

**THE ADMISSIONS COMMITTEE WOULD LIKE TO KNOW MORE ABOUT YOU IN YOUR OWN WORDS. PLEASE SUBMIT A BRIEF ESSAY, EITHER AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL OR CREATIVE, WHICH YOU FEEL BEST DESCRIBES YOU. IF TRANSFERRING FROM A FOUR-YEAR UNIVERSITY, PLEASE INCLUDE YOUR REASONS FOR TRANSFERRING FROM YOUR PRESENT INSTITUTION.**

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Language and linguistics are more than merely realms of academic interest, but also portals into new worlds of intellectual and cultural exploration. I vividly recall stepping foot on Japanese soil at the age of fourteen, and being thoroughly fascinated with Japanese culture, language, and way of life. In particular, I developed a deep fascination for the language. Underlying Tokyo’s vibrancy and traveling throngs of people was a deeply meticulous cityscape, futuristic subways, perfectionist social attitudes, and a synchronized pace that was far unlike the United States or Europe. I was entranced by the contrast in Japanese and Western standards, and sought a closer insight into the moral obligations and cultural traditions that comprised Japanese culture. I attended high school in Switzerland, and reveled in the comparative cultural experiences I received inside and outside of the classroom, but shifted my focus toward my evolving interest in Japanese language and culture. Therefore, my academic progression was saliently fueled by my broad interest in foreign languages in general, and more specifically my developing interest in Japanese culture and linguistics – which I hope to make the focus of my studies at Georgetown University.

I gradually uncovered that Japanese culture was indeed a reflection of the language. I immersed myself in the culture by attending numerous summer programs in Japan, which enriched my perspective and fluency. I learned how the complex anatomy of the language encompassed a range of dimensions, whereby a shift in simple linguistic inflections and verbal conjugations meant the difference between honor and dishonor, respectful or casual conversation. Moreover, Japanese language was meticulous and rule-oriented. Therefore, Japanese fluency rests more on understanding and knowing these linguistic rules, which is more pivotal than being able to effectively speak the language. Furthermore, Japanese culture, which is hallmarked by neatly defined social roles and behavioral codes, is indeed a mirror of the language’s well-defined canons. I discovered my knowledge and understanding of Japanese culture and society enhanced as my proficiency in the Japanese language developed, a dynamic that drove my desire to make Japanese language and culture the centerpiece of my undergraduate studies.

Cultural immersion is the ideal way to truly learn a language. After living abroad as a child and attending high school in Geneva, which is indeed an international political capital, I was exposed to a diverse array of languages and cultures. As a result, I studied a range of tongues, including Spanish, French, Italian, and Hebrew. Living in Switzerland led me to discover that language was both a bridge and barrier to understanding different cultures and societies, which can only be crossed with developing a fluency of a particular language. Moreover, I also learned that languages impacted their respective societies to different degrees, whereas more dominant languages left a more entrenched and ubiquitous imprint of societal structures, cultural perspectives, and

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generational relations. Japanese, I discovered, was an archetypal *dominant language*. The language's harmonization with Japanese culture was far more intricate than English or Spanish, for instance, thus triggering a combined intellectual passion for Japanese linguistics and culture. I traveled to Japan throughout my adolescence, studied the language independently and with a tutor, and engaged a limited curriculum as George Washington University (GWU), but desired a formal and comprehensive curriculum to fully engage my interest in Japanese language, culture and linguistics.

My study of languages, and Japanese in particular, enriched my analytical mind. After spending a summer in Tokyo, I was assigned with drafting a composition based on my experience for my Japanese course at GWU. One segment of the piece described how I commuted everyday on the *Namboku* line, which phonetically included an "m" although my professor explained that it changed into an "n" sound because of the language rules. I asked my professor about this discrepancy, and learned that Japanese was comprised of a unique set of grammatical rules that did not comport with Western languages. Therefore, in order to resolve my questions about the Japanese language, my professor advised that understanding the linguistic anatomy, history and evolution of the language was a prerequisite. GWU's Japanese Department is not only small, but also limited to a degree in Japanese Language & Literature, whereby my intellectual interests lie specifically in Japanese Language & Culture, a major offered at Georgetown. Furthermore, my professor encouraged me to also consider majoring in Linguistics, which would significantly enrich my understanding of Japanese language and culture, which I intend on pursuing as a double-major at Georgetown. Therefore, taking courses such as "Sociolinguistics," foundational linguistics courses, and advanced Japanese language and area studies classes will furnish me with the robust academic program I am currently lacking. Although my fluency in Japanese is gradually strengthening, it is essential that I fully immerse myself into a dynamic academic track that encompasses Japanese culture, modern society and politics, and linguistics will maximize my mastery of the language, and broaden my familiarity with the country.

In addition to mastering the Japanese language, or becoming fully knowledgeable about Japanese culture, I am principally interested in understanding *why* Japanese language and culture is unique, and *what* are the root causes of its distinction. My interest in Japan most aptly defines my intellectual passions, and also navigates my professional aspirations. Georgetown University, which is situated in one of the world's most dynamic political and cultural centers, offers the ideal setting and resources to cultivate this passion. I look forward to taking advantage of Georgetown's academic offerings and extracurricular opportunities, and also continuing to seize Washington DC's learning and professional resources. For instance, I plan on interning with IMF and the Japanese Embassy, and continuing my attendance of Japanese-oriented events at the Brookings Institute and other prominent think tanks. In sum, Georgetown's Japanese Language and Culture program is the very portal that will truly nourish my passion for Japanese language and society, and open a brave new world of intellectual and professional opportunities.