

Very compelling and engaging opening hook. It also establishes the theme of beauty of language and culture that flows throughout the rest of the essay.

First, my eyes were opened to the beauty of the language; I owe that to my first Spanish teacher. Then, my eyes were opened to the beauty of the culture; I owe that to Fabricio. Spanish-speaking and straight from Costa Rica, Fabricio was my first natively latino amigo. When he landed in my hometown last December on a gap year of sorts, I was eager to practice my fledgling language skills with him; however, although my new friend did teach me to say “pura vida”, what I truly learned from him was not the vocabulary but the lifestyle it represented. He was the absolute most chill, go-with-the-flow person I had ever met – and I can’t help thinking it had to do with his Tico upbringing. Fabricio was up for any new challenge or experience, happy to make conversation with anyone, and always embracing whatever life had to offer. Because of Fabricio, I came to see that all my constant planning, calculations, and reservations – the things I thought helped to prepare me for the world - were actually making me a bystander in life. In contrast, Fabricio was a perpetual volunteer. He had something I didn’t and the fact that I want to travel to a foreign country now shows that I’m starting to find it.

This student wants to learn the language and culture, but they also know that simply stating that won’t be compelling for a reader. So, we get a beautiful narrative that establishes this student’s personal connection to the experience

General topic paragraph that bridges the earlier narrative to concrete educational outcomes that the student wants to

An experience in Costa Rica – and this experience in particular – would be ideal for me. I have never travelled internationally before, but I think my perfect stepping stone would be three weeks in Costa Rica, which because of my Tico friend seems a little less foreign. As a student studying mathematics, Spanish, and secondary education, I am thrilled not just at the opportunity to exercise my growing language skills but also at the prospect of catching a glimpse of another country’s education system. Understanding that system should help me better understand my own. I believe the same can be said for getting a taste of different governmental and economic structures.

This paragraph is looking at short- and long-term goals, such as the impact on the next three years at Simpson and future career prospects. Each goal is a marriage between what the student wants and what traveling abroad can offer.

By experiencing lingual and cultural immersion early in my academic career, I will not only open up my schedule for future semesters and fulfill a Spanish major requirement but gain insights that will take my language skills to the next level and broaden my understanding of pedagogy, thereby enhancing my classroom experience for the next three years at Simpson. Even further down the road, I believe this May Term travel course will be something I draw on as a professional. While my long-term goal is to teach Spanish and/or mathematics in a small-town high school, my immediate plan after college is to work outside of the education sector. Just like traveling to Costa Rica, applying Spanish and mathematics in business will give me practical experience that I can use to supplement my lesson plans someday as an educator.

You are absolutely allowed to talk about your personal reasons for traveling, but this student made sure to address the academic and professional reasons as well.

Through international May Term travel, I hope to grow for the sake of my academic and professional careers, but mostly I hope to grow personally. I have seen how domestic travel and new experiences have bettered me in the past and I think in order to continue on that upward path, this international travel course is the next challenge I need to face. I’m prepared to buy some sunscreen, exchange my “tu”s for “usted”s, and try on the “pura vida” lifestyle; I’m excited to adopt a volunteering attitude in life; and I’m ready to accept Fabricio’s advice to me: “no permita que el miedo la detenga de hacer las cosas.” Specifically, he added, don’t let fear keep you from studying in another country.

Compelling and personal ending that connects with the beginning narrative. Ending sentiment encourages reader to feel excited for this student and pulls on their “heart strings.”

Overall, this student balances several modes of argumentation to persuade the audience: they show how this experience might improve their educational and professional experience (logos), they write in Spanish to demonstrate that they are qualified and serious (ethos), and they tell personal anecdotes laced in vulnerability to move our emotions (pathos). Use multiple means of persuasion in your own essay.