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## LEARNING INDEPENDENCE

On my morning bus rides I would see students walking and riding the bus completely alone, even first graders! I got the sense that German parents are very trusting of their children and give them a lot of freedom...and the kids seem to take the responsibility of that independence seriously. *This had me thinking...*

Growing up I always had a buddy when away from home. I didn't have "helicopter parents," but they did want to make sure I was safe and with others. As I got older this translated into me thinking that I always need to have someone with me. In Germany I didn't have a choice. I couldn't lodge with my cohort and I was traveling solo every day. Traveling alone on the bus or train, in an unfamiliar place, was a terrifying thought - and my first ride home by myself was lonely and slightly uncomfortable. But that alone time ended

up becoming the perfect opportunity for me to reflect (the educator reflex!) and think about the ways I can grow from every experience and encounter. I now can navigate my way around a new place, and not become anxious about being by myself. I am so proud of the independence I not only developed but also became comfortable with.



*The best part of traveling is being able to visit the places you see in pictures and actually experience what it is like to be in the moment, surrounded by such beauty.*

