



Application Worksheet for CLS Program Essays

This worksheet is designed to help you plan your essay responses and reflect on your motivations for applying for the CLS Program. Note that this worksheet is NOT part of the CLS application, which is available online at: <https://clscholarship.org/apply>

The following reflection questions are designed to help you think deeply about the essay prompts and generate content for your responses. They are not meant to be answered individually; rather, use them as a tool to explore different angles and craft comprehensive answers to the main prompts.

Getting Started

- Before beginning your essays, review the [information related to your language](#) and [watch a recording of the general webinar](#).
- If you have applied for a CLS award before, ensure that your responses are original and reflect your current experiences.
- Start your application early. The essays are just one part of a comprehensive application.
- Check out more resources for applicants at: www.clscholarship.org/applicants

Key Reminders

- **Be Specific:** Use concrete examples to illustrate your points.
- **Be Focused:** Clarity is essential; ensure your responses directly address the question and stay on topic.
- **Be Reflective:** Show deep thought and introspection in your answers.
- **And lastly, PROOFREAD!**

Good luck with your application!



Essay 1: Commitment to Language Learning

Prompt:

- Why are you interested in your target language and culture?
- Have you encountered challenges in pursuing your target language? If so, how will CLS help you overcome these barriers?
- How does CLS fit into your plan to begin or continue studying your target language? If you have prior experience, how will CLS build on that experience?
- How will you continue to study and engage with your target language and culture after the CLS Program? What strategies will you use to continue language learning, even if resources are limited on your campus?

Reflection Questions:

- Is there a particular experience, person, or moment that sparked your interest in this language and culture? How has that initial spark evolved over time?
- How do you envision engaging with this language and culture will enrich your academic or professional life?
- What specific obstacles (limited course offerings, financial constraints, lack of native speakers, time conflicts, etc.) have you faced in your language learning journey, and how have you attempted to navigate or overcome these challenges?
 - Which features or aspects of the CLS Program directly address the barriers you've encountered?
- Where are you currently in your language learning journey (complete beginner, false beginner, intermediate, etc.)? What are your current strengths and areas for growth?
 - If you are a complete beginner, how have you learned a new skill before? In what ways did you struggle and how did you achieve success?
- How will you stay motivated and accountable in your language learning when formal instruction ends? What personal strategies or support systems will you create?
- If your campus has limited resources for your target language, how will you creatively seek out or create learning opportunities? Consider both in-person opportunities (conversation partners, cultural events, study abroad) and digital resources (apps, online communities, media).

Tips:



- **Be Proactive:** Research ways to continue developing your language skills after CLS, such as online courses, language exchanges, or local conversation groups.
- **Get Creative:** Focus on creative solutions to overcome limitations in your community rather than dwelling on them.

Essay 2: Preparation for the Program

Prompt:

- How do you see yourself meeting the demands of an intensive language-focused program, adapting to life in an overseas host community, and collaborating with a group of peers from across the United States?
- What knowledge, skills, or experiences have prepared you to meet these challenges? What potential challenges do you anticipate, and how would you approach them?
- Give an example of when you navigated an unfamiliar situation. How did you respond, what perspectives did you learn from, and what did you take away from the experience?

Reflection Questions:

- What are your biggest fears or uncertainties about living in a foreign country and/or studying a (new) language intensively?
 - What specifically about living and learning intensively with the same cohort of peers from across the United States—spending 4-6 hours daily in class together, navigating cultural adjustment as a group, and sharing close quarters—might be challenging for you? How does this differ from typical group projects or classroom settings you've experienced?
- What experiences from your past can you draw on? How were they similar to or different from the CLS Program structure? What skills—such as teamwork, communication, or adaptability—can you leverage to navigate the challenges of this program?
- What experiences from your past can you draw on? How were they similar or different to the CLS Program structure? What skills - such as teamwork, communication, or adaptability - can you draw on?



- Think about a time when you had to interact with people whose beliefs, backgrounds, or values were different from your own. How did you approach the situation? What did you learn about yourself and others?

Tips:

- **Brainstorm challenges:** Think of situations you've faced in the past that resemble what you might encounter on the CLS Program. Consider sharing a couple of these examples with a trusted friend, family member, or mentor to get their perspective on which one is the strongest.
- **Create a list of skills, strategies, or coping mechanisms** that helped you adapt and succeed in those situations, and that you would bring to your CLS Program.

Essay 3: Citizen Diplomacy and National Impact

Prompt:

- Describe how you plan to develop an understanding of your host culture and community.
- What specific experiences and perspectives have prepared you to represent the United States as a citizen diplomat?
- What steps will you take to share the knowledge and skills gained through CLS with your community upon return to the United States?

Reflection Questions:

- What specific strategies will you use to immerse yourself in the local culture and build meaningful relationships with people from your host community?
- What is something you are eager to learn about your host community or culture, and how will you approach learning about it with curiosity, humility, and cultural sensitivity?
- Think about moments in your life where you've represented a group, bridged different communities, or navigated cross-cultural situations. What lessons from these experiences will help you represent the complexity of American culture abroad?
- What knowledge about your host culture and community do you believe is important or valuable for your community back home, and why does it matter that you share this understanding?



- What concrete actions will you take upon your return to share what you've learned—through presentations, mentorship, community engagement, advocacy, or other means—and how will you ensure this knowledge creates a lasting impact?

Tips:

- **Describe how you will immerse yourself in your host community:** Consider specific strategies such as building relationships with host families and peers, participating in local traditions, or engaging in community activities. Show how you view cultural exchange as a two-way process of listening and sharing.
- **Define your role as a citizen diplomat:** In the context of CLS, being a citizen diplomat means using your experiences and perspectives gained through the program to bridge cultural gaps, promote dialogue, and build mutual respect between Americans and people from other communities/countries.
- **Connect your participation to a broader impact:** Think beyond what you will learn individually and consider how your experience will create ripple effects that extend to your community/ies and contribute to our nation's global engagement.
- **Use personal and specific examples:** Show, don't just tell. Draw on experiences from your life and discuss how these experiences have prepared you to engage globally with integrity and respect and represent the United States abroad.

Personal Statement

Prompt:

- What are your academic and professional goals?
- How integral is knowledge of your target language and culture to your goals?
- What qualities, perspectives, and/or experiences make you a good candidate for the CLS Program?
- After the program, how will you use what you've learned to make a positive impact in the United States? For example, how will your participation contribute to broader goals, such as strengthening international relationships, supporting innovation, or benefiting your community?

Reflection Questions:



- What are you hoping to study or accomplish academically in the near future, and what kind of work or career are you interested in pursuing? What experiences or interests have led you toward this path?
 - What obstacles or uncertainties do you face in reaching these goals? What support, resources, or opportunities would help you move forward?
- In what specific ways will proficiency in your target language and cultural competency be necessary or valuable for your academic and professional success? Consider particular opportunities, research areas, populations you'll work with, or regions where you'll work.
- How will your presence and participation enrich the cohort experience for your peers, and what can you contribute to group learning and cultural exchange?
- What specific communities, organizations, or sectors in the U.S. will benefit from your enhanced language skills and cultural knowledge, and how do you plan to engage with them?
- How will your participation in CLS contribute to broader goals such as building bridges between the U.S. and your target language region, fostering innovation, supporting underrepresented communities, or promoting mutual understanding?

Tips:

- **Articulate Your Goals:** Clearly explain how studying your CLS language aligns with your specific academic and professional aspirations, and why CLS is essential for achieving them.
- **Highlight Personal Motivations:** Include any personal reasons for learning the language that you haven't mentioned elsewhere, showcasing your commitment and enthusiasm for the program.
- **Emphasize Community:** Address why your participation in CLS matters not just to you, but also to your community and country, making a case for the broader benefits of your experience.