

Study Abroad Completion Report

UCLA Summer Sessions A6

1. Overview

Program: UCLA Summer Session A6

Goals: Improve English proficiency, experience American culture through travel, and build muscle (bulk up)

Outcomes: Gained motivation to continue studying English and improved Chinese proficiency; traveled to Los Angeles, Las Vegas, and San Diego; lost both body fat and muscle mass

2. Courses

Ceramics

The professor would explain and demonstrate a technique, and students would then practice it. The classroom atmosphere was relaxed, and attendance was not strictly monitored; being late or making up missed sessions was not a problem. However, the final project required each student to write a one-page paper on a ceramic artist and their work, as well as to produce four individual pieces: a mug, a bowl, a pitcher, and a bottle. There was also a team project in which groups of four collaborated to create a single piece and present it to a curator. Even topics that would have been unfamiliar in Korean became more difficult when approached in English. That said, because the class was hands-on and practice-based, it was enjoyable and easy to stay focused.

Vocal Technique

This course covered vocal theory, followed by practice sessions applying what was taught. Assignments included a team project involving a choral performance, an individual “vocal demonstration” in which students demonstrated techniques learned in class, and both a mini presentation (a preview) and a final presentation in which students selected a favorite song, explained its background, and performed it live. There were also assignments to record a video practicing vocal techniques and to write an accompanying feedback paper. I had expected the course to focus on selecting and practicing a modern pop song, but the repertoire was mainly classical. Overall, the workload felt fairly heavy.

3. Daily Life (Housing, Meals, etc.)

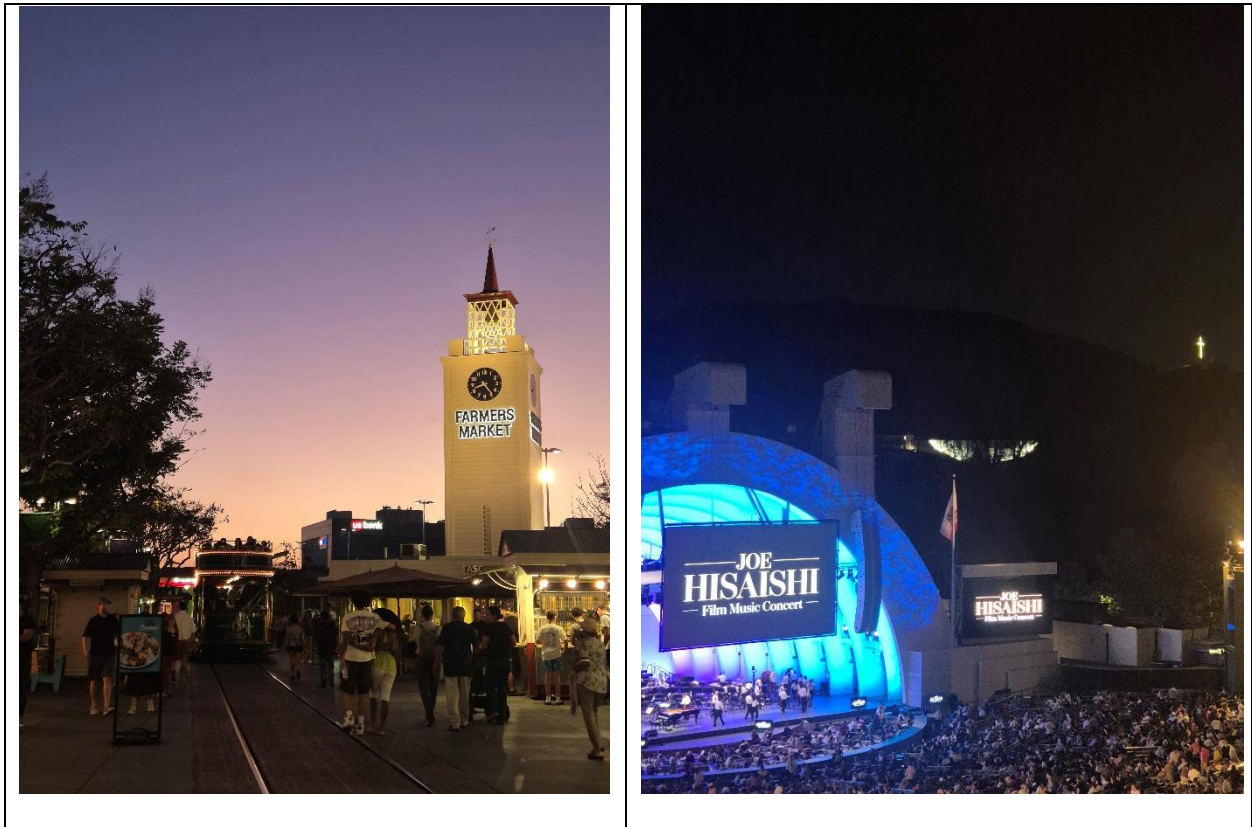
I lived in a triple room with two Chinese roommates. Since the two of them spoke to each other in Chinese, communication was difficult at first and I sometimes felt left out. Over time, however, we grew closer as we asked each other questions about our respective cultures and shared food. This environment turned out to be valuable practice for listening to and speaking Chinese. For meals, I mainly used a meal plan and ate at the campus dining halls, eating out only on days when I went off campus. The dormitory did not have its own kitchen.

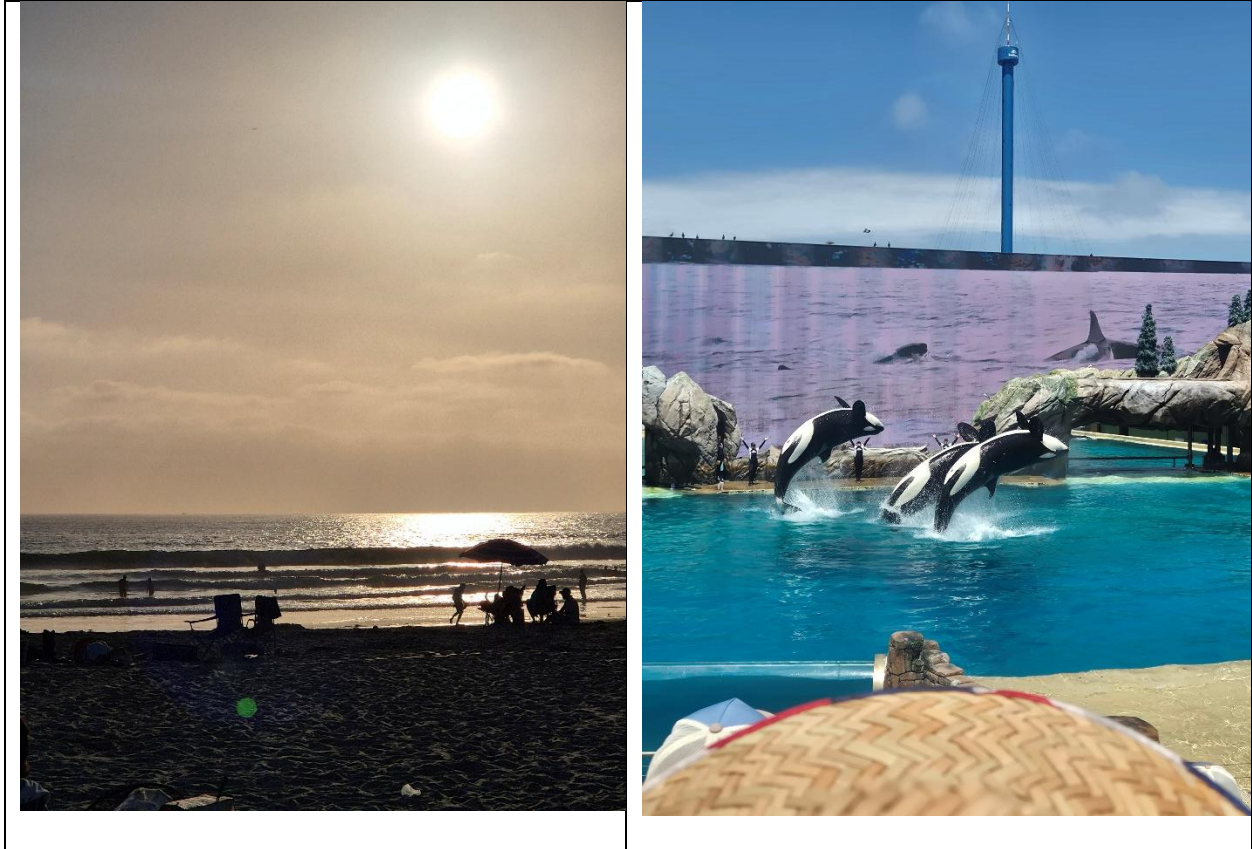
4. Cultural Life (Hangouts and Trips)

In Los Angeles, I visited well-known spots such as Griffith Observatory and the farmers market. Since I usually enjoy exploring a city on foot and observing local life away from the main attractions, I visited several lesser-known areas, though there was not much to see there. Beyond the popular areas, the presence of homeless individuals and the smell

of drugs made me hesitant to explore further, and since it was dangerous late at night, I mostly called an Uber back to campus. Because Uber fares were expensive, it was generally better to travel with a friend rather than alone.

For cultural activities, I applied through ioit.com to attend a live taping of a soccer talk show on FOX. I also attended a Hisaishi Jo concert at the Hollywood Bowl and watched the film “The Odyssey” at the TCL Chinese Theatre. Near campus, I visited the Getty Museum to see ceramics and other artworks, and I visited LACMA, where I took part in a jazz festival. I also visited a botanical garden in Los Angeles. For a longer trip, I took a two-night, three-day excursion to Las Vegas, the Grand Canyon, and San Diego.





5. Reflections

I ended up in an environment where I had to use both English and Chinese on a near-daily basis. Since most of the Asian students I encountered were Chinese, being able to speak both English and Chinese meant I could communicate with almost everyone. I do feel some regret that if I had been a bit more proficient in both languages, I could have enjoyed spending time and communicating with friends even more, and I could have participated more actively in class as well.

This experience made me realize that studying only in Korea is not enough to remain competitive in an increasingly globalized society — whether due to limited English proficiency, a narrower range of people one gets to meet, or simply settling into a comfortable environment. I now feel that I should pursue a master's degree in the United States after graduation. To prepare for that, I need to build not only the English communication skills but also the academic capability to keep up with university-level coursework in English.