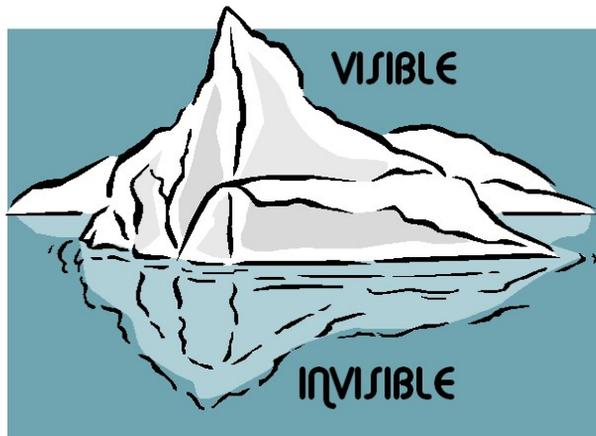


## What to know Before Your Student Arrives?

### Iceberg Model of Culture

Culture can be compared to an iceberg. An iceberg has a visible section above the waterline, and a larger, invisible section below the water line. Likewise, culture has some aspects that are observable and others that can only be suspected or imagined. Also, like an iceberg, the part of culture that is visible (observable behavior) is only a small part of a much bigger whole.



The numbered items that appear below are all features of culture. Some of them are behaviors that you will easily see in the exchange students you are hosting. They may also see these behaviors easily in your home. Others on the list are not observable; they are things that you and your exchange student can only guess about each other.

**In the drawing of the iceberg above, write above the water-line the numbers of those features you consider observable behavior; write the remaining numbers beneath the line.**

- |                          |  |
|--------------------------|--|
| 1. Facial expressions    | 14. Notions of modesty                 |
| 2. Religious beliefs     | 15. Foods                              |
| 3. Religious rituals     | 16. Eating habits                      |
| 4. Importance of time    | 17. Understanding of the natural world |
| 5. Paintings             | 18. Concept of self                    |
| 6. Values                | 19. Work ethic                         |
| 7. Literature            | 20. Concept of beauty                  |
| 8. Childrearing          | 21. Music                              |
| 9. Concept of leadership | 22. Styles of dress                    |
| 10. Gestures             | 23. General world view                 |
| 11. Holiday customs      | 24. Concept of personal space          |
| 12. Concept of fairness  | 25. Rules of social etiquette          |
| 13. Nature of friendship |  |

Remember that the behaviors you see in your exchange student that may seem strange or unusual are often deeply rooted in the student's culture and upbringing.

\*Adapted from *Culture Matters* Published by Peace Corps Information and Exchange

# Stereotypes and Preconceptions

A stereotype is a conventional and usually oversimplified belief. Often, a stereotype emerges when a single characteristic is considered typical of a whole culture. For example, many people think all Germans are precise, or all Japanese are very formal. Certain stereotypes can be hurtful because they reduce an individual or group to simple characteristics that may not actually represent them.

The country specific Culturegrams provide a general overview of common cultural characteristics of your student's country. While it is very helpful to learn about those cultural norms, it is important not to hold fast to a stereotype that might be harmful to your student. Everyone is unique, no matter what country they come from.

**Please answer these questions to learn more about stereotypes and preconceptions.**

What are two personality traits you associate with the country of your student?

Are there ways in which stereotypes can be useful?

Are there any ways in which stereotypes can be harmful? What historical examples of stereotyping can you think of?

Have you thought about what American stereotypes your student might have?

Here are some characteristics that exemplify some of the stereotypes people might attach to Americans or to another nationality:

- Industrious
- Energetic
- Greedy
- Self-indulgent
- Rude
- Nationalistic
- Inventive
- Intelligent
- Honest
- Friendly
- Lazy
- Sophisticated

# What to Expect in the First Few Days and Weeks?

## The Stages of Cultural Adjustment

We guarantee that your student will go through a period of cultural adjustment as they experience change in their routines, roles, relationships, and everyday living, but we also guarantee that each student will experience it differently. Every student will react depending on their individual personality. The information below describes some of the emotions that your student may cycle through as they adjust. This will help you and your family understand some of your student's behavior.

### **Initial Euphoria: 'Honeymoon' Phase**

The Individual:

- 9 Is very positive about the culture.
- 9 Is overwhelmed with impressions.
- 9 Finds the culture exotic and is fascinated by it.
- 9 Is largely passive; doesn't confront the culture

### **Rejection: Discomfort Begins – The Honeymoon is Over**

The Individual:

- 9 Begins to interact with the culture.
- 9 Begins to dislike aspects of the culture.
- 9 Finds the behavior of the people unusual and unpredictable.
- 9 Feels anxiety, stress and anger.
- 9 Begins to criticize, mock or show animosity to the people 9 Wants to go home.

### **Adjustment: Understanding the differences**

The Individual:

- 9 Begins to understand the behavior of the people.
- 9 Feels more comfortable living in/encountering the culture.
- 9 Feels less isolated.
- 9 Regains his/her sense of humor.

### **Adaptation: Cultural competency**

The Individual:

- 9 Enjoys being in the culture.
- 9 Functions easily in the culture.
- 9 Prefers certain host country behavior to that of their own culture.
- 9 Adopts certain behaviors.

### **Possible Symptoms of Transition Stress:**

Homesickness	Irritability	Boredom
Lethargy	Hostility towards locals	Mockery
Irrational behavior	Excessive sleeping	Withdrawal

# INSIDE YOUR FAMILY - EXPECTATIONS

Within the first week or so after your student arrives, complete this exercise with your student to review your family habits and routines. These questions should first be answered separately by your family members and then by the student. Then, through conversation, compare to see if the student's perceptions of your family's habits are the same as your own perceptions of your family.

*Post this worksheet on the refrigerator so that the student can refer to it as needed.*

## **Routines:**

What time do family members get up on weekdays? \_\_\_\_\_ On Saturday? \_\_\_\_\_ On Sunday? \_\_\_\_\_

What time do family members go to bed on weekdays? \_\_\_\_\_ On Friday? \_\_\_\_\_ On Saturday? \_\_\_\_\_

When do family members go to work or leave the house? \_\_\_\_\_ When do they come home? \_\_\_\_\_

## **Food:**

	Breakfast		Lunch		Dinner	
	Weekdays	Weekends	Weekdays	Weekends	Weekdays	Weekends
Does everyone eat together?						
At what time?						
What is typical food for this meal?						
Who prepares the food?						
Who pays for it?						

What are the rules about eating between meals and helping oneself to what's in the refrigerator?

Where are snacks allowed to be eaten? \_\_\_\_\_

What are your favorite foods? \_\_\_\_\_

What are the favorite foods of your family? \_\_\_\_\_

## **Habits:**

What jobs are shared around the house? \_\_\_\_\_

What are your responsibilities? \_\_\_\_\_

What is the usual routine for using the bathroom? \_\_\_\_\_

What can or cannot be flushed down the toilet? \_\_\_\_\_

What is the procedure for doing the laundry? \_\_\_\_\_

What is the procedure for the locking the house front door? \_\_\_\_\_

When family members have special plans or want to bring a guest home, what arrangements should be made? \_\_\_\_\_

What is the procedure for using the home telephone? \_\_\_\_\_ Taking messages? \_\_\_\_\_

What is the procedure for using the cell phone? \_\_\_\_\_

What is the procedure for accessing internet in the home? \_\_\_\_\_

What are the family guidelines for using the TV, stereo, and computer?

## **Eight Simple Safety Tips for Pan Atlantic Foundation Host Families**

You're about to learn about a new family member and culture and build new friendships. As you begin this year or semester, it's very important to keep in mind that your new host son or daughter has grown up in a very different environment. Many things which seem obvious to you will seem new and foreign to them. These Simple Safety Tips can help you establish a safe and happy environment for your new family member.

1. **Help your student learn your address and phone number as soon as possible.** Take them for a tour of your neighborhood and the area around the high school, pointing out landmarks and helping them to learn street names along the way. You may even want to help them map the area, highlighting routes to and from places they may visit often. Show them places they can go and numbers they can call if they are lost, need help or feel uncomfortable.
2. **Remind your student that they should check with you first** before giving out their address, phone number or personal information to someone they're not familiar with.
3. **Monitor your student's online activity.** Keep computers in a central location and be sure that students do not give out personal or host family information.
4. **Make sure your student knows to check with you first before riding with or going** to the home of someone new.
5. **Remind your student there is safety in numbers** – he/she shouldn't go out alone and should avoid one on one unsupervised situations with individuals with whom your family is not familiar or uncomfortable.
6. **Place reasonable limits on your physical interaction.** Remember that many students come from cultures or homes in which affection is not openly displayed. Respect your student's wishes regarding physical contact, including his/her right to reject displays of affection when it makes him/her uncomfortable.
7. **Reassure your student that they can always share their difficulties as well as happiness with their** Area Representative, Regional Director or the Pan Atlantic Foundation office staff.
8. **Make sure that your student knows his/her school counselor** and would feel comfortable discussing any issues of concern with him/her.

Adapted from the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children's (1989) *Knowing My 8 Rules for Safety*; Darkness to Light's (2004) *7 Steps to protecting our children* by the Center for Cultural Interchange

## **Preparation for the First Few Weeks: Your Master Checklist**

**Student's Room** - Clean and ready to go! Fresh sheets on the bed, a blanket, comforter or quilt and pillow. Make sure the student's room is cleaned out for their use and some type of dresser is available. All items that do not belong to the student and/or host sibling, if sharing a room, should be removed.

**Welcome Note and Snacks/Bottled Water** - For those first few nights of jetlag.

**Welcome Basket or Gift** - We often gets asked for ideas. Here are a few from previous years:

- Gum and a few little snacks, some trial sizes of shampoo, lotion and conditioner, pencils and pens for school, a small photo frame or photo booklet, razors, deodorant, some lip gloss and nail polish, the school handbook and a small dictionary.
- We bought a school t-shirt from her high school. We added some small bath and body works items, loofa, red white and blue items, fun socks, hair ties, and a variety of candy bars.
- Journal, couple of shirts, fingernail polish and remover, cotton balls, and a handmade blanket. Refillable water bottle to carry to school.
- High school t-shirt, shampoo, body wash, deodorant, paper and pencils..... - An empty photo album and together as a family, take pictures and fill the album throughout the year.
- House key, a city map, phone numbers, etc., as well as some fruit and crackers.

**Important Documents** - Right from the beginning, decide on a designated place for all important documents, i.e. passport, DS2019, insurance and Pan Atlantic Foundation information.

**Important Information** - Consider giving your student your address and phone numbers, a map of the area, an area guidebook or website link to your city listing parks, significant sights recreation, shopping restaurants and activities in your surrounding area.

**Cell Phones** - We recommend prepaid cards/no contract phones with talk, text and internet. There are a variety of options with both limited and unlimited minutes. We discourage adding your student to your family's phone plan.

**Money** - We recommend that students manage their own money from an account already connected to their natural parents in their home country. Please read the *Program Rules* section of the Host Family Handbook to learn more about specifics of how to manage money. If your student needs to open a checking account in the US, plan to take them during the first week. (some banks will not do this unless the student is 18 of age. Please do not place their money in your account. Please do not receive money from the Natural Family via Pay Pal or similar type account. Also, never borrow or lend money to/from your student.

# **INSURANCE INFORMATION**

## **For Host Families and Students**

You have, or will soon be receiving, detailed insurance information in an email. **Be sure to keep this pertinent insurance information for your student.** It contains policy numbers, contact information, and more details about coverage.

**Important note: vaccinations and/or sports physicals** that may be required by schools are not covered by the student's insurance. Your student will need to pay for these themselves.

### **Here are general guidelines to follow in the event that medical services are needed.**

Report the following information to your Area Representative:

1. The date of any illness or accident requiring health services.
2. The reason for the visit.
3. The names and phone numbers of the service providers, i.e., the doctor, the hospital, the radiology lab, etc.
4. When required by the insurance company, whether the 800 number was called for preapproval.
5. In addition, hosts are asked to keep copies of all documentation or bills received before forwarding originals to the **claims** office.

Students should give health providers only information directly related to the illness or accident.

Claims assessors may find reason to deny claims because of "pre-existing" conditions. If, indeed, the illness is a pre-existing condition, the student needs to be aware that the claim may be denied, even when pre-approval has been given. However, we do not want students to hesitate getting treatment, even for pre-existing conditions, if they need it.

As the host parent, you should make a copy of:

- The student's insurance ID card, which is in your HF welcome email.
- The insurance company's 800/toll free number.

**NOTE:** *Only visit the Emergency Room in the case of a real emergency. Students are expected to pay out of pocket \$350 which is not reimbursed.*

## Follow Up Visit to Your Home Within 60 days of your student's arrival

Within a week or up to 30 to 60 days of your student's arrival, you will be visited one time by another Pan Atlantic Foundation Representative. Department of State requires all J-1 visa sponsors to send a representative to complete a second visit of all host families' homes within the first two months of the exchange students' arrivals. This visit is to verify that the information provided in the host family application has been accurately portrayed and that the student is in a safe and suitable environment.

What to expect for the second site visit:

- You will receive a call from the visiting representative to arrange a day and time for the brief visit.
- Only one adult needs to be present; it is not required that the exchange student or other members of your family be present.
- The visit should not take more than 15-30 minutes in total and will be similar to the house tour that you provided during your initial house visit.

**NOTE:**

1. If the placement is **Permanent**, the visit should happen between 1-60 days after the student arrives.
2. If the placement is **Temporary**, the visit should happen between 1-30 days after the student arrives and thereafter until the student is placed permanently.

We appreciate you making the time to receive this brief visit and your continued support in providing a wonderful American experience for an exchange student.

## Important Visa and Travel Information

Welcome to your exchange experience! We're sure that your first few weeks together will be busy as you get to know your student and pursue school and community activities. This letter contains some important information that should be helpful during the getting-to-know-you period and beyond.

First, we'd like to encourage you to contact your Area Representative (AR) or the Portland, Maine office at any time in the coming months with questions, concerns or good news! Homesickness, a new culture, language, the adjustment to welcoming and being a new family member - all these will affect the normal ups and downs of family life this year. Pan Atlantic Foundation ARs are there to help you establish communication and clear up misunderstandings if difficulties arise, as well as to share your excitement when all goes well. We hope that as time passes you will develop strong, lasting relationships, learn about one another's cultures and gain a new awareness that your family has a unique culture all its own.

Secondly, please note that all students should have arrived with a DS-2019 form which has Pan Atlantic Foundation's address listed on it. (*Students should take care not to lose this form and store it with their passport in a safe location.*)

Finally, we'd like to review procedures for changes of address and travel. Government regulations require that we keep all students' current home and school addresses up-to-date in the Department of Homeland Security's database throughout the year. Thank you for helping us to meet this requirement by notifying your AR in advance of any move or travel. Please take a moment to review our travel policies below, which have been developed to speed the flow of information in the event of any emergency and to ensure that students' visas remain valid. In summary:

- If students plan to stay the night at friend's home, the hosting family will need to know where they will be and have a phone number where they can be reached.
- If the hosting family will be out of town and have made arrangements for their student to stay with friends while they are away, the student's contact information needs to be provided to their AR, who will provide it to the Pan Atlantic Foundation Office. The AR contact information should be provided to the temporary hosting family. Pan Atlantic Foundation will also need to conduct criminal background checks on the individuals in the household who are 17 or older if this is more than a weekend stay.
- If the host family is planning a brief trip away from home with their student (e.g. to a relative's home or for a holiday), the host family must inform the AR and provide an itinerary and contact numbers.

If your family plans to travel internationally with your student, please submit a Travel Request form for approval by the Pan Atlantic Foundation office well in advance (2 weeks min). Please remember to check visa requirements to the country you are traveling to for your student, they may differ than yours. Also, it is imperative to check that the student's U.S. visa allows for multiple entries back into the U.S.

We, at Pan Atlantic Foundation, are committed to supporting students and host families throughout their exchange year. Please feel free to contact your AR, or Regional Director at any time with questions or concerns. Thank you again for your commitment to international educational and cultural exchange. We look forward to working together this year!

Best regards,

*Vickie McCormack*

**Vice President, Pan Atlantic Foundation**



Income Tax Deductions of a Charitable Contribution for  
Maintenance of an International Exchange Student  
Sponsored by Pan Atlantic Foundation

Host Family Name and Address

---

---

---

IRS Regulation 1.170 A-2, enacted December 1969, permits families maintaining an exchange student as a member of their household to consider \$50 per month as a charitable contribution for income tax purposes.

This will certify that the above named family, by written agreement with Pan Atlantic Foundation, had as a member of their household an international exchange student.

Student Name

Country of Origin

Program Dates

Host Signature

---

---

---

---

---

Report your charitable contributions on Schedule A of Form 1040. For information about "Reporting expenses for student living with you" see IRS Publication 526 or <http://www.irs.gov/publications/p526/ar02.html#d0e707>

Sponsoring Organization:  
Pan Atlantic Foundation  
1 Union Street, Suite 202  
Portland, ME. 04101

