Cultural Norms

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WHAT IS CULTURE?
**Cultural Norms**

**culture**

/kʌltʃər/ Show spelled [kuhl-cher] Show IPA noun, verb, -tured, -tur·ing. *noun*

- The quality in a person or society that arises from a concern for what is regarded as excellent in arts, letters, manners, scholarly pursuits, etc.
- That which is excellent in the arts, manners, etc.
- A particular form or stage of civilization, as that of a certain nation or period: Greek culture.
- The development or improvement of the mind by education or training.
- The behaviors and beliefs characteristic of a particular social, ethnic or age group: the youth culture; the drug culture.
- Anthropology. The sum total of ways of living built up by a group of human beings and transmitted from one generation to another.
- Biology. a. the cultivation of microorganisms, such as bacteria, or of tissues, for scientific study, medicinal use, etc. b. the product or growth resulting from such cultivation.
- The act or practice of cultivating the soil; tillage.
- The raising of plants or animals, especially with a view to their improvement.
- The product or growth resulting from such cultivation.
HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE CULTURE?
Culture is like an iceberg
Cultural Norms

Like an iceberg, nine-tenths of culture is below the surface.

Surface Culture
Most easily seen
Emotional level - low

Shallow Culture
Unspoken Rules
Emotional level - high

courtesy, contextual conversational patterns, concept of time, personal space, rules of conduct, facial expressions, nonverbal communication, body language, touching, eye contact, patterns of handling emotions, notions of modesty, concept of beauty, courtship practices, relationships to animals, notions of leadership, tempo of work, concepts of food, ideals of child rearing, theory of disease, social interaction rate, nature of friendships, tone of voice, attitudes toward elders, concept of cleanliness, notions of adolescence, patterns of group decision-making, definition of insanity, preferences for competition or cooperation, tolerance of physical pain, concept of "self", concept of past and future, definition of obscenity, attitudes toward dependents, problem solving roles in relation to age, sex, class, occupation, kinship, and ...

Deep Culture
Unconscious Rules
Emotional level - intense

Food, dress, music, visual arts, drama, crafts, dance, literature, languagae, celebrations, games
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Photo Credit: Indiana Department of Education - Language Minority and Migrant Program
Cultural norms you may be used to

- China
  - Group harmony - Collectivist
  - Loyalty
  - Long-term relationships
  - Indirect, reading between the lines
    - People may say “maybe” when they mean “no”
    - People are polite, saving face
  - Crowds
Cultural norms you may encounter

- **United States**
  - Independence - Individualistic
  - Self-reliance
  - “Friends”
  - Recognition
  - Direct, to-the-point
  - “We should get lunch sometime.”
  - We like lines
  - Don’t jump in line in front of others
Cultural aspects to keep in mind
Cultural aspects to keep in mind

- Drinking age is 21 years of age
- You will need XL twin bed sheets in the residence halls
- Making friends can be challenging, even for American students
- You need to practice your English
- People you don’t know will say hello or smile
- When people ask “how are you” it’s a form of hello
Cultural aspects to keep in mind

• Ask questions
• You may have stereotypes of people in the United States:
  – Fat and lazy
  – Arrogant
  – Self-absorbed
  – Everyone has a gun
  – Loud
  – Self-centered
  – Bad at geography
• How did you develop these stereotypes?
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- Un-cultured
- Selfish
- Arrogant

USA MMA
Cultural Norms
Cultural aspects to keep in mind

- You will be asked questions
- Americans may have stereotypes about you which may cause some silly questions:
  - Do you have computers in your country?
  - Do you have electricity?
  - Do you use cell phones?
  - Do you own a pet panda?
  - Do you wear clothes when you are at home?
  - Do you know karate?
  - Are there fast-food restaurants in your country?
  - Have you ridden an elephant?
NO MATTER HOW MANY BOOKS YOU READ ...
FRIENDS
YOU TALK TO ...
YOU CANNOT PREPARE FOR EVERYTHING.
Cultural Norms

- **IKEA Sign:** The sign uses Chinese characters, indicating it is located in a Chinese-speaking region.

- **Toilet Sign:** The sign shows the correct and incorrect ways to use a squat toilet, emphasizing cultural differences in toilet usage.

- **No Tissue:** The image with a prohibition symbol indicates that using toilet paper in a certain manner is not recommended, possibly due to cultural or environmental reasons.

- **Pocket Tissues:** The image of pocket tissues suggests alternatives to traditional toilet paper.