

MANITOBA-QUÉBEC EXCHANGE PROGRAM

PARTICIPANT GUIDE

Canada 

Manitoba 

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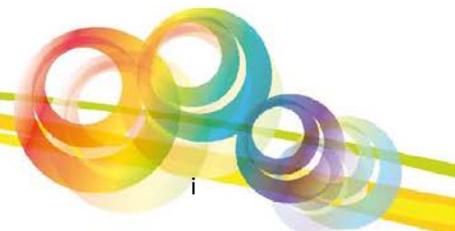
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Please note that the department could make changes to the online version.

Ce document est disponible en français.

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PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Manitoba-Québec Exchange Program is a reciprocal program, which involves the pairing of students from each province.

The program's objectives are:

- Improve students French language communication skills.
- Improve students' confidence to speak French.
- Develop students' bilingual identity.
- Create lifelong opportunities and foster openness to other languages and cultures.
- Develop students' greater independence and self-esteem.

From September to December, Québec students live with their Manitoba host families and both students attend the same school. In turn, starting in February, the Manitoba students live with their Québec host families and both students attend school in Québec for the same length of time and under the same conditions.

While in their host province, students are expected to speak the official language of the majority in that province and to get involved in a variety of cultural activities.

The success of the program depends upon the *commitment* of the **participating students, their family and their school.**

This guide has been designed for those families participating in the program, as well as those who may be considering future participation.

TIMELINE OVERVIEW

YEAR BEFORE THE EXCHANGE	YEAR OF THE EXCHANGE
<p>November to February</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • advertising of the program begins • liaison teacher is identified • on behalf of the school, the school divisions apply to the Department of Education to participate in the exchange • student fill out the application form, available on the website <p>February</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • schools begin the selection process • schools conduct in-home interviews of potential candidates <p>March</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • maximum of five high quality applications per school are submitted to the Department • family members over 18 years of age start the process to obtain a Criminal Record Check and a Child Abuse Registry Check <p>April</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • processing and matching of student files • pairing of eligible candidates done by provincial coordinators <p>May</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • selected participants and schools are notified • students and liaison teachers receive Québec student files • families must submit the Criminal Record check and the Child Abuse Registry check to the Department <p>June</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • correspondence/communication begins between Manitoba and Québec families (by email, phone, social medias, etc.) <p>July</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • continuing communication between Manitoba and Québec families <p>August</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manitoba families and schools are advised of Québec students' arrival times 	<p>September</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • orientation session for Manitoba families and liaison teachers before the arrival of Québec students • Québec students arrive in Manitoba <p>October</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mid-term evaluation interviews conducted by Québec teachers (by phone) <p>End of November</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Québec students' assessment report are completed by Manitoba teachers <p>December</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Québec students return home • Manitoba students prepare for their trip to Québec <p>January</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manitoba students ensure that they are caught up and/or are prepared to catch up on school work which will be missed while on exchange <p>February</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manitoba students leave for Québec • student interviews by Manitoba provincial coordinator (in person or by phone) <p>Beginning of March</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • evaluation interviews are conducted by liaison teacher from the Manitoba school, after 3 or 4 weeks stay (by phone) <p>April</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manitoba students return home

TO EXCHANGE PARTICIPANTS AND THEIR FAMILY

The exchange participants include both you and your family. As students applying for this program, you must understand the commitment you are about to make and be sure that your family will back you up in this endeavour.

The first portion of this exchange involves having a new family member for three months. Will this cause any strain on your family emotionally or financially? Will it interfere with your daily activities? Are you willing to make this new member of your family the most important thing in your life during his/her visit to Manitoba? Will leaving home for three months be difficult for you and your family?

You must be willing to fulfill some of your academic requirements either before you leave on the exchange, or after you return, or a bit of both (and that could involve taking summer school). You may wish to start planning to meet your academic requirements as soon as the application is submitted.

It is important to remember that all participants in this program become ambassadors for their home province and should attempt to display maturity, adaptability, hospitality and graciousness at all times throughout the exchange.

ELIGIBILITY

Before any Manitoba student is eligible to participate, the student's school division must fill out the *School Division Participation Request Form* available online and send it to the Department of Education.

To be eligible to apply for this exchange program, students must:

- be currently enrolled in Grade 9 or 10 in either the French Immersion Program or the French course in the English Program;
- have a solid academic record or a recommendation from their parents and school;
- have a good knowledge of French or a strong desire to learn;
- be flexible and open to new experiences and a new culture;
- be well motivated to participate in this type of learning activity;
- be recommended by the liaison teacher, designated by the school administration.

The selection committee must be assured that the Manitoba student meets the above criteria and that the home is one that will enthusiastically receive a Québec student for three months. The committee must also ascertain that this would not cause an undue burden on the family.

COSTS

Participating families must pay part of the airfare (\$300) as well as living expenses for their visiting student.

The government of Manitoba covers the remaining roundtrip travel costs from Winnipeg to Québec city.

Tuition costs are covered by both provinces based on reciprocity.

APPLICATION PROCEDURE

1. The student and his/her parents are to fill out the *Application Form* electronically. The student must then submit the application form to the person responsible for the exchange program at the school (liaison teacher).
2. The liaison teacher must advise the school division of the student's potential participation in the exchange program and ask the division to fill out the *Participation Request Form*.
3. Upon receiving the duly completed application from the student, **the liaison teacher** will conduct an interview with the candidate and his or her parents or guardians at the residence where the student from Québec will be staying.
4. After the interview process is complete, the committee will evaluate the candidate and decide whether or not the candidate is qualified to participate in the program. If so, the liaison teacher will prepare the student's registration file to be submitted to the Department.
5. The student registration file must consist of two duly completed documents: the *Application Form* and the *Interview Questionnaire*
6. For each student recommended by the school, the liaison teacher will not only mail a copy of the student's registration file to the program coordinator at the Bureau de l'éducation française, but will also submit the file electronically. He should also keep a copy for reference.
7. The complete file must be submitted to the Department before the **end of March**.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Participation in this program requires **major and continuing commitment** on the part of the student. Students should not apply if they are not certain of their interest or commitment.
2. Students participating in the program must be prepared to respect house rules in their host home in Québec in regards to curfews, smoking limitations, house chores, etc.
3. The use of alcohol or drugs, or trouble with the law means immediate termination of the exchange. Return airfare home for these reasons, or for early termination of the program for reasons outside the spirit of the program, will be at parental expense.
4. Student participants hosting a Québec student must give high priority to their responsibilities as hosts. Your partner must be more important than your boyfriend or girlfriend, your circle of friends or your part-time job. (You may find that you have to quit your job during the exchange.)
5. Participating students will be away from their regular school for three months. This requires special planning of the school programs for the year (i.e. making arrangements with teachers/principal for exams, projects, etc.).

PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Participation by a student in this program also requires a major and continuing commitment by his/her parents. It involves the hosting of a Francophone student for three months. It is essential that every member of the family be receptive to the exchange student and be willing to contribute to the success of the exchange. Every family member must agree to participate in the exchange by supporting the presence of a new family member for three months.
2. There must be space in the home for another adolescent. A separate bedroom is not essential but may be desirable. **A separate bed is essential, as is the availability of "private space" where the exchange student may be alone if desired.**
3. **Each family member residing in the household, over 18 years of age, must undergo a Criminal Records Check and a Child Abuse Check before the beginning of the exchange.**
4. Parents are encouraged to correspond with the parents of the Québec students in order to inform them about the home situation such as household rules, curfews, etc.
5. Parents are requested to meet Québec students upon their arrival at the Winnipeg International Airport as well as accompany them back to the airport on the day of their return flight.
6. It is hoped that Manitoba hosting families will provide suitable cultural and recreational experiences to Québec exchange students. This might include some travel within the province. There are no minimum expectations here and individual families should plan to do only what they might wish to do. Such travel is at the expense of the host family.
7. Hosting parents assume responsibility for the visiting student. It is expected that guardianship of the visiting adolescent be assumed. Any travel involving an overnight stay is to be supervised by the host family; verbal or written permission from the student's family must also be obtained. For travel outside the country, parents must have written parental permission on hand.
8. During the fall term, the parents should make every attempt to attend the parent-teacher conferences at school to determine the progress of their own son/daughter and the Québec student's participation and progress, and to ensure that all of the teachers involved are aware that the Manitoba student will be attending school in Québec for three months.

NOTIFICATION OF STATUS

All applicants will be notified of the status of their application in May.

Note: Once notified of a proposed match, parents must consider carefully the responsibilities outlined above and the way an exchange would affect the family before the proposed match is accepted. **When the Department receives the signed acceptance document, it is with the understanding that the commitment has been made to this exchange program.**

Be sure that any changes in information given during the interview, or on the application form, are communicated immediately to the liaison teacher and to the Manitoba provincial coordinator.

PRIOR TO THE EXCHANGE

CORRESPONDENCE WITH QUÉBEC PARTNER

Correspondence with the Québec partner and family should begin after the date indicated by the provincial coordinator and may be initiated by either party.

Are you wondering about what to write in your first email? Suggestions include letting your partner know about:

- yourself: photos, typical daily activities, domestic chores, weekend activities;
- your family: typical evening and weekend activities, photos;
- your school: include a school handbook, outline courses available, co-curricular and extra-curricular programs available (sports, music, etc.);
- your community: discuss the clubs, recreation facilities, geographic location, population, economy of the area, cultural and sport activities – include photos, maps, newspapers.

Communications between the families help develop important ties for the exchange. Exchanging music, photos, videos, etc., help with information sharing. When you receive a message, reply immediately.

Note: Be sure to obtain a summer address from your partner, and phone your partner if you have not received a reply to your email by July. (Inform your liaison teacher if this is the case.) Be careful what information you put on Facebook concerning your partner. Ensure that you have their PERMISSION before putting any photos or names.

DROP OUT OR WITHDRAWAL

If you are selected and circumstances require you to withdraw from the program, you must notify:

- 1) your liaison teacher* immediately;
- 2) your partner and his/her family, by phone and in writing, with reasons explaining the need for withdrawal.

*A copy of this correspondence will be sent to the provincial coordinator by your liaison teacher.

STUDENT TIMETABLE PLANNING, PROGRAMMING CONSIDERATIONS

Since your next school year will be different, it is very important that you plan your school courses with special care. As soon as possible, you should consult with your teachers, counsellors and, if necessary, with the school administrators to ensure that your school courses are structured so that you receive a full year of credits and satisfactory marks.

Past experience has shown that the more work that is completed before going to Québec, the easier it is for the Manitoba students to readjust to the Manitoba school system and way of living upon returning. Working on Manitoba correspondence courses during your three-month stay in Québec is not recommended. Some participants may consider attending school during the summer preceding or following the exchange.

Do not expect schools in Québec to be able to meet your exact needs regarding course selection, as this is not always possible. The main goal of the program is language learning in the cultural milieu. This will require your full attention. Should you have timetable concerns, please discuss them with your liaison teacher and school administration.

STUDENT INITIATED PROJECT (SIP) – CREDIT REQUIREMENT

High school students in Manitoba can submit a request to obtain a high school credit towards graduation for their participation in the Manitoba-Québec Exchange Program.

Prior to participating in the exchange, students must:

- Fill out the *Student Initiated Project Registration Form*, obtain the appropriate signatures (parent, principal, superintendent) and send it to the Department of Education. The form is available online at <http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/docs/support/ldc/>.

After completing the exchange, students will submit to the liaison teacher, the following documents:

- a copy of their schedule while in Québec;
- their *Journal et portfolio*.

The *Fiche d'appréciation de l'élève en visite au Québec* is also a document required in order to obtain a credit; the Provincial coordinator will send it to the liaison teacher as soon as she receives it from Québec.

The liaison teacher will assess the documents received and will contact the provincial coordinator of the exchange program to inform her whether the school will award a credit to the student. If awarded, the Department will send a letter to the school principal indicating that the credit has been granted.

HOSTING QUÉBEC EXCHANGE STUDENT

This section attempts to give some suggestions that may help you during the hosting period portion of the exchange.

SEPTEMBER TO DECEMBER

During this three-month period, the major responsibility of the Manitoba student and family is to welcome the Québec student and make him/her feel comfortable in your home. It can be a stressful experience for a teenager to leave his/her "secure" environment to live with a new family for three **months**. This difficulty is usually compounded by language/communication difficulties. While some Québec students may be able to express themselves quite well in English, it is important to note that nuances of meaning and the cultural understanding will require special attention and assistance.

ARRIVAL OF QUÉBEC STUDENT

Manitoba students and families must be at the pickup point to welcome the Québec student. Manitoba students should help their exchange partner settle into their home. Make the arrival a special event, i.e. with flowers, a party, BBQ or dinner, etc. A tour of the home and a review of the relevant household rules are recommended. Be considerate of your partner. He/she may be tired, may not understand, and you may need to go over the relevant household rules slowly again, two or three days later.

AT SCHOOL

When you take your Québec partner to school, the first person that he/she should meet is the liaison teacher, followed by the school administration. Tour the school and inform your partner of the school rules, morning routines, timetable, cafeteria, gymnasium, bus pass and locker. Until a timetable is established the Québec student may follow you to your classes.

Take your partner to all his/her classes and introduce him/her to the teachers. If a major problem is perceived, tell the liaison teacher. Remember that some may get upset over the little things when the real issues are major cultural and language differences. **So please be patient.**

When you are learning a second language, you tire very quickly. Give your partner the opportunity to sleep, play sports, and participate in non-conversational activities, as well as provide him/her with a private space.

AT HOME

The first weeks of the exchange are the most important. It will require all of your attention to include your new family member in all activities. If there is one rule of thumb, it is to communicate directly and clearly with the exchange student regarding expectations and limitations.

Some areas of concern that have been mentioned by past participants of the program include:

- The presence of a new person in the home can cause jealousy on the part of younger family members. Suddenly someone is receiving more attention. It is important to involve these young family members who can be excellent teachers: they repeat things many times as they generally love to communicate. It is important that parents help younger children accept the new addition to the family.

- The Québec student should also be encouraged to come out of his/her room, i.e. to watch television, play games or to help with family chores.
- Respect your partner and communicate honestly with him/her as often as possible. However, it is not necessary to be with each other all the time.
- In the early stages of the exchange, continue to verify that your partner understands and that he/she is not just polite and saying "yes".
- If you, as the host student and family, see that after the first few weeks the Québec student is spending all his/her time in his/her room without indicating being tired, is crying a lot, and/or is writing a lot of emails in his/her room, host parents should sit down with the Québec student and make sure that everything is alright. If necessary, involve the liaison teacher.
- The Québec student must be encouraged to communicate with the Manitoba partner if there is the slightest concern at any time. The Québec student must realize that you and your family care. In many cases, indication of affection such as a hug or a pat on the back will break the barrier.

FAMILY RULES

Families should inform Québec student about time of the meals during the week and weekend, shower schedule, curfews for weeknights and weekends, family chores and activities, and the amount of permitted television time etc.

LANGUAGE

The Québec student may use English to swear, completely unaware of the meaning of the newly learned expressions. You may find that your friends or other students relish the opportunity to teach your partner such expressions. If this should happen, the Québec student must be told politely that such language is inappropriate and why.

FRIENDS

The Manitoba student should introduce his/her Québec partner to his/her own circle of friends. During the exchange, the Québec student will make his/her own circle of friends. This will allow both students to spend some time apart, which is conducive to a healthy situation.

The Québec student may be the focus of a great deal of attention since he/she is the new person on the scene. He/she may happen to acquire many friends rapidly; jealousy may creep into the relationship between the partners. The reverse situation may occur in Québec.

If your partner starts dating, ask him/her to introduce the girl/boy to your family for parental approval.

LANGUAGE LEARNING

Learning a second language is not easy. The strength of the motivation to learn the second language and the family environment could determine the rate of progress.

Here are a few ideas to help the Québec student:

- Expose the Québec student to all types of board games, cards, Scrabble, English television programs, videos and music.
- Encourage the Québec students to ask questions in English first and help them if they necessary.
- Dictate the grocery lists to the Québec student and take him/her on errands (ex.: to the supermarket).

AFTER HOSTING THE QUÉBEC STUDENT

MANITOBA STUDENT PREPARATION PERIOD

Besides the readjustment to your family dynamics after the departure of your new friend, you will complete the final preparations for your own departure.

1. Start watching/listening to films, radio, etc., in French.
2. Some teachers may suggest you give a presentation to the class upon your return from Québec, telling other students about the area where you lived. The presentation might be done from a historical, geographical, or sociological viewpoint. Think about the photographs that you may want to take and any necessary research before you leave.
3. Discuss with your family as to how much phoning will take place. If you are taking a non-semester course in Manitoba, arrange with a reliable friend to collect notes and handouts in each of your classes during your absence.
4. Make a family decision with respect to finances and a weekly/monthly budget.

PACKING

Just a few reminders...

- Have you checked on the climate of the region you are visiting?
- Remember, you will not have a lot of room in suitcases for a huge wardrobe and there are washing facilities in Québec, so take a limited wardrobe with maximum flexibility! Layers of clothing are the most practical way of wardrobe planning.

Note:

- Have medical and dental checkups prior to departure.
- Obtain a Manitoba Health Card and have it with you in Québec.
- Have coursework/assignments done prior to departure.

DURING THE EXCHANGE PERIOD IN QUÉBEC

ARRIVING IN THE QUÉBEC COMMUNITY – FEBRUARY TO APRIL

The first two weeks in Québec will be a challenge. You will be surrounded with "new" people and situations.

When you arrive, you will be tired, disoriented and inundated with new information all in French. Do not hesitate to ask people to repeat information and names.

Do not tell people that you understand what they said if this is not true.
Ask them to repeat until you do understand.

When you arrive, you will be asked if you wish to rest, unpack, etc., in your new room. Do not hesitate to tell your partner and your host family when you are tired (due to travel, constant usage of French, etc.).

In your own family, where the rules are understood, there is no need to ask or confirm.
In a new family, you must learn the rules.

Ask your partner about the following family rules:

- Meals: What time are family meals? Any eating restrictions (allergies, special diet) should be discussed.
- Housework: What chores are expected from me? Dishes? Washing? Laundry? How often? Where are the cleaning materials?
- Your room must be kept tidy! If you are sharing a room, determine who does what.

HINTS FOR IMPROVED FAMILY RELATIONS

It is important that you realize it is your responsibility to adjust to your host family's way of doing things, and not the other way around.

What is your host family expecting? We cannot generalize, but you can be sure that they are hoping for a response from you, a sign that you care about their efforts! We would like to suggest four ways that you can be responsive.

1. Share about yourself with your exchange family. They are concerned with how you feel and how you are doing. They want to learn all about you, your family, your part of the country, and your culture and customs. Spend time talking to them and offer to prepare a special meal (even if you can't cook, there must be a friend who can help you). Share unique celebrations with them, such as a birthday, breakfast, or whatever. Above all, avoid saying "no". If the family invites you to go somewhere with them – a museum perhaps or going to a movie, accept, even if you don't particularly care for museums and don't like movies. Make a little bit of an extra effort.

2. React and respond to whatever they say to you or do for you. If your host mother has prepared a special dish for you, don't hesitate to say "how delicious!" If you don't really like it very much, a comment about how nice it was of her to do that will suffice. **If people do things for you, show appreciation or they most likely won't try again.** Whatever they do, they expect a response from you and it is one way for you to repay them.
3. Volunteer to help. Most families assign some chore to each family member and they will expect you to do your part, but they may be reluctant to ask you to help. You are expected to understand that there are responsibilities for everyone involved in running a household, and you must do your share. Some students have found that less was expected of them from their Québec family than from their family back home. Don't wait, volunteer and ask what you can do so that the family has no reason to be disappointed and complain that the exchange student thinks that housework should be done by others or that it magically takes care of itself!

Any traveling that you do without your host family must be approved by your own parents and your host family. In general, traveling alone or with other teenagers involving an overnight stay is not recommended.

VISITS FROM MANITOBA FRIENDS OR FAMILY

Visits during your three-month stay in Québec from Manitoba family and friends can disrupt the exchange. This is especially true of boyfriends and girlfriends; therefore, they are not allowed. We recommend that your family not come at all, but if they do, they should do so **after** the initial exchange period. It is confusing to have two sets of parents with two different value systems, and difficulties can develop.

RELIGION

Your host family may have different views on religion than your own family. If this is important to you, discuss this with the host family immediately upon arrival and make the necessary arrangements.

Should there be any difficulties that need resolving, the Québec liaison teacher is the key person. Do not hesitate to discuss issues with him/her about which you feel uncomfortable.

CAUTION!

Your Québec partner is the "person you know" in this strange new world. There will be a tendency to "cling" to this familiar person. Remember that this may become tiresome in the long run.

People in Québec will want to practice their English with you. Make sure that you say calmly, firmly and politely: *En français SVP!* This is YOUR opportunity to learn and to practice French, not to teach English.

FRIENDS

Your partner will introduce you to friends at school and people in the community. Avoid refusing to try a new activity or miss an occasion to meet new people. New friendships usually require time and commitment. This is more difficult when your French is not as fluent as you would like. Do not expect your partner's friends to become your friends automatically.

Do not hesitate to make your own friends. There is no need to live in each other's pocket. In fact, depending on your partner, too much for too long could cause resentment. Should this arise, discuss this with your partner.

It will be up to you to make the effort to integrate into the school and community. This can be very taxing and frustrating, especially in the first weeks when your French is limited.

Friendships with other Manitoba exchange students are natural; but restrict your English. You are there to learn French.

SPECIAL FRIENDS

If your partner has a boyfriend/girlfriend, there may be occasions when you are invited to join them for an outing. If you feel like a "fifth wheel", discuss this uncomfortable feeling openly with your partner.

Should you develop a "special relationship", remember to abide by the family rules! Be sure to invite your friends to meet your Québec family.

PHONE CALLS

Phone calls to other Manitoba exchange students should be infrequent and in French as much as possible. Be sure to limit, and then eliminate, English as your French improves.

FACEBOOK, SKYPE, TEXT MESSAGING, EMAILS

Like the phone, these are very popular ways to stay connected with home. Remember, family and friends in Manitoba love you. Your absence does not diminish the love they feel for you – they will be there when you get home! So concentrate on your experience in Québec!

Spending hours in your room alone on Facebook or writing emails and text messaging will not help you learn French. This may be a sign of an adjustment problem or homesickness.

THE SCHOOL

When you arrive at school the first morning, have your partner introduce you to the liaison teacher. This should be the first person who you meet. Then be sure to meet the administrative staff.

You may not receive a timetable immediately. Until a timetable is arranged, you may visit classes or go to classes with your partner.

Your school situation in Québec may be very different from the one you know in Manitoba. Do not insist on a certain schedule or course. This may not be possible in your new school due to the timetable and class size restrictions.

Always remember that you are an ambassador for Manitoba. You must be diplomatic and considerate at all times. You may share your views but imposing them on others may create unnecessary conflict.

You will be a new face in the school. Sometimes you will feel stared at. A friendly smile and a warm "Salut!" should see you through this somewhat disconcerting situation.

Do not be afraid to use your vocabulary and get to know people in your school and community. Often the negative feelings are about the unknown. Giving people a chance to know you, the Manitoban, will usually dispel most of the fears, yours and theirs!

Be prepared to talk about Manitoba. You will be asked to speak in your own classes and possibly in others, as well as for groups in and out of school. Do not be surprised at the number and types of questions you will be asked! That "package of goodies" on Manitoba you brought along will be very useful now.

You are in Québec as an exchange STUDENT, not on a continuous vacation or travel program. **This means that you are expected to attend school regularly**, work hard, earn acceptable grades, and demonstrate a positive attitude, even if you receive no academic credit at home for your schooling in Québec. At some point, you might feel that this is a "lost" semester as far as progress with your academic education is concerned; but remember that you have chosen to enrich your life with this exchange experience and the value of the experience is certain to outweigh the academic loss.

School will be very different from the one to which you are accustomed. You will find a variety of courses to choose from, besides the compulsory courses that you might have to take. Get your counsellor's advice. Don't shy away from other academic classes or advanced courses; you might find them to be an interesting challenge. If your French is a bit shaky, stay away from courses with a long reading list. Above all, try to take classes that you cannot get at home.

The clubs and teams that you join can offer new friendships. Participate! As soon as you can, visit the clubs and teams at school (ex.: a drama group, a computer club, or the tennis, soccer or volleyball team). Whether the sports program in your host school is more (or less) competitive than your school in Manitoba, if the team is not already full of players, you might be just the person they have been waiting for! Involvement is the key.

ATTITUDE

Your attitude will largely determine the success or failure of your exchange. First, you must have a positive frame of mind. No matter what happens, where you are, or with whom, be curious and open, look for the good things and for what you can learn from the experience. Above all, **remember the two "Cs" – consideration and cooperation.**

A common characteristic of teenagers is a certain self-centeredness. However, in the situation that you have chosen, greater maturity is demanded of you, and you are obliged to cooperate with and to have consideration for others – to think about them and what they may want. The little, everyday things count most: say "Merci", come home when you are expected, eat the food that is placed in front of you, smile and say "Bonjour" when you walk in the door, offer to set the table, to take out the garbage or shovel the snow, keep your room clean, join the family in their activities, write thank-you notes to their friends who have shown you a special kindness, forego an evening with the "gang" to attend a family dinner.

You and your behaviour may shape the attitude of people in Québec towards all young people from Manitoba. The impression and image you leave behind in your community may encourage, or may discourage other families to host future exchange students. Be mature and be good ambassadors for Manitoba!

CULTURE SHOCK

At some point during your three months in Québec, you may ask yourself, "What am I doing here? I could be with my friends and family, or at least in more familiar surroundings!" You may have to deal with depression and homesickness. It is perfectly natural to feel this way when fully immersed in a culture that is different from your own without the usual familiar supports.

"Culture shock" is a common and normal reaction when you are in a strange place. It typically manifests itself in feelings of depression and anger. You become irritated about almost everything. You feel that everything in Québec is stupid and everything "back home" is wonderful. You feel that no one understands you. You don't feel like going out, you are afraid to take risks; you are tired and sleep much more than usual, and you gain weight and blame it on the new food.

There are unacceptable methods of dealing with these problems such as consuming alcohol, taking drugs or returning home. However, there are healthy alternative ways to overcoming culture shock. There are a few suggestions on the following page.

Healthy Ways to Overcome Culture Shock:

- Keep yourself busy. When you are bored or lonely, make a decision to do something immediately! Engage in activities that you may have previously avoided or considered silly. Go watch a hockey game or call someone from the school and arrange to get together. Go to a movie, a concert or just out for a hot chocolate or a soda.
- Concentrate on the here and now and put behind the memories of "the way things are done back home". Look at the life around you as being interesting and different – not better or worse. If you are critical and negative, you will quickly alienate people and become isolated from them.
- Talk to your host family. Sometimes talking about how you feel makes the feeling itself less intense and they will be happy that you confided in them.
- Eat sensibly and avoid junk food even when you are surrounded by it.
- Do not spend all of your time with other exchange students. You will only feed on each other's dissatisfactions as you spend your time complaining and reminiscing about all the good things you left behind.
- Do not sit in your room writing emails. This solitary activity is not good for you and your family and friends will not know how to interpret your feelings and may become upset. If you must write your feelings down, let the text sit for 24 hours or more and reread it before sending it. The world may look totally different by then.
- Make friends. The only way to make new friends is to introduce yourself to strangers. Most of the students at your school are already part of a group, but they are likely interested in meeting you. We encouraged you to make the first move. Do not wait for them to call you and do not get discouraged.
- Join clubs and sports teams. Participate in school and community activities. Join a church youth group. Volunteer to teach some young people a skill that you know and that they would like to learn.

If you feel that your problem is different, that this advice does not help, and your host family does not understand, then you must contact your Québec liaison teacher. He/she is dedicated to providing you with a rewarding exchange experience and will do all he/she can to see that goal achieved.

LANGUAGE LEARNING, PATIENCE AND PERMISSION

Patience and permission are two key words. Be patient with yourself and ask questions – people will help you. You cannot become bilingual overnight. Give yourself permission to make mistakes; this is how you learn. As you listen and practice more, you will acquire more vocabulary and learn more structures. As people show you the correct phrases and structure, you will be able to speak more fluently.

It is natural when you do not know a word or phrase in French, to use English or a "literal translation". Research in linguistics has determined that translation to English merely strengthens your English centre. To learn and develop the French language, you must use French in your daily life, thinking and even dreaming in French! This can happen while in Québec.

To take advantage of this opportunity, you must be ready to:

- ask people to repeat themselves;
- learn the French names for objects, etc. (make lists);
- learn the phrases that express ideas in French, ask for help and use your newly-learned phrases/expressions;
- be prepared to experience headaches and frustration due to your efforts to concentrate – the reward is worth it!
- stop translating into English.

MANITOBA FAMILY DURING MANITOBA STUDENT'S ABSENCE

The Manitoba family will need to support their son/daughter who is in an unfamiliar situation by:

- determining how often phone calls and emails from home should occur, and
- suggesting that the student become involved in the family and social life in Québec.

Limiting communication with your son/daughter is suggested. This "escape" from the homesickness and frustration of a new culture and language is only temporary.

Note: The advantage of a pre-determined communication schedule is that the Manitoba student learns to be independent and to face any difficulties he/she encounters.

When things get tough for your child, remind him/her of his/her commitment, of his/her ability to overcome such difficulties, and of the pride that will result from succeeding.

Encouragement from you will see your child through. The reward is personal growth, independence and fluency in French! After twelve weeks in Québec, your child's efforts will be rewarded; he/she will notice a great improvement and will be proud of himself/herself.

AFTER THE EXCHANGE

RETURNING HOME FROM QUÉBEC

Students who travel to Québec will discover new external realities and insights of which consequences on the return were more or less foreseen.

For most participants, the return is problem free, and the readjustment is quite easy. However, for some, re-entry is more difficult and sometimes causes some distress or shock.

In general, the more we anticipate an easy and automatic re-entry, the more drawn out and difficult is the readjustment.

To minimize the shock upon return, expect a period of readjustment. Give yourself the chance to **make provisions for the difficult moments** of the exchange year and to **know how to behave** to get through without too much difficulty.

After your return to Manitoba, you should highlight the positive aspects of your exchange:

- speak with the liaison teacher about your experience;
- continue writing in your journal;
- make a presentation about your experience;
- write an article for the school newspaper;
- participate in the promotion of next year's program;
- offer your services as a resource person to another student participating the following year.

PROGRAM COORDINATOR

If you have any questions or comments, please contact:

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