible for purchasing his/her own personal items, including but not limited to clothing, entertainment, etc., and for providing his/her own spending money. Student is required to have at his/her disposal a minimum of \$250 each month. The Receiving Organization is not responsible for any lost or stolen money. It is against the Receiving Organization regulations for Student to place his/her money in the Host Family's bank account. Furthermore, Student is not permitted to lend to or borrow from any member of his/her Host Family. It is Student's responsibility to manage their own money.

5. EMPLOYMENT RULES

Under the terms of the J-1 visa, Students may not be employed on either a full or part-time basis but may accept sporadic or intermittent employment such as babysitting or yard work. Activities that could result in the generation of significant income, including crafts or online sales, must be approved by the Receiving Organization management prior to the Student beginning the activity.

Electronic Communications and Social Media

6. RULES

- Student must abide by Host Family and school rules related to use of computers, internet, social media, and other electronic communications.

- Regardless of age, Student may not download or access any materials or content that are illegal or which constitute “adult content” (meaning intended only for persons over age 18). If Student downloads or accesses such material, any and all costs and fines will be the responsibility of the Participants. Such downloads or access will cause Student’s Program to be reviewed by the Receiving Organization management and may result in early dismissal from the Program.

- During the Program, Student is not allowed to join or participate on online dating sites.
- Student’s behavior online, in e-mails, texts, and/or on social media and other electronic

communications, must reflect the same standards of honesty, respect, and consideration used in face-to-face interaction. Student must never talk negatively about others in e-mails, text messages, on social media, or in any other communications. This does not include direct and private communications with the Receiving Organization; the Student’s Sending Organization/Agent in their home country; or school counselors, teachers, or administrators.

- Bullying posts or posts about sex, drugs, or alcohol are not permitted and will result in a formal Program review by the Receiving Organization management and potentially to dismissal from the Program.

7. CELL PHONES AND DEVICES

Students must follow host family rules regarding cell phone, computer, and internet usage. This includes hours of usage and location. Host Family rules may not completely eliminate usage or prohibit natural family communication or communication with the Receiving Organization. Student must not be put on the Host Family’s cellphone plan.

Travel and Visits

8. TRAVEL DURING THE PROGRAM

Any overnight stay away from the Host Family home is considered travel. All travel must include supervision by a responsible adult. Student is required to obtain permission from their Host Family for any travel, and to inform the Receiving Organization in advance of any travel that will last more than two nights. Travel that is longer than two nights and not with the Student’s Host Family, another current Receiving Organization Host Family, or a Receiving Organization representative must be approved by the

Receiving Organization in advance and may require a written statement of approval from the Sending Organization and/or Legal Guardians. Requests for travel approval **must be submitted to the Receiving Organization at least 14 days in advance.**

For travel outside the U.S., the DS-2019 form must be signed by an authorized Receiving Organization staff member before travel is permitted. This is the Participant's responsibility and request **must be received by the Receiving Organization at least 14 days in advance.** Refer to your Handbook for details regarding Authorization to Travel.

Student is not permitted to return to their home country during their Program; doing so will be considered leaving the Program and result in early termination of Program status. Requests for emergency exceptions may be reviewed on a case by case basis.

Nonrefundable travel arrangements should not be made prior to approval of the related travel requests.

Unauthorized travel by a Student will result in his/her Program being reviewed and may be reported to the U.S. Department of State as appropriate.

9. VISITORS

- August-arrival semester Students are not permitted to have visitors from abroad or from other parts of the U.S. until the end of their Program.
- August 10-month (full U.S. academic year) Students may not have visitors until February.
- January-arrival Students may not have visitors until the end of their first semester.
- All plans for visitors, whether from abroad or from other parts of the U.S., must be communicated with the Host Family and Local Coordinator for approval in advance, and prior to making non-refundable travel arrangements.

Laws and Staying Safe

10. LAW VIOLATIONS

Student must obey all laws of the United States, and all laws applicable in their host state, city, and community. If Student is suspected of violating a criminal law, they may be questioned, and/or arrested and/or charged with a violation. If reliable information is received that the Student will be or has been arrested and charged or otherwise implicated in illegal behavior, the Student's Program will be reviewed, and he/she may be returned to his/her home country as soon as legally possible.

11. DRUGS AND ALCOHOL

Purchase, possession, and/or use of illegal (non-prescription) drugs and/or alcohol is forbidden, as is inappropriate use of prescription or non-prescription drugs, even if legal in the host jurisdiction and even if the Student is of age. Furthermore, Participants have agreed that the Receiving Organization has the right to conduct drug testing on Student at the Receiving Organization's discretion, and Student must cooperate and participate in any such requested testing. Violations will result in a review of the Student's Program by the Receiving Organization.

If Student is in a situation where they are offered alcohol or drugs, Student must immediately inform their Host Family or Local Coordinator. Failure to do so will result in the Student's Program being reviewed.

12. TOBACCO USE

The purchase, possession and/or use of tobacco products is forbidden even if the student is of age. This includes but is not limited to: cigarettes, chewing tobacco, nicotine patches, vapor (i.e., vapes) or electronic cigarettes, hookah products, snuff, etc. Violations will result in the Student's Program being reviewed.

13. PORNOGRAPHY AND ADULT CONTENT ITEMS

The purchase, possession, viewing and/or downloading of pornography is against the law and is not permitted. If Student is found to have done so, his/her Program will be reviewed. Student, no matter what their age, is not allowed to purchase or possess materials that are considered for mature audiences or items that are for adults over the age of 18.

14. SEXTING

Student should not engage in sexting or distribution of sexual imagery. Sexting is a punishable offense in the United States, in order to protect children from sexual predators and other unsafe risks. Teenagers who text nude or partially nude photos of themselves or others can be charged with distribution and/or possession of child pornography. Those who receive the pictures can be charged with possession of child pornography. These are serious offenses and will result in the Student's Program being reviewed.

15. DANGEROUS ACTIVITIES

Dangerous activities such as, but not limited to, skydiving, hang gliding, glider riding, parachute jumping, parasailing, jet skiing, snowmobiling, motorcycling, all-terrain vehicle riding, rock climbing, bungee jumping, riding in private aircraft, hot air balloon riding, hunting and/or using weapons (including but not limited to: guns, rifles, bows/arrows, etc.), are prohibited during the Student's Program. Some insurance plans may cover such activities, but coverage does not constitute the Receiving Organization's permission to participate in these dangerous activities. They are prohibited and participation in them will result in the Student's Program being reviewed.

16. DRIVING

Due to the danger involved and the lack of liability/medical insurance coverage, Student may not, under any circumstances, operate a motorized vehicle. This includes, but is not limited to, operating automobiles, trucks, motorcycles, motor scooters, all-terrain vehicles, golf carts, snowmobiles, riding lawnmowers, etc. Students may participate in a drivers' training course, but may not at any time drive a vehicle. Driving is prohibited even if the Host Family would otherwise permit it, and even if Host Family children are legally permitted to drive. Violations will result in the Student's Program being reviewed.

17. HITCHHIKING

Hitchhiking is extremely dangerous. Student is not permitted to hitchhike, either alone or with friends, at any time on their Program. Violations will result in the Student's Program being reviewed.

18. SEX AND DATING

Dating while on the Program is subject to the Host Family rules. Sexual relations are prohibited for Student while on the Program. If it is found that Student is pregnant or has caused a pregnancy while on the Receiving Organization Program, the Student's Program will immediately be reviewed.

19. LIFE-CHANGING DECISIONS

Decisions such as marriage, engagement to be married, change of religion, acquiring tattoos or body piercings, making body modifications, etc., must be put aside until after the Student returns home. Violations will cause the Student's Program to be reviewed.

20. THE BRIDGEUSA SPONSOR IS THE FINAL AUTHORITY

Student must abide by the Receiving Organization's judgment in resolving any issues that arise while Student is on Program.



Student Pre-Departure and Personal Safety Orientation

Student Name: _____

Please Print Name

Student Singature: _____

CETUSA Student #: _____

Location of Orientation: _____

First & Last Name of Presenter: _____

Please Print Name

Title/Position: _____

Name of Organization: _____

Presenter Signature: _____

Today's Date: __/__/____
MM DD YYYY

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