In 2009, my mom bought me an Atlas filled with flags of the world and maps of countries and regions. Little did 4 year-old me know how much that book has made an impact on my life and the person that I am today. That atlas made me dive in early into the study of Geography, and I read it every single day as a kindergartner, even during dinner and breakfast. I treated the atlas like it was my holy book. 13 years later, I have learned that geography is not merely the study of flags and countries, but so much more on our planet and our lives on this planet. That is one topic I find so captivating and engaging because of how broad and interesting it is.

“What’s the capital of Ukraine? What’s the capital of Japan? What’s this flag?”, those are some common questions you’d expect to get asked when you say you love geography. In primary school, I stood out as that one kid who “knows all the flags,” “knows every country and capital,” people would come up to me to ask about flags, countries or flags, my 4th grade English teacher even complimented me on my knowledge. I can always thank my atlas for that. When I finally had geography lessons in secondary school, I learned about the reality of modern geography the hard way. In modern geography, you learn about physical features of the earth, agriculture, settlements and so much more. I started off as a mediocre student facing hurdles. My teacher once said, “Knowing countries and capitals is one thing, but skills is another.”

I understood at that point that I am mediocre at the subject, but I am not bad in geography in general. I didn't let grades stand in the way of my passion. Passion for a subject was more important than grades and I believed that was very important. This was the only subject where despite whatever happens to me in class, whether good or bad, every day was a new day and I always looked forward to class, especially the lessons involving me answering my teacher’s questions on countries & capitals. I learned from my mistakes in 7th grade and in 8th grade I did much better and more consistent in class, what I did was that I continued reading my textbook repeatedly, every lesson was a new lesson, I learned more every new day.

I can connect this subject to the real world even by sitting in my bed and looking out the window of my 13th floor apartment in Singapore. I can ask questions such as “Why is it more preferable to build apartments rather than houses in some parts of the world?”, “What are the solutions to shortage of land and floods in many places?” In my last year of studying Geography, I learned more real-world topics such as: politics, history of borders, religions, and city planning. That was the year that skyrocketed my interest and passion for the subject.

I’ve grown to love the subject and have learned that its more than merely knowing countries and capitals, it’s also about learning the physical features of this planet and real world subjects. By learning Geography, in the future I could bring positive changes to many places in the world from preventing floods to mitigating volcanic eruptions to even lessening poverty. I learned that geographic skills play a huge part in being proficient in this topic. It’s a very useful subject that is overlooked by many people. Geography is all around us and it’s endless, that’s why I wish to continue to study this subject in the future and why I find it so engaging and captivating.