

Preparing for an exchange program

Before you actually take part in an exchange program, it can be helpful to give some thought to some general aspects of exchanges.

1 [👥] [✍️] An intercultural gallery walk:

- a) Divide up into four groups. Each group creates a profile of one of these people:
 a typical American woman • a typical German woman • a typical American man • a typical German man
 For each profile, make a drawing and feature text elements to illustrate your ideas.
- b) When all four groups are finished, hang your profiles up in the classroom. As a class, take a walk

c) Class discussion:

1. Where do you feel stereotypes are involved in the drawings of the American man and woman?
2. Do you think the portraits of the German man and woman would have been any different if Americans (or anybody from outside Germany) had drawn them? Explain.
3. Discuss why stereotypes can be a problem – and how they can be avoided.

2 Thinking about a stay in the US:

- a) [✍️] Imagine you will be staying with an American host family and going to an American high school for a year. What do you think it will be like? Take three minutes to write down your ideas (in keywords) on these aspects of American life: location for exchange year • family lifestyle • friends • free time

- b) Share your ideas with the rest of class. What ideas are mentioned most often?

- c) Read the interview questions below, any of which could be asked by an exchange program placement officer. What answers show that you have the maturity – and the intercultural competence – to do well in an exchange program with a foreign family?

1. "Imagine that your host family is *much* different than you had expected in an important way. (Much more religious; completely different financial situation; completely different lifestyle; etc.). Would that be a problem for you? Explain why or why not."
2. "How would you react if a classmate at your new American high school asked you why you aren't wearing your little leather shorts and feathered cap / your 'dirndl' dress?"
3. "You may have expectations of your host family. But what do you think they might expect of you?"

3 [👥] [🎤] Preparing for exchange program interviews:

- a) Listen to what an exchange program interviewer says about the process of determining who is well-suited – or not – to an exchange program in the US.
- b) 1. What does the man say about teenagers' expectations?
 2. What does he say about the actual application process?
- c) [👥] Role play – 'Hot seat':
 Act out exchange program interviews. On slips of paper, write questions you think an interviewer might ask. Take turns being the interviewer and the pupil on the 'hot seat'. Each pupil draws a question and has to answer it on the spot.

