

# UNIT 7

## Bridging the culture gap

### ▼ AGENDA

- ▶ Modal verbs: *must/mustn't/needn't, have to/need to*
- ▶ City descriptions file.  
British English and American English
- ▶ International outsourcing
- ▶ Giving talks and presentations

### Language focus

- 1 Look at the heading from a conference programme. Imagine you are going to this conference.

**MOSCONE CENTER SOUTH • SAN FRANCISCO**

### 'Doing business in different countries and cultures'

A convention for international businesses  
SEPTEMBER 5-8

- 1 What topics do you expect to be on the programme?
- 2 What practical information do you need about attending the conference?

- 2 Read the extract from the conference advice sheets. Check your answers to question 2 in 1.

#### Arrival and registration

Your hotel will advise you on public transportation from your hotel to the Moscone Conference Center. Alternatively, you can call the following toll-free taxicab numbers: 626 2345, 648 4444, or 673 1414.

Conference registration opens at 10.00 on September 5th at Desk B of the Moscone Center South. Please bring your registration documents with you.

- 3 You are going to listen to a conversation between a young Chinese businessman and his English language teacher. Wu Chao is about to leave for the conference in San Francisco and Mike Millard is Canadian, but is now based in China.

Before you listen discuss what advice you think Mike will give Wu Chao on these topics about doing business with Americans.

- speed of negotiation
- sensitivity to cultural differences
- individual initiative and achievement
- making decisions
- periods of silence in meetings
- social formalities

- 4 7.1 Listen to the first part of the conversation and check your answers in 3.

- 5 7.1 Listen again. Complete the sentences.

- 1 I know I \_\_\_\_\_ be prepared for things to be very different.
- 2 You \_\_\_\_\_ expect the way of doing business to be the same.
- 3 You \_\_\_\_\_ remember that American business culture is largely individualistic.
- 4 You \_\_\_\_\_ think clearly and quickly when you're doing business.
- 5 You \_\_\_\_\_ worry. In American business culture, they stick to the rules.
- 6 You \_\_\_\_\_ spend a long time on social formalities.



- 6 7.2 Listen to the second part of the conversation. What advice or information does Mike give Wu Chao about

- 1 general conversation topics?
- 2 asking personal questions?
- 3 if you don't understand what someone is saying to you?
- 4 being on time?

- 7 7.2 Listen again. Complete the sentences.

- 1 You \_\_\_\_\_ ask about a person's job in general terms.
- 2 You \_\_\_\_\_ ask a person how old they are.
- 3 You \_\_\_\_\_ ask a few questions about her husband and children.
- 4 You \_\_\_\_\_ find you don't understand everything people are saying.
- 5 You \_\_\_\_\_ stop the person you're talking to and ask for clarification.
- 6 You \_\_\_\_\_ be invited for a round of golf.
- 7 You \_\_\_\_\_ practise your golf before you go.

- 8 Write the modal verbs from 5 and 7 next to the appropriate meaning.

- 1 it's necessary/obligatory \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 it's not necessary/obligatory \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 it's necessary/obligatory *not* to do it \_\_\_\_\_
- 4 it's possible \_\_\_\_\_
- 5 it's permitted \_\_\_\_\_
- 6 it's advisable \_\_\_\_\_
- 7 it's not advisable \_\_\_\_\_

### Modal verbs, *have to/need to*

Read the examples. Answer the questions and complete the rules.

#### *must/mustn't/needn't*

- I **must** go and pack.
- What else **must** I be careful about?
- You **mustn't** ask questions that are too personal.
- You **needn't** worry. In American business culture, they stick to the rules.

#### *have to/need to*

- You **have to** be on time for meetings and business appointments.
- You **need to** think clearly and quickly.
- Do I **have to** be on time for everything?
- Do I **need to** know about American popular culture?
- You **don't have to** arrive exactly on time for parties and social occasions.
- You **don't need to** spend a long time on social formalities.

- 1 How do we make questions with *must*?
- 2 How do we make questions and negatives with other modal verbs, e.g. *can, could, may, might, should*?
- 3 How do we make questions and negatives with *have to* and *need to*?
- 4 What is the Past Simple form of *have to*?

Write *mustn't* or *needn't*.

- \_\_\_\_\_ is used to express no necessity or obligation to do something.
- \_\_\_\_\_ is used to express a necessity or obligation not to do something.

Write *have to, need to, or must*.

- \_\_\_\_\_ usually expresses the personal opinion of the speaker about what is necessary or obligatory.
- \_\_\_\_\_ usually expresses a general obligation outside the control of the speaker, or an obligation based on a rule or law.
- \_\_\_\_\_ is used in both contexts to express necessity.

- Practice 1** Read this email from the Human Resources department of a company to their delegate for the San Francisco conference. Choose the best alternatives.

**From** Glenys Garbett **To** John R Livitsky  
**Subject** San Francisco conference

John,

Just a few last-minute reminders about the conference. According to the schedule, you *have to/must<sup>1</sup>* register at the conference at 10 o'clock.

I know you're very interested in Argentina, so you *have to/must<sup>2</sup>* sign up for the optional session on South America. As far as the other sessions are concerned, you *don't need to/mustn't<sup>3</sup>* worry – you can choose. The Managing Director would like you to meet with Jacques Pétain. It *mustn't/needn't<sup>4</sup>* be a formal meeting – a chat in the bar is OK if you want. However, you *mustn't/needn't<sup>5</sup>* tell him about our plans in Argentina, as they're highly confidential.

You *don't have to/mustn't<sup>6</sup>* take any brochures, but you can take a few if you want.

On a more personal note, as I know you haven't been to San Francisco before, you *must/have to<sup>7</sup>* pack some warm clothes. It can get quite cool in the evenings. Also smoking: you *don't need to/mustn't<sup>8</sup>* smoke anywhere in public buildings – they're very strict about it. One last thing – you *don't have to/mustn't<sup>9</sup>* forget your registration form!

Good luck! Glenys

## Pronunciation

- 1** **7.3** Listen and write the number of words you hear in the sentences.  
Count contractions (e.g. *don't*) as one word.

1 \_\_\_\_\_ 3 \_\_\_\_\_ 5 \_\_\_\_\_ 7 \_\_\_\_\_  
2 \_\_\_\_\_ 4 \_\_\_\_\_ 6 \_\_\_\_\_ 8 \_\_\_\_\_

- 2** **7.3** Listen again and complete the sentences.

1 I \_\_\_\_\_ go to the talk. 5 We \_\_\_\_\_ to ask him.  
2 You \_\_\_\_\_ be late. 6 Do \_\_\_\_\_ early tomorrow?  
3 You \_\_\_\_\_ about me. 7 He \_\_\_\_\_ very hard.  
4 You \_\_\_\_\_ take an umbrella. 8 What \_\_\_\_\_ should do?

- 3** **7.3** Listen again and repeat after each sentence.





allowed  
obligatory  
recommended  
forbidden  
permitted  
required

**2** **7.4** Listen to some recorded information about driving and parking in San Francisco.

- 1 Complete the sentences with words from the box.
  - a A full international driving license and auto insurance are \_\_\_\_\_ for all drivers.
  - b The wearing of seat belts is \_\_\_\_\_.
  - c It is \_\_\_\_\_ to drive under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
  - d It is \_\_\_\_\_ to stop or park at red curbs at any time.
  - e Only commercial vehicles are \_\_\_\_\_ to load at yellow curbs.
  - f All vehicles are \_\_\_\_\_ to stop at green curbs for a maximum of ten minutes.
  - g The following tips are \_\_\_\_\_ for tourists driving in the Bay Area.
- 2 Which sentences express: permission, advice, obligation, obligation not to do something?
- 3 Rephrase each extract as if you were speaking directly to the person.
- 4 What advice about driving would you give people visiting your country? Think about vehicle safety and general driving etiquette, as well as driving and parking laws.

**3** Rewrite these sentences where necessary so they are true for your country.

- 1 Everyone has to have an identity card.
- 2 Smoking in restaurants and bars is forbidden.
- 3 You mustn't use mobile phones in public places like restaurants and museums or art galleries.
- 4 You are not allowed to go into a bar serving alcohol if you are under 18.
- 5 You have to buy a ticket before you get on a bus.
- 6 People from other countries do not need a visa to enter the country.
- 7 You have to pay for your tuition fees if you go to university.
- 8 You are not allowed to own a gun without a special licence.

**4** Work in pairs. Ask your partner questions about the activities in the box, or other activities. Use *have to* in different tenses. Then complete sentences 1–8.

**Examples** *Do you have to work at the weekends?*  
*Did you have to use your English yesterday?*  
*Will you have to work late tomorrow?*

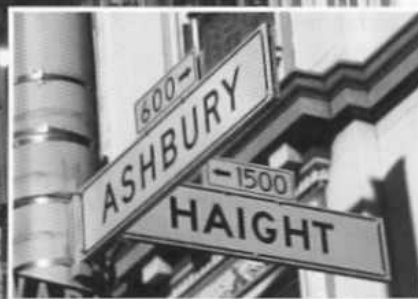
My partner

- |                         |                       |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 has to _____          | 5 has had to _____    |
| 2 doesn't have to _____ | 6 hasn't had to _____ |
| 3 had to _____          | 7 will have to _____  |
| 4 didn't have to _____  | 8 won't have to _____ |

work long hours  
make a long journey to work  
use your spoken English at work  
send emails in English  
use a computer a lot  
get up early  
do the housework  
go abroad in business  
make a lot of phone calls  
do repairs around the house

- 1 What do you know about San Francisco? Look at the photographs to help you. Make notes under the headings in the box.

- Geography/climate
- Transport
- Culture/entertainment
- Eating/drinking
- Business/industry



- 2
- 1 Read the description of San Francisco. Add information to the five headings in 1.
  - 2 Find places and things that are also in your town or city.
- Examples *beach, skyscrapers, financial district*
- 3 Which places and things mentioned in the text are not in your town or city?

## San Francisco

Situated on a 120-square-kilometre peninsula – bounded in the west by the Pacific Ocean, the north by the Golden Gate Strait, and the north-east by the Bay – San Francisco was once a small Spanish fishing village. It has now grown into a lively and cosmopolitan city and one of the main business and tourist centers in California. The population is over 800,000 in the city, with a total of nearly seven million inhabitants living in the wider metropolitan area. The climate is never too hot and never too cold – although it can get chilly and foggy at times.

Dramatic hills, stunning beaches, soaring skyscrapers, peaceful parks, and interesting architecture help to make San Francisco one of America's most visited cities. San Francisco is also a very safe and clean city. Tourism is the main industry, with visitors enjoying the famous tourist attractions such as the Golden Gate Bridge and Alcatraz, as well as the museums and art galleries, concert halls, and theaters. There is an extensive range of retail outlets

in the shopping malls and streets of the city, and a wide variety of eating establishments, especially in the exciting ethnic neighborhoods such as China Town, North Beach (Italian), and the Mission (Mexican).

There are many other businesses in San Francisco. Although the 1990s boom of the dot com industries has now passed, the computer industry and new media in general are still big businesses, helped by the proximity of Silicon Valley. The financial district in downtown San Francisco is also full of banking, insurance, and other corporate enterprises.

The public transportation system makes all areas of the city accessible, and getting around is reasonably quick and cheap. There are buses, a subway system, and of course the famous cable cars. But probably the best way to experience the rich variety of this fascinating city is on foot.



small  
foggy  
cosmopolitan  
hot  
cold  
dramatic  
accessible  
safe  
stunning  
famous  
fascinating  
peaceful  
lively  
extensive  
interesting  
exciting  
quick  
clean  
chilly  
cheap  
soaring

- 3 What do each of the adjectives in the box describe in the text?

Example *small – fishing village*

- 4 Match these adjectives in the box with their opposites in the box in 3.

dirty	dangerous	dull	boring
noisy	warm	limited	expensive

- 5 1 Look at these pairs of words. Which one is American English and which one is British English? Use an English–English dictionary to help you.

a downtown/city centre	e elevator/lift
b shopping mall/shopping centre	f taxi/cab
c pavement/sidewalk	g freeway/motorway
d flat/apartment	h gas/petrol

- 2 American English and British English spelling is sometimes different, e.g. *center* (AmE) and *centre* (BrE). Can you find any other examples of American English spelling in the San Francisco text?

- 3 Do you know any other differences between American English and British English?

- 6 Work in pairs. Describe the town or city where you live to each other. Use words and phrases in 2, 3, and 4.

- 7 Look at the list of common questions asked by visitors when they are in a city for the first time.

- I'm only in the city for a day. What can I do?
- Where can I get the best view of the city?
- How do I get to (*name of famous attraction*)?
- Is there a discount travel pass?
- Who do I call for hotel reservations?
- What's the nightlife like?
- What type of food and restaurants do you recommend?
- Where are the main shopping areas?

- 1 Which of the questions do you think would be asked by a business visitor?  
2 How would you reply to a business visitor to your city or town asking these questions? Role-play with a partner.



## The outsourcing option – the way to save your company money

### 500 jobs lost as bank relocates call centre to India



- 1 Work in pairs. Look at the photograph and headlines.
  - 1 What do you think is meant by 'international outsourcing'?
  - 2 What is a *call centre*?
  - 3 Why do some businesses have call centres based in other countries?
  - 4 What good or bad experiences have you had phoning call centres?
- 2 Read the article and check your answers to questions 1 and 2 in 1. Then answer these questions.
  - 1 In which countries are call centres often based?
  - 2 Why is the number of international call centres increasing?
  - 3 What characteristics and skills does a good call centre operative need?
  - 4 List the ways in which call centre operatives are helped to relate to callers from different countries.

## Indians learn to be Brad and Britney

Elocution lessons are helping staff at call centres in India to lose their accents and make them more effective when speaking to customers from the UK and the USA.

Many western companies now use international outsourcing as part of their business operation. Outsourcing is when a company uses a different company, often in another country, to manage some of their business tasks, particularly telephone help and information lines – known as 'call centres'.

Most English-speaking countries outsource to call centres in countries like India, where English is spoken. India in fact accounts for 66% of international call centre outsourcing. But other countries, such as the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Mexico,

Poland, Russia, and Romania, are also used by western companies.

Advances in technology, the falling cost of international phone calls, and the big differences in labour costs mean that international call centres are booming. It is estimated that soon there will be more than two million call centre operatives in India.

Call centre operatives have to be polite, friendly, and helpful and they need to be able to give information clearly and respond to customer questions. They also need to sympathize with callers and understand their problems. Call centres go to great lengths to make their staff sound like they are from the country of the person they are speaking to.

Zia Sheikh, head and co-founder of Infowavz International in Mumbai said, 'There are definitely challenges about bridging the culture gap between someone sitting in Denver and someone supporting them from India who's probably never travelled outside the country. We believe that it's important that the caller should feel like they're talking to someone next door. They mustn't know that the voice at

the other end of the line is from the other side of the world.'

Staff are sometimes given Western pseudonyms to use such as 'Brad' or 'Britney' instead of their real names. They also watch films from the UK and US to learn about how people live their lives. One call centre operative, 'James', who has never been to the UK, attended a crash course in British culture. His course taught him that 'what English people like most is going to the pub, and they love horse racing and obviously football, and they like food such as puddings and fish and chips.'

Call centres also have clocks set to the time of the countries that are calling them so they know whether the caller has just got up, or is about to have dinner, or go out. They have regular weather reports, so that they can make conversation about the weather and other topics of small talk.

So the next time you phone to ask for information about train times or because you have a problem with your computer, you might be talking to someone on the other side of the world. But will you actually know?

- ③ Find words or phrases in the text that mean
- 1 the ability to speak clearly and correctly, especially in public.
  - 2 a way of pronouncing words connected with the country, area, or social class that you come from.
  - 3 progress or developments in something.
  - 4 understand and share someone's feelings or problem.
  - 5 make more effort than usual in order to achieve something.
  - 6 new and difficult things that force you to make a lot of effort.
  - 7 a name that you use professionally that is not your real name.
  - 8 a course which gives you a lot of information in a very short time.
  - 9 desserts, often sweet and heavy.

- ④  7.5 Listen to this discussion from a business meeting. Complete the table.

	Advantages	Disadvantages
1 companies		
2 home countries		
3 countries where call centres are located		

- ⑤ Work in groups. Give your own opinion of the advantages and disadvantages of call centres and international outsourcing in general. Compare your views with the other groups.
- ⑥ Work in groups. Produce a training guide for call centre staff dealing with callers from all over the world, with specific advice about callers from your country. Include the following areas:

## A practical guide for call centre staff



- \* General advice on being polite and friendly, on how to answer the phone, and on how to address the caller.



- \* General advice on speech delivery, accent, and phone manner.
- \* Suitable pseudonyms to adopt when talking to people from particular countries (including your own).



- \* Topics for conversation and small talk. What would callers from your country want to talk about?
- \* Cultural differences. Are there any particular cultural differences that you think call centre operatives should be made aware of?

Compare your guide with other groups.



## Giving talks and presentations

- 1 Work in groups. Make a list of what you need to do to give a successful talk or presentation.



- 2 Carol Hunt is a freelance consultant for NMP. She gives talks and presentations on a variety of subjects.
- 1 What is the title of her talk?
  - 2 What do you think is meant by 'signposting language'?

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Carol Hunt



## Communication skills at work

## Giving talks and presentations

- Preparation
- 'Signposting language'
- Delivery

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## Communication skills at work

## Preparation: six key points

- Objectives
- Audience
- Content
- Organization
- Visual information
- Practice

- 3 Which of the six key points on Preparation do you think these questions refer to?
- 1 Who are you talking to?
  - 2 What is the aim of your talk?
  - 3 Is the talk clear and logical?
  - 4 Have you practised giving the talk?
  - 5 What is the important information to get across?
  - 6 What do you want to achieve?
  - 7 Have you checked the timing?
  - 8 Can you use the visual display equipment correctly?
  - 9 Are you using 'signposting language' that makes the talk easy to follow?
  - 10 Are you showing too much information on the screen or slide?
  - 11 What do they need to know?
  - 12 Are you sure what you are saying is interesting?

- 4  7.6 Listen to the first part of Carol Hunt's talk and check your answers in 3.

- 5 Carol Hunt gives a handout on 'Signposting language'. Write the correct heading for each extract.

Introducing each section  
Referring to questions  
Summarizing a section  
Introducing the topic  
Dealing with questions

Referring backwards and forwards  
Concluding  
Referring to visual information  
Referring to common knowledge  
Checking understanding

## Signposting language

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_  
 This morning | I'm going to ... (talk about ...)  
 Today | I'd like to ... (describe ...)  
 The aim of my presentation this morning is to ... (explain ...)  
 I've divided my presentation into ... (three parts).  
 My talk will be in ...  
 First, | I'd like to ... (give you an overview of ...)  
 Second, | I'll | move on to ...  
 Then | focus on ...  
 After that, | we'll | deal with ...  
 Finally, | consider ...
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Feel free to | interrupt me if there's anything  
 | you don't understand.  
 If you don't mind, we'll leave questions till the end.
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_  
 So, let's start with ... (objectives ...)  
 Now let's move on to ... (the next part ...)  
 Let's turn our attention to ... (the question of ...)  
 This leads me to ... (my third point ...)  
 Finally ... (let's consider ...)
- 4 \_\_\_\_\_  
 That completes my ... (description of ...)  
 So, to summarize ... (There are five key points ...)
- 5 \_\_\_\_\_  
 I mentioned earlier ... (the importance of ...)  
 I'll say more about this later.  
 We'll come back to this point later.
- 6 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Is that clear?  
 Are there any questions?
- 7 \_\_\_\_\_  
 This screen shows ... (a diagram).  
 If you look at this graph you can see ...  
 What is interesting in this slide is ...  
 I'd like to draw your attention to ... (this chart ...)
- 8 \_\_\_\_\_  
 As you know ...  
 As I'm sure you're aware ...
- 9 \_\_\_\_\_  
 That concludes my talk.  
 That brings me to the end of my presentation.  
 If you have any questions I'd be pleased I'll do my best to  
 answer them.  
 Thank you for your attention.
- 10 \_\_\_\_\_  
 That's a good point.  
 I'm glad you asked that question.  
 Can I get back to you on that later? I'm afraid I don't have ...  
 (the information at present).  
 I'm afraid I'm not the right person to answer that.

- 6 7.7 Listen to the last part of Carol Hunt's presentation. Complete the key points about delivery on the screen.

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Carol Hunt



### Communication skills at work

#### Delivery – key points

- 1 nerves
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_
- 4 \_\_\_\_\_
- 5 \_\_\_\_\_

- 7 7.7 Listen again. Make notes to help you remember what the presenter says about the five areas. Then compare notes with a partner.

- 8 Work in groups or individually.

- 1 Prepare a talk or presentation on a topic of your choice. Use the information in this section to think about how you will organize your talk – e.g. how many sections, what visual aids, what visual information systems, how to deal with questions, what signposting language to use.
- 2 Give your talk or presentation to the rest of the class.