

Skills:

Can discuss in simple terms the way in which things that may look “strange” to them in another sociocultural context may well be “normal” for the other people concerned.

Adults/Teens

Group



1 Look at the images and explain the cultural practice you notice. Try to guess which country it might be from. Do people do it in your country?

2 Discuss in pairs:

1. Have you ever traveled to a country with different customs than your own? What was your experience there like?
2. Have you ever felt uncomfortable because of cultural differences while traveling?
3. Do you think it's important to adapt to local customs and traditions when visiting a foreign country? Or is it just enough to know them?

3 Match the following words with their definitions.

bow

fault

observing

handshake

appropriate

learn the technique

properly

norm

1. a mistake or problem that is someone's responsibility - _____.
2. understood how to do something by practicing it - _____.
3. in the correct way or manner - _____.
4. bending your body forward at the waist as a sign of respect - _____.
5. a standard or rule that most people follow - _____.
6. suitable or right for a particular situation - _____.
7. holding someone's hand and moving it up and down as a greeting - _____.
8. watching something carefully - _____.

4 Read the stories of 3 people about their cultural experiences and then answer the questions:

Lucy

In many Western countries, it is common to greet someone with a kiss on the cheek. However, during a visit to Japan, I quickly realized that this is not the norm there. When I tried to greet a Japanese friend with a kiss on the cheek, she seemed shocked and took a step back. I quickly apologized and learned that a simple bow or handshake is more appropriate in Japan.

Jake

When I moved to England, I noticed that people often say "sorry" even when something isn't their fault. For example, if someone bumps into you on the street, they'll say "sorry," even though it was really your fault for not getting out of the way.

Adi

During a trip to India, I was invited to a local's house for dinner. To my surprise, the family members were eating with their hands instead of using cutlery. At first, I felt a bit uncomfortable and didn't know how to eat the food properly. However, after observing them for a while, I learned the technique and actually enjoyed the experience.

1

What cultural difference did Lucy notice regarding greetings between Western countries and Japan?

2

What cultural observation did Jake make about people in England saying "sorry"?

3

What surprised Adi about how the family members were eating during dinner in India?

5

Fill in the gaps in the conversations with the suitable words from Exercise 3.



Whose _____(1) is it that the meeting went wrong?



I think it was the translator's misunderstanding.



Did you greet our visitors _____(2)?



I just nodded...



What were you doing at the festival?



Just _____(3) the traditional dances.



How did you manage the tea ceremony?



I learned the _____(4) from a local guide.



Is it normal to eat with your hands here?



Yes, it's a cultural _____(5) in this region.



I tried to shake his hand, but he seemed uncomfortable.



In their culture, a _____(6) is more common than a _____(7).



Do you know how to dress _____(8) for the religious event?



I'm not sure if I need to cover my shoulders

6

In pairs or small groups, identify a couple of customs, habits, or superstitions that are unique to your country (-ies). The goal is to explain them in a way that someone from another country could understand.

Example:

Custom: in Japanese homes, it's common to take off your shoes at the entrance and wear indoor slippers or go barefoot inside.

Explanation: This tradition is about keeping things clean and respecting the home. When you visit someone's house, certain businesses, or traditional restaurants, you'll usually find a place to leave your shoes. It's seen as rude to walk into these places with outdoor shoes, so always look for a shoe rack or a spot to remove them.

Correct answers

1

Inspired by the “Lead-in Activities” tool.

siesta - Spain; taking off your shoes inside - Japan and Post-Soviet countries; a kiss on the cheek as a greeting - France, bows - Japan, Korea, China and Vietnam.

2

Made in the “Discussion questions” tool.

3

Made in the “Word-Definition Matching” tool.

1. fault
2. learn the technique
3. properly
4. bow
5. norm
6. appropriate
7. handshake
8. observing

4

Made in “Create a Text” + “Open Questions”.

1. Lucy noticed that while it is common to greet with a kiss on the cheek in Western countries, this is not the norm in Japan.
2. Jake noticed that people in England often say "sorry" even when something isn't their fault.
3. Adi was surprised that the family members were eating with their hands instead of using cutlery during dinner in India.

5

Made in “Communicative situations” + “Fill in the Gaps”

1. fault
2. properly
3. observing
4. technique
5. norm
6. bow
7. handshake
8. appropriately

6

Inspired by the “Lead-in Activities” tool.