

# 2

## CULTURAL DIVERSITY



### READING

#### Before You Read

*Work in pairs. Answer the following questions.*

1. Do Vietnamese people often use their first name or last name when addressing someone both formally and informally?
2. When do Americans and Europeans address someone with a title and the last name – in a formal or informal situation?

Give examples.

#### Reading Text

*Read the text and do the tasks that follow.*

#### Socializing and Codes of Etiquette

Every country has its own codes of etiquette. For example, it is common for people in the United States and in Britain to use first names quickly, even in a letter or a fax. Such instant familiarity is much less acceptable in the rest of Europe and Asia, where even business partners and colleagues of many years' acquaintance address each other by the equivalent of Mr., Mrs., Ms., or Miss with the last name. Therefore, when addressing a European, we should stick to the last name unless he / she suggests that we use his / her first name. Also, we should not interpret the other person's formality as stiffness or unfriendliness. On the other hand, if a partner with a North American or British background uses our first names right away, we shouldn't be surprised.

In many Western countries, including the United States, a person who does not maintain good eye contact is regarded as being a slightly suspicious, or dishonest person. Americans tend to associate people who avoid eye

contact as unfriendly, insecure, untrustworthy, and inattentive. In contrast, the Japanese lower their eyes when they speak to a superior to show a gesture of respect. In Latin America as well as in some African cultures, people have longer looking time, but prolonged eye contact from an individual of lower status is considered disrespectful. In the United States, it is considered rude to stare, regardless of who is looking at whom. In contrast, the polite Englishman is taught to pay strict attention to a speaker, to listen carefully, and to blink his eyes to let the speaker know he or she has been understood as well as heard. A widening of the eyes can be interpreted differently, depending on circumstances and cultures. Regardless of the language being used, an American may interpret a Chinese person's widened eyes as an expression of astonishment instead of its true meaning – politely expressing anger.

(Adapted from *Managing Cultural Differences*,  
by Philip R. Harris and Robert T. Moran)

a) Match each of the following words or phrase in A with its definition or equivalent in B.

A	B
1. codes of etiquette	a. accepted way of doing things
2. interpret	b. not confident about oneself
3. formality	c. not dependable
4. suspicious	d. describe the meaning of
5. insecure	e. rules about behavior in a particular culture
6. untrustworthy	f. position
7. inattentive	g. making someone feel that one is dishonest
8. status	h. not listening or watching carefully

b) Read the following statements and check (✓) **T** (True) or **F** (False). For the false statements, write the correct information.

- |   | <b>T</b>                            | <b>F</b>                 |
|---|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Most Americans use the first name very quickly when addressing their new acquaintance. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. An Asian's formal behavior may be interpreted as friendly by a European.               | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/> |

3. Good eye contact is highly appreciated in many Western cultures.
4. The Japanese often lower their eyes to show respect to their superiors.
5. A polite American tends to stare at his / her partner to show his attentiveness.
6. A Chinese often shows his interest by widening his eyes.

c) Complete the following paragraph with the words from the box.

untrustworthy	disrespect	attention	contact
astonishment	inattentive	respect	politeness

In many Western societies, good eye (1)\_\_\_\_\_ is often highly appreciated. In the United States, for example, a person who tries to avoid eye contact is regarded as being (2)\_\_\_\_\_ and unfriendly. In Europe, if you don't look straight at your teacher's eyes while he or she is explaining the lesson, you may be regarded as a(n) (3)\_\_\_\_\_ student. On the other hand, to show (4)\_\_\_\_\_ to a superior, a Japanese often lowers his / her eyes. In some African cultures, people often have a prolonged look, but prolonged eye contact from a person of a lower status is interpreted as a sign of (5)\_\_\_\_\_. In Britain, to express (6)\_\_\_\_\_, you should show that you pay close (7)\_\_\_\_\_ to a speaker by blinking your eyes. A person's widened eyes may be interpreted differently in different cultures. The Chinese widen their eyes to politely express anger, whereas the Europeans regard this expression as a sign of (8)\_\_\_\_\_.

d) Work in pairs. Discuss these questions.

1. How do young people in Viet Nam address elderly people or their superiors to show politeness?
2. When do you keep good eye contact with someone?



## LISTENING

a) *Work in pairs. Answer the following questions.*

1. On what occasions do you give gifts?
2. What do you often buy as gifts?

b) *Listen and repeat the following words, then put them in the blanks below.*

symbolize

separation

impressed

appreciated

1. Thank you for the valuable gift. It is highly \_\_\_\_\_ by our family.
2. My little niece was very \_\_\_\_\_ by the Barbie doll she got on her birthday.
3. The scales in front of the court \_\_\_\_\_ justice.
4. He was reunited with his parents after five years' \_\_\_\_\_.

c) *Listen to the conversation between Linh and her English friend, Christine, and fill in the blanks with appropriate words or phrases.*



### Example

When going abroad, we should learn about the *gift-giving* customs of the countries we're visiting.

1. In Europe, flowers are a safe and \_\_\_\_\_ that we can give to our host or hostess, but red roses are not always appropriate because they are mostly for \_\_\_\_\_.
2. In Germany, an even number of flowers symbolizes \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Asians are very \_\_\_\_\_ if the gift-giver pays attention to what he / she gives them as gifts.
4. In Viet Nam, people do not give glasses to a bride and a groom because "glass" means \_\_\_\_\_ in Vietnamese.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ shouldn't be given as gifts in Hong Kong because they imply the end of a relationship.
6. In most of Asia, people do not expect the host or hostess to \_\_\_\_\_ before the guests have left.

d) *Work in groups. Discuss the kinds of gifts for certain occasions, i.e., to a friend on his / her birthday, to a bride and a groom on their wedding, to your parents on their wedding anniversary, etc.*



## SPEAKING

### Giving Compliments

- a) *In small groups, read the exchanges you may hear at a party. Then decide which ones are acceptable in most Western countries.*

#### At a Party

1. A: Thanks for coming.  
What a nice gift you've brought us!  
B: I'm glad you like it.
2. A: Your dress is lovely. I like it.  
B: Oh! It's just an old dress.
3. A: You have a good voice. You sang so beautifully!  
B: Thanks for your compliment. It's certainly encouraging.
4. A: It was an enjoyable party, and the roast turkey was delicious.  
B: Thank you. I'm glad you enjoyed the party.
5. A: You're certainly a smart student.  
B: I don't think so.



- b) *Work in pairs. Give your compliments and responses in the following situations.*

#### Useful Expressions

*When you give compliments, these expressions may be useful.*

- Amazing! You've made an excellent ...!
- Congratulations! You played ... so well!
- Your parents must be proud of your ...!
- Your little sister is so cute!
- How beautiful your ... is!
- You've done a good job!

*Suggested responses to compliments.*

- I'm glad you like it.
- Thank you.
- Your compliment is encouraging.
- It's nice of you to say so.

Your partner has just

- had a new shirt / blouse / hat / pair of shoes.
- earned excellent scores in a test.
- won first prize in a contest.
- chosen a nice gift for you.
- done some volunteer work.

- c) *Work with a partner. Give compliments to each other on what you have or what you have achieved and respond to the compliments.*



## WRITING

### Writing a Paragraph about a Typical Product of a Culture

- a) *Read the following paragraph and do the two tasks that follow.*

I have been traveling to different parts of my country, and I have learned a lot about interesting lifestyles and customs. In many ethnic villages I went to, I was impressed by some of their beautiful traditional customs. For instance, most of the villagers lived in extended families, and they held a close relationship among family members. In addition, young people always showed respect for their ancestors and for elderly people. People were also willing to give a hand when someone was in need. Members of the family helped one another with household chores as well as with farm work. While men were working in the fields, women were doing the household chores. While we were staying there, the villagers always gave us a helping hand and invited us to have dinner with their families on special occasions. In short, I highly valued the close ties in human relationship shown in the villagers' ways of living.

- 1) *Fill in the missing parts in the outline.*

#### Outline

1. *Topic sentence:* In many ethnic villages I went to, I was impressed by some of their beautiful traditional customs.
2. a. *First supporting idea:* Close relationship among family members  
Examples
  - Living in extended families
  - \_\_\_\_\_

b. *Second supporting idea:* \_\_\_\_\_.

Examples

- \_\_\_\_\_
- Villagers' giving us a helping hand

3. *Concluding sentence:* \_\_\_\_\_.

2) *Pick out the linking words or phrases from the paragraph.*

**Linking Words and Phrases**

- For instance,
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

b) *Make an outline and then write a paragraph to develop the following topic sentence.*

Some Vietnamese family traditions have been lost in the nuclear family nowadays.



**LANGUAGE FOCUS**

**Word Study**

**Negative Prefixes**

a) *Write in Column B the opposites of the adjectives in Column A by adding the negative prefixes in-, un-, im-, dis-*

A	B
1. attentive	a. <u>inattentive</u>
2. formal	b. _____
3. honest	c. _____
4. mature	d. _____
5. respectful	e. _____
6. secure	f. _____
7. sensitive	g. _____
8. suitable	h. _____

- b) Choose the words found in exercise a) to fill in the blanks. The first one has been done for you.



### Example

A: Do you often speak in front of a large audience?

B: No. That's why I felt insecure when I spoke in front of my class last week.

1. A: Max doesn't do well in his tests, does he?

B: No, he doesn't. Maybe because he is a(n) \_\_\_\_\_ boy.

2. A: Should we wear our uniform at the meeting tomorrow?

B: No. It's only a(n) \_\_\_\_\_ meeting.

3. A: We should be careful about \_\_\_\_\_ traders in the tourist areas. They sell faulty goods.

B: I agree with you. Some traders are untrustworthy.

4. Our parents taught us not to be \_\_\_\_\_ to elderly people.

5. Jane is 18 years old, but she sometimes acts as a child. She seems to be \_\_\_\_\_ for her age.

6. He was wearing a suit, which was \_\_\_\_\_ for an informal gathering.

7. Those people cheat even poor people. They seem to be \_\_\_\_\_ to other people's suffering.

## Grammar

### Review 1: Present Simple and Present Progressive Expressing Future

- a) Read the sentences in the box and answer the questions below.

- a. My parents and I *are going* on a trip to Europe.  
b. We're *flying* tomorrow.  
c. The bus *comes* every twenty minutes.

1. Which two sentences describe a plan for a future action?
2. Which sentence describes a scheduled event?



b) Fill in the blanks using the present simple or present progressive of the verbs from the box.

start    leave    depart    arrive    take    not take    come

1. A: I \_\_\_\_\_ to a friend's house for dinner this weekend. Is it all right if I bring my girlfriend along?  
B: Well, you should call your host first and ask if it's OK.
2. A: When \_\_\_\_\_ you \_\_\_\_\_ for Ha Noi?  
B: On the first train tomorrow, at 6:30 a.m.
3. A: When will you start your new school year?  
B: Well, classes \_\_\_\_\_ on the fifth of September.
4. A: What courses \_\_\_\_\_ you \_\_\_\_\_ this summer?  
B: I \_\_\_\_\_ any courses. I'm working full time.
5. A: Could you give me the train schedule?  
B: The first train \_\_\_\_\_ from Da Nang at 6:15 a.m. and \_\_\_\_\_ in Ho Chi Minh City at 8:30 p.m.

### Review 2: Past Simple and Past Progressive



#### Examples

- We *were staying* in an ethnic village during our last vacation.
- While we *were staying* there, villagers always *gave* us a helping hand.
- While men *were working* in the fields, women *were doing* the household chores.

Fill in the blanks using the past simple or past progressive of the verbs from the box.

lecture    not mind    find    learn    work  
ask    come    attend    not leave    dress

A Korean student told me that while he (1) \_\_\_\_\_ a school in the United States three years ago, he (2) \_\_\_\_\_ a lot of things about the lifestyle of Americans, which was not the same as that in Korea. For

example, some teachers in the American high school dressed casually when they (3)\_\_\_\_\_ to class. Many teachers (4)\_\_\_\_\_ their students' interrupting them while they (5)\_\_\_\_\_ the lessons.

That student said he was at first embarrassed when his American friends (6)\_\_\_\_\_ him to share the bill of their dinner. But later, he (7)\_\_\_\_\_ out that it is the way most Americans do.

During the last summer vacation, while Asian students were traveling, many American students (8)\_\_\_\_\_ to earn money to pay their tuitions in the next school year even though their parents were rich and could afford to pay for their children's school expenses.

### Review 3: Present Perfect and Present Perfect Progressive

*I have been traveling* to different parts of my country, and I *have learned* a lot about interesting lifestyles and customs.

Put the verbs in italics into the present perfect or present perfect progressive, or both.



#### Example

How long you / *live* / this village?

How long *have you been living* in this village?

1. How long you / *know* / these people?
2. These traditional customs / *be establish* / for ages.
3. I / *work* / hard for years, but I / *not accumulate* / any wealth.
4. I'm sorry I / *not call* / you. I / *not feel* / well lately.
5. I / *read* / a book about ancient Greece. I / *read* / it for the third time.
6. The number of women working in the UK / *rise* / steadily for several decades.
7. The number of working women in China / *increase* / from 49% in 1980 to nearly 65% today.