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Grade 11

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Different Languages, Same Stories

While waiting at the T station, you hear a couple speaking Mandarin. Outside the Thomas Crane Public Library, your friend calls her parents and chats in Albanian. After a long day, you come home and have a discussion with your brother in English. Welcome to Quincy, a small city named after this country's sixth president, a polyglot himself. Quincy is immersed in diversity, serving as a microcosm to all the cultures and people abroad. Everyone has a story; most often, these stories are sequels to those of their ancestors. Ironically, the people of Quincy are united by a certain chapter of their books: language. Here, in Quincy, the diversity of languages creates global links that define the city's extraordinary community.

We are all children of immigrants, regardless of our generation. Crucially, with emigration, languages follow and become a defining cultural characteristic. Whether your parents immigrated in search of higher education or your greatest grandparents found religious freedom, Quincy became a common place for opportunity seekers. Ultimately, the city became a melting pot of cultures where we find ourselves having a burrito at Chipotle or practicing taekwon do at the nearest dojang. Despite our different backgrounds, languages are never a barrier in this city. Instead, they are spoken and shared in order to tell our stories which come to have the same foundation: opportunity.

Language is at the heart of communication, connection, and culture. The plethora of languages spoken in Quincy have been unifying in their expression of these elements. As a means of communication, languages serve to disseminate ideas or resolve conflict. Languages provide connection not only between speakers of the same language, but also those merely interested in the language and can relate to its purpose; which essentially includes everyone. Finally, language is a defining factor of culture. Just as a language may represent the mores of a

certain group of people based on how the people communicate and connect, the diversity of languages in Quincy itself is an eminent factor of the city's culture. The great variation in languages in Quincy creates global links as communication, connection, and culture unite diverse people who may represent their own stories individually, but together define the elements of community.

Furthermore, the next time you try to decipher what the family next to you is discussing in Spanish or question the authenticity of the California roll, recall that despite the fact that languages may appear selective, they demonstrate global macrocosm in diverse communities such as Quincy. This city has been transformed by languages to encompass a wide variety of cultures brought by a wide variety of people. Nonetheless, these people are united by their stories that regardless of what language they are told in, represent culture and opportunity—the essence of Quincy.