



## FAR AHEAD T<sup>le</sup> (UNIT8)

## READING

### UNIT 8 : ACROSS CULTURES

#### SESSION 2 : Reading

#### Learning Context:

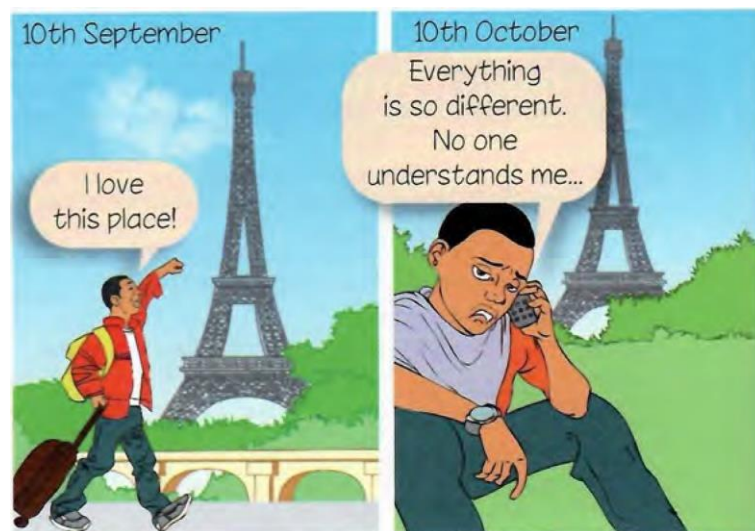
*On the International Cultural Day, you read a passage about cross-cultural communication in order to get prepared to receive a group of young tourists from an American high school.*

#### 1 Before you read

Look at the pictures.  
What can you say about them?  
What is culture shock?  
Who is affected by culture shock?  
Why?

#### 2 Read the passage below.

Who is the speaker and what audience is he addressing?  
Choose from:



#### Speaker:

- A a university lecturer      B a student counsellor      C an examiner

#### Audience:

- A native students      B foreign students from the same country      C foreign students from different countries

### Culture shock

<p>5</p> <p><b>Paragraph1</b> It's very important to be aware that studying in a new country can be quite a stressful experience even if you have planned your trip carefully. You will find many things that are different from back home. Consequently, it is very likely that you will experience culture shock after a few weeks here in Britain. This is caused by the shock of being in a new environment and is worse if you feel homesick and miss your family and friends. It's essential to realise that this experience is quite normal. This can affect anyone, no matter where you come from or where you go. So if you start feeling depressed or lonely, I encourage you to seek help. You can come at any time to talk things over with counsellors here at the Foreign Students' Bureau of the university. They are well aware of the problems facing foreign students and will be able to give you support and advice. Now I'll quickly run through a few things that you may have trouble with and ways of coping.</p>	
<p>10</p> <p><b>Paragraph2</b> First of all, if you are used to a warm climate, you may find the grey, damp British weather depressing, especially in winter when the days are short. There's nothing we can do about the climate, but we can make you aware that this may make you feel down.</p> <p><b>Paragraph3</b> Another problem area for overseas students is food. It may taste very different from what you are used to. If you have self-catering accommodation, I suggest you try cooking food</p>	

15	<p>you are familiar with now and again. However, I advise you not to eat a lot of fast food, as an unhealthy diet and lifestyle will only make you feel worse. Make sure you eat plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables and get lots of exercise.</p> <p><b>Paragraph4</b> Constantly speaking and listening in a foreign language is tiring, and you may miss your own language. You may be able to get satellite TV in your language. I recommend that you read online newspapers or take part in chat groups in your language.</p>
20	<p><b>Paragraph5</b> If you feel homesick, make sure you keep in touch with home. Phone or skype home regularly. Use email and social networks to exchange news and photos. But don't travel home too often as this can make settling in more difficult. Make friends with fellow foreign students as they will understand your feelings and be able to sympathise.</p>
25	<p><b>Paragraph6</b> Every culture has unspoken rules which affect the way people treat one another. You may find these confusing and difficult to understand. For example, punctuality is important in Britain, so you should always be on time for lectures. That's why it is important to make friends with as many local students as you can. They will help you learn about British culture.</p>
30	<p><b>Paragraph7</b> Remember, if you feel unhappy, there's always someone you can talk to here at the bureau. We also have a leaflet for foreign students summarising the things I've been talking about. You can take one as you leave.</p>

**ACTIVITY 2: Find in the text a word or phrase for each of the following meanings.**

The indicated lines or paragraphs will help you. Write your answer like in the example. (N4 p93).

**Example:** 1-be aware

1. know; understand (paragraph 1): .....
2. probable; almost certain (L3) : .....
3. miss home (L5) : .....
4. without anybody to talk to (L7) : .....
5. solving the problem (L11) : .....
6. wet (paragraph 2) : .....
7. depressed; filled with melancholy (paragraph 2) : .....
8. live by your own (paragraph 3) : .....
9. courses; classes (Line 29) : .....
10. booklet; brochure (paragraph 7) : .....

**ACTIVITY 3: Read the conversation below and say which of the following cultural misunderstandings is not mentioned.**

A- Touching

B-Greetings

C- Punctuality

D- Eye contact

E- Gestures

F – Personal space

# Interview

**Interviewer:** How long have you been living in London, Toni?

**Toni:** I've been here for just over a year now.

**Interviewer:** So would you say there are many cultural differences between Italy and England, Toni? Did you find many things different here in England when you first arrived?

**Toni:** Oh yes. When I first came to London, I had trouble getting used to quite a few things. At first, people, even friends, used to back away from me when we were chatting and this made me feel very uncomfortable. It took me a while to realise that I was getting too close and they were feeling uncomfortable too.

**Interviewer:** We English need a lot of space, don't we! What about physical contact? How different are attitudes to that?

**Toni:** I've had some funny experiences with that. I remember a time when I put my arm around Isabelle's shoulders and she just froze. I was only being friendly but she was very upset and told me to remove my arm. I was terribly embarrassed and apologised.

**Isabelle:** Yes, and you were very relieved when I started laughing, weren't you? You see I thought he was being too intimate. I was very uncomfortable. Then I realised that he was just being Italian! It was very funny. He has to be careful with other people though. Another thing that was strange at first was the way he waves his arms around. And he never stops talking. I have to grab his arms if I want to say something!

**Toni:** We don't have the same attitude to time, either. Isabelle's parents asked me to lunch one day and I got there half an hour late. It's usual to do that in Italy.

**Isabelle:** Yes, and my mum wasn't very pleased. You know what the English are like about being on time. I had to explain to her that it was a misunderstanding.

**Toni:** She was very kind about that. I explained that if someone arrived on time for a social occasion in Italy, the hosts would probably not be ready. It's just not the thing to do. One thing I don't like though, is the way people here just nod and say 'hi' when they meet. They only shake hands at their first encounter. I think it's very odd not to greet someone warmly.

**Isabelle:** I agree with Toni. I think it's much friendlier to kiss or shake hands when you meet. Actually, a few people do it in England these days, but the majority don't. It's not really acceptable.

**Interviewer:** What about hand gestures like V sign? Are there many differences?

**Toni:** They're pretty much the same, so I haven't made any serious mistakes in that area.

**Interviewer:** When will you return to Italy?

**Toni:** I've decided to settle in England. You see, I'm getting married next July.

**Interviewer:** That's fantastic! Congratulations! Who are you marrying?

**Toni:** Isabelle!

**ACTIVITY 4:** Read the conversation again and match the statements with England or Italy (N°3 p93).

Answer like in the example. **Example: 1-Italy**

1- It's usual to stand quite close when you are talking to someone. ...*Italy*...

2- A majority of people avoid touching each other in social situations. ....

- 3- It's acceptable to arrive late for a social event or a meeting. ....
- 4- It's impolite to arrive late for anything. ....
- 5- In general, people don't move their arms about a lot when they're talking. ....
- 6- It's usual to greet another person warmly. ....
- 7- Most people shake hands only when they meet for the time. ....

**ACTIVITY 5: Complete the sentences with adjectives from the box. One adjective is a distracter.**  
**Answer like in the example. Example: 1-upset**

delighted - upset – surprised – confused – jealous – embarrassed - insulted

- 1- I was very .....when my beloved aunt died.
- 2- Mary's parents were.....when she was appointed school principal.
- 3- He felt .....when the teacher asked him to give a talk to the class.
- 4- Flora was.....with her birthday present. It was exactly what she wanted.
- 5- Yakouba was.....when his friend went out with a girl he liked.
- 6- We were all.....when the exams were over.

**ACTIVITY 5: Choose one feeling and write an anecdote about it. (N7 p93)**

**ACTIVITY 6: COMMUNICATION**

You've been chosen by your School English Club to serve as a tourist guide to a group of young tourists from an American high school. In order to play your role with efficiency you write on a notebook things they can say and do, and things they should avoid to say and do in your cultural environment.

Things they can say	Things they can't say	Things they can do	Things they can't do

