

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Opportunities for American Schools

1. Why does the U.S. State Department offer international opportunities to American high schools?

One of the missions of the State Department is to expand communication between the people of the United States and people from other countries to promote mutual understanding and respect. Youth exchange programs are one of many projects that give American citizens the opportunity to meet with people from diverse cultures and countries in order to bridge differences and enhance cross-cultural communication. In addition, youth exchange programs are designed to help schools and individuals develop 21st century skills and knowledge that prepare them for their future roles in an increasingly multicultural, multilingual global society.



2. What travel opportunities are available for American teachers and students?



[The Youth Programs Division](#) conducts numerous programs that offer travel opportunities to American participants. [The National Security Language Initiative](#) offers Americans opportunities to study languages and live with host families in China, Jordan and Egypt for six weeks during summer months. The [Congress – Bundestag Youth Exchange Program \(CBYX\)](#) provides American young people a full scholarship for an academic year experience in Germany. [The German American Partnership Program \(GAPP\)](#) is a high school linkage program between American high schools with secondary schools in Germany. Currently, there are approximately 760 active partnerships throughout the United States and Germany with more than 5,000 American high school students and teachers visiting their partners in Germany.



Teachers who involve their classes in the [Global Connections and Exchange \(GCE\)](#) program can apply for a three-week exchange to Bangladesh and Tajikistan. Classes learning Arabic through the [GCE program with the West Bank](#) can continue their

language studies through an Arabic immersion course in Nazareth, Israel. Another GCE program, implemented by [iEARN](#), offers scholarships to teachers and students to participate in their annual Youth Summit, which takes place in different countries every year.

3. Are there international programs that schools can participate in that do not require travel?



The Youth Programs Division offers multiple opportunities for American students to gain an awareness of other cultures and develop skills that enable them to communicate better across borders.

[State Department Foreign Exchange Scholarship Students](#)

Enrollment of State Department scholarship students at American high schools provides students and teachers with unique opportunities to exchange ideas, share experiences and learn about each other's

countries. More often than not, this exchange of ideas and values between American teenagers and foreign youth help to counter misperceptions and stereotypes while simultaneously teaching them about world history, geography, international politics and cultural studies with a global perspective.



[Classroom-to-Classroom Linkages](#)

The use of digital media to communicate and work collaboratively with a class overseas gives American students opportunities to learn about other cultures and expand their global awareness while also enhancing their technology skills in a meaningful way. The [Global Connections and Exchange program](#) offers a structured environment for collaboration through videoconferences, wikispaces, digital photography, discussion boards and blogs to communicate and

share ideas.

4. What countries are State Department Scholarship Students from?





The Youth Programs Division currently administers four yearlong programs, each of which targets different countries.

- **Youth Exchange and Study (YES):** Afghanistan, Algeria, Bangladesh, Brunei, Egypt, Gaza, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Israel (Arab Community), Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Malaysia, Morocco, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Philippines, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Thailand, Tunisia, Turkey, West Bank, and Yemen, Brunei, Ghana and Thailand – countries of the Arab and Muslim world

<http://exchanges.state.gov/education/citizens/students/programs/yes.htm>

- **Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange (CBYX):** Germany
<http://exchanges.state.gov/education/citizens/students/programs/gapp.htm>
- **Future Leaders Exchange (FLEX):** Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan – countries of the former Soviet Union
<http://exchanges.state.gov/education/citizens/students/programs/flex/index.htm>
- **American Serbia and Montenegro Youth Leadership Exchange (A-SMYLE) :** Serbia and Montenegro
http://exchanges.state.gov/education/citizens/students/europe/a_smyle.htm

5. How do schools benefit by enrolling State Department Exchange Scholarship Students?



Youth exchange programs sponsored by the State Department offer an unprecedented opportunity for American students to bridge cultural divides and unveil mysteries that have been hidden for so long. At the same time, American schools can reach out and help scholarship students learn about concepts of democracy, community service and civil society, possibly for the first time. While Americans tend to take many freedoms for granted, some of these concepts and values such as open elections, student government

and volunteerism may be new and exciting experiences schools can share with visiting students.

As American schools face the challenges of preparing students for a global economy, the need to incorporate international issues into the curriculum has become increasingly critical. Schools



throughout the United States have begun to offer a broad range of foreign language courses and are teaching about world regions both in history and current affairs classes to discuss and research topics such as global warming and international trade. Teachers are also encouraging students to participate in international programs such as Model UN and Doors to Diplomacy while facilitating virtual exchanges with classrooms overseas. As the thrust to internationalize schools becomes apparent nationwide, the benefits of enrolling a

State Department scholarship student grow even more evident. What better way to support these efforts than to bring an international scholarship student into the classroom?

The State Department has become a key player in promoting the exchange of information to not only enable foreign citizens to learn about American society, but to also encourage Americans to reach out to other nations to overcome misunderstandings and to create bonds based on commonalities rather than differences. Enrolling State Department scholarship students in American high schools give Americans first-hand knowledge about foreign languages, cultures, and customs while gaining new perspectives of the United States and the world. On a personal level, American teenagers have a wonderful opportunity to learn about a new culture and traditions and to create friendships that can last forever.

6. How are scholarship students prepared for their year in the U.S.?

Prior to departure, scholarship students participate in an orientation program in their home countries. The major goal of the pre-departure orientation is to prepare students for what lies ahead. Students are told about program rules such as the prohibition against alcohol, drugs and driving, and the possibility that they may not be granted a diploma by their American school. After arriving in the U.S., students participate in another orientation that offers them information about their host state, school and community. They are also told about the organization's policies and given a schedule of activities.

7. Do State Department scholarship students have special responsibilities?

Sharing Cultures



Since students are on U.S. Government scholarships, their responsibilities during the exchange period greatly exceed those of students who come to the U.S. under private programs. State Department scholarship students are expected to be ambassadors from their countries and to teach Americans with whom they interact about the culture of their home countries. Before arriving in the U.S., scholarship students are told to be prepared to give presentations and to bring photos and artifacts with

them to support their cultural presentations in their American school and for community groups. Upon returning home, they also are expected to be ambassadors from the U.S. to teach their friends, families, neighbors and community members about life in the U.S. Many scholarship students have written articles for local newspapers, have been interviewed on TV and radio, and have made presentations about American life in their home schools and universities.

Community Service

Most scholarship students are expected to participate in a variety of community service activities, including working at homeless shelters, building homes for Habitat for Humanity, talking to senior citizens, helping at Special Olympic events, at libraries, and for local newspapers. The Youth Programs Division believes that participating in volunteer activities provides a way for students to give something back to their host schools and communities. In addition, it helps the students gain a better understanding of volunteerism, a concept that may be foreign to many of these young people.

