

特別賞/日米協会会長賞

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このエッセイは、コミュニケーションを世界へのパスポートとして描いています。交流や異文化体験、友人を守る行動を通して、共感や勇気、視野の広がりを学び、成長や人との関わりの大切さを示した作品です。

My Passport to the World: How Communication Opened My Mind

When I think of the word communication, I imagine a passport. Without it, I would be stuck in a small nation called “my own thoughts.” By picking up a passport called communication, I’ve traveled the world, without ever leaving my room.

In the beginning, my mind was like a blank passport: full of potential, but without a single stamp. I spoke only my native language, interacted with people just like me, and saw the world through a narrow lens. But everything changed when I moved to an international school in fourth grade. Suddenly, I found myself surrounded by classmates from different countries, cultures, and belief systems. This shift introduced me not only to new languages, but to new ways of thinking. That’s where my journey toward global awareness truly began.

I began speaking not only with my close friends, but also with students from other grades, different backgrounds, and even teachers I once found intimidating. At first, it felt awkward to approach unfamiliar people, especially in a second language. I used to hold a strong prejudice against foreign people when they try to get into someone’s hearts very forcibly. However, those moments of discomfort led to the deepest lessons about people. Some teachers, despite seeming strict, turned out to be incredibly supportive. Their kindness taught me that preconceptions often dissolve through open dialogue, even a word or phrase, like “excuse me” and that communication has the power to reshape the way we see others.

The most memorable day at my school was when I stood up for a girl in my class who was being teased because of her accent in speaking, shaped by her Indian background. At first, I hesitated, because I had always kept myself comfortable and did my best to not be involved in problems. Then I remembered how significant it is to use our voices when it is needed by someone. That small act felt like a moment of bravery, not only for her, but for myself. A few weeks later, she invited me to her house for her birthday. Her family welcomed me with warmth, and she served me traditional

Indian food I had never tasted before. The food was delicious, but even more than that, the experience left a lasting emotional impression. Her quiet kindness and gratitude taught me that cross-cultural exchanges don't always happen in classrooms; sometimes, they happen around the dinner table. I would never forget the day I spoke up, because we ended up being good friends until graduation.

Through these experiences, I gained something far greater than just language skills: I experienced perspective shifts that shaped my values. Through these shifts in perspectives, I learned the importance of empathy, the courage to speak up, and the strength found in communities that support one another. Communication became more than just a tool for conversation, it became a mirror that reflected who I was, and a window into how much more there was to understand, giving me much more chances to rethink about my all-day activities. For me, communication now holds more power than any subject, sport, or school event I've ever participated in.

Looking back, I now realize how communication has transformed my worldview and my identity. What started as an empty passport has slowly filled with invisible stamps: acts of kindness, shared stories, and emotional growth built through authentic connection. Communication has not just broadened my horizon. It has deepened it by layers, through every conversation, every challenge, and every new voice I've heard. Although I used to be timid and afraid to speak up, I had made a significant step forward to get excited about being aware of different perspectives and feelings. I still have many blank pages in my passport, but now, I'm excited to fill them: one conversation at a time.