**Short Answer #1:**

About eighteenths months ago our medical anthropology professor told the class that if an individual learns something new every five years it keeps his or her brain healthier and more active later in life. There are various ways in which one can do this, such as playing a new sport, picking up an instrument, or learning a foreign language. After hearing this I decided to try a new language and I knew exactly which one I was going to attempt.

The Arabic language and the Middle Eastern region attracted my attention in high school during a world history course. I was fascinated by the historical significance of this region, the rich civilization that flourished there long before Americas were discovered, the deep rooted culture and religious beliefs, and the quest for peace in the region.

I am eagerly pursuing my goal of mastering both the written and spoken language by taking courses in Modern Standard Arabic. I am fortunate that my Arabic courses are taught by native speakers and by professors who are originally from Middle East. I expanded my knowledge about the region by taking courses such as *Middle East: Politics, Economics, and American Policy*, *State and War in the Middle East*, and *Introduction to International Relations*. I hope to enhance this strong academic foundation with an immersive experience of the Middle East and the Arabic language to enable me to pursue a career in Middle Eastern diplomacy and anthropological research.

**Short Answer #2:**

Our school does not offer a major in Arabic, so I will most likely travel to the Middle East through a study abroad program during my senior year. The intensive study of Arabic in a country where it is natively spoken will be a tremendously educational experience for me in my future endeavors. I have planned my undergraduate program to provide coverage of many aspects that affect the Middle East. I am a double major in Anthropology and International Studies and I am currently enrolled in a minor in Arabic. I have completed a four semesters of Arabic, two semesters of Spanish and one semester of French. The combination of French and Arabic is important in countries such as Morocco and Lebanon that have Arabic dialects that are influenced by French.

During the summer of 2010, I worked as a research assistant at University at Buffalo, on a study analyzing the aspects of Twitter and networking during wars. This project involved analyzing twitter messages from all over the world dealing with the 2008-2009 Gaza Conflict. I plan to use publications out of the Middle East for my senior research project for Anthropology. This research involves searching through Arabic language newspapers, print publications and web sites. It will certainly benefit my Arabic language abilities and also help build on the language skills acquired through CLS. The CLS Arab language experience will be an integral and indispensible part of my academic studies and career.

**Essay Question #1: Statement of Purpose**

I have always believed that those who learn together learn the most. I have taken various seminar courses at Case Western and the reason they are so enriching is because they are discussion-based and group-based. As students, we are constantly working together by sharing opinions, disagreeing with one another, or struggling and succeeding to learn material. Each class I have taken has its own personality and we are constantly encouraged by our professors to maintain interest in the topics we study.

When I study in the Middle East, I expect to learn the intonations, accents, figurative and colloquial usage of the language that are difficult to pick up when learning Modern Standard Arabic in the United States. By mingling with the native people I expect to learn the culture, social practices and cultural nuances of language. The group with which I will be studying will help me practice the language skills and to reinforce my learning. This like-minded group from diverse backgrounds will also offer me a great opportunity for networking across the United States.

The intense language experience will certainly have tremendous influence on my studies and my career goal of Middle Eastern diplomacy. As an undergraduate and a double major in International Studies and Anthropology I am also completing a minor in Arabic.

As a part my major I have completed a course, *Anthropology of Adolescence*, that has influenced my future plan to undertake participant-observation field-work in the Middle East. For my research I plan to study the effects of war, a conservative religion, and a changing culture on child development and adolescence. I expect this research will offer a new perspective on the younger generation of the Middle East who will be the future decision makers for peace. After studying the history of Middle East, I realized the influence of the French in the region so I have also enrolled myself in a French language course and plan to be proficient in spoken and written French by the time I graduate. To develop good rapport with the people I wish to study I need to be able to speak and understand their language. Anthropological fieldwork requires that the anthropologist not only observes the target group but also is integrated into the culture he or she is studying. It is very critical that I am proficient in Arabic if I want to fulfill my future research goals.

In the field of International Studies, I would like to do research on why joint political and economic institutions, such as the European Union, fail in the Middle East. This research would include studying the internal and external efficacy of the Arab League and the US roadmaps for peace in the Middle East. These Middle East-related issues will form the basis for my senior research thesis for my International Studies major requirement. Once again I plan to distinguish this study by opinions collected directly from the field. These opinions will come from informal discussions and practical observations of the events and perspectives of native people in the Middle Eastern country I will be visiting.

**Essay Question #2:**

From a very young age, I exhibited an extroverted nature. I am sociable and energetic in even the most diverse group settings. Because I handle stress well, I project my optimism and amicability, which allows me to befriend people very quickly. Travelling to foreign countries throughout my childhood has definitely brought out my open-minded and sociable nature. Through these trips, I have come to love learning about new cultures and their different histories.

In 2008 I auditioned for and was accepted into a band and choir program (called American Music Abroad) that brought students from around the country to perform in remote venues across Europe. This music tour familiarized me with experiencing different people in foreign settings. I spent four weeks with a diverse group of musicians from all over USA, and very quickly learned to make adjustments to fast-paced schedules, abiding by strict rules of travelling in a group, existing with limited resources, and making friends.

Visiting India has definitely prepared me for living in situations different than in the United States. When we visit India we usually stay in a small, non-air conditioned apartment with other family members. Everything from the taste of the milk to the way we bathe is different there. However, it is something you learn to appreciate the longer you stay. I could not imagine India without the humid climate, ferocious mosquitoes, and faulty electricity. For all these small problems, there are far more amazing aspects to living in India. Some of these great aspects include watching hilariously overdramatic serials with my grandmother, seeing mischievous monkeys always running around, or travelling by auto-rickshaws through the city. The hustle and bustle of the city is so fascinating and colorful: cows, bikes, buses, cars, rickshaws and motorcycles all sharing the same road and surrounded by a marketplace ripe with fresh food and other goods. India is indeed a different world to which I have become accustomed.

During the summer of 2009 and again in summer of 2010, I worked at Cradle Beach Camp, a camp for disabled and disadvantaged children. This was one of the most eye-opening experiences for me. It was a twenty-four hour job and up to sixteen of those hours were spent awake and alert, looking after children from ages 7-14. I worked with children from the inner-city as well as children who have physical and mental impairments. Most of the campers came from vastly different backgrounds than me. One girl came in with no clothes but the ones she was wearing. Others were belligerent and disobedient because they came from abusive families. One boy with down-syndrome was in foster care waiting to be adopted. They all faced more adversity in ten years than I have in twenty and they were still so full of life and optimistic. Through working with all these children, camp has taught me that empathy is truly something that comes from experience. Empathy is difficult to achieve because you have to set your own personal biases aside. No matter what situation I am faced with now, I really try to go in with an objective and open mind.

All in all, the experiences I have had abroad and as a camp counselor have positively shaped the person I am today. I am well prepared to face these kinds of realities throughout my life.