

UNIT 8

Crossing cultures

▼ AGENDA

- ▶ Modal verbs: *should/shouldn't, may, might*
- ▶ *have to/don't have to*
- ▶ *it's important to/not to*
- ▶ Descriptions file. Using a dictionary and word building
- ▶ Across cultures
- ▶ Invitations

Language focus

- 1** Read the questions. Talk about what happens in your country and describe any differences with other countries you know.

What happens in your country?

- 1 How do people greet
 - a family members?
 - b close friends?
 - c colleagues at work?
 - d visitors to their company/organization?
- 2 Do colleagues at work call each other by their
 - a first names?
 - b family names?
- 3 How punctual are people for
 - a business meetings?
 - b social events?
- 4 How separate are work and private life? Do employees
 - a take work home?
 - b invite colleagues or business visitors to their home?
 - c give their company their phone number when they're on holiday?
- 5 What presents do people take when they are invited to a person's home?

- 2** The words in A are in the extracts in **3**. Match them with their meaning in B.

A	B
1 schedule	a opposite of 'polite'
2 agenda	b programme of work to do
3 interrupt	c without words
4 rude	d how someone looks
5 non-verbal	e say something is very good
6 appearance	f speak when another person is speaking
7 compliment	g list of subjects to discuss at a meeting

- 3** Read these extracts from *Understanding Cultural Differences*, a book that gives advice about working in other countries. Then discuss with a partner which country you think the author is describing.

Extract 1

... It's important to be serious in a work situation. They don't mix work and play so you shouldn't make jokes as you do in the UK and USA when you first meet people. They work in a very organized way and prefer to do one thing at a time. They don't like interruptions or sudden changes of schedule. Punctuality is very important so you should arrive on time for appointments. At meetings it's important to follow the agenda and not interrupt another speaker. If you give a presentation, you should focus on facts and technical information and the quality of your company's products. You should also prepare well, as they may ask a lot of questions. Colleagues normally use family names, and titles – for example 'Doctor' or 'Professor', so you shouldn't use first names unless a person asks you to.

Sweden _____ France _____ Germany _____



- 4 Were your answers in 3 correct? Do you think the descriptions of the nationalities are accurate? Do you disagree with any of the advice?
- 5 Look at the extracts in 3 again. What verbs and phrases does the author use to give advice?

Modal verbs

Modal verbs are special auxiliary verbs which add extra meaning to the main verb. For example, modals can express advice, necessity, and possibility.

Read the examples and complete the grammar rules. Then answer the questions.

should/shouldn't

- You **should** arrive on time for appointments.
- You **shouldn't** make jokes as you do in the UK and USA.
- Use **should** to say *it's a good idea*.
- Use _____ to say *it's a bad idea*.

have to/don't have to

- They **have to** ask everyone in the company.
- You **don't have to** be formal.
- Use _____ to say *it's necessary or obligatory*.
- Use _____ to say *it's not necessary or obligatory*.

Note To say *it's necessary* we also use *it's important to/not to*.

may/might

- They **may** ask a lot of questions.
- They **might** think you're rude if you don't.
- Use _____ to say *it's about 50% possible*.
- Use **might** to say *it's less than 50% possible*.

Do **should**, **may**, and **might** have -s in the *he/she/it* form?

Do we use **to** after **should/shouldn't**, **may**, and **might**?

How do we make questions with **should**?

How do we make questions with **have to**?



Pocket Book p. 8

Find other examples of these modal verbs in the book extracts in 3.

Understanding Cultural Differences

Extract 2

... Politeness and good manners are very important and business meetings are very formal. Business cards are also important and they exchange these at the beginning of a meeting. They always look at them carefully, so you should do the same as they might think you're rude if you don't. A lot of communication is non-verbal. They are very good listeners and may ask a lot of questions to check they understand everything. In a conversation they wait longer before they reply than westerners do, so it's important not to speak in those long pauses but to wait for their reply. In their culture it's rude to ask direct questions or to say 'No' or 'I disagree'. In business it takes a long time to make a decision because they have to ask everyone in the company. When they say 'Yes' it may mean 'I understand', not 'I agree', and when they smile it might be because they don't know what to say.

Japan _____ India _____ China _____

Extract 3

... People and personal relationships are more important than time and schedules, which are flexible. People may be late for an appointment, although they are more punctual in the north of the country than in the south. To north Europeans their way of working may seem disorganized and inefficient. In meetings they don't feel they have to follow the agenda or speak only in turn. They interrupt each other a lot and often all talk at the same time. They are excellent communicators and are very expressive in their use of body language. Appearance and good manners are important, so you should dress well and be polite, but you don't have to be formal. Food is a very important part of life, and is very good, so remember to compliment them on their cuisine.

France _____ Italy _____ Spain _____

Practice

- 1 Complete the sentences. Use a modal verb which adds the meaning in brackets.

- 1 In California you _____ be 21 to drink alcohol. (It's obligatory.)
- 2 In the Netherlands you _____ be 18 to buy beer, but you do to buy wine. (It's not necessary.)
- 3 In Hong Kong you _____ get a fine if you eat or drink on the subway system. (It's possible.)
- 4 In Thailand you _____ get permission before you take photos of images of Buddha. (It's a good idea.)
- 5 In Turkey and Japan you _____ blow your nose in public. (It's a bad idea.)

- 2 Work in pairs. Can you suggest reasons for these cultural dos and don'ts? Discuss your ideas.

In Russia


- 1 Why is it important not to give an even number of flowers (e.g. 8, 10, 12) as a present?
- 2 Why shouldn't you smoke in Red Square, Moscow?
- 3 Why do you have to leave your coat in the cloakroom when you go to a restaurant or a theatre?
- 4 If you visit someone in their home in winter, why should you take a pair of indoor shoes with you?

In Japan


- 1 Why shouldn't you speak loudly or show you're angry when speaking to Japanese people?
- 2 Why is it important not to pour your own drink when you are with friends or people you know?
- 3 Why should westerners stand further away than is normal for them when they are in conversation with Japanese people?
- 4 Why do you have to take a shower before you get into a Japanese communal bath?

- 3  8.1 Listen to the answers. Were you right?

Pronunciation

- 1  8.2 Listen to the example. Which two words have the main stress? Underline them. Why are they stressed?

Example *You might have a few problems, but you won't have many.*

- 2  8.3 Listen to the sentences below. Underline the two words in each sentence that have the main stress.

- 1 You should always be punctual, but you don't have to be formal.
- 2 You don't have to wear a suit, but you must wear a tie.
- 3 You have to get permission first, but the managers don't.
- 4 The Japanese may think you rude, but the Italians won't.
- 5 It's important to be serious at work, but not when you're at a party.

- 3  8.3 Listen again. Repeat the sentences.

- 4 Work in pairs. Practise the sentences in 2. Change the meaning by changing the stress.



- 4 A foreign visitor who is going to work in your company/organization for a year needs your advice. What reply would you give to the visitor's questions below? Use *should/shouldn't, have to/don't have to, may/might, it's important to/not to* in your answers.

Examples *You don't have to use a person's title when you're talking to them, but of course it's important to use it when you write the name on a letter or a formal list.*

At a meeting you should keep to the agenda and not interrupt people because they may think you're rude. You should wait until a person has finished speaking before you say anything.

- 1 How should I greet people in the morning? Should I shake hands with colleagues or just say 'hello'?
- 2 Should I use a person's title if they have one?
- 3 At a meeting, is it important to keep to the agenda? Is it OK to interrupt or do I have to wait my turn to speak?
- 4 Should I dress formally for work? Do I have to wear a suit and tie every day?
- 5 Are people usually serious at work or is it OK to make jokes?
- 6 At a business lunch is it OK to discuss business during the meal or should I wait until after the meal?
- 7 To talk to more senior people do I have to make an appointment or can I just knock on their door?
- 8 Do people usually exchange business cards at first meetings? If so, should I do it at the beginning of the meeting?

- 5 Work in groups. Brainstorm your ideas for this competition. Then make a list of your eight best ideas. Use *should/shouldn't, have to/don't have to, may/might, it's important to/not to*.

COMPETITION

Win a three-month intensive English course in the country of your choice! All you have to do is answer this question.

What is the secret of successful language learning?

Here are some suggestions for topics. Add other topics.

- motivation
- course length
- learning vocabulary
- reading newspapers, books, magazines in English

Examples *It's very important to be motivated and to enjoy speaking the language.*

You have to be patient. It takes a long time to learn a language well.

- 6 Present your ideas to the class.



- 1 A good dictionary gives you information that helps you learn vocabulary more easily. Read the dictionary extracts. Use the information to complete the table.

* **efficient** /i'fɪʃnt/ **adj** able to work well without making mistakes or wasting time and energy: *Our secretary is very efficient.* • *You must find a more efficient way of organizing your time.* → opposite **inefficient** -efficiency /i'fɪʃnsi/ **noun** [U] -efficiently **adv**

* **honest** /'ɒnɪst/ **adj** 1 (used about a person) telling the truth; not deceiving people or stealing: *Just be honest – do you like this skirt or not?* • *To be honest, I don't think that's a very good idea.* 2 showing honest qualities: *an honest face* • *I'd like your honest opinion, please.* → opposite for both senses **dishonest** -honesty **noun** [U] → opposite **dishonesty**

* **polite** /pə'laɪt/ **adj** having good manners and showing respect for others. *The assistants in that shop are always very helpful and polite.* • *He gave me a polite smile.* → Opposite **impolite** or **impertinent** -politely **adv** -politeness **noun** [U]

* **punctual** /'pʌŋktʃuəl/ **adj** doing sth or happening at the right time; not late: *It is important to be punctual for your classes.* > We say the train, bus, etc was **on time** not punctual.
-punctuality /'pʌŋktʃu'æləti/ **noun** [U]: *Japanese trains are famous for their punctuality.*
-punctually **adv**

* **reliable** /rɪ'laɪəbl/ **adj** that you can trust: *Japanese cars are usually very reliable.* • *Is he a reliable witness?* → opposite **unreliable** → verb **rely** -reliability /rɪ,laɪə'bɪləti/ **noun** [U] -reliably /'ɒbli/ **adv**: *I have been reliably informed that there will be no trains tomorrow.*

Definition taken from the Oxford Wordpower Dictionary
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Adjective	Opposite adjective	Noun
efficient	_____	_____
honest	_____	_____
polite	_____	_____
punctual	<u>unpunctual*</u>	_____
reliable	_____	_____

* A dictionary does not usually give the opposite adjective when it begins with the prefix *un-*.

- ② We add a prefix to the beginning of a word, and a suffix to the end, e.g. *unpunctual*, *punctuality*. Look at the table in ①. Which other prefixes make an opposite adjective? Which other suffixes make a noun from an adjective?
- ③ Match the adjectives in the box with the definitions.

ambitious	adaptable	creative	easy-going	hard-working
organized	outgoing	patient	sensitive	sociable

A person who ...

Adjective

- | | |
|---|-------|
| 1 enjoys being with other people | _____ |
| 2 waits and doesn't get angry | _____ |
| 3 works with energy and effort | _____ |
| 4 is calm and relaxed | _____ |
| 5 wants to be successful | _____ |
| 6 plans their work and life | _____ |
| 7 adapts easily in different situations | _____ |
| 8 uses their imagination to make and do new things | _____ |
| 9 is interested in other people and new experiences | _____ |
| 10 shows understanding of other people's feelings, problems, etc. | _____ |

- ④ Complete the table. Use the correct prefix (*dis-*, *im-*, *in-*, *un-*) and suffix (*-ation*, *-ity*, *-n*, *-ce*).

Adjective	Opposite adjective	Noun
ambitious	_____	_____
organized	_____	_____
patient	_____	_____
sensitive	_____	_____

- ⑤ Which three adjectives in ① and ③ best describe your character? Would you like to be different in any way?
- ⑥ Work in groups. We often use particular adjectives to describe national characteristics, e.g. *Italians are very sociable*, *Brazilians are easy-going*, *Japanese are very polite*, etc. Choose four adjectives from ① and ③ which you think describe four different nationalities.
- ⑦ Tell the class which adjectives you chose in ⑥, and which nationalities you think they describe and why.
- ⑧ Do you think descriptions of national characteristics help us to understand other nationalities better, or are they too general to be helpful?

Across cultures

- 1 In his book, *When Cultures Collide*, about working with different nationalities, Richard D. Lewis divides countries into three cultural groups: 'Linear-active', 'Multi-active', and 'Reactive'. In his opinion, each group of countries in A has one of the cultures in B. Match the countries with the cultures.

A

- south-east Asia and Finland
- southern Europe and Latin America
- the USA and northern Europe

B

Linear-active

- do one thing at a time
- are punctual
- follow timetables and schedules
- rarely interrupt
- focus first on the job and finishing it in time

Multi-active

- do several things at the same time
- are unpunctual
- prefer flexibility to fixed timetables and schedules
- often interrupt
- think personal relationships are as important as the job

Reactive

- are punctual
- follow the timetable of the person they are doing business with
- do not express individual opinions or disagreement
- listen very carefully and do not interrupt
- do not speak first and pause before replying

- 2 8.4 Listen to the first part of a talk about Linear-active, Multi-active, and Reactive cultures. Check your answers for 1.
- 3 8.5 Listen to the second part of the talk. Complete the table to show the differences between the three groups. Write L (Linear-active), M (Multi-active) and R (Reactive) at appropriate points on the lines, as in the example.

punctual	<u>LR</u>	<u>M</u>	unpunctual
long pauses in conversation			no long pauses in conversation
a lot of eye contact			very little eye contact
stand close together			stand further away
use gestures a lot			use gestures very little

- 4 What do you think of Richard Lewis's analysis of different cultures? How useful is it in helping to avoid cultural misunderstandings?
- 5 Work in groups. Compare your answers to the questions.
- In your country
- how much eye contact is there between
 - people talking to each other?
 - strangers passing in the street?
 - do people
 - stand close enough to touch each other when they are speaking?
 - show affection in public (e.g. holding hands, kissing)?
 - what gestures do people use to
 - indicate 'Yes' and 'No'?
 - attract the attention of someone in a group?
 - call a waiter?
 - indicate they don't understand?
 - show surprise?
- 6 Describe any differences you have heard about or noticed in other nationalities. Do you think any of the differences could cause a cultural misunderstanding?

Invitations



- 1 8.6 Read the invitation. Listen to the telephone conversation between Monique Bresson and Duncan Ross. Answer the questions.

- 1 What invitation does Duncan make on the phone?
- 2 What is Monique's response?

Wine & Dine

Monique Bresson is invited to the 10th anniversary celebration of *Wine & Dine* magazine, to take place on Saturday 14 and Sunday 15 June at Glencross Castle, Scotland.

Return flight London-Edinburgh by charter aircraft is included in this invitation.

Duncan Ross

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- 2 8.7 After talking to Monique, Duncan phones James Turner. Listen to their conversation. Answer the questions.

- 1 Why doesn't James accept Duncan's invitation?
- 2 What makes him change his mind?

- 3 8.6, 8.7 Listen to both telephone conversations again. Tick (✓) the phrases you hear.

Inviting

I'd like to invite you to ...

Would you join us ... ?

Would you like to ... ?

Why don't you ... ?

How about ... ?

Declining

I'd love to, but (*I'm afraid I can't*).

Thanks a lot, but (*I've made another arrangement*).

Accepting

Thank you. I'd be delighted to accept.

Thank you. I'd love to.

Thank you. I'd enjoy that.

- 4 Work in pairs. Use the phrases in 3 to make and respond to invitations. Think of two more situations and practise them.



Student A

Situation 1

Invite your colleague to join you for lunch tomorrow.

Suggest another day next week.

Situation 2

Decline and give a reason.

Suggest lunch another day.

Student B

Decline and give a reason.

Accept.

Invite your colleague for a drink after work.

Accept.