



1 Read the blog and comments. Pay attention to the words in colour. Which comments are written by British people and which by Americans?

Crossing Cultures

Before moving to the USA, I thought that Brits and Americans were **alike**. After all, we speak the same language. But there is a **culture gap** despite the fact there's no **language barrier** and it took me a long time to stop feeling **foreign**.

Readers, what are some differences you've noticed?

SusX: I've been living in the UK for two years now and I've noticed that being direct is practically **unheard of** in the UK. Why can't Brits be more **straightforward** and say exactly what they mean?

KayRem89: British and American humour reflect different **outlooks** on life. British humour is very **subtle** and often sarcastic. Americans are more open and optimistic, so their humour is often silly. In fact, I don't find it funny at all!

JenTy: Why do Americans speak so loudly? We Brits **tend to** be more reserved and we don't think it's **appropriate** to show our emotions.

MissBB: One of the most important **values** in the US is individualism. This may be hard for us to understand, but its **roots** are in the country's history. Diverse groups of people came to a new continent to be free of persecution and **narrow-minded** authorities.

RockyR: British table **manners** are very different from ours. The Brits keep their knife and fork in their hands while they eat, but Americans cut their food with their knife in their right hand, put their knife down, and then switch the fork to their right hand to bring the food to their mouth. Our way is so **awkward** compared to theirs.



YOUR OUTLOOK
CRITICAL THINKING

From the descriptions in Exercise 1, do you think it would be easier for you to adapt to British or to US culture? Explain your answer.

2 Replace the words in bold with a word or expression below.

open-minded | **misconception** | **rude** | **fit in** | **sensitive**

- 1 It's **not polite** to talk loudly in public.
- 2 Are they **able to accept other people's opinions**?
- 3 She isn't **aware of other people's feelings**.
- 4 At first, I felt I didn't **belong** because I was from another country.
- 5 It's a **false idea** that British and Americans are exactly the same.

3 Choose the correct answer to show that you understand the meaning of the words in bold.

- 1 People feel *excited* / *angry* when someone is **rude** to them.
- 2 When a custom is **foreign**, it is a *new* / *familiar* experience.
- 3 People are **alike** when they're *similar* / *different*.
- 4 This is a **sensitive** topic, so be *direct* / *careful* when discussing it.
- 5 A good example of a **subtle** colour is *orange* / *beige*.
- 6 **Straightforward** people *say* / *don't say* what they think.
- 7 **Open-minded** people *accept* / *reject* lifestyles different from their own.

4 Decide if the following sentences are true or false. Correct the false sentences without changing the words in bold.

- 1 Teenagers today **tend to** communicate on social media.
- 2 Your **roots** change every year.
- 3 Your **values** influence the way you behave.
- 4 It is possible to overcome a **language barrier**.
- 5 It is bad **manners** to fail an exam.
- 6 **Culture gaps** are often experienced by refugees.
- 7 People feel **awkward** when they're having a good time.

5 What other words do you know connected to culture?



LOOKING AT LANGUAGE

The following words from the text have more than one meaning. How many meanings do you know for each word?

mean | reserved | hard | right | switch

SPEAKING Talking about Culture

9 Give some tips to an immigrant to your country. Think about:

food | driving etiquette | attitude to time
school | table manners | clothes
family life | timetables

It's very common here to eat dinner quite late at night.

The drivers here are reckless. You have to watch out for that!

USEFUL LANGUAGE

It's very common here to ...

It's hard for people to get used to ...

You have to watch out for ...

... might be new to you.

Try to be open-minded about ...

LISTENING A Radio Interview

6 What traditional foods are there where you live? Are these foods popular with tourists as well as locals?

7 You are going to hear an interview about a way that one city is overcoming culture gaps between different communities. Listen to the first part of the interview and complete the sentences with a suitable word.

- 1 Ms Freeson is a member of a local ... club.
- 2 Some of the immigrants in Tupelo can't relate to the American ... on life.
- 3 Cooking as a First Language helps immigrants feel more
- 4 The classes take place ... a month.
- 5 People present their ... dishes.

8 Listen to the second part of the interview and decide if the sentences are true or false.

- 1 A food blogger approached some Japanese women to start a club.
- 2 The club grew quickly.
- 3 It's easy to find ethnic food in Tupelo.
- 4 The language barrier is a problem in the club.
- 5 Evan thinks the students would be interested in the club.



YOUR OUTLOOK CRITICAL THINKING

Many immigrants to the United States learn English as a second language. Why do you think the club is called *Cooking as a First Language*?

