



Will  
From Oakville Trafalgar to  
France

*I couldn't imagine myself anywhere else!*

Salut!

It's probably the most cliché thing to say but time has literally gone by so fast, it's hard to imagine that I'm already in my third month here in France. I have done so much in the past eighty days that I should probably just start from the beginning. I left for my flight from Toronto to Paris on August 26th and then after the seven hour flight through the night I arrived in Paris. The first day was probably the hardest considering that I was so tired, had no clue what anyone was saying, and I didn't actually know anyone that well. As the days went on things started to get easier though and my French has improved a lot. I sounded like a complete idiot when I first got here. I sound like I somewhat know what I'm talking about now. However I still have a long way to go before I would even consider my French to be good! One thing that really has been weird about learning French though is how my English is slowly starting to get worse and even as I'm writing this I think of the French words first.

About a week after I got here I started school. I'm in première littérature which sounds just as exciting as it is. I won't lie the classes are a bit dry but the people in my class are absolutely amazing. School here is completely different to Canada. I'm with the same kids

all day long in my class with the exception of some courses like English literature because students can choose between classes like Spanish literature or German literature and so on.

But for the most part I am with my friends all day which is great because the class becomes like a little family and everyone is really close. Also in school here the school year doesn't have semesters so it's the same courses with the same class all year long, however the school days change each day and I start and finish at different times too. So for example on Tuesdays I start at 9:00 with three hours of film theory then I have a two hour "hole" where students can do whatever. Then after that I have two hours of AP which is like a personal help course where students work on their homework and learn French grammar. Finally after that I have two hours of history/geography which means that I end up finishing at 6:00pm! Coming from my school where we finished at 2:27 this is like a nightmare but Tuesday is my hardest day and on days like Monday I have 3 hours of class. Also here on Wednesdays school is half the day so I go to school from 8:00 to 12:00 and then have the afternoon off. Overall the French school system is a bit overly complicated but after a couple weeks it starts to make sense.

Some other cool things that I have been able to do is go to Mont Saint Michel, which is basically a giant church village on a mountain island. It sounds a bit weird but it is absolutely beautiful. We also got to meet up with awesome people from five other districts in the north-eastern part of France along with the close to fifty exchange students in my district. I have also gotten to go outside of the country and visit Belgium and Norway! I went to Brussels in my first couple weeks in France with another exchange student from Chile named Gabi. My host mum took us because she has a friend who lives there and had offered to have us over for a couple days. Also during the half term break I got to go stay with some other friends of my host mum and experience life in Norway. They were some of the nicest people ever and were happy to take me around and do things which was absolutely amazing. Norway is definitely on my list of places that I would like to go back to. I can't even begin to describe how amazing just about everything there was. But anyways back to France!

My first host family was really nice to me and had given me the opportunity go to a lot of places. In that family I had my host mum Anne and host Dad Emmanuel (Manu for short) and then I had a host sister who is 16 named Emma. I was living in the small town of Oye-Plage (but it's pronounced like wha-plate). It's a nice little town close to the beach but I go to school in Grand-Synthe which is a part of the city of Dunkerque. Living in Oye-Plage meant that I have to take a long bus ride in the morning to school and to top things off my house was a forty-five minute walk to the bus stop or like a ten minute drive so each morning I get driven to the stop.

However I just moved host families last night and I'm now in the town of Loon-Plage, which is absolutely amazing! I have three host brothers named Robin (18), Natân (16), and Eloi (14) who are all absolutely amazing. Along with them I have a host mum named Anne and a host dad named Antoine who have made me feel really comfortable and at home here. At first I was nervous to change host families but I'm really happy here and a lot closer to friends and school!

They have already planned to take me down south to see a place called future horoscope, which is like an amusement park but there's a bunch of movie theatre like things with films in 4D and things like that.

So right now the next three months are looking good! France is amazing but nothing like I expected to be (minus baguettes, they like their baguettes) but I am starting to get used to the French culture and enjoying every moment of my exchange. I am so grateful to everyone back home for getting me to where I am and giving me the chance to go on exchange. France wasn't my first choice for my exchange but now I couldn't imagine myself anywhere else! So until next time,

Au Revoir!

*Will*