



Writing Guidelines
Fulbright Scholarship Personal Statements

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Guidelines for Writing Fulbright Personal Statements

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The Fulbright U.S. Student Program awards 1,500 grants each year. Applications require a statement of proposed study and a personal statement—a kind of intellectual autobiography, often with a central focus or theme, in which you discuss your academic credentials and accomplishments along with selected and revealing life experiences. Your personal statement, approximately one page single-spaced, should distinguish you from one of the other 4, 500 applicants. You can achieve your goal by

- Revealing the person behind the experiences and academic accomplishments and credentials
- Illustrating that you can be a representative “ambassador” for the program and your country
- Showing that you have the adaptability and character traits suited for this experience
- Showing how you have prepared—or continue to prepare—for the program
- Conveying your sincerity, integrity, ethics, and, more generally, strength of character
- Demonstrating your intellectual ability, creativity, and analytical and problem-solving skills
- Demonstrating your written communication skills

I. Audience and the Writing Situation

Understanding your reading audience and familiarizing yourself with the writing situation will help you select appropriate subject matter and generate a high-quality essay. Consider what features of the writing situation may influence your readers’ response. Learn all you can about your readers and the Fulbright program and its philosophy. As you plan and develop your essay, keep these ideas in mind:

- The Fulbright Program offers you, and other recent graduates, invaluable international and cross-cultural experience. You have the opportunity to **1)** live with the people of your host country and participate in their daily activities and experiences; **2)** gain a greater understanding of their values and beliefs through one-on-one interactions, work, and community involvement; and **3)** promote international cooperation and fellowship between the United States and other countries.
- Committee members will read your essay with the Fulbright mission and philosophy in mind. Senator William Fulbright “viewed the program as a much-needed vehicle for promoting mutual

understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries of the world” (“Fulbright/Fulbright Scholar Program”).

- Members of the Fulbright selection committee include professors, former Fulbright winners, and business and professional leaders—a group of intelligent but non-specialist readers.
- Committee members will read other application essays in addition to yours. Late in the day—after reading many essays—tired, bored readers will have little patience for predictable storylines, encompassing statements, clichés, insincerity, and gimmicks. So do not waste their time—be specific, make every word count, and get their attention with a strong opening sentence.

II. Topic Selection

Readers do not have a set agenda or criteria for what makes an appropriate or ideal topic. However, they do want—from all writers—honest, authentic, thoughtful essays that reveal the person as well as their relevant activities, accomplishments, and academic qualifications. While your particular qualifications and experiences make you and your essay unique, several characteristics and thematic patterns seem particularly relevant for this kind of essay. The following observations, suggestions, and caveats should help you generate a quality piece of writing:

General Comments & Suggestions

- Avoid summarizing information or writing a resume in paragraph form. As noted on the “Personal Statement” page of the Fulbright site, the essay “is more of a biography [really, an autobiography], but specifically related to you and your aspirations relative to the Fulbright Program” (https://us.fulbrightonline.org/preparing_personalstatements.html).
- Discuss “concrete” experiences that illuminate your qualifications; avoid abstract ideas and general topics.
- Focus more on experiences from the last four (or more) years, since you began college, than on the preceding years, though you can, as many applicants do, include a meaningful example or two from when you were younger. Avoid, however, statements like the following one: I have wanted to be an environmental scientist since the second grade.
- Avoid focusing on religious themes and experiences. The Fulbright Commission, a government agency, cannot use religious criteria or information as part of their decision-making.
- Focus on academic and professional goals and interests. Note how the Fulbright experience will prepare you for graduate school (if that dovetails with your plans) and your professional life.
- Include an explanation for poor grades or a weak academic performance, but do so briefly and in a positive way. Explain the situation and avoid making excuses. Focusing on achievements or strengths may be the best antidote for academic blotches.

Personal Strengths, Qualities, and Interests

- Write about a topic that you genuinely and deeply care about—one that reveals your interests, your personality, and your passion.
- Reveal the kind of person you are—show your personality or character traits; reveal strengths and weaknesses; illustrate how you have grown or changed; demonstrate your character and ethical sensibility.
- Demonstrate your ability to get along and work with other people of all ages and from all backgrounds; show your appreciation for cultural differences and unique individuals and personality types.
- Focus on jobs, campus activities, and other experiences that demonstrate leadership or leadership potential; describe experiences that show your ability to teach, support, and help others, including classroom teaching, tutoring, mentoring, and coaching.
- Focus on experiences that illustrate your independence, maturity, emotional stability, and ability to adapt to new situations and environments.
- Illustrate your intellectual curiosity and your desire to learn about new places, cultures, and peoples.
- Describe your creativity, your aesthetic sensibility, and your accomplishments in art, music, theater, or film.
- Show modesty, restraint, humility, and compassion. Avoid presenting yourself—inadvertently, of course—as the “Ugly American.” Do not be too self-assured, overly-confident, or self-congratulatory.

Cross-Cultural Information and Experiences

- Discuss family history, particularly experiences, stories, and anecdotes that focus on immigration, place of origin, cultural heritage, ethnic identity, multiculturalism, and cultural and political diaspora.
- Discuss travel experiences, study-abroad and mission programs, and other cross-cultural experiences in this country and overseas. In particular, note if you have traveled or studied in the host country—or in that part of the world.
- Demonstrate your knowledge of your host country—about its history, political affairs, current events, social mores, cultural life, and geography and environment.
- Demonstrate your knowledge of foreign policy and international affairs, cultural anthropology, global economics, or world history.
- Highlight cross-cultural experiences that reveal your understanding of cultural barriers and “bridge-building” between different peoples and cultures.
- Demonstrate your language competency. Note your proficiency in a language or a number of languages. Identify language-learning experiences—in the classroom and in another country.

- Show that you will be a conscientious “ambassador” for the Fulbright program and its philosophy.

III. Content, Organization, and Development

- Narrow your topic and develop a theme or connecting thread throughout your essay. Refrain from discussing too many experiences and topics, thus reducing your essay to a resume in paragraph form.
- Include a governing idea, thesis, or life-lesson that reveals your ability to reflect and think critically about your life and experiences.
- Choose from any number of appropriate organizational strategies and methods of development. The following pattern, common in many essays, includes a number of characteristic components arranged in a particular order that resembles a chronology:
 1. Applicants commonly contextualize their topics or begin with life-revealing anecdotes or experiences—at a time before high school or college—that illustrate how they first became interested in an activity or subject.
 2. Applicants then focus on the experiences—after high school—that make them worthy Fulbright candidates. They discuss, among other things, academic experiences, research experiences, language experiences, cross-cultural experiences, and extra-curricular leadership experiences. Applicants might develop two or three paragraphs focusing on one of these topics in each paragraph.
 3. Some writers include another paragraph—either the penultimate paragraph or the last paragraph—that emphasizes additional preparation, such as improving language proficiency, learning about the host country, filling in gaps in their education, or doing relevant volunteer work.
 4. Applicants commonly conclude by focusing on life after their Fulbright experience—that is, on graduate school, on professional goals and aspirations, and on the commitment to promoting the values and beliefs of the Fulbright mission and program.

Please Note: Not all applicants use this organizational template, and some applicants emphasize certain sections more than other sections. Moreover, these sections may be less defined or transparent if authors use a narrative strategy.

- Begin with an “attention-getter”: an anecdote, an example, a vivid description, a meaningful statement, a thoughtful question, a metaphor, or some other “technique” that captures the attention of readers and, as noted above, reveals the main point of your essay. Be “concrete,” specific, detailed, and do not bore readers with an introduction replete with generalizations, abstract statements, or trite observations.
- Make the first sentence a compelling one.

- Note, too, that a number of applicants include long opening paragraphs with extensive background information that contextualizes their topics.
- Provide support material in your body paragraphs as well: details, examples, and anecdotes are a must. You sell yourself, support your claims—whatever words you want to use—when you include adequate evidence or support in each paragraph throughout your curriculum vita.
- Include thoughtful insights about your experience. In other words, in addition to describing and detailing what you have done, reveal what you have learned and what insights you have gained—about yourself, about a subject, about an experience.
- Develop a thoughtful relevant conclusion—one that adds to your discussion and brings it to a close. The best advice is to stop when you are finished; do not tag on a needless summary or add a paragraph of generalizations and empty statements. Often you can end with the preceding paragraph and bring it—and your essay—to a close by adding a memorable sentence or two. As noted above, many writers end by focusing on what they plan to do after their Fulbright experiences.

IV. Language, Style, and Tone

- Use concrete and specific language; avoid general and encompassing statements. Instead of saying that you value social equality or diversity, show what you have learned and generate specific statements and explanations for why you value these ideals.
- Choose words appropriate to your audience—a group of thoughtful but non-specialist readers. Avoid jargon—unless necessary—and explain esoteric terms and disciplinary-specific vocabulary.
- Develop a tone that strikes a balance between being too personal or too academic. Avoid stilted, overly formal, and pedantic language.
- Avoid clichés, sentimental language, and platitudes. For example: “I felt unbridled happiness, when a homeless person thanked me for helping to build them a new home.”
- Write concisely. Because of page limitations, every word counts, so work with an experienced editor to eliminate superfluous words, phrases, and sentences. Follow these suggestions:
 1. **Condense phrases by using a single word**—“Obviously” instead of “It is obvious that”; “Because” instead of “On the grounds that.”
 2. **Eliminate nominalizations** (verbs and adjective used as nouns)—“Victimize” instead of “Victimization.”
 3. **Condense verb phrases by using a single word**—“Consider” instead of “Give consideration to”; “Understand” instead of “Have a great understanding of.”

4. **Edit unnecessary adverbs used as intensifiers**—“Finished” instead of “Completely finished.”
 5. **Eliminate unnecessary relative pronouns** (that, which, who, whom)—“The book I quoted was missing” instead of “The book that I had quoted was missing.”
 6. **Eliminate redundant words**—“Ready” instead of “Ready and able”; “Willing” instead of “Willing and eager.”
 7. **Minimize the use of expletive constructions** (short statements that start sentences and include “to be” verbs)—“We want” instead of “There is a desire for”; “We hope” instead of “It is to be hoped.”
 8. **Combine two or more sentences and omit unnecessary repetition**—“John went to the store on Saturday to buy bread and butter” instead of “John went to the store on Saturday. He bought bread and butter.”
- Whenever possible, use the active voice—for example, “The fireman put out the fire”, not “The fire was put out by the fireman.”
 - Your tone should be genuine and convey sincerity and honesty. If you “sound” inauthentic or insincere, readers may make more general assumptions about your character and integrity.
 - Because the personal statement focuses on you, use the first person singular pronoun, “I,” but keep it to a minimum, particularly at the beginning of sentences. And eliminate the “I thinks,” “I believes,” and the “I feels.”
 - Vary sentence length and types: **Simple sentences** with one independent clause; **Compound sentences** with two or more independent clauses; or more **Complex sentences** with one independent clause and at least one dependent clause.

Complete Statements

In the following sections, are examples of several complete Fulbright personal statements (the first two followed by critical commentary).

Essay One

During the summer of tenth grade, I took a number theory course at Johns Hopkins University with students from Alaska, California, and Bogota, Colombia. My attendance of the New Jersey Governor's School in the Sciences is another accomplishment that exemplifies my dedication to knowledge. During the summer following eleventh grade, I took courses in molecular orbital theory, special relativity, cognitive psychology, and I participated in an astrophysics research project. For my independent research project, I used a telescope to find the angular velocity of Pluto. With the angular velocity determined, I used Einstein's field equations and Kepler's laws to place an upper bound on the magnitude of the cosmological constant, which describes the curvature of space and the rate of the universe's expansion.

In addition to learning science, I recently lectured physics classes on special relativity at the request of my physics teacher. After lecturing one class for 45 minutes, one student bought many books on both general and special relativity to read during his study hall. Inspiring other students to search for knowledge kindles my own quest to understand the world and the people around me.

Also, as president of the National Honor Society, I tutor students with difficulties in various subject areas. Moreover, I am ranked number one in my class, and I am the leading member of the Math Team, the Academic Team, and the Model Congress Team. In the area of leadership, I have recently received the Rotary Youth Leadership Award from a local rotary club and have been asked to attend the National Youth Leadership Forum on Law and the Constitution in Washington D.C. Currently enrolled in Spanish 6, I am a member of both the Spanish Club and the Spanish Honor Society.

As student council president, I have begun a biweekly publication of student council activities and opinions. Also, the executive board under my direction has opened the school store for the first time in nearly a decade and is finding speakers to speak at a series of colloquia on topics ranging from physics to politics. Directing fund raisers and charity drives also consumes much of my time. For instance, I recently organized a charity drive that netted about \$1,500 for the family of a local girl in need of a heart transplant.

Consistent with my love of freedom and my belief in democracy, which is best summarized by Hayek's Road to Serfdom, I have recently initiated an application to become the liaison to the local board of education. Also, in keeping with my belief that individuals develop strong principles and ideology, I teach Sunday school three months a year and have chaperoned for a local Christian school.

Outside pure academics and leadership roles, I lift weights five times a week for an hour each day. In addition, I play singles for my school's varsity tennis team. Because I find extraordinary satisfaction in nature and have dedicated my life to its understanding, I enjoy mountain climbing. Among the notable peaks I have reached are Mt. Washington, Mt. Jefferson, Mt. Madison, Mt. Marcy and Mt. Katahdin. Unquestionably, my life's aim is to dramatically raise the height of the mountain of knowledge so that my successors may have a more accurate view of the universe around them.

Annotations: Essay One

- Though the candidate has excellent credentials and a wealth of experience, he has written a resume in paragraph form—a list or catalog of activities, experiences, and accomplishments. As you would expect, paragraphs lack focus and cohesion.
- Overall, the essay lacks a central theme, a meaningful organizational pattern, and, perhaps most important, self-reflection and thoughtful insights about his experiences. Readers want to know what you have done, of course, but they also want to know what you have learned—about yourself, about others, about the world.
- The author conveys, as well, a number of unintended negative messages. The list of experiences and accomplishments, coupled with the use of “I,” may be interpreted as self-congratulatory, perhaps even egocentric, when the writing occasion calls for self-confidence tempered by modesty and restraint. Specific self-references, such as “I am number one in my class” and “I am the leading member of the Math Team,” further emphasize this point and suggest, perhaps unintentionally, an annoying arrogance—to this reader, anyway—that the concluding statement underscores: “Unquestionably, my life’s aim is to dramatically raise the height of the mountain of knowledge so that my successors may have a more accurate view of the universe around them.”
- The author intends to illustrate his altruism—his wish to serve and help others—when he identifies that he has tutored students, organized a charity drive, and taught Sunday school for three months a year. He undermines his intentions, however, when he lists these experiences as additional accomplishments and demonstrates no genuine caring, concern, or empathy for others.

Essay Two

I lived until the age of 18 in Lacey, Washington, a small town made up mostly of the strip malls and fast food restaurants that line Interstate 5 from Portland to Seattle. Very few of my high school classmates left this town, and instead moved back into the service industries and lower rungs of state bureaucracy where their parents had worked before them. For those of us who wanted to leave, the only routes, at the time, seemed to be the military or higher education. Since, by middle school, I had been tracked into college prep courses, I assumed that I would go to college but did not know where or what to study.

In our garage, my grandfather kept back issues of National Geographic dating to the 1920's. The summer before starting high school, he paid me to dust them and it was then that I discovered something called "Anthropology" which, when studied, appeared to lead to a more interesting life in a more interesting place. For my Freshman Physical Science course's "SCIENCE CAREERS DAY," I wrote "Anthropology" down as my career goal, though I knew nothing at the time about the discipline besides the name.

I likewise chose a college which I knew nothing about - Lewis and Clark in Oregon - because the brochure mentioned that there were several dozen overseas programs available through the school. Though I could have gone to India, Indonesia, Ecuador, Australia, Korea or many other countries, I decided to apply for Kenya because the year before I had read a book about nomads and the program included a unit on nomadic pastoralism and ecology.

After rereading this book much later, I discovered it to be an incredibly sappy, melodramatic and condescending account of the lives of indigenous Australians and other nomadic peoples. When I was seventeen, though, the plot of the book - mainly, that humans have an innate desire to wander the earth, in the same manner the Aborigines retrace the paths which their ancestors sung into existence at the beginning of time - seemed quite compelling and true. I was fixated on nomads for the rest of my undergraduate career; however after my stay in Kenya for 7 months in 1990, the nature of my interest changed.

The event that both altered my perspective on nomads, and also led to an eventual decision to pursue a graduate degree in Anthropology occurred while driving north past Mt. Kenya with an American instructor who had lived in Africa for 25 years. After descending from the rich, green highlands into a hot arid plain of acacia trees, scrub, and dry river beds, from the car window there appeared cattle kraals made of thin branches and thorn bush, small boys herding goats, sheep and cattle, and the squat, dung-walled, oval houses belonging to the Samburu communities who occupied the area. The instructor stopped the truck, took in the view, and then announced quite dramatically, "These people have lived like this for 6000 years."

Everything about that statement was false. The communities currently occupying that area had not been there for 600 years, let alone 6000. Additionally, the people who I met in Northern Kenya, though definitely poor, had fully "modern" lives. They wore jewelry reconstructed from 35 mm film cannisters and shoes from old tire treads. They voted in elections and kept up with national news. I had watched men mix vats of fluorescent green chemicals with which to vaccinate their cattle. I had seen women cook with tin pots and tea kettles and kids on their way to school with exercise books and soccer balls made from plastic bags.

At that moment, I was confronted with a glaring contradiction between what I observed - that is, an encounter with modernity as complex and confusing as that which I had witnessed in my own culture - and what I, along with many other of my fellow travelers to Africa, often want to believe - that somewhere out in the world there are people who represent what humans beings were meant to be, what we used to be, and what we have lost. What I gained from that moment was ultimately an appreciation, instead, for what people really do with their lives - how they manage the economic, political and social transformations that are occurring, and have always occurred, in their local communities. Moreover, I developed an interest in how groups of people are made to stand for something else, like a concept, an ideal or, perhaps, a fear. This interest has switched over time from a focus on how Europeans and Americans use images of African communities representationally (the idea of the 'noble savage,' for instance) to, as I explain in my proposal, a concern about how communities use debates over children to represent conflicts in other areas of social life.

In the summer of 2013, I had the opportunity to travel to Tanzania on an SSRC Predissertation Grant to begin to establish affiliation, research clearance and possible field sites. I have also made contacts at the district level with officials and academics in the area. Though I already speak Kiswahili, the national language of Tanzania, I also have made arrangements to study Maa, the language of the Kisongo Maasai and WaArusha who live in the district in which I will be working. I am looking forward to working in Tanzania not only because of its political stability and unique history as a nation, but also because of the opportunity to generate information about children and education in pastoral communities there, a topic which is still under-researched despite the restructuring of national curriculum in recent years.

Annotations: Essay Two

- In the narrative-like opening paragraph, the author sketches a brief but vivid portrait of Lacey,

Washington and hints at a personal and global journey that will take her beyond its small-town provincialism.

- The essay includes a thematic focus and a narrative thread—her interest in anthropology and nomadic people, which begins in paragraph two and ends in the last paragraph with a reference to her proposal.
- Though the author writes about her experiences, she minimizes the focus on herself by describing and understanding nomadic peoples from a perspective that transcends the customary romanticism and ethnocentrism exhibited by the American instructor identified in paragraph five. More specifically, the author reveals the wisdom gleaned from her experiences: “how groups of people are made to stand for something else, like a concept, an ideal or, perhaps, a fear.”
- The concluding paragraph illustrates the candidate’s careful preparation and conveys that she would adapt to the culture of her host country and complete the program.
- Overall, the essay focuses on a number of topics, issues, and experiences that her readers will be targeting, including travel experience, language proficiency, preparation for living in her host country, and appreciation of other peoples and cultures.

Essay Three

The life of an urban dweller is a patchwork of sorts. You may live in one square of the quilt but be unaware of surrounding swatches. My patch was Brooklyn—a patch buried within the dense urban quilt of New York City.

Nature was never immediately outside my door; it was something my family had to consciously make a day of. We would pile into the subway and ride for hours to finally arrive at a tiny piece of nature, only it was neatly quarantined within the limits of the surrounding urban landscape. While many people remember recesses filled with playgrounds and grass, my memories are of a parking lot bordered by a two-story tall chain link fence. These stark, well-defined boundaries ruled my daily existence. Nature, to me, was always enclosed by a fence, a wall, or a sidewalk; it existed only tucked between folds of concrete. Longing for more natural areas, I developed a distaste for the rigidity of my urban habitat.

While studying civil engineering I continuously attempted to deconstruct conventional engineering applications and blur these divides, but my engineering education upheld the traditional theories of compartmentalization. In water treatment and distribution classes I was taught to design large plants—central locations fenced off to the community, often unbeknownst to the urban dweller turning the faucet to gather water. When my studies presented an opportunity to write a prescription for combined sewer overloads, an actual urban illness caused by overdevelopment, mine was the reintroduction of nature through an extensive implementation of green roofs. After the project ended, I continued on to co-author a paper on the applicability of low-impact designs in urban settings. Frustrated by the lack of research and literature on how to easily integrate green roofs into current engineering design theory and equations, I conducted hydrological tests on green roof planting material. Currently, I am working on publishing these findings with the purpose of aiding engineers in the New York Tri-State area with this integration.

Immediately after graduation I traveled to Ghana and found myself instinctively questioning where this developing nation drew the boundary between the constructed and the natural. While observing Ghanaian life, I discovered that often the natural landscapes overshadowed the constructed, and at the center of life was the community. I witnessed a society where urban congestion, the natural environments, living spaces, technology, and the community are not a separated patchwork, but rather are woven to become a more vibrant cloth. In more rural areas, my reaction was that the constructed environment, including technological infrastructure, did not define the boundaries of life, but rather coordinated with the natural and cultural realms already in existence.

Engineers are often stereotyped as being human calculators, unreceptive to the social parameters surrounding the project at hand, crafting quilts with squares organized into grids preventing any overlap. In many aspects, regions of Ghana seemed to be the photonegative of the large city situation where underdevelopment, nature, and the community could define the face of technology. This curiosity motivated me to return to graduate school and explore how water treatment and purification can occur under monetary and chemical-resource limitations. My current experience as a graduate research assistant for a NSF-funded project on global research ethics will help me further shape my research by examining the cultural impacts filtration infrastructure imparts and what ethical responsibilities an engineer has to the community. Thus, I will continue to map the existing boundaries between nature, the built environment, and culture.

Essay Four

I grew up in the upstate New York town of Saratoga Springs, a Victorian spa resort whose motto, "Health, horses and history," announces its glamorous origins. My family's Empire-style home, built in 1836, exemplified the cloudy mingling of reality, culture and history that continues to inform my work today. Victorian architecture embraced not only the connection between interior and exterior decoration, but also the design of everything from furniture to rugs to silverware, generally believing that all things necessary to life should be made beautiful. Yet, the Victorian era — as it is understood through literature, religion and philosophy — was a time of doubt, brought about by a quickly changing era of industrialization and historicism. In my paintings, I explore the contradictions of bourgeois longings, the clash between the reality of everyday life and the histories that we invent and cling to, as exemplified by the contradictory Victorian era. My immersive, large-scale canvases contain disjointed images - of contemporary and historic rooms inexplicably installed as if in a single home - that balance representation and abstraction. Melding the public and private, the handcrafted with the anonymously mass-produced, I create paintings that are connected to history and to my experience as a woman in America.

If my hometown presented one store of images, my experience studying in Italy gave me an insight into the relationship an individual or a society could have with public art. In Italy, I made regular visits to Lorenzetti's 14 century masterpiece, "Allegory and Effects of Good and Bad Government," commissioned by the original government of Siena and installed in the Palazzo Pubblico. The fresco, depicting both visionary and corrupt societies, detailed the everyday actions and roles of its citizens. Experiencing the "Allegory" in the space it was conceived transformed the fresco from a static image into a public symbol connected to the history and social fabric of Siena.

Taking lessons from my childhood home and "The Allegory," I strive, in my own work, to bring art and architecture, history and community, into meaningful dialogue, creating paintings that complicate space, and installations that transform galleries into domestic environments.

This convergence of home and decoration is at the center of the home-painting tradition, practiced by Indian women, which I intend to study. While scholars recognize the richness and complexity of these traditions - the geometric alpana designs are studied by computer scientists - they are also largely personal rituals, passed down from generation to generation and created for private audiences. I am eager to pursue my creative research in the feminine traditions of home arts in India, and to deepen my understanding of the relationship between ritual and life. A year spent in India is an opportunity to catalyze my creative growth, share my art-making process and make lifelong connections. In the future, I look forward to continuing my artistic practice, seeking new challenges in life and in the studio, while pursuing a career teaching at the university level.

Essay Five

When I first saw a skeleton hanging on the window of a house, I shrugged and wondered what type of neighborhood my family had moved into. What else could I think? I was a recent immigrant from Israel and the concept of Halloween was one of those American cultural entities which I had yet to learn about. It was the start of several years' worth of an interplay involving mutual ignorance on my part, regarding American culture, and on my American peers' part, regarding mine.

In fact, this was not the first immigration in my family's history. Both of my parents emigrated from Romania to Israel after World War II. The consequence was that sentences in our household sometimes started in one language (e.g., Romanian), were interjected with a phrase from a second (e.g., English), before finally being terminated in a third (e.g., Hebrew).

When I arrived to the United States (where I was later naturalized), I was "fluent" in only one word in English (the word "no"), inappropriately clothed (with respect to the fashion of the time), and culturally inept. Thus, I was cast out by many of my classmates as an outsider at first. Through hard work and determination, I strove to excel academically and initiated extracurricular involvement as I began to overcome the language barrier. With time, I believe my classmates also learned a lot about me and my previous country's culture.

Based on my experiences, I realized that the most effective way to rid oneself of ignorance of other nations (and to learn from them) is via complete immersion in the foreign culture. This is why I am so excited about the Fulbright program's general premise. How else can we gain each other's trust to the extent that we can collaborate on ideas and projects that will shape our future?

My experiences have left me with as many questions as answers. I now wonder which traits are innate to humans and which are cultural. For example, while a kiss signifies love in one country, it can serve as the equivalent of a handshake in another. Winking is considered rather impolite in some non-Western cultures. If such seemingly innate nonverbal forms of communication are interpreted differently, then certainly there must be many other differences that we can learn about.

As an individual who has seen two very different cultural worlds, I feel that I am in a position to better understand such cultural issues. It will be especially interesting for me to explore Canada, where I can see a culture that is not as different from America as that of my native land. Even though it has fewer cultural differences vis-a-vis the United States than more distant countries do, I have already witnessed several of them firsthand on a couple of trips to Canada, including a visit to the University of Toronto. It will be interesting to see how American and Canadian cultures retained some characteristics and yet differentiated in others as they split from their original British roots.

I think that a Fulbright experience will help me as I look toward the future. My career goal is to apply computer and engineering methods to biology (specifically biochemistry), in order to facilitate the design of better drugs. I would also like to encourage governments to provide cooperative research funding opportunities for drug design efforts. Such opportunities would divide the cost of researching new drugs among North American companies and the government and involve North American academic institutions in the research process. Working together across national and commercial/academia boundaries would be especially rewarding in this field. Drug research is expensive, yet people all over the world realize immense benefits from each new type of drug that becomes available, no matter what country it originates from. I hope that I can be a part of the process that improves the quality of life for citizens everywhere. For, while we may be different in how we communicate and in the traditions we cherish, surely we are all made of the same "stuff of life," as the late Carl Sagan once put it.

Essay Six

My grandparents have touched many lives: former drug addicts, refugees, neighbors, and my own. They have an uncommon ability to build relationships; they are a paradigm of service—where service is more than what you do and is also defined by who you are.

In my own life, I have aspired to affect people in the manner of my grandparents and others in the Mennonite Church. I still have that aspiration, but my vision has expanded. Prior to attending Mythic College, I pictured myself living in Mythic County near my family and my roots. I grew up attached to the local way of life, working at my family's snack food business, raising crops to earn money, and leading the local Future Farmers of America. During high school, I read the international section of the paper but the people and events seemed a world away. At Mythic College, professors challenged me with realities such as the fate of 500 million people who are chronically malnourished. I began to ask myself, "Why will I have thirty food options at breakfast tomorrow while whole populations around the world will wake up with almost nothing to eat?"

In the summer of 2009, I traveled to Ecuador, equipped with rudimentary Spanish, a background in international politics and economics, and a desire to meet people, hear their stories, and learn from them. In Ecuador, the effects of a devastating financial crisis in 2000 still lingered. Many people had watched helplessly as banks froze savings accounts while the national currency plummeted, melting the life savings of many Ecuadorians.

Like helplessness, dependency often stems from a lack of opportunities. The children who begged on the streets of Quito depended upon strangers for money. If they were going to eat they had to beg. Reflecting on such matters, as part of my studies I had asked myself, "What is the goal of development?" Through the plight I witnessed among Ecuadorians, I came to define development as building the productive and institutional capacities that give people opportunities to lead lives that they value.

After my travels, I returned to Mythic County in December of 20xx and ate Christmas dinner at my grandparents' farmhouse. I knew that this area was my home, and that my family was the source of my inspiration. I also knew that my passion for studying international development would take me away from Mythic County. But my grandparents had taught me to empathize and act. While aware of problems within Mythic County, I had seen much greater need in Latin America. Driven by the values instilled in me, I contacted Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA) to work on a development project.

In June of 2012, I traveled to Peru to assist with an innovative approach to agriculture lending pioneered by MEDA. While working for MEDA, I assessed a microcredit project involving rice farmers. The experience impressed upon me the value of a grassroots understanding as well as the importance of sound macro-level policies. Tariff rates, financial regulations, and public infrastructure plans could mean the difference between the project's success or failure. I left Peru convinced that sound trade and development policies could profoundly affect people's lives. Shaping macro-level policies became my goal.

With this goal in mind, I hope to pursue a law degree and a Master of Public Policy with an emphasis in international development. These degrees will give me the tools to craft and analyze development policy. I will use my experiences and education to hope to shape such policies in Latin America. Later, I plan to teach development studies at the university level.

Essay Seven

My two defining passions are my loves of music and foreign languages. I began playing flute at age nine. I was fortunate to be talented enough to make it into several youth ensembles including the prestigious Greater Boston Youth Symphony Orchestra. Music has taught me dedication and perseverance. It has brought me together with people from all walks of life and helped me to develop an international perspective on life. I love music because it allows me to create a bit of beauty in the world. Wherever in the world I have been, my flute has come along, and it will accompany me to Poland if I receive a Fulbright grant.

I have always been interested in learning about the world beyond my own backyard. As a child, I used to trace maps for fun, and I would constantly ask my dad, who had taken German in high school, to teach me new words. In high school I was able to channel this enthusiasm in an academic direction and took as many foreign language classes as I could (including three years of German), engaging in independent study to fit in the equivalent of five years of French in three years. As a senior, I put my knack for languages to practical use by helping Elvizada, who had just moved to my town from the Congo, adjust to life in the United States.

During high school, the seeds for my future fascination with Poland were also sown when I took Pre-Calculus with Mrs. Koch, a Polish immigrant and one of the most dedicated teachers I have ever had. She taught me my first Polish words and sparked my interest in her homeland. However, I was not able to start learning Polish formally until college. As a freshman, I received a scholarship to study at the Jagiellonian University Summer School. I spent July 2005 in Krakow learning Polish and attending lectures on Polish history. My first visit to Poland was a cultural keelhauling. I knew exactly seven words, and the language barrier was overwhelming at first. I was afraid to explore the city alone for the simple reason that I could not pronounce the name of my tram stop (Akademia Pedagogiczna). However, four weeks and many flashcards later, I could pronounce Akademia Pedagogiczna and had come to love Poland. Since then, I have continued to learn Polish in Rochester, Krakow, and Cologne.

I have also been able to study abroad in Germany and France as an undergraduate, and I consider these experiences one of the most valuable components of my education. Apart from improving my language skills, study abroad has provided me with vital exposure to different cultures. I grew up in a small New England town with little cultural diversity. Living abroad has broadened my horizons and challenged concepts that I had previously held to be immutable. This is particularly true with respect to national and cultural identity. I have long been interested in identity issues since I am a Hispanic who does not speak Spanish. Yet, until I studied abroad, I felt relatively secure in my position on the issue. When I met my

friend Angelina in Cologne, who is ethnically German but grew up in Kazakhstan and speaks Russian as her native language, the issue of cultural identity was suddenly less clear to me. I began to ask myself what exactly does determine cultural and national identity.

Unlike many students of Polish studies, I cannot lay claim to any Polish ancestry. It is unfortunate that Poland and Polish culture, which have played such a dynamic role in European and world history, are so little understood in the United States among those who have no ethnic connection to Poland. And though Germany and Poland share a common border, one meets very few students of German who also choose to learn Polish. This is one of the reasons why I plan to pursue graduate work in cultural studies with an emphasis on Polish literature, a goal which would be greatly furthered by receiving a Fulbright grant to Poland.

Essay Eight

I chose to study French because of my high school teacher. In sixth grade, Madame O'Hara came to speak with my class about studying a foreign language. Using simple French, gestures, and cognates, she taught us phrases, colors, and numbers. I was thrilled to understand this language despite never having previously studied it, and chose to study French in middle and high school to learn more. In class, we not only studied grammar, but explored French and Francophone culture with movies, songs, cooking, and play-acting. When I decided to study French in middle school, I did not realize that this choice would dictate not only my fourth period class, but the rest of my life. The more I learned about the Francophone world, aided by Madame O'Hara and other outstanding teachers, the more I wanted to know. Because of this interest and a desire to keep learning every day, I chose to teach languages. I entered college as French major in the hopes of continuing the legacy of my high-school teachers and one day teaching at the secondary level.

Upon my arrival at the University of Rochester, I embraced the study of French language and culture with open arms. At first it was intimidating to listen to the intelligent, well-articulated voices around me in the classroom, but soon I was contributing to class discussions. In addition to classes in the French language, literature, translation, culture, and politics, I have studied in Rennes and Grenoble, France. During both of these experiences, I stayed with host families, both of whom helped me learn about French culture first-hand. During my stay in Grenoble, I joined the University Ski Club. After several outings and a week-long "stage" or technique camp with the racing team, my skiing improved tremendously. After days of training and joking around with my teammates, my French also became more natural and fluid.

In addition to French, I am studying Spanish language and Hispanic culture at my university. Taking beginning-level language and culture classes has reminded me of the effort necessary to learn a new language. This experience will help me relate to the difficulties facing the students I will be teaching in France and has already made me more perceptive of the difficulties of the students I teach in French summer classes. I studied for a month in Oaxaca, Mexico, this past summer, which made me realize how frustrating it is not to be able to communicate, but also how rewarding it is to finally succeed. Now, I want to help other students succeed in learning a language. This fall and spring, I am working as a teaching assistant at my university for the beginning Spanish class.

While it is challenging to instruct students in a language that I began to study three years ago, I have confidence in my ability to teach languages. At my university, I tutor students in French and Spanish and lead a weekly French conversation hour. For the past two summers, I have taught French at GirlSummer, an academic camp for 7th to 11th graders. This has been an amazing experience for me because I plan my own

curriculum and gain first-hand teaching experience in a classroom setting. I share my enthusiasm for the French language and culture by singing, dancing, play-acting, and urging my students to do the same.

If awarded a Fulbright Fellowship to teach English in France, I will strive to inspire in my students the same love for learning that my high-school French teacher inspired in me. Upon my return to the United States, my teaching will reflect a greater knowledge of French culture. In my classes, I will incorporate more aspects of French life into my classroom. Serving as a teaching assistant in France will allow me to contribute to the French school system while growing personally and professionally.

Essay Nine

On one hot late-summer day when I was in high school, my parents came back from a shopping trip with a surprise present for me: the legendary board game, Diplomacy. At first I scoffed at such an old-fashioned game. Who would want to waste glorious sunny days moving armies around a map of pre-World War I Europe, pretending to be Bismarck or Disraeli? But after playing the game once, I became absolutely riveted by the nuances of statecraft, and soon began losing sleep as I tried to craft clever diplomatic gambits, hatch devious schemes, and better understand the game's ever-changing dynamics. As my friends and I spent the second half of the summer absorbed by the game, my parents grinned knowingly. How could I resist being fascinated with Diplomacy, they asked me, when I incessantly read about international affairs, and liked nothing more than debating politics over dinner? How could I resist being fascinated, when I had spent most of my summers in Greece (and, much more briefly, France and England), witnessing first-hand the ways in which countries differ socially, culturally, and politically?

Though my passion for foreign policy and international affairs undoubtedly dates back to high school, I never had the chance to fully develop this interest before college. Once I arrived at Harvard, however, I discovered that I could learn about international relations through both my academics and my extracurricular activities. Academically, I decided to concentrate in Government, and, within Government, to take classes that elucidated the forces underlying the relations of states on the world stage. Some of the most memorable of these classes included Human Rights, in which we discussed what role humanitarian concerns ought to play in international relations; Politics of Western Europe, in which I learned about the social, economic, and political development of five major European countries; and Causes and Prevention of War, which focused on unearthing the roots of conflict and finding out how bloodshed could have been avoided. Currently, for my senior thesis, I am investigating the strange pattern of American human rights-based intervention in the post-Cold War era, and trying to determine which explanatory variables are best able to account for it.

Interestingly, I think that I have learned at least as much about international relations through my extracurriculars in college as I have through my classes. For the past three years, for instance, I have helped run Harvard's three Model United Nations conferences. As a committee director at these conferences, I researched topics of global importance (e.g. the violent disintegration of states, weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East), wrote detailed study guides discussing these subjects, and then moderated hundreds of students as they debated the topics and strove to resolve them. Even more enriching for me than directing these committees was taking part in them myself. As a delegate at other schools' conferences, I would be assigned to represent a particular country on a particular UN committee (e.g. France on the Security Council). I would then need to research my country's position on the topics to be discussed, articulate my view in front of others in my committee, and convince my fellow delegates to support my position. Trying to peg down a country's elusive 'national interest,' clashing over thorny

practical and philosophical issues, making and breaking alliances — Model UN was basically a simulation of how diplomacy really works.

Thankfully, I have also found time over the past few years to cultivate interests and skills unrelated to Model UN and foreign policy. One of the most important of these has been community service. As a volunteer for Evening With Champions, an annual ice-skating exhibition held to raise money for children with cancer, and as a teacher of a weekly high school class on current events and international affairs, I have, whenever possible, used my time and talents to benefit my community. Another more recent interest of mine is the fascinating realm of business. Two years ago, my father's Christmas present to me was a challenge rather than a gift: he gave me \$500, but told me that I could keep it only if I invested it in the stock market — and earned a higher rate of return than he did with another \$500. Since then, I have avidly followed the stock market, and become very interested in how businesses interact and respond to strategic threats (perhaps because of the similarities between business competition and the equally cutthroat world of diplomatic realpolitik). A final passion of mine is writing. As the writer of a biweekly column in the Independent, one of Harvard's student newspapers, I find very little as satisfying as filling a blank page with words — creating from nothing an elegant opinion piece that illuminates some quirk of college life, or induces my readers to consider an issue or position that they had ignored until then.

Because of my wide range of interests, I have not yet decided what career path to follow into the future. In the short run, I hope to study abroad for a year, in the process immersing myself in another culture, and deepening my personal and academic understanding of international affairs. After studying abroad, my options would include working for a nonprofit organization, entering the corporate world, and attending law school. In the long run, I envision for myself a career straddling the highest levels of international relations, politics, and business. I could achieve this admittedly ambitious goal by advancing within a nonprofit group, think tank, or major international company. Perhaps most appealingly, I could also achieve this goal by entering public service and obtaining some degree of influence over actual foreign policy decisions — that is, becoming a player myself in the real-life game of Diplomacy.

Essay Ten

I decided that I wanted to be a scientist while I was still in elementary school, but even in high school where I was praised for my academic successes, my relatives were still against the whole idea. My grandma still asks me every Christmas what my major is and once I start telling her about earthquakes and mountain formation, she quickly changes the subject. Coming from a small town in Mythic County and being only the second person on either side of my family to attend college, it has been an ongoing issue to convince my family that a person, let alone a woman, can make a living doing geologic research.

As a freshman at Mythic University, I was accepted for a research assistantship designed for incoming freshman women. Through this program I worked with a Mythic University geochemistry professor on the sequestration of pollutants in aquifers. Going into the program, I expected merely to be washing lab equipment and capping bottles, but instead I got to make solutions, run pH experiments and learn how to use spectroscopy instruments. By my sophomore year, I was running samples and interpreting data. It was through this experience that I learned a valuable lesson: opportunities are endless if one is prepared for them.

The spring of my sophomore year I applied for a research course that required me to learn to scuba dive. Through this course I was certified as a PADI open water diver and was able to go to the island of San Salvador in the Bahamas. In San Salvador I was part of a team that conducted research on the island's coral reefs, which involved surveying them for disease and damage, through a program called Reef Check. That summer I also received a scholarship through Mythic University's Biogeochemical Research

Initiative for Education to continue the geochemistry research I started as a freshman. Later that summer I left for a semester abroad at the University of Western Australia in Perth, Australia. Before returning home, I visited Thailand for over a month to satisfy my curiosity about Asian cultures and to obtain my advanced and rescue diver certifications.

To say the least, my study abroad experience dramatically changed my life. I had never really been away from home for very long at one time other than college, but even there I was only an hour away from home and had close friends who also attend Mythic University. Being in Australia taught me the true meaning of independence and gave me a new sense of confidence. In addition, I gained an international perspective on many issues that I had never considered before. My experience in Thailand opened my eyes to many misconceptions I had about Asian people, and it gave me a new appreciation for the term "culture."

The spring semester of my junior year I was accepted into a collaborative research class in which we began to prepare an online geology course for Mythic University's world campus classroom. In the summer we spent three weeks in many of the southwestern US national parks producing short educational films to be used in the class. This fall we are editing the films and giving presentations about our experiences with the class. As I write this I am in the first semester of my senior year and I have just started my thesis research with a grant from the National Science Foundation. My work investigates uplift in the Himalayan Plateau.

Since studying abroad, I have gained a more compassionate outlook on life, which has caused me to re-evaluate my career choices. For a short time I considered changing fields to a major that would be more beneficial to humanity and thus more self-fulfilling. But after contemplating the issue for some time, I decided that I can make a difference in the world with any career choice. Now, I am devoted to using my geologic knowledge for the betterment of humanity. This is the main reason why I have chosen a project dealing with earthquakes in Taiwan. The research is not just about geology but about advances that will help to save people's lives.

In addition, I am very excited to learn more about the Asian culture, which I have taken a special interest in since my short visit to Thailand. I believe I am highly qualified to conduct my proposed research. Although my research interactions will be done in English, I have started Chinese lessons this fall at Mythic University to make my experience in Taiwan even more meaningful. I will have completed Chinese II by the time I graduate and I hope to take personal language lessons over the summer before traveling to Taiwan. After this experience I plan to obtain my PhD at a geology school in California, integrating the knowledge I obtained in Taiwan to studies on fault zones in the United States.

Essay Eleven

At the age of twelve, I visited my parents' home country of Lebanon. Confined to my grandfather's apartment due to a heavy Syrian military presence outside (and the drivers are particularly wild), I decided to use the elevator to get a view of the world outside. As the slow Otis elevator ground to a halt, the elevator door opened to reveal an entire story that was no longer in existence. Rubble was everywhere, and my mind, already processing the bullet holes that marked almost every building that did not get the fashionable facelift of downtown, was reeling as I stared from the edge of the 9th floor to the ground below. The devastation and destruction wrought by years of ethnic and religious conflict had a deep impression on my psyche. I could not imagine how such appalling acts could occur or how people could live in such an atmosphere of apprehension. Returning to her old mountain home overlooking Beirut a few days later, my mother could only cry as she saw old rusted bullets in her bedroom, and she

could only scream at us in Arabic to stay away from the rockets in the bathroom. To help ease my apparent distress, my father gave me a hug, telling me, "You are safe in America. It is our new home. Just remember this: Anger does not solve anything, an eye for an eye and the world goes blind."

As I grew older in America I recognized that the lines of communication and understanding in Lebanon had been undermined and replaced by bigotry, religious intolerance, and hatred. During my high-school years, I was a bilingual speaker of English and Arabic, with a cadre of friends who spoke French, Spanish, Russian, Hebrew, Hindi and Swahili. My world broadened with the many heated talks on international politics, and growing up near Washington, DC, I was drawn to the history and politics of the region, visiting the various museums and the Kennedy Center, and keeping abreast of political news. In my spare time (summer break), I spent my money on books and travel, visiting Japan, Spain, Australia, England, and New Zealand. I readily admit my life is sheltered, yet I have encountered many obstacles in my young life.

My multicultural experiences as a child and teen gave me inner strength to overcome the hurdles. From blatant racism in high school from teachers and students because of my name, to people discounting my ability to speak English, I have learned that respect is earned and patience and understanding are a necessity. Before visiting my parents' home country, I was an angry child. Students who would make fun of my name or call me 'camel-rider' were often hit. My anger led to numerous black eyes. Until I visited real suffering, I could not imagine a worse existence. Yet my world was radically altered when I could no longer look at myself in the mirror and see someone to pity. That day anger was replaced with a promise to do better for myself and others.

For these reasons, upon arriving at the University of Rochester, I was naturally drawn to History, Neuroscience and Political Science. My majors are a reflection of the self I have become and the future-self I still strive for. I want to be able to understand both theoretically and scientifically what drives world society towards horrific acts. I want to understand why anger can lead to violence. Most importantly, I want to gain the skills that will help implement solutions towards fixing such problems. Agonizing over game theory, learning about centers of the brain, and understanding the historical roots of regional conflict all help further my aim of applying my education in real-world situations.

Living in Jordan as a Fulbright Scholar will give me the opportunity to interact with a new generation of young adults, providing me with the opportunity to learn and impart knowledge by acting as a bridge between cultures. As part of my community outreach, I will establish a rapport with local schools around my university, in order to engage in community service activities with secondary students. I will also volunteer in the community at hospitals, schools and shelters (in conjunction with the Public Services Club of JUST), much as I did in high-school at Suburban Hospital or Bannockburn Elementary, both located in Bethesda, Maryland. By directly establishing a relationship with secondary students, I will learn how teenagers view democracy and what they see for the future politically. Understanding how younger generations of Jordan will adapt and implement democratic processes is essential in a region that is volatile, since the alternative is death, destruction, and needless suffering.

Sample Opening Paragraphs

Read and compare the sample introduction listed below. Different writing occasions call for different kinds of beginning paragraphs. The lead of any document, however, will do the following:

- “Grab” the reader with an attention-getter, such as an example, an anecdote, a description, a definition, a question, or some other technique or device. Begin with a compelling first sentence.
- Introduce the main point or governing idea—stated or implied—and possibly contextualize the topic or include relevant background material.
- Provide “signal” information, such as organizational “guideposts” or an “umbrella” statement, and a compelling transitional sentence or two.
- Establish the tone of the essay.

- 1. During the summer of tenth grade, I took a number theory course at Johns Hopkins University with students from Alaska, California, and Bogota, Colombia.** My attendance of the New Jersey Governor's School in the Sciences is another accomplishment that exemplifies my dedication to knowledge. During the summer following eleventh grade, I took courses in molecular orbital theory, special relativity, cognitive psychology, and I participated in an astrophysics research project. For my independent research project, I used a telescope to find the angular velocity of Pluto. With the angular velocity determined, I used Einstein's field equations and Kepler's laws to place an upper bound on the magnitude of the cosmological constant, which describes the curvature of space and the rate of the universe's expansion.
- 2. I lived until the age of 18 in Lacey, Washington, a small town made up mostly of the strip malls and fast food restaurants that line Interstate 5 from Portland to Seattle.** Very few of my high school classmates left this town, and instead moved back into the service industries and lower rungs of state bureaucracy where their parents had worked before them. For those of us who wanted to leave, the only routes, at the time, seemed to be the military or higher education. Since, by middle school, I had been tracked into college prep courses, I assumed that I would go to college but did not know where or what to study.
- 3. The life of an urban dweller is a patchwork of sorts.** You may live in one square of the quilt but be unaware of surrounding swatches. My patch was Brooklyn—a patch buried within the dense urban quilt of New York City.
- 4. I grew up in the upstate New York town of Saratoga Springs, a Victorian spa resort whose motto, "Health, horses and history," announces its glamorous origins.** My family's Empire-style home, built in 1836, exemplified the cloudy mingling of reality, culture and history that continues to inform my work today. Victorian architecture embraced not only the connection between interior and exterior decoration, but also the design of everything from furniture to rugs to silverware, generally believing that all things necessary to life should be made beautiful. Yet, the Victorian era — as it is understood through literature, religion and philosophy — was a time of doubt, brought about by a quickly changing era of industrialization and historicism. In my paintings, I explore the contradictions of bourgeois longings, the clash between the reality of everyday life and the histories that we invent and cling to, as exemplified by the contradictory Victorian era. My immersive, large-scale canvases contain disjointed images - of contemporary and historic rooms inexplicably installed as if in a single home - that balance representation and abstraction. Melding the public and private, the handcrafted with the anonymously mass-produced, I create paintings

that are connected to history and to my experience as a woman in America.

5. **When I first saw a skeleton hanging on the window of a house, I shrugged and wondered what type of neighborhood my family had moved into.** What else could I think? I was a recent immigrant from Israel and the concept of Halloween was one of those American cultural entities which I had yet to learn about. It was the start of several years' worth of an interplay involving mutual ignorance on my part, regarding American culture, and on my American peers' part, regarding mine.
6. **My grandparents have touched many lives: former drug addicts, refugees, neighbors, and my own.** They have an uncommon ability to build relationships; they are a paradigm of service—where service is more than what you do and is also defined by who you are. In my own life, I have aspired to affect people in the manner of my grandparents and others in the Mennonite Church. I still have that aspiration, but my vision has expanded. Prior to attending Mythic College, I pictured myself living in Mythic County near my family and my roots. I grew up attached to the local way of life, working at my family's snack food business, raising crops to earn money, and leading the local Future Farmers of America. During high school, I read the international section of the paper but the people and events seemed a world away. At Mythic College, professors challenged me with realities such as the fate of 500 million people who are chronically malnourished. I began to ask myself, "Why will I have thirty food options at breakfast tomorrow while whole populations around the world will wake up with almost nothing to eat?"
7. **My two defining passions are my loves of music and foreign languages.** I began playing flute at age nine. I was fortunate to be talented enough to make it into several youth ensembles including the prestigious Greater Boston Youth Symphony Orchestra. Music has taught me dedication and perseverance. It has brought me together with people from all walks of life and helped me to develop an international perspective on life. I love music because it allows me to create a bit of beauty in the world. Wherever in the world I have been, my flute has come along, and it will accompany me to Poland if I receive a Fulbright grant.
8. **I chose to study French because of my high school teacher.** In sixth grade, Madame O'Hara came to speak with my class about studying a foreign language. Using simple French, gestures, and cognates, she taught us phrases, colors, and numbers. I was thrilled to understand this language despite never having previously studied it, and chose to study French in middle and high school to learn more. In class, we not only studied grammar, but explored French and Francophone culture with movies, songs, cooking, and play-acting. When I decided to study French in middle school, I did not realize that this choice would dictate not only my fourth period class, but the rest of my life. The more I learned about the Francophone world, aided by Madame O'Hara and other outstanding teachers, the more I wanted to know. Because of this interest and a desire to keep learning every day, I chose to teach languages. I entered college as French major in the hopes of continuing the legacy of my high-school teachers and one day teaching at the secondary level.
9. **On one hot late-summer day when I was in high school, my parents came back from a shopping trip with a surprise present for me: the legendary board game. Diplomacy.** At first I scoffed at such an old-fashioned game. Who would want to waste glorious sunny days moving armies around a map of pre-World War I Europe, pretending to be Bismarck or Disraeli? But after playing the game once, I became absolutely riveted by the nuances of statecraft, and soon began losing sleep as I tried to craft clever diplomatic gambits, hatch devious schemes, and better understand the game's ever-changing dynamics. As my friends

and I spent the second half of the summer absorbed by the game, my parents grinned knowingly. How could I resist being fascinated with Diplomacy, they asked me, when I incessantly read about international affairs, and liked nothing more than debating politics over dinner? How could I resist being fascinated, when I had spent most of my summers in Greece (and, much more briefly, France and England), witnessing first-hand the ways in which countries differ socially, culturally, and politically?

10. I decided that I wanted to be a scientist while I was still in elementary school, but even in high school where I was praised for my academic successes, my relatives were still against the whole idea. My grandma still asks me every Christmas what my major is and once I start telling her about earthquakes and mountain formation, she quickly changes the subject. Coming from a small town in Mythic County and being only the second person on either side of my family to attend college, it has been an ongoing issue to convince my family that a person, let alone a woman, can make a living doing geologic research.

11. At the age of twelve, I visited my parents' home country of Lebanon. Confined to my grandfather's apartment due to a heavy Syrian military presence outside (and the drivers are particularly wild), I decided to use the elevator and get a view of the world outside. As the slow Otis elevator ground to a halt, the elevator door opened to reveal an entire story that was no longer in existence. Rubble was everywhere, and my mind, already processing the bullet holes that marked almost every building that did not get the fashionable facelift of downtown, was reeling as I stared from the edge of the 9th floor to the ground below. The devastation and destruction wrought by years of ethnic and religious conflict had a deep impression on my psyche. I could not imagine how such appalling acts could occur or how people could live in such an atmosphere of apprehension. Returning to her old mountain home overlooking Beirut a few days later, my mother could only cry as she saw old rusted bullets in her bedroom, and she could only scream at us in Arabic to stay away from the rockets in the bathroom. To help ease my apparent distress, my father gave me a hug, telling me, "You are safe in America. It is our new home. Just remember this: Anger does not solve anything, an eye for an eye and the world goes blind."

Sample Closing Paragraphs

Writers often struggle with closing paragraphs and resort to tacking on a conclusion that adds little to the discussion. Like introductory paragraphs, just remember that different writing occasions call for different ending paragraphs. As you read and compare the paragraphs listed below, keep in mind that a good conclusion will do the following:

- Speak to the writing occasion and to the audience.
 - Bring the discussion to a close, tie up loose ends, and/or put the subject in a meaningful perspective.
 - Engage readers with something specific or “concrete” (e.g., a brief example or quote) and is free of clichés, platitudes, generalizations, and unnecessary summary or repetition.
 - End with a memorable accent sentence.
1. Outside pure academics and leadership roles, I lift weights five times a week for an hour each day. In addition, I play singles for my school's varsity tennis team. Because I find extraordinary satisfaction in nature and have dedicated my life to its understanding, I enjoy

mountain climbing. Among the notable peaks I have reached are Mt. Washington, Mt. Jefferson, Mt. Madison, Mt. Marcy and Mt. Katahdin. **Unquestionably, my life's aim is to dramatically raise the height of the mountain of knowledge so that my successors may have a more accurate view of the universe around them.**

2. In the summer of 1994, I had the opportunity to travel to Tanzania on an SSRC Predissertation Grant to begin to establish affiliation, research clearance and possible field sites. I have also made contacts at the district level with officials and academics in the area. Though I already speak Kiswahili, the national language of Tanzania, I also have made arrangements to study Maa, the language of the Kisongo Maasai and WaArusha who live in the district in which I will be working. **I am looking forward to working in Tanzania not only because of its political stability and unique history as a nation, but also because of the opportunity to generate information about children and education in pastoral communities there, a topic which is still under-researched despite the restructuring of national curriculum in recent years.**
3. Engineers are often stereotyped as being human calculators, unreceptive to the social parameters surrounding the project at hand, crafting quilts with squares organized into grids preventing any overlap. In many aspects, regions of Ghana seemed to be the photonegative of the large city situation where underdevelopment, nature, and the community could define the face of technology. This curiosity motivated me to return to graduate school and explore how water treatment and purification can occur under monetary and chemical-resource limitations. My current experience as a graduate research assistant for a NSF-funded project on global research ethics will help me further shape my research by examining the cultural impacts filtration infrastructure imparts and what ethical responsibilities an engineer has to the community. **Thus, I will continue to map the existing boundaries between nature, the built environment, and culture.**
4. This convergence of home and decoration is at the center of the home-painting tradition, practiced by Indian women, which I intend to study. While scholars recognize the richness and complexity of these traditions - the geometric alpana designs are studied by computer scientists - they are also largely personal rituals, passed down from generation to generation and created for private audiences. I am eager to pursue my creative research in the feminine traditions of home arts in India, and to deepen my understanding of the relationship between ritual and life. A year spent in India is an opportunity to catalyze my creative growth, share my art-making process and make lifelong connections. **In the future, I look forward to continuing my artistic practice, seeking new challenges in life and in the studio, while pursuing a career teaching at the university level.**
5. I think that a Fulbright experience will help me as I look toward the future. My career goal is to apply computer and engineering methods to biology (specifically biochemistry), in order to facilitate the design of better drugs. I would also like to encourage governments to provide cooperative research funding opportunities for drug design efforts. Such opportunities would divide the cost of researching new drugs among North American companies and the government and involve North American academic institutions in the research process. Working together across national and commercial/academia boundaries would be especially rewarding in this field. Drug research is expensive, yet people all over the world realize immense benefits from each new type of drug that becomes available, no matter what country it originates from. I hope that I can be a part of the process to

Improve the quality of life for citizens everywhere. **For, while we may be different in how we communicate and in the traditions we cherish, surely we are all made of the same "stuff of life," as the late Carl Sagan once put it.**

6. With this goal in mind, I hope to pursue a law degree and a Master of Public Policy with an emphasis in international development. These degrees will give me the tools to craft and analyze development policy. I will use my experiences and education to hope to shape such policies in Latin America. **Later, I plan to teach development studies at the university level.**
7. Unlike many students of Polish studies, I cannot lay claim to any Polish ancestry. It is unfortunate that Poland and Polish culture, which have played such a dynamic role in European and world history, are so little understood in the United States among those who have no ethnic connection to Poland. And though Germany and Poland share a common border, one meets very few students of German who also choose to learn Polish. **This is one of the reasons why I plan to pursue graduate work in cultural studies with an emphasis on Polish literature, a goal which would be greatly furthered by receiving a Fulbright grant to Poland.**
8. If awarded a Fulbright Fellowship to teach English in France, I will strive to inspire in my students the same love for learning that my high-school French teacher inspired in me. Upon my return to the United States, my teaching will reflect a greater knowledge of French culture. In my classes, I will incorporate more aspects of French life into my classroom. **Serving as a teaching assistant in France will allow me to contribute to the French school system while growing personally and professionally.**
9. Because of my wide range of interests, I have not yet decided what career path to follow into the future. In the short run, I hope to study abroad for a year, in the process immersing myself in another culture, and deepening my personal and academic understanding of international affairs. After studying abroad, my options would include working for a nonprofit organization, entering the corporate world, and attending law school. In the long run, I envision for myself a career straddling the highest levels of international relations, politics, and business. I could achieve this admittedly ambitious goal by advancing within a nonprofit group, think tank, or major international company. **Perhaps most appealingly, I could also achieve this goal by entering public service and obtaining some degree of influence over actual foreign policy decisions — that is, becoming a player myself in the real-life game of Diplomacy.**
10. In addition, I am very excited to learn more about the Asian culture, which I have taken a special interest in since my short visit to Thailand. I believe I am highly qualified to conduct my proposed research. Although my research interactions will be done in English, I have started Chinese lessons this fall at Mythic University to make my experience in Taiwan even more meaningful. I will have completed Chinese II by the time I graduate and I hope to take personal language lessons over the summer before traveling to Taiwan. **After this experience I plan to obtain my PhD at a geology school in California, integrating the knowledge I obtained in Taiwan to studies on fault zones in the United States.**
11. Living in Jordan as a Fulbright Scholar will give me the opportunity to interact with a new generation of young adults, providing me with the opportunity to learn and impart knowledge by acting as a bridge between cultures. As part of my community outreach, I

will establish a rapport with local schools around my university, in order to engage in community service activities with secondary students. I will also volunteer in the community at hospitals, schools and shelters (in conjunction with the Public Services Club of JUST), much as I did in high-school at Suburban Hospital or Bannockburn Elementary, both located in Bethesda, Maryland. By directly establishing a relationship with secondary students, I will learn how teenagers view democracy and what they see for the future politically. **Understanding how younger generations of Jordan will adapt and implement democratic processes is essential in a region that is volatile, since the alternative is death, destruction, and needless suffering.**

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Sample Personal Statement Sources

Curriculum Vita One:

<<http://www.studentnow.com/collegelist/essayexample.html>>

Curriculum Vita Two:

<<http://www.bu.edu/bufellow/essays/fgessay.htm>>

Curriculum Vita Three:

<<http://www.utexas.edu/cola/uwc/>>

Curriculum Vita Four:

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Curriculum Vita Five:

“Where Drive and Talent Can Take You—The Fulbright.” *Graduate Admissions Essays: Write Your Way into the Graduate School of Your Choice*. Ed. Donald Asher. Berkeley: Ten Speed Press, 2000. 184-85.

Curriculum Vita Six:

Writing Personal Statements and Scholarship Application Essays. Ed. Joe Schall. Outernet Publishing, 2006. 152-53.

Curriculum Vita Seven:

<<http://www.rochester.edu/college/CCAS/fellowships/EssaySample1.html>>

Curriculum Vita Eight:

<<http://www.rochester.edu/college/CCAS/fellowships/EssaySample1.html>>

Curriculum Vita Nine:

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Curriculum Vita Ten:

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Curriculum Vita Eleven:

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