

Dear Host Family,

I am Pia, 15 years old and hopefully soon to be your host student!

I live in a fairly big city in Germany, and have done so for most of my life. However, I was born in Berlin, Germany's capital. I reside nearby with my parents, and in the past also with my sister, who is currently doing voluntary service abroad and will study afterwards. We live a little outside the city in a detached house and have a very close relationship with our neighbourhood. Street parties, Christmas markets and bonfires are not uncommon here! Unfortunately, more family doesn't live here, but I still have a relatively good connection to my grandparents and great-grandparents. My great-grandmother lives in Berlin, so not far from us, and so we spent many hours together in her garden, but also in cafes, in her flat and our house. My maternal grandparents live at the sea, so at the Baltic Sea. I visit them regularly during my holidays, with my family, with friends or alone. Fortunately, my paternal grandparents also live not far away, so I am able to see and visit them regularly. Sadly, the Corona pandemic limits that.

I also go to school, to the nearby Gymnasium in the city centre. I have been a student at this school for almost 5 years now. I was in the school orchestra for a long time and I also sing in the pop choir at my school, whenever that's possible and there's no pandemic. I also play the violin and have additional music lessons at school with vocal training and music theory. I like listening to music from different genres, from classical to rock and much more. I do sports in my canoe club and have been doing so for almost 10 years. I have also been camping, at competitions, on runs and do training and ski camps with this club. So I'm relatively close to the people in the club and the sport, and it has actually been an integral part of my life since I was 6. Of course, homework, studying, presentations and other schoolwork have to play a role in my free time. But I often try to find space and time for other hobbies, so I love reading, both fiction and non-fiction, baking gateaux, cooking vegetarian and trying out recipes. I also help out in the household, for example with the laundry, washing dishes, with rubbish or cleaning. I often like to try out creative projects with handwork, such as sewing, painting or crocheting. Of course, it is important for me to have still enough time for my friends and other people that are close to me. I like to experience things and create memories with them, and be out and about, both within my neighbourhood and outside it. It's also important for me and my family in general to share activities together, whether it's a hike, a film evening, a visit to a museum, a cooking evening or something completely different.

I am a very openminded and unprejudiced person. In my opinion, it's easier to live that way. It is also very important for me that different opinions and minorities are accepted and tolerated. I try hard to stand up against different forms of discrimination, both in my personal environment and on a larger level, e.g. with demonstrations or protests, but also with campaigns. I am part of a campaign for more co-determination in schools, but I also organise a project against racism at my school. I am a responsible and independent person who organises a lot, so I am class representative and have been part of several conferences

at my school, I organise class trips and other projects at my school. In general, I am politically interested and committed and I am often part of FridaysForFuture demonstrations and sometimes events of other climate movements.

I am generally a happy girl who likes to laugh. Especially because I have a lot of hobbies and do a lot in my free time, a balance is important to me. I am usually a very social person and have no problems having lots of people around me. Nevertheless, I also need the opportunity to take time for myself, to be able to back out and concentrate on myself.

I have been lucky enough to travel a lot with my family until now. I love experiencing new cultures, travelling to new landscapes and countries, and tasting new foods and discover new eating habits. This definitely contributes to my desire to live abroad for a year. I believe that cultural exchange is very important and, above all, incredibly educational. Spending a year in a different environment, with a different family, with a new language and a new culture is an amazing opportunity for me to learn and develop. I am curious and very keen to experience things and try new things, so I hope I am well suited for a year abroad. I am adaptable and can integrate well into a new environment, I have a desire to learn Portuguese as well as habits and cultures. I hope to become more independent and self-reliant, and also to find myself a bit more.

But why Portugal? There are so many beautiful countries in the world! Several factors played into it. It was relatively important to me that I could spend a year in a new culture and in a new environment, but I didn't want to be completely restricted as a young girl. I also want to have some reference points to life as I know it at home and not get a complete culture shock. So I would like to stay in Europe for a year at the age of 15/16. I would love to learn a new language and the more southern Europe is just more interesting for me. I love sun and summer, but also friendly and approachable people. Portugal then convinced me for a variety of reasons, such as the beautiful language, Portuguese. But I am also curious about fascinating and diverse landscapes, beaches, mountains, coasts and fields. Especially I look forward to insight into colourful and interesting culture, to festivals, colourful parades, music and dances.

I am really pleased that you are considering taking me in. Maybe we will see each other soon! Thank you very much!

Saúdo-vos muito gentilmente da Alemanha, Pia Kleinke