

# Hirakata, Japan

## Gabrielle Zweifel



**Program:** Kansai Gaidai University Exchange, Spring 2018

**Majors:** Asian Studies and English

### Earning the Language Immersion Badge:



Through my program, I was able to earn the Language Immersion Badge. The Japanese course provided by my program was very effective—the teacher was great and gave us a variety of ways to practice our language skills. We even had native Japanese students visit our class a few times to converse with us. I took advantage of the Language Partner and

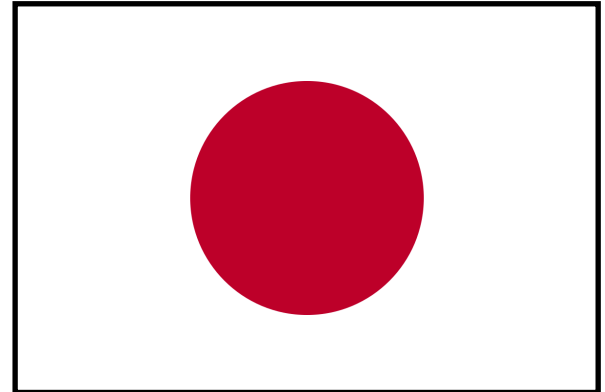
Home Visit programs, meaning that I got partnered with a native Japanese student and a Japanese family. With my language partner I was able to practice Japanese, learn about the city, and see what life is like in Japan for an average college student. With my family, I got to experience local life in a Japanese home, and again, immerse myself in the language. I also had the opportunity to help teach English to Japanese children and/or seniors, and to chat with them a bit in Japanese, which made for very fun experiences. I went to a few concerts during my time in Japan, and I was so excited when I realized that, thanks to my language immersion, I was able to understand nearly everything the artists said when they spoke to the audience. I got to shake my favorite artist's hand and thank him in Japanese at the end of one event, and needless to say I was very pleased. I was also able to ask for directions once when I got lost in Tokyo. Knowing I could interact with locals made me feel a sense of confidence, and pride in how far my language skills had come. Immersion improved my Japanese immensely.

### Transferable Skill:



Participating in this program helped me understand how to learn languages. I am currently learning a new language, and thanks to the skills I gained studying Japanese, I am picking it up very quickly. I am also more comfortable engaging with people with limited English skills, as I have learned how to communicate in a variety of ways, both verbal and

non-verbal. I believe this ability will be very useful in the future, as I want to do humanitarian work and will likely have the opportunity to interact with people from a variety of cultures. I think the skills I learned during my program will be useful in both my professional and personal life for years to come.



***“Learning abroad expanded my worldview. I'm much more conscious now of how big the world is, and how much is going on in every corner of it. I am more motivated now to do something impactful with my life. I want to see and experience as much as I can, and do whatever little I can to help, wherever possible.”***