

Two important traits of my personality are my knowledge about humanities and my cultural background, because I am an international student.

Since my childhood I have been interested in social sciences, especially in Russian history and Russian literature. In my former school nobody doubted my historical knowledge. Once, for example, when a teacher could not come to class, she asked me to teach the class for one lesson. Obviously, it was not a regular lesson with usual discipline, but was a topic that was successfully learned. I spent last year at one of the most prestigious schools in Russia. I got the highest scores among all students on the admission tests, which included a history test and an oral presentation on literature. I think that this acceptance was my most significant achievement in my entire life. Unfortunately my humanities experience in the U.S.A. is limited. I can not take social science this year because I am involved in the ESL program, which allows me to develop my English skills. However, I was reading most of the book from sophomore English and I learned all the information from the history course for tenth graders in the Russian school.

Another significant feature of my character is my cultural background. I was born in Russia, so I represent a Russian prospective of life and values. Obviously, when I first came to the U.S.A I had a culture shock. For example, it took a lot of time for me to understand that the phrase "What's up?" is not actually a question. It means "Hello". That is why I came up with the idea that the way Americans communicate is very indirect. The words do not have literal meaning. I think I would never have recognized this concept if I were not a member of the Russian culture, which is very direct and straight. Another interesting aspect is that a lot of students with whom I have been studying this year recognize me as a Russian. I am completely convinced that their first word in my description would be "Russian" rather than a personality trait. I think it happens because I always compare the American environment with the Russian because of my considerable knowledge about Russian culture from history and literature. Probably it happens because of my strong accent. I felt shame in the beginning of the year because of my accent. However, I was able to deal with it and to turn it into a joke.

To conclude, I have two main goals for the NYU summer session, which correspond to my personal characteristics which I have described above. Firstly, I would like to understand the process of studying in American schools and recognize the differences with Russian way of learning. Secondly, I am really interested in the American culture and this summer session would give me a picture of a great American university, which is a huge part of U.S.A. culture.