

## Experience of student exchange to Ireland

This text is about my three-month exchange to Ireland from the 8th January to the 8th of April. I come from Witten, a town near Dortmund in North Rhine-Westphalia in the west of Germany. I decided to go to Ireland a year ago, around eastern. It was my last chance for exchange in school time and I wanted to take this chance. Ireland was my choice, the reason for that was a real nice holiday trip to Ireland with my parents in the summer holidays 2014. I liked the people, the sport, the nature. A lot of thing, and I wanted to come back for a longer time. In the summer month of 2016 my organisation told me that I will go to Kinsale, a small town near Cork directly at the south coast of Ireland. My got my host family a few weeks later. A family with two children a girl in my age and a 12-year-old boy. I really looked forward for the time.

The arriving was really well organised, I was picked up at Dublin Airport we had to wait for other students and then we took the bus to Cork where my host family waited for me. The next day I got my school uniform and the books before I got to school. I was really excited; the school was so big compared to my German school. I was so confused about all the rooms and corridors. But after a time that was easier to understand. The Irish students were all very friendly, but it was hard to integrate into Groups of them. We often stand as a group of exchange students, which was not too bad, but we also tried to get in contact with Irish students. School itself was really different, I was in the Transition Year short known as TY. A break year for Irish students after their Junior Certificates with a lot of practical stuff, work experience and without real focus on theoretical learning targets in subjects like Maths, English or Science. For an exchange student is that really positive, you have literally no homework and so more time for other things like hobbies or meeting friends. And with the subjects it's the same everywhere. You like some of them and you don't like some of them, but I think that's fine.

In my free time, I played in an open Basketball and in an open Badminton round. Both once a week, it was really good for me, because you had no liabilities, if you come you can play and if you don't want to its also fine. The last 6 weeks I also did stuff in the school show, we made a music show with 80's Songs based on the Irish movie Sing Street. I met a lot of new people there and I am really happy about my decision to take part in it even it was very stressful the last two weeks. At the time, I am writing this article the show is in front of me. It will be on the next four nights, so I cannot say something about it. But I am looking forward and think it will be a great finish for my time.

At the weekend, I often did trips to Cork, was other exchange students (mostly from Spain or Germany) and with a few Irish students. We visited the town, went shopping or played Lasertag. They days in Cork have always been very nice. We got there by bus, the trip takes an hour. At some days, we also went to points of interest in Kinsale, like the ruins of Charles fort and James fort and to the Kinsale Dock beach. Often really nice trips.

Other exciting events have been the St. Patricks day, where I have been on the school wagon in the Kinsale parade and I have seen the cork parade. It was very Irish and very good day or my work experience I did for school. I was 5 days in a pharmacy and 5 days in a small breakfast café/restaurant. Epically the time in the restaurant was very nice. The people were so friendly it was a good experience to work in English and I really liked to atmosphere there. The week in the pharmacy was also very good.

My English was already okay as I arrived in Ireland, I had no real problems to let people know what I say. But my English is definitely better now. Particularly my understanding is better, it's now easier to

understand what people say, even if they speak fast. But also, my Vocabulary and my confidence in speaking and writing has improved.

All in All, I can say that I will never forget this three months I will stay in contact with a few people I met here, some of them German or Spanish, some of Irish. I really liked the time and I had no real problems at all, but I am also looking forward to go back and think about all the impressions of this great experience.



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