



Launch your language learning journey and immerse yourself in a new culture with CLS Spark! CLS Spark is a funded virtual summer opportunity for American undergraduates to begin their study of languages essential to America's engagement with the world.

A program of the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, CLS Spark is part of a U.S. government effort to increase the number of Americans studying and mastering critical foreign languages and applying those skills in their professional careers. Students spend eight to ten weeks over the summer studying one of five critical languages in live virtual classes facilitated by native speakers at a host institution abroad.

Languages: Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Russian

WHY CLS SPARK?



CLS Spark provides American undergraduate students the opportunity to start their language learning journeys virtually when they may not have access to language learning on their campuses or the ability to study abroad. CLS Spark goes beyond online language learning and introduces students to host communities overseas through interactive cultural activities, language partners, and individualized instruction from native speakers at host institutes abroad.

Students not only develop regional and cultural insights, they make impressive language gains. In just 8-10 weeks, participants typically gain an average of two sub-levels on the ACTFL Proficiency scale widely used by U.S. language programs to measure language ability.

STRUCTURE



- 8-10 weeks of programming
- 10 hours of live instruction per week
- Daily homework and self-study (approximately 2 hours a day)
- Small classroom size
- Inclusive support provided by program staff
- Weekly individual consultations with instructors
- Weekly meetings and cultural exchange with language partners
- Hands-on cultural activities such as calligraphy and cooking classes
- Virtual tours of sites of historic and cultural significance
- Structured professional development activities



"In 8 weeks, I have gone from having a base knowledge of the Arabic alphabet to being able to hold a basic conversation. I cannot imagine a better result over such a short period of time." - 2023 CLS Spark scholar

ELIGIBILITY



- Must be a U.S. citizen or national
- Must be enrolled in an accredited U.S. degree-granting program at the undergraduate level at the time of application
- Must be at least 18 years old by May of the program year

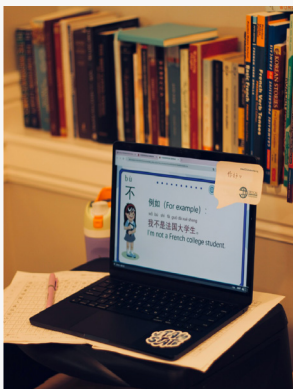
Note: There is no prerequisite for CLS Spark, as it is intended to support beginners (with the exception of Japanese, which also supports advanced beginners). Applicants with prior language proficiency should consider applying for the CLS Program overseas.

BENEFITS



- Intensive language instruction led by native speakers at host institutions abroad
- Structured cultural enrichment experiences
- Academic credit issued by Bryn Mawr College
- Language gains certified by the ACTFL OPI test
- Non-competitive eligibility for U.S. federal jobs
- Automatic semi-finalist status for the subsequent year to continue study of their Spark language through CLS
- Admission to a diverse network of U.S. Department of State Exchange Alumni

SELECTION



Applicants should articulate how CLS Spark provides a unique opportunity for them to access language and intercultural learning and demonstrate how they possess the readiness to contribute to an intensive virtual program.

The CLS Program welcomes all eligible applications and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, geographic location, socio-economic status, disability, or gender identity. Students in all disciplines are encouraged to apply, as well as students pursuing associate degrees and those attending community colleges and technical schools.

Preference will be given to applicants from campuses that do not offer their Spark language.

WHY STUDY A CRITICAL LANGUAGE?

Critical languages are languages essential to the United States' national security, economic prosperity, and engagement with the world, and they tend to be less commonly taught in the United States or have relatively few proficient speakers. Critical language skills and intercultural competence are in demand in our globalized workforce and increase a student's competitiveness across career fields.



"CLS Spark was a fantastic program. It pushed me out of my comfort zone in the best way possible and allowed me to learn things I never thought I would be capable of. The quality of education, small class sizes, and especially the overall consistency of lessons and assignments from the program were huge factors in my success." - 2023 CLS Spark scholar

