



French Immersion: A Long But Enriching Journey

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In my experience, taking French immersion throughout high school has been a long journey, but one that has certainly paid off. Being bilingual has increased my participation in the job market, making me a more competitive applicant by offering and promoting better communication and language competence. Over 20% of the Canadian population speaks French, and being able to confidently speak and write efficiently in a second language has elevated my communication skills, allowing for better daily interactions with other Francophones with whom I may be working for, or with.

Some may presume that, if two candidates are equally qualified, but one is bilingual, an employer may prefer the bilingual candidate, even if the position does not require bilingualism. However, from the perspective of a French immersion student, it is not solely the relevance of being bilingual that leads to more employment opportunities, but the capability of demonstrating the self-perseverance and dedication it takes to follow through and become fluent in that language and applying that same perspective and language proficiency in every day life. In a diversified and erratically changing world, the flexibility that comes from a bilingual employee makes them more valuable to companies in relation to their effectiveness to adaptation. In grade 12, I decided to take

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the DELF (*Diplôme d'études en langue française*) exam at a B2 level in order to continue my post-secondary studies in French. French immersion over the years prepared me for this by placing a large focus on learning how to communicate independently, construct arguments, defend opinions, explain viewpoints, and how to negotiate. This was achieved through practicing oral presentations, classroom debates, verb conjugation, and taking oral skills and applying them to reading and writing capabilities with the use of appropriate expressions of formality for academic writing in French. I also had the opportunity to take other high school courses in French such as Science, History, and Geography which allowed for me to expand my vocabulary in French, and

to improve critical creative thinking in a second language. Not only has this allowed me to pursue further studies in French, but to also have access to an extensive variety of scholarships and bursaries for my post-secondary education. These scholarships can range from entrance bursaries to academic excellence scholarships, and facilitate in paying a substantial amount of tuition fees.

Overall, French immersion required lots of time and effort, but was worthwhile and extraordinarily beneficial to my future endeavors. Furthermore, Ontario and many other parts of the world are currently facing a shortage of French teachers, reducing access to students who may want a French education. In addition to the lack of bilingual educators, this problem is also preeminent to other professions such as medicine, journalism, flight attendants, and even customer service. Being bilingual allows for a more accessible and inclusive environment for people in a multicultural country, who speak different languages, to communicate and build connections. If ever given the opportunity to learn a second language, I highly recommend learning French. Apart from obtaining a higher personal advantage, you would be granting yourself the capacity of communication with others who may speak a different language than the one most common to you. ■