**Application Worksheet for CLS Spark Essays**

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

**Getting Started**

* Before beginning your essays, review the information on the CLS website related to your language and watch the relevant application tips video.
* 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](http://www.clscholarship.org/)

**Essay 1: Motivation and Commitment (350 Word Maximum)**

**Prompt:**

* What interests you about your target language and the region in which it is spoken?
* How will increased knowledge of your target language and culture help you achieve your long-term academic or professional goals?
* What aspects of this program do you anticipate will be the most challenging? What knowledge, skills, and experience will help you sustain your engagement and learning throughout this program?

**Draft Response:**

**Reflection Questions:**

* Think about what first sparked your interest in learning your CLS language or exploring the culture of the region where it is spoken. What inspired you to take that first step?
* What specific skills or insights do you believe you will gain from understanding the language and culture, and how do you envision applying them to overcome challenges or seize opportunities in your future career/academic pursuits?
* What are your biggest fears or uncertainties about participating in an intensive virtual program? What specific skills or experiences from your past—such as teamwork, communication, or adaptability—can you leverage to address the challenges of living and learning in this environment? How will they help you during CLS Spark?

**Tip:**

* **Connect with Your Motivations:** Try listing out motivations for learning your target language under three categories: personal, professional and academic. Spend some time reflecting on your motivations and identify which are the strongest and most compelling to include in your responses.
* **Draw on Examples:** Be specific in examples you choose drawing on ones that mirror the challenges you expect to face in the intensive virtual environment of CLS Spark.

**Essay 2: Access to Language Learning Opportunities (300 Word Maximum)**

**Prompt:**

* What opportunities, if any, have you taken advantage of in pursuit of studying your target language? Have you faced any barriers in your attempts to study your target language?
* How will CLS Spark help you overcome these barriers? How does CLS Spark fit into your plan to develop proficiency in your target language?
* How do you plan to continue your language learning journey after CLS Spark?

**Draft Response:**

**Reflection Questions:**

* What opportunities have you pursued (formal or informal) to learn about your target language? Reflect on how these experiences have shaped your motivation and interest to study the language.
* Have there been barriers (such as financial, access to resources, or limited courses) that have hindered your language study? How have you been able to overcome or work around these challenges?
* Why is CLS Spark the right next step in your language learning journey? How will it help you overcome barriers, how does it offer opportunities that other programs or methods cannot?
* Beyond CLS Spark, what concrete steps do you plan to take to maintain and enhance your language skills? Think creatively about opportunities for continued study such as online resources, conversation groups, travel, or professional applications.

**Tip:**

* **Do Your Research:** Research how you will continue studying your target language after CLS-Spark. What opportunities might be available in your community and how might you also leverage the resources and connections you will make through CLS Spark to continue your language study?

**Essay 3: Statement of Experience (350 Word Maximum)**

**Prompt:**

* How will your experiences, perspectives, and/or background contribute to your cohort?
* How will your experiences, perspectives, and/or background contribute towards the goal of building mutual understanding?

**Draft Response:**

**Reflection Questions:**

* Reflecting on your qualities and experiences, how will they enrich your cohort's dynamic, and what specific examples can you provide to demonstrate how you can positively influence your cohort during CLS Spark?
* Think about moments in your life where you’ve represented a group or a community. What lessons from these experiences will help you represent the diversity of American culture abroad?
* What insights do you want to share to challenge stereotypes and promote cultural exchange? How will you continue to promote mutual understanding after returning to the U.S.?

**Tip:**

* **Connect with Others:** Ask a trusted friend, family member, teacher or mentor, to help you identify what unique qualities, experiences and perspectives you have that make you well-suited to serve as a bridge between the U.S. and the host culture and contribute to a positive virtual group environment.

**Final Reflections**

* **Be Specific:** Use concrete examples to illustrate your points.
* **Be Genuine:** Authenticity is crucial; ensure your responses reflect your true self and experiences.
* **Be Reflective:** Show deep thought and introspection in your answers.
* **And lastly, PROOFREAD!**

**Good luck with your application!**