**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>

**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: Citizen Diplomacy and Mutual Understanding**

**Prompt:**

* How might your experiences, perspectives, and/or background contribute to your role as a citizen diplomat and the overarching mission of building mutual understanding in your host community?
* How do you plan to contribute to the mission of building mutual understanding and represent your host community upon returning to the United States?

**Draft Response:**

**Reflection Questions:**

* 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 specific aspects of your background would you like to share to challenge stereotypes about Americans and promote cultural exchange?
* What is something you are eager to learn about your host community or culture, and why do you believe this knowledge is important for your community back home?
* In what ways do you plan to immerse yourself in the local culture and build meaningful relationships with people from your host community?

**Tips:**

* **Connect with how you can serve as a citizen diplomat:** A citizen diplomat engages in cultural exchange and fosters understanding between people from different countries. In the context of CLS, it means using your experiences and perspectives to bridge cultural gaps, promote dialogue, and build mutual respect between Americans and people from other communities/countries.
* **Use Personal Examples:** Draw on experiences from your life where you’ve served as a bridge between different cultures, communities, or perspectives.

**Essay 2: Preparation for the Program**

**Prompt:**

* What challenges do you anticipate while participating in an intensive language-focused program, living in an overseas host community, and learning in a cohort-based environment?
* What knowledge, skills, and experiences will you draw on to meet these challenges?
* Give an example of a situation that required you to interact with people who were different from you or a situation that was unfamiliar in the past. Please explain what knowledge, skills, and experiences you drew on to navigate the challenge and what you took away from the situation.

**Draft Response:**

**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 the cohort model (working with a diverse group of American students) might be challenging for you?
* 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 in this program?
* 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: Commitment to Language Study**

**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 pursue study of your target language?
* How does CLS fit into your plan to develop proficiency in your target language?
* How will you continue to study and engage with your target language after the CLS Program?

**Draft Response:**

**Reflection Questions:**

* What opportunities have you pursued (formal or informal) to study your target language? Reflect on how these experiences have shaped your motivation and commitment to mastering the language.
* Have there been barriers (such as financial, access to resources, or limited courses) that have hindered your language study? How did you overcome or work around these challenges?
* Why is the CLS Program the right next step in your language learning journey? How does it offer opportunities that other programs or methods cannot?
* Beyond the CLS Program, 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.

**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.

**Personal Statement**

**Prompt:**

* Why are you interested in your target language and the region where it is spoken? Why is CLS the best avenue to pursue these interests?
* What are your academic and professional goals? How will you make the most of your CLS experience to reach these goals?
* What qualities, perspectives, and/or experiences do you bring to the program and to your cohort? Why do they make you a good candidate for the CLS Program?

**Draft Response:**

**Reflection Questions:**

* Think back to the moment you first became interested in your target language or region. What sparked that interest? How has it grown over time?
* Reflect on how this interest connects to your identity or worldview. How has it shaped who you are today? In what specific ways does the CLS Program align with your academic and professional goals? How do you plan to use the immersive experience of CLS to not only improve your language skills but also advance your career or academic objectives?
* Reflecting on your qualities and experiences, how do you believe they will enrich your cohort's dynamic, and what specific examples can you provide to demonstrate how you can positively influence your peers during the program?

**Tips:**

* **Articulate Your Goals:** Clearly explain how mastering 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.

**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!**