

At the end of their AFS exchange in France, we asked some recent AFSers from the USA to answer two questions:

- ❑ What elements of your host culture, compared to US culture, did you find most difficult to adjust to in the areas of family, school and/or social life?
- ❑ Please note any advice you would like to share with AFSers destined for your host country.

Here are some of their responses:

Keep a journal. Never speak in English if you can avoid it. Also, try to be low-maintenance and go with the flow. Be yourself.

**Jacob, Semester, 2010**

Be very open and patient, it is very easy to get frustrated.

**Aaron, Semester, 2010**

Compromise. Shove your pride elsewhere.

**Lenna, Semester, 2010**

Talk. No matter how stupid you sound (or think you do). It is only talking a lot that will help you improve your language and relationships.

**Andrea, Year, 2009**

Compromise when necessary, and try to be as easy going as possible. Immersion is key.

**Yasmine, Semester, 2009**

Do your best to learn their language but don't forget your roots - wear both nationalities with pride and you'll be respected.

**Gabrielle, Summer, 2009**

This isn't specific, but be open and talk a lot, even if you can speak well. It's okay not to understand. It's hard for people to talk to you if you don't look friendly...smile and TALK!

**Erin, Year, 2009**

Try not to compare to what you have back home, you're abroad for an experience you have not had in your life yet and you can't expect things to go the way you want. Enjoy your time while you're there because it will be an experience of a life time.

**Lauren, Year, 2009**

Be prepared that the French can sometimes behave less enthusiastically than Americans, but also that they do not deserve the false stereotype that marks them as

impolite and unhelpful.

**McKenzie, Year, 2008**

Make sure not to miss too many meals with your host family. Meals are one of the most important times of the day for them. It is the time for them to be together as a family and to catch up on each others' lives.

**Lucinda, Year, 2008**

Really go for it, I've seen too many AFSers just sit back and never really put both feet into their new country. Be serious about this, put some effort into it, and remember you are not on vacation.

**Bryan, Year, 2008**

Any opportunity to get involved in something, be it a sport, group, or dinner with grandparents really go to everything. Never say no. I found a lot of cool stuff and people doing this

**Noah, Year, 2008**

Don't be afraid to try something new or to approach people. It's the only way you will be able to truly experience this country.

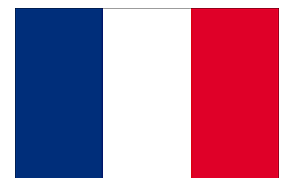
**Madeleine, Summer, 2008**

Get out there and enjoy yourself, the time goes quickly, so it's always better just to enjoy what you can in the moment.

**Robert, Summer, 2008**

Be prepared to spend time with family (extended or immediate). Family time is valued more so [in the U.S.].

**Anna, Semester, 2008**



Don't be afraid to share your opinions, even if they're different from other people! Most people I met loved debating things, and wanted to know what I thought about all kinds of topics.

**Anna, Year, 2007**

Be ready to make mistakes! Be ok with making mistakes. Enjoy yourself and be open to everything.

**Anissa, Year, 2007**

Have no expectations, leave with an open mind and heart.

**Elizabeth, Semester, 2007**

Spend the time to build a strong bond with your host family, they are the ones you are actually going to be living with for the year.

**Sophia, Year, 2007**

An essential ingredient to developing a true friendship is time.

**Adam, Year, 2007**