

Participant P9

School Experience: Private high school in Indiana with relatively few Asian students (predominantly White student population)

1. Can you briefly introduce yourself and tell me when you came to the United States?

Response:

My name is Ashley. After completing ninth grade in China, I moved to the United States and repeated ninth grade. I am now about to begin eleventh grade.

2. What was the biggest challenge when you first arrived in the United States?

Response:

I did not experience major language difficulties because I had attended Shanghai American School (SAS) since kindergarten and had used English in my daily life for many years. However, I found that making friends was much more difficult than I expected. At my international school, students were generally very outgoing and willing to start conversations. In my American school, however, people rarely approached me unless I initiated the conversation first.

3. Can you describe your experience learning English?

Response:

I have studied at an international school since kindergarten, so I have grown up in a bilingual environment. English has always been a major part of my education, and I have used it for many years. As a result, I did not experience significant language difficulties after moving to the United States.

4. Do you remember a moment when language made you feel excluded, embarrassed, or misunderstood?

Response:

No. I have never felt excluded, embarrassed, or misunderstood because of my English ability.

5. Do you feel like the same person when speaking Chinese and English? Why or why not?

Response:

Not completely. Although I have always considered myself Chinese, I have used English for so long that I now speak Chinese with a slight American accent. Because of this, I feel somewhat different when speaking Chinese and English.

6. Has moving to the United States changed the way you think about being Chinese?

Response:

I have always identified as Chinese, but after moving to the United States, I feel that my awareness of being Chinese has become somewhat weaker. I do not usually introduce myself as Chinese or emphasize my nationality to others. I cannot fully explain why, but I think it may be because my personality and lifestyle have gradually become more influenced by American culture.

7. When do you feel most Chinese? Can you give an example?

Response:

I feel most Chinese when I return to China and attend SAT preparation classes. That was also where I met the person interviewing me. I enjoy speaking Chinese with my classmates, and I spend a lot of time using Chinese social media platforms. Compared with American internet culture, I am much more familiar with Chinese online trends and often share short videos with my friends. These experiences remind me of my Chinese identity.

8. When do you feel most American? Can you give an example?

Response:

I feel most American when I participate in my school's sports team. I have also adopted some American ideas about appearance and lifestyle. For example, I prefer having a tan rather than very fair skin, and I enjoy exercising and building muscle instead of pursuing the slimmer body type that is often considered ideal in China.

9. Have you ever felt caught between two cultures? Can you tell me about that experience?

Response:

Not really. Because I have grown up in a bilingual and bicultural environment, I have become comfortable navigating both cultures. I do not experience a strong sense of conflict or division between them and feel that I have adapted well to both.

10. If you could describe your identity in one sentence, what would that sentence be?

Response:

I am an outgoing Chinese person whose identity has been shaped by both Chinese and American cultures, and I find it difficult to define myself with a single label.

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1. 请简单介绍一下自己, 以及你是什么时候来到美国的?

回答:

我叫Ashley。我在中国完成九年级后, 来到美国重新就读九年级, 目前即将升入十一年级。

2. 刚来到美国时, 你遇到的最大挑战是什么?

回答:

来到美国后, 我没有遇到特别大的语言挑战, 因为我从小在上海美国学校(SAS)就读, 平时一直使用英语。不过, 我后来发现最大的困难其实是交朋友。国际学校里, 同学们通常会主动社交, 而在美国, 如果自己不主动和别人交流, 别人一般也不会主动接近你。

3. 你能描述一下自己学习英语的经历吗?

回答:

我从幼儿园开始就在国际学校读书, 因此一直生活在双语环境中, 英语水平一直比较好。我长期使用英语, 所以来到美国之后, 在语言方面没有遇到太大的困难。

4. 你是否记得某个因为语言而感到被排斥、尴尬或被误解的时刻?

回答:

没有。我从来没有因为语言问题而感到被排斥、尴尬或者被误解。

5. 当你说中文和说英文时, 你觉得自己是同一个人吗? 为什么?

回答:

我觉得不完全一样。虽然我一直认为自己是中国人, 但由于长期使用英语, 我说中文的时候会带有一点美式口音, 听起来有些特别。这让我觉得说中文和说英文时, 自己的状态还是有一些不同。

6. 来到美国以后, 你对于“中国人身份”的理解有发生变化吗?

回答:

我一直认同自己是中国人, 但来到美国之后, 我感觉自己的中国人身份意识变淡了一些。我不会主动向别人强调自己是中国人, 也很难准确解释这种变化。可能是因为我的生活方式和性格逐渐受到美国文化的影响。

7. 在什么情况下你最能感受到自己是中国人? 能举个例子吗?

回答:

我最能感受到自己是中国人的时候, 是回国参加SAT补习班的时候。当时我和同学们一起用中文聊天, 也是在那里认识了采访我的人。相比美国的网络文化, 我更熟悉中国的网络流行语, 经常使用中国社交平台, 也会和朋友分享国内短视频。这些经历都会让我更加意识到自己的中国人身份。

8. 在什么情况下你最能感受到自己像美国人? 能举个例子吗?

回答:

我加入学校体育队之后, 会觉得自己更像美国人。另外, 在审美方面, 我也逐渐受到美国文化影响。例如, 我喜欢健康的小麦肤色, 而不是追求皮肤白皙; 我也喜欢运动、练肌肉, 而不是追求特别纤细的身材。这些审美观念都更接近美国文化。

9. 你有没有感到自己夹在两种文化之间? 可以分享一个相关经历吗?

回答:

我没有特别强烈的这种感觉。从小生活在双语、双文化环境中, 我已经比较习惯同时接触两种文化, 因此不会觉得自己处于明显的文化冲突或割裂状态。我认为自己能够比较自然地适应两种文化。

10. 如果让你用一句话描述自己的身份认同, 你会怎么说?

回答:

我是一个性格开朗的中国人, 两种文化很好地融合在我的身上, 我很难用一个简单的词来定义自己。