

Rebound Guide

A guide to overcoming your 2nd culture shock and how to use it to your advantage.

August 2024

Welcome back to the United States!

You've made it back in one piece from your second home. You've grown a lot as an individual, but many of those around you might be having trouble with the change. We're glad to see it and to help ease you back into life in the US. If you need help with anything...

Rotex is Here to Help!

Let's be honest, you are going to experience culture shock in one way, shape, or form. If you need help dealing with it or just want a person to talk to, Rotex is there to help! We live all over the state and would gladly help you out—Mark where to find your local Rotex.

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Expectations for the Weekend

This is your last required Rotary Youth Exchange event and the beginning of your Rebound year. We have the following expectations:

1. Be Responsible:

- You're back in the U.S. now, and we expect you to follow US rules and laws
- Be careful with your safety
- Take responsibility for your words and actions

2. Be Respectful:

- Be mindful that each exchange is unique and each person experienced different things on their exchange
- Allow each other the opportunity to be heard without judgment

3. Participate when you can:

- It can be difficult to talk about your exchange and we get it. Do your best and be your best.

Goals for the Weekend

This weekend is meant to be a time of reflection on yourself and who you've become. We want to support you in your lifelong goals and grow in the way you want to grow. Hopefully, when you leave you'll be confident that all have been answered:

- Who was I?
- Who am I now? How has exchange changed me?
- Who do I want to become?
- What am I going to do with this new person?
- **What goals do I have? (Write below)**

Weekend Schedule

Friday

5:30 PM	Check-in
6:00 PM	Dinner
7:00 PM	Big Group Meeting
7:30 PM	Small Group Break Outs - Essay/Checklist
10:00 PM	Free Time
11:00 PM	Lights Out

Saturday

8:00 AM	Breakfast
9:00 AM	Morning Hike
	Graphing Your Exchange Year
10:00 AM	Essay
12:00 PM	Lunch
12:00 PM	Country Officer Time/Free Time
1:40 PM	Marketing Your Overseas Skills

Saturday (Continued)

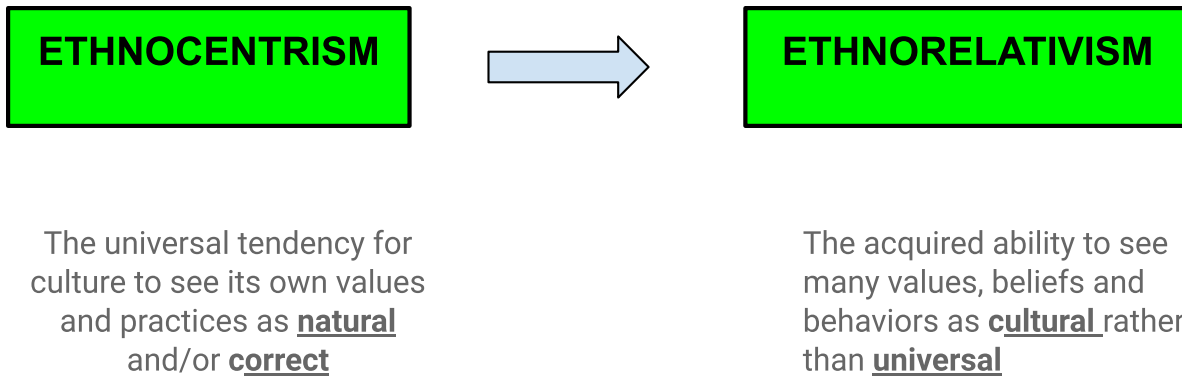
4:30 PM	Small Group: Essays
5:00 PM	Dinner
6:30 PM	Free Time
7:40 PM	Small Group: Essays And Goals
9:00 PM	Best Of The Best
10:00 PM	Free Time
11:00 PM	Lights Out

Sunday

7:00 AM	Wake-up And Pack-up
8:00 AM	Breakfast/ Check Out
9:00 AM	Small Group
10:00 AM	Big Group
11:00 AM	Goodbyes And Departure

What are Culture Shock and Reverse Culture Shock?

Going on exchange meant that you experienced a different culture with different norms and a new language! You've probably gone from...



While the year abroad has ended, the exchange program and its many effects on you have just begun. You may have already begun to experience a phenomenon known as "Reverse Culture Shock" or "Re-Entry Shock." This coming back can leave you feeling lonely and isolated. There are several stages in coming back:

1. **Euphoria-** You are excited to share your experiences and are overflowing with stories of your year abroad. You truly have become a citizen of the world!
2. **Hostility/Rejection-** You find yourself unhappy being home and have resentment for most things US. You might not even experience the Euphoria stage because you weren't even ready to come home.
 - a. It might be that you want everything to change with you as well but your friends, family, and hometown just remained the same.
 - b. You also left your new life behind and might not be able to return to your family and friends abroad.
3. **Denial Reversion-** You might feel that you haven't changed at all and deny even growing as an individual.
4. **Eventual Adaptation-** It might take a month or it might take years! It's up to you how you handle it. When you are eventually able to, you'll realize how big your world is. And guess what? You've become bi-cultural because of it!

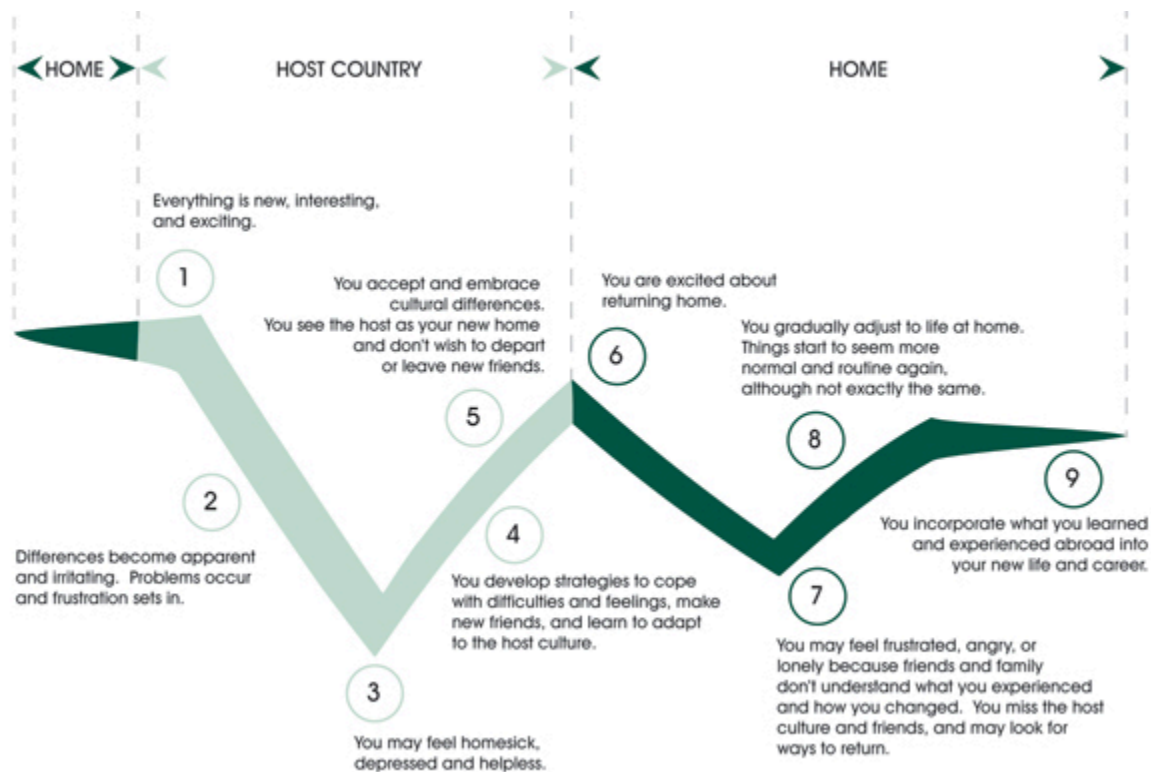
It can be difficult to experience some of these things on your own, especially if you feel alone in this.

Re-Entry shock is expected and is a part of the experience. Give it time and understand that you'll always have two homes. You have been in on this exchange from the start sharing many of the ups and downs. Remember two years ago when you were selected? Remember the whole year it took you to adjust? This next year or so is that last step in your exchange! You can make this last part of your journey, and you don't need to do it on your own. All you need to do is reach out!

REVERSE CULTURE SHOCK

In many ways, your emotions and challenges coming home will be like all Rebounds before you. You may experience many of the stages of reverse culture shock described on the previous page. You will have created powerful memories, and made connections that you worry you will lose now that you are home. Some of the more common feelings include excitement, sadness, frustration, resistance, and anger.

Instead of learning how to fit the new you into your old life, you--along with every person around you--have to figure this out without the comfort of your old routine. You may feel the same feelings, but perhaps more of some and less of others; and there may be additional feelings such as confusion at the whole situation, failure at ending your exchange early (if applicable), disappointment at Rotary for not figuring everything out, and guilt.



This difference will not prevent you from maturing, developing bi-culturalism, and growing like all exchange students before you, but it will almost certainly look different and it may take longer.

A few important points:

- Whatever you feel are **normal reactions to an abnormal situation**; validate your feelings.
- If you are discouraged, try thinking about your year as two separate exchanges: part 1, where incredible personal growth occurred; and part 2, which can help you relate to others' experiences.
- The Rebound year is an important part of your exchange. Reverse culture shock is actually quite similar to culture shock, and the reflection you do will help you solidify your identity. You are learning **resilience** which will serve you well in the future.
- Working through these changes is a personal journey, but there are many resources available to you, both within Rotary and outside.

How Have I Changed From My Experience?

Below is a checklist of changes that may have happened on your exchange. If you haven't thought very carefully about how you have changed, this list may be especially helpful in making you more fully aware of what has happened to you. Read through the list and place a checkmark by each change that you believe has occurred in you. You do not need to check all of these.

- I have increased my perseverance and self-discipline.
- I am more willing to invest time and effort to do well in my studies at school or in independent learning projects.
- I am more confident and positive when meeting new people.
- I am more confident and assertive when facing new situations.
- I have a greater capacity to accept differences in others.
- I am more open to sharing my thoughts and feelings with others.
- I have more curiosity about and respect for new ideas.
- I have a better idea of some of my short-term and long-term goals.
- I am more flexible and able to adjust to changes in others.
- I am more tolerant of situations that are confusing and open to differing interpretations.
- I have increased my ability to see myself objectively; see my own day-to-day problems in a broader, more realistic context.
- I am more deeply committed to an idea, cause, or goal.

- I have a greater sense of responsibility for other people.
- I have improved my ability to speak a foreign language.
- I am more knowledgeable about another culture and lifestyle.
- I am able to ask for and receive help from others.
- I have a greater ability to empathize with others, that is, to put myself in their place when making judgments.
- I have a greater willingness to take on roles and tasks to which I am unaccustomed.
- I can accept failures and shortcomings in myself more easily.
- I have increased my capacity to experiment and take risks.
- I have a better understanding of my strengths and weaknesses.
- I have a deeper understanding of the values and lifestyle of my native culture and community.
- I am more aware of the opportunities in life that are open to me.
- I feel greater respect and appreciation for my natural family.
- I am more independent in my relationships with family and friends.
- I feel that I need fewer friends but have deeper (more intimate and more close two or three trusting) friendships.
- I am more aware of the way I use and structure time.
- I have a greater capacity to profit from my mistakes.
- I am more capable of making long-term plans.
- I am more determined to fully develop my skills and talents.
- I feel a greater need to have diverse experiences and friends.
- I am more balanced in my judgments; that is, less likely to judge things as "good" or "bad," "right" or "wrong".
- I am more likely to do things spontaneously, that is, to do things without undue concern about the possible consequences.
- I have improved my observation skills.
- I am more confident about the decisions I make.

- I am confident that all humans, regardless of our identity, have more in common than we are different.
- I have a deeper understanding of the problems and issues that confront all human beings on this planet.
- I have a greater awareness of political, economic, and social events occurring around the world.
- I am more comfortable being alone, enjoying my own company.

A. Draw a star next to the ones that stuck with you. What made them stick with you or make you think “that’s me”?

B. Which changes in the statements did you not identify with? How have you grown differently?

C. Have you grown in other ways? Explain how.

D. What qualities or traits best show your growth? Write down three words that best describe you today.

Writing Your College/ Scholarship Essay

As you are beginning to discover, your exchange changed you in a way that nothing else really can. You’ve matured a lot, gained a new perspective on life, developed a work ethic and problem-solving abilities, etc. This is widely understood by future employers and college selection committees, so it is in your interest to bring up your exchange experience whenever possible (while of course avoiding the “look at me, I’m so cultured” sense).

College and scholarship essays will frequently ask you to describe a situation in your life when you were challenged, or felt outside of your comfort zone, or something along these lines. That should be old hat by now! Prompts like these are a prime opportunity to set yourself apart by talking about your exchange experience. Some tips: try to use specific examples; and be very conscious of the prompt and answer it—don’t allow yourself to wander too far afield.

To begin developing your own high-level ideas, you can address these Core questions that all good Common Application essays should answer:	
“Who Am I?”	<i>The focus here is on your personality traits — who you are as a person. They’re considering how you will fit in to the student body and campus community.</i>
“Why Am I Here?”	<i>This question targets your progression throughout high school (an arc or journey). Use this as an opportunity to bridge into your experience abroad.</i>
“What is Unique About Me?”	<i>Here’s where you can go in depth. Why do they NEED you at their school? You’ve gone all over the world! Expand on that and use stories about challenging experiences or how you’ve grown as a citizen of the world.</i>
“What Matters to Me?”	<i>Hopes, dreams, and reflection stage. Think about where you want to do and how your exchange led you there.</i>
We’ve included the 2024-25 essay prompts questions that some universities have used in the past:	

2024-2025 Common Core Application Essay Prompts

1. Some students have a background, identity, interest, or talent that is so meaningful they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, then please share your story.
2. The lessons we take from obstacles we encounter can be fundamental to later success. Recount a time when you faced a challenge, setback, or failure. How did it affect you, and what did you learn from the experience?
3. Reflect on a time when you questioned or challenged a belief or idea. What prompted your thinking? What was the outcome?
4. Reflect on something that someone has done for you that has made you happy or thankful in a surprising way. How has this gratitude affected or motivated you?
5. Discuss an accomplishment, event, or realization that sparked a period of personal growth and a new understanding of yourself or others.
6. Describe a topic, idea, or concept you find so engaging that it makes you lose all track of time. Why does it captivate you? What or who do you turn to when you want to learn more?
7. Share an essay on any topic of your choice. It can be one you've already written, one that responds to a different prompt, or one of your own design.

In summary, you can use your exchange to stand out in an essay by:

- Always answering the prompt, but finding a way to incorporate examples from your exchange experiences
- Using the medium of an essay to flesh out your experiences to illustrate a point
- As always, taking care to use formal language and proper grammar

Writing Your Cover Letter

Cover letters are a quite different format from essays, but can achieve the same end—leveraging your exchange experience to stand out as an applicant. Cover letters are part of some applications, but are usually much more free-form: you are expected to explain to a future employer or academic committee, in 2-3 paragraphs, why you are interested in the position/program and what you have to offer them, sort of like you would in a resume. While resumes can be general, however, a cover letter is targeted for exactly what you are applying for.

Because cover letters are the first thing to be seen (and because they are specific to the position/program), they are a great opportunity to show off your exchange. Unlike in an essay, you should probably refrain from lengthy anecdotes illustrating a quality about you, but you have an opportunity to identify characteristics (problem-solving, the Finnish language, the ability to sleep literally anywhere, etc.) and briefly describe how your experiences (such as exchange) have given you these characteristics.

In summary, you can use your exchange to stand out in a cover letter by:

- Listing qualities you gained from exchange
- Demonstrating some of those qualities, such as maturity and attention to detail, in your writing itself
- Avoiding anecdotes and instead trying to be as succinct as possible

For more information about cover letters, including formatting requirements and examples, try the internet. Or you can ask one of the Rotex, and they'll email you a resource.

Human Shield

For the next few minutes, reflect back on your exchange. Use the following prompts to help you:

Draw or write about something you are proud of:




Draw or write about something you have learned about yourself SINCE COMING HOME:

Draw or write something about the United States or Americans that irritates you:

Draw or write about something you would like others to know about - either about you or anything

Graphing Your Exchange Year

Below is a graph of your year abroad. Go ahead and fill in each box to show where you were emotionally on your exchange year. Think about memorable experiences, overcoming hardships, or everyday life.

	10												
	9												
	8												
	7												
	6												
	5												
	4												
	3												
	2												
	1												
		AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JULY
	Monthly Experience												

- Which month(s) was your hardest? Why were they challenging?
- Which month(s) were the greatest? What made them high points?
- What was your favorite experience?
- How did you overcome a difficult experience?

Goal Setting

Goal setting will help you keep on track to accomplish the things that are important to you in the long and short term. You'll need to set S.M.A.R.T. goals to obtain them (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Reasonable, Time-Sensitive).

Long Term Goal #1

A year from now, I will have:

Steps To Reaching My Goal:

1

2

Two Things That Will Help Me Reach My Goal:

1

2

I will know I've reached my goal because:

Long Term Goal #2

A year from now, I will have:

Steps To Reaching My Goal:

1

2

Two Things That Will Help Me Reach My Goal:

1

2

I will know I've reached my goal because:

Short Term Goal #1

Goal:

I will know I've reached my goal because:

Short Term Goal #2

Goal:

I will know I've reached my goal because:

Short Term Goal #3

Goal:

I will know I've reached my goal because:

Who can help support me in attaining my Goals

Name	Contact Information	Which Goal(s)

Where Do I See Myself...

In 1 year?

In 5 years?

In 10 years?

Open Ended Questions

- Time Management and Other Decisions
 - What decisions do you feel that you should control?
 - Curfew, friends, money...Have you discussed with your parents?

- Alcohol and Cigarettes (if applicable)
 - Some of you might have been exposed to the experience of drinking, which in many cultures and countries is accepted and often encouraged.
 - What are your views on enjoying a glass of beer or wine during dinner and what effects would your drinking have on your natural family?
 - What about smoking?

- Money
 - After living abroad, you might've realized your spending habits may need to change. How financially independent do you think you should be?

- Family
 - How have your relationships with your siblings and parents changed? Have there been any major developments in their lives? How has it affected you?

Staying Involved in Rotary

Rotary meetings:

- Be sure to visit your sponsor club now that you are home. Be sure to thank them for their support of you.
- Provide them with a presentation about your exchange year and what you learned.
- Ensure you express your gratitude
- Ask for a list of presenters over the year and attend the ones that are of interest to you.

Interact and Rotaract: check out your school or community for a club. Check for Facebook groups and ask your Rotary club. If there isn't one, maybe you can start one!

RYLA: <http://www.ryladistrict5100.org/> (you will all be eligible at the age of 21)

Rotex-Stay tuned for socials!

- Follow our Instagram: [@yourfav5100rotex](#)
- Join our Rotex Facebook group: [District 5100 ROTEX](#)

