

# Intercultural communication

SPEAKING

LEVEL  
Advanced

NUMBER  
EN\_BE\_3903S

LANGUAGE  
English

lingoda





## Goals

- Can read, listen to and understand a text about cultural misunderstandings.
- Can explain how to adapt my language to be more culturally sensitive.







## What is culture?

**Look at the definitions of culture below. Do you agree with them? What might you add to them?**



Culture is our way of life. It is a reflection of our history and affects how we express ideas and creativity.



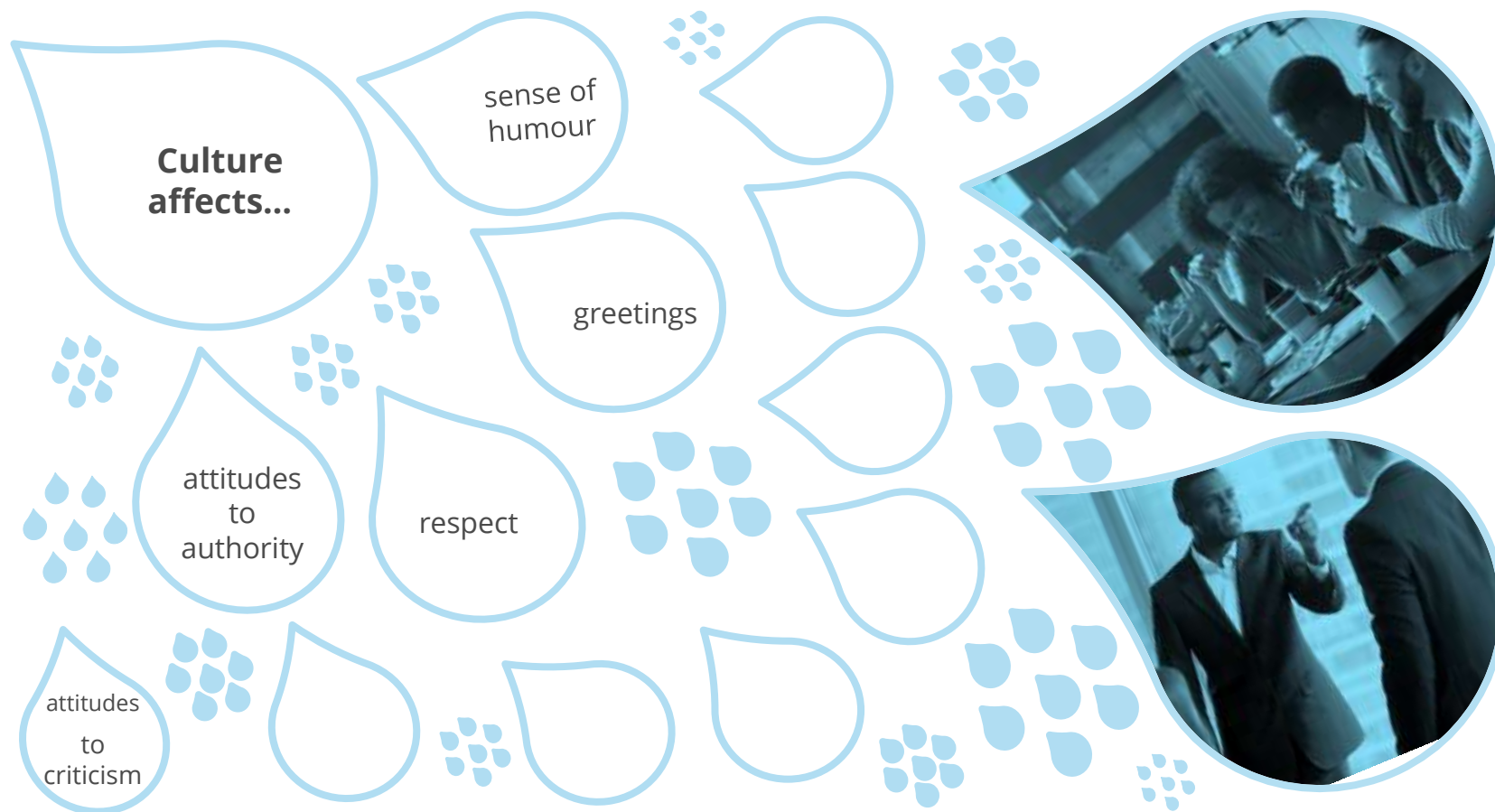
Culture is a set of social norms for any given group, touching on religion, food, language, social habits and the arts.





## Things affected by culture

Complete the brainstorm with things which are affected by culture.





## Greetings

**Read through the dialogue of people comparing greetings in their countries.**



In France we often kiss each other on the cheeks when we greet people.



That wouldn't go down well at all in Japan – people here prefer to bow.



A handshake is used in Poland, but you should always address the oldest or most senior person first and use a proper title for them.



## Comparing cultures

Think about the topics on your brainstorm and the dialogue on the previous page. Then talk to your teacher or classmates about the cultural norms in your country.

punctuality



eating times



building trust



dress codes





## Intercultural communication

It may seem obvious that culture affects the clothes we wear and the products we buy, but the effect this has on global companies is not something many of us think about. Products have to be **adapted** to suit specific **markets**; while one country might be used to very sweet chocolate, another prefers a creamier taste. So too do companies have to change brand names, **slogans** and other forms of advertising to **appeal** to different markets. Product **localisation**, when done in the right way, can be very **lucrative** for companies, but ignoring the need to adapt can have the opposite effect.





## Intercultural communication

In the world of business, it is becoming increasingly important to learn about different cultures as companies become more **globalised**. It is impossible to **conduct business** in the same way all around the world, and there are many **instances** of conflicts and misunderstandings **arising** in business due to a **clash of cultures**. It is **imperative** to learn the norms and taboos of a society with which you plan to interact in order to ensure **smooth cooperation**.





## Localisation

**Do you think that companies can sell their products in the same way all over the world?**





## Localisation

**Do all products  
need to be  
localised?**



**Which products need  
to take into account  
cultural elements  
when being localised?**





## Food

Some global food companies have a range of **country-specific products** to cater to the tastes of the **local market**.

Have you ever eaten something different from a **global company** when travelling abroad?





## Speaking

**Answer the questions below with your teacher or classmates.**



1

Do you know of any non-food products that have been localised in different countries?

2

Can you think of any products you've seen abroad that wouldn't sell well in your country?

3

Can you think of any examples when localisation has gone wrong or not been taken into account?



## Intercultural working

**Do you work with people from other cultures?  
Have you ever had any misunderstandings?**





## Get ready to listen



**The next few pages will focus on your listening comprehension.**



Listen out for these words while your teacher is speaking.  
Do you know what they mean?

gesture

intercultural

lingua franca

costly

actively listening

misconstrued





## Lingua franca



Is **English** the **lingua franca** in your industry?

Have you worked with anyone whose English wasn't quite as **good** as yours?

How did you deal with that?



## Discuss the following questions



Have you ever felt embarrassed about not understanding something at work?

Has a costly mistake ever been made in your company due to an intercultural misunderstanding?



## Active listening

**How do you show that you are listening in your country?  
How would you react to someone doing the things mentioned below  
when they were listening?**



leaning forward  
and sitting close  
to you



interrupting and  
asking questions



## Intercultural communication

Read though the tips below on how to ensure smooth intercultural communication.

1. **Use paraverbal communication:** this means thinking about the pace and pitch of your speech and paying attention to where you put emphasis or pauses in sentences.
2. **Use nonverbal communication:** use appropriate hand gestures and body language to help people understand.
3. **Avoid specific cultural references:** for example, don't talk about a childhood snack that was only available in your country.
4. **Use the *loop technique*:** if you suspect that someone has misunderstood, ask them to repeat your idea back to you in their own words. You can then either confirm or correct them.



Which of these tips have you used or would you use in the future?



## Tips for intercultural communication

**Can you add some tips to the ones on the previous page?**

**Discuss with your teacher or classmates.**





## Dialogue

**Read through the dialogue below. Which method of solving an intercultural communication problem do they use?**



I'm sorry, I'm not sure I understood what you just said.

Perhaps you could tell me what you did understand and we'll see if we're in agreement?



OK, sure. What I thought you meant was...



## Intercultural misunderstandings

What has gone wrong in the situations below? How would you fix them?



I'm sorry, you're speaking too quickly and I don't think I understand.



It's like Ross and Rachel... from *Friends*? No? No one knows that series?



Oh dear, we don't kiss each other on the cheeks here.



**Read the comment below and decide whether you agree with it or not.  
Is it true in some cases but not in others?**

Native speakers speak the worst English  
and are the hardest people to  
understand.



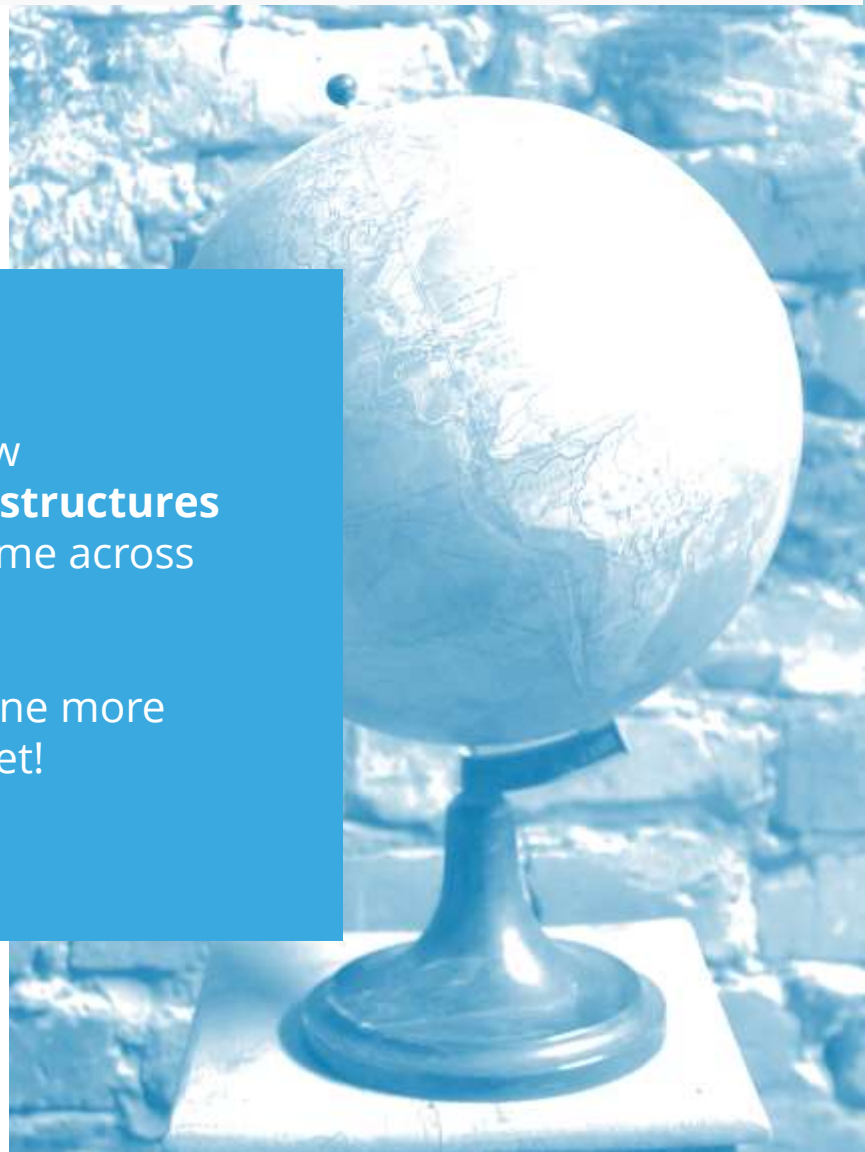




## Reflect on this lesson

Take a moment to review any new **vocabulary, phrases, language structures** or **grammar points** you have come across for the first time in this lesson.

Review them with your teacher one more time to make sure you don't forget!





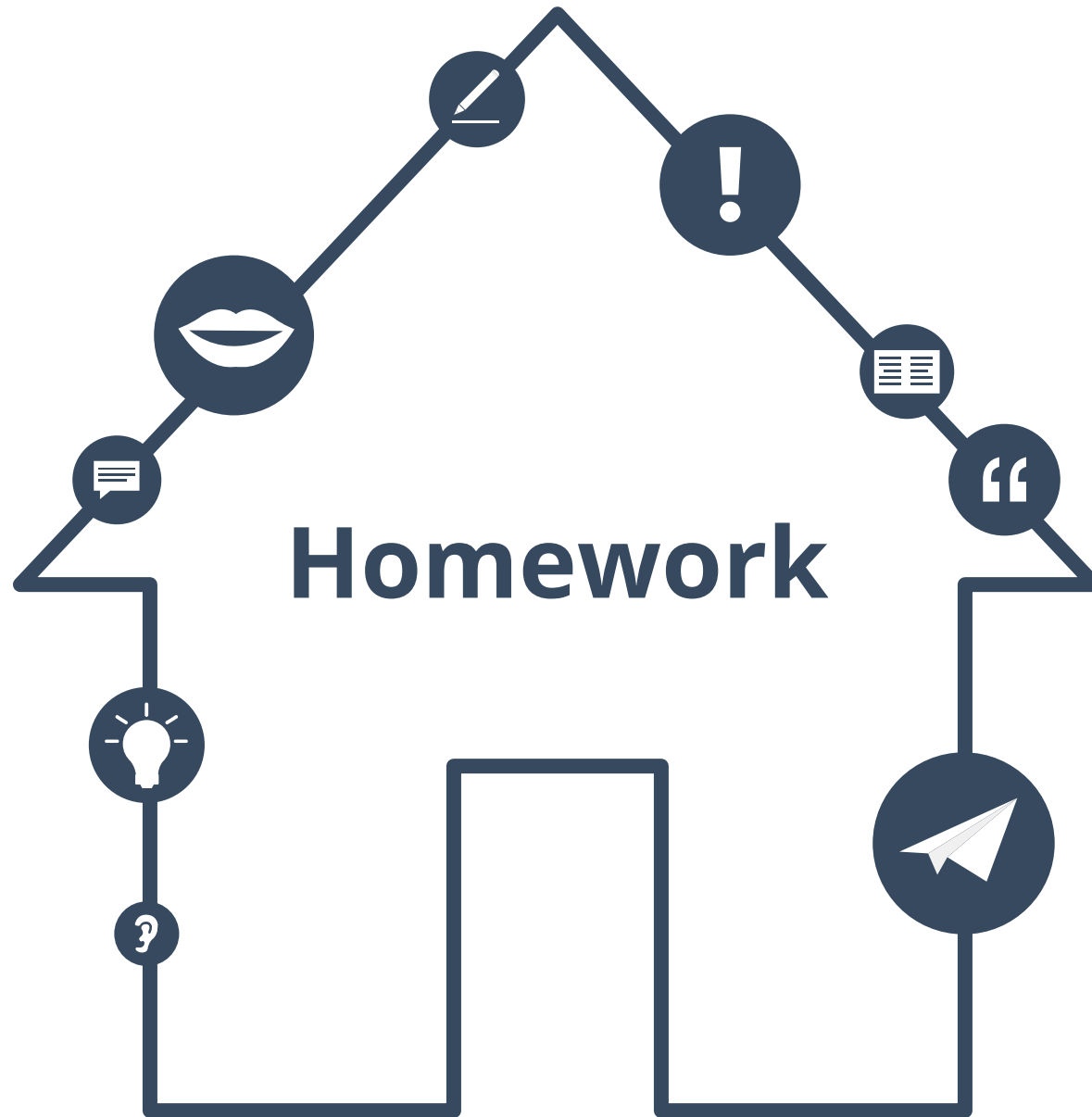
## Transcription

p. 16

There are many elements of intercultural communication. It includes: understanding physical **gestures**, such as when to shake hands or bow; understanding politeness - should you arrive early, on time or late? Should you bring a gift?; and the use of language in an **intercultural** business environment. The latter is perhaps the most important aspect of intercultural communication.

English is often considered to be the **lingua franca** of the business world, but there is no guarantee that the person with whom you are working will speak English at the same level as you do. Assuming that someone speaks very good English when they don't can cause embarrassment at best, and enormous and **costly** misunderstandings at worst. Furthermore, recognising different communication styles - such as whether one culture is more extroverted than another in their speech - can make a great difference to how businesses get along.

Finally, in close cooperation with speaking, there is listening. Different cultures have different listening practices and it is essential to learn how to ensure people know that you are **actively listening**. While it might be acceptable to lean back and stretch in your chair in the US, this could be **misconstructed** as boredom and disinterest elsewhere. Not listening is one of the ways people are perceived as rude across all cultures.





## Complete the sentences

**Complete the sentences with reference to what you talked about in the lesson.**

1. To me, culture means...
2. An example of good localisation of a brand is...
3. An example of bad localisation by a brand is...
4. When I don't understand someone from another country I feel...



This image shows a single sheet of white paper designed for writing. On the left side, there is a vertical blue line creating a narrow margin. Along this margin, there are ten circular punch holes, evenly spaced from top to bottom. The main body of the page contains ten horizontal blue lines, also evenly spaced, providing a guide for handwriting. The paper is otherwise blank, with no text or other markings.



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