

ACADEMIC YEAR IN THE US

As a student, you are leaving your familiar environment to embark on one of the most exciting experiences of your life. You will get to know a different culture, make new friends, become fluent in new language, overcome a number of challenges, and – we hope – have a lot of fun along the way. At the end of the program, you will have learned not only a lot about life in the United States, but also about yourself.

BENEFITS OF STUDYING ABROAD

Gains in Personal Development & Growth:

- Increases self-confidence & self-reliance
- Gain independence & maturity
- Lasting impact on world view
- Grow your global network of friends
- Prepares you to face challenges in the future
- Better understanding of your personal strengths & weaknesses

Academic Commitment:

- Enhances interest in specific academic study
- Influences subsequent educational experiences
- Reinforces commitment to foreign language study

Intercultural Development:

- Language and cultural immersion
- Helps you to better understand your own cultural views and biases
- Influences you to seek out a greater diversity of friends
- Continues to influence your interactions with people from different cultures
- Gain better appreciation of other cultures as well as your own

ACADEMIC LIFE

High school attendance is not only a requirement of the J-1 exchange visitor program but also an important part of the student's cultural experience in the United States. We rely on the generosity of American high schools to accept our students into their school system, and we greatly appreciate the tremendous opportunity they give to young people from all over the world. In return, we guarantee that our students are well prepared for academic success, and we are committed to providing the highest level of support to ensure that schools can fully enjoy the benefits of hosting an exchange student.

Before students are accepted into the program, they must demonstrate strong academic potential through both course transcripts and school references. Students must be able to fully participate in an American high school and meet the academic requirements. Qualified English instructors assess their ability to speak, read, and write English. In addition, our students are screened for emotional

maturity, focused goals, demonstrated leadership, and the ability to adapt to the challenges of life in the U.S.

Students are expected to comply with the general school curriculum and schedule when choosing courses. Each student works closely with a school guidance counselor to determine which class level to enter and which courses to select. Wherever possible, we require students to enroll in a standard curriculum including English literature, U.S. history or government, mathematics, and science. If students have already achieved mastery levels in certain areas, or if a course is not available, they must substitute another core academic class. The remainder of the schedule may be made up of courses chosen by the student, such as additional core courses, art, music, drama, etc. Some schools require a class in physical education (sports). If students are unable to participate due to medical reasons, they may be excused.

Students attend an academic program; therefore, we expect our students to maintain a grade of C or better in every class they attend and in general to make a positive contribution. Poor academic performance will be addressed with disciplinary steps and, in extreme cases, could lead to dismissal from the program. Note: In most U.S. school systems an A (excellent) is the highest grade, followed by B (good), C (average), D (poor), and F (fail/no credit).

EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

American high schools usually offer a variety of activities for students to choose from outside the required academic curriculum. These activities include athletic teams (American football, basketball, volleyball, swimming, etc.), civic education (debate teams, student government, school newspaper, etc.), creative expression (theater, arts, dancing, etc.), and community service (raising funds for charity, working at a soup kitchen for the homeless, building housing for low-income people, etc.). In addition, students are strongly encouraged to become involved in community service activities, as these are a great opportunities to give back to their host communities.

LOCAL REPRESENTATIVES

Each student is assigned a local representative who serves as their main contact regarding most aspects of the program. In addition to matching students with host families, the local representative is responsible for conducting orientations, assisting with high school enrollment, and providing support and counseling to students, host families, and schools as needed. Representatives maintain close communication with students and host families, as well as school officials. They contact students and host families separately once a month, either in-person or by phone. Schools are contacted at a minimum of every 6 to 8 weeks. Local representatives are also required to document student patterns of adjustment, outstanding accomplishments, and areas of concern.