

## **Stephanie Lopez**

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*I would like to give thanks to Haverford College, l'Université Laval in Quebec, and l'Alliance Française de Philadelphie for making this immersion trip possible.*

There are countless aspects of this French summer-immersion program in Quebec, Canada, that made this an unforgettable experience. To start off, the classes and professors at l'Université Laval strengthened and furthered my previous French knowledge. I took two classes: Communication Orale et Phonétique IV and Langue Orale et Écrite IV with two lovely professors from Quebec. The communication class was interesting because we learned about the numerous, distinctive sounds of the Québécois French compared to the Parisian French. The phonetic alphabet posed a challenge, but we practiced extensively with pronunciation exercises. The second class was centered around the grammar structures within the French language, where we learned and reviewed core concepts crucial for greater communication. Both courses were extremely beneficial to deepen my French knowledge, not to mention the kindness and helpfulness of my professors. However, the program offered more than just classes, as it advanced our immersion through different excursions and activities.

The excursions were fundamental experiences that facilitated conversational French, which was distinct from the language used in an academic setting. As we toured la Ville de Lévis, the animateurs et animatrices would hand out green cards to reward us for our consistent efforts to speak French. There were moments where communication became difficult because there is still so much vocabulary to learn and discover! However, these occasions forced me to think outside the box and find ways to get my point across without the use of English. Furthermore, we visited the Parc de la Chute-Montmorency and they explained how it is the tallest waterfall in Quebec, with a height of 272 feet. Both of these excursions were key to helping us connect with other members of the program, and at the same time, practice our conversation skills.

On the other hand, the activities expanded my knowledge of Québécois culture, which was another valuable aspect of the immersion program. Three excursions in particular come to mind when thinking about the culture: L'île d'Orléans, la Cabane à Sucre, and Wendake Onwha

Lumina. L'Île d'Orléans was a memorable experience because we had an apple cider dégustation in a beautiful building, near a small animal farm. Moreover, we got to visit a Confiturerie that had an amazing view of the fleuve Saint-Laurent, which highlighted the tranquility of the region. Going to the Cabane à Sucre excursion was special, as we tried a traditional québécois meal that had meat pie, sausage, egg, ham, pancakes, and potatoes! In addition, we sang and played multiple instruments with the accompaniment of an accordion. Finally, the Onhwa Lumina excursion combined elements of nature with the Wendake culture, which felt magical. While on these excursions, we practiced our French and learned about the uniqueness of the Québec region in Canada.

The whole trip was an incredible experience, and I am extremely grateful to everyone who made it possible. An opportunity like this for a college student can open up a wide range of possibilities because of the profound language and culture immersion. The friends I made along the way and all the adventures I experienced will forever stay with me. Coming back to my fall semester of college, I feel more confident in my French skills and ready to continue learning such a beautiful language.