

Scenario: The Homestay

You're going to keep a journal and write a story as a person who is going on a homestay. First, you need to create a character:

Name:

Age:

Gender:

Family Background:

Hobbies:

Personality (circle one of each pair):

- easygoing / uptight
- hardworking / lazy
- shy / outgoing
- judgmental / accepting

*When you write the story, remember to write the story **as your character** and not **as yourself!***

Day 1: The Arrival

You just arrived in _____ for a 3-month homestay. You got off the plane, and your host family met you at the gate. You went to their house and met the rest of the family. They showed you to your room, and then you all went out to dinner to get to know each other better.

Here are some questions to consider when writing:

- What did you notice when you got off the plane? How was it different from in your home country?
- What was your first impression of your host family?
- Describe the family members, including their names, personalities, ages, etc.
- Did they have any pets?
- What was their house like? Was it in a city or the country?
- What was your room like?
- Where did you go out to eat?
- Reflect on your feelings after this long, stressful and exciting day. Excited? Scared? Nervous? Homesick?
- What do you expect will happen in the future?

Week 1: Culture Shock

Your first week on homestay was as exciting as it was frustrating. Everything is different, and you now understand what people mean when they talk about “culture shock.” During this first week, you have noticed so many cultural differences, and sometimes you wish you could just be back home with your family and friends.

You went to a new school and made some new friends. One friend made an especially strong impression on you. However, kids can be mean, and some people thought it would be funny to pick on the new student.

Here are some questions to consider when writing:

- What cultural differences have you noticed? (food, entertainment, language, markets, stores, traffic, attitudes, weather, etc.)
- How does “culture shock” feel?
- Who did you meet? Who made a strong impression on you, and why?
- What happened when the kids started to pick on you?

Homework: Research some of the major tourist sites where you are staying.

Week 2: Getting Around

During your second week, you started to get used to living in a new country. You got used to your normal routine, and you even had an argument with someone in the host family. It's just like home!

You met more of your classmates, and started to really like/dislike living there. On the weekend, your host family decided to take you around the city and show you some of the major tourist spots. On the way back to the house, you saw something that you will never forget.

Here are some questions to consider when writing:

- Who did you have an argument with? What happened?
- Who else did you meet?
- How do you like living there?
- What tourist spots did you visit? What did you think of them?
- What did you see on the way home, and why will you never forget it?

Homework: What is the weather like in this place? What natural disasters regularly occur there?

Week 3: The Disaster

The good news is: school was cancelled on Tuesday. The bad news is: there was a natural disaster, and several people were killed. You stayed home and watched the news with your host family, and you got calls and emails from your family and friends back home to make sure you are okay.

On the bright side, you joined an activity group during your third week on homestay, and it was more fun than you could have imagined!

Here are some questions to consider when writing:

- What was the natural disaster?
- Who called you, and what did they say?
- How did the people in your host family react to the news?
- What activity group did you join?

Month 2: Routines

You've now been on a homestay for a full month, and you've gotten comfortable in your routine. Every day you do many of the same things, and you're starting to feel more like a native! You're even starting to like some of the strange food!

During your fourth week, you got a minor injury and had to go to the hospital. Even though it's not too serious, it still hurt pretty bad. It's hard to be upset, though, because every time you think of how it happened you start to laugh.

Here are some questions to consider when writing:

- What is your routine like? What do you do in the morning, afternoon, and evening every day? How is this different from your routine back home?
- What "strange foods" are you starting to like?
- What injury did you get, and how did you get it?

Homework: What are some of the major holidays where you are staying, and what are the dates?

Week 6 - Homesick

There is a national holiday this weekend, so you get a 3-day weekend! On Friday and Saturday, you do something special to celebrate the holiday.

However, being away from home for so long has made you start to feel homesick; three months suddenly seems like a very long time. Talking to your family on the phone makes you feel a little better, but you wish you could just be back at home right now.

On the bright side, your host family decided to get a pet, and they let you help them choose which one to get – that helped to cheer you up, and you feel like a part of their family.

Here are some questions to consider when writing:

- What is the national holiday?
- What do you do to celebrate?
- How do you feel when you are homesick? What can you do to get over it?
- What pet did you get? Did you name the pet yet?

Homework: Who are some of the famous people from where you are staying?

Week 8 – Celebrity

A celebrity came to speak at your school, and it made you forget all about being homesick! After the speech, you even got to meet the celebrity, and you got an autograph! Your friends back home would be so jealous!

Plus, one of your relatives called to tell you that they are going to come visit you next week, so you are very excited! Your host family is helping you plan several activities so that you can show your relative around the place that has become your new home!

Here are some questions to consider when writing:

- Which celebrity came to speak at your school?
- What was the speech about?
- Who is coming to visit you?
- What are you planning to do when he/she comes?

Homework: What are some other interesting cities, places, or tourist spots in the country where you are staying?

Month 3 – The Visit

On Thursday, you couldn't wait to finish school and go meet your relative at the airport. It was a very happy reunion, and you were excited to introduce him/her to your host family.

Plus, you get to take an extra long weekend to visit some other places in the country with your relative and your host family. When you see your relative, you remember what it is like to visit this country for the first time, and you realize how far you have come in the past two months.

When your relative leaves, it is an emotional farewell. "Don't worry," you say, "I'll see you in a few weeks!"

After you get home, you realize: your homestay is 2/3 over!

Here are some questions to consider when writing:

- What was your relative's first reaction to the place where you are staying?
- Where did you go? What did you see? What was your favorite place? Least favorite place?
- How have you changed in the past 2 months?
- How do you feel when you realize that your homestay is 2/3 over?

Week 10 – One More Thing...

Only two weeks to go! You're now eating like a native, talking like a native, and behaving like a native. It's going to be hard to go back home! Your host family asks you if there's anything that you haven't done yet that you really want to do. There's only one thing, and when you mention it, they promise to take you next week, so you're really excited.

Your host family takes you out to a special dinner, and they buy you a very unique souvenir afterwards. Plus, they take you and your friends shopping, and you get to buy several gifts for your friends and family back home (as well as a few for yourself...)!

Here are some questions to consider when writing:

- How are you “eating like a native, talking like a native, and behaving like a native”?
- What is the one thing that you really want to do?
- Where do you go for dinner, and what souvenir do you get?
- What gifts do you get for your family and friends back home?
- Have your language skills improved in the past several weeks? How so?

Last Week – Going Away

Three months passes so quickly! It seems like just yesterday that you arrived here, and now you're going home already. On your last day, there is a big "going away" party for you.

You realize that you are going to miss all of the "little things" – the small differences that don't seem important, but really make this place so unique. Your final week is filled with anxiety, but finally, your last day comes, and you pack your clothes and go to the airport to fly back home.

Here are some questions to consider when writing:

- What are your thoughts during this final week?
- How do you feel when your classmates throw you a party?
- What "little things" are you going to miss?
- And . . . what happens when you finally see your family again?