Above the surface
- Languages
- Foods
- Behaviors
- Music

Below the surface
- Beliefs
- Thought patterns
- Values
- Assumptions

Visible = objective knowledge
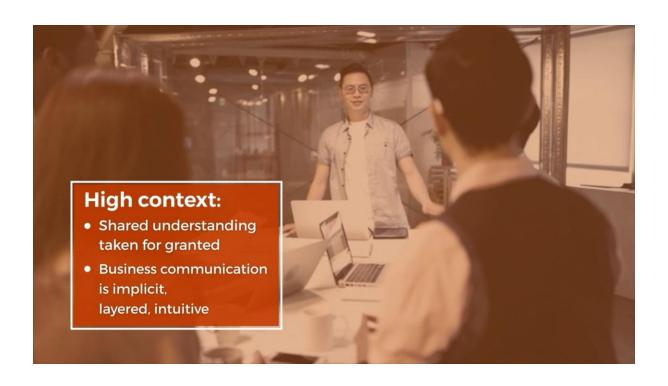
Job Aid: Visible and Invisible Culture

Culture includes both invisible and visible variables. Both are influenced by factors such as geography, history, climate, and people, but the two variable types also have differing characteristics. Think of the visible variables as the tip of an iceberg, while the invisible variables are below the surface.

	terms and explanations
Category	**Characteristics**
Visible variables	• Explicitly learned • Conscious • Easily changed • Objective knowledge
Invisible variables	• Implicitly learned • Unconscious • Difficult to change • Subjective knowledge

Low context:
- Most things spelled out explicitly
- Business communication is simple, clear, and direct

High context:
- Shared understanding taken for granted
- Business communication is implicit, layered, intuitive

Mapping

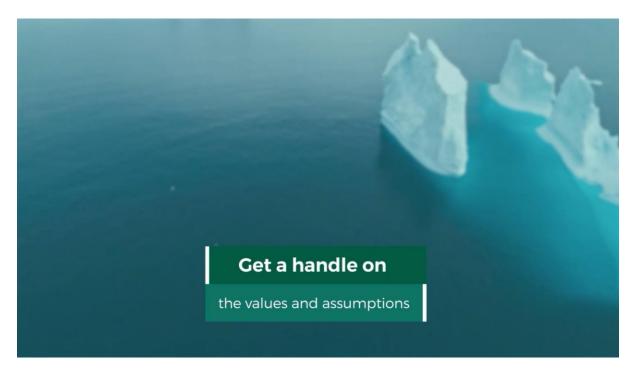help see in relative cultural position

Job Aid: Modeling Cultures

The same old set of management approaches and ways of doing things may not work when you transpose them to other cultures. To succeed, it's important to have a framework for analyzing and understanding the dimensions of other cultures.

Fortunately, several models have been created to provide that framework and help you reap the benefits that come from understanding cultural differences.

terms and explanations		
Model	**Author**	**Description**
High-context/low-context cultures	Edward T. Hall	Hall's model divides cultures in terms of whether communication is high context or low context: • **High-context cultures** – Shared understanding of different norms is taken for granted and communication can be confusing for outsiders • **Low-context cultures** – Most things are spelled out explicitly in words and very little is taken for granted
Cultural dimensions	Geert Hofstede	Hofstede's model sees cultures in terms of different dimensions: • **Individualism-collectivism** – Individualist cultures focus on the "I" as opposed to the "we," whereas collectivist cultures focus on the needs of the broader group • **Uncertainty avoidance** – Uncertainty avoidance refers to the level of comfort with ambiguity in different cultures • **Power-distance index** – The power-distance index relates to the strength of the social or organizational hierarchy and the level of acceptance within the group regarding each individual's place in the hierarchy

terms and explanations		
Model	**Author**	**Description**
Culture mapping	Erin Meyer	Meyer's model maps cultures across eight key areas. Each area is considered on a spectrum from one extreme to another: • **Communicating** – Low-context → high-context • **Evaluating** – Direct negative feedback → indirect negative feedback • **Persuading** – Concept first → application first • **Leading** – Egalitarian → hierarchical • **Deciding** – Consensual → top-down • **Trusting** – Task-based → relationship-based • **Disagreeing** – Confrontational → avoids confrontation • **Scheduling** – Linear time → flexible time

Concerned about your language fluency

Differences in ways you express emotion

Concerned about your language fluency

Concerned about your language fluency

Differences in ways you express emotion

3:27 / 4:24

Overcome
by staying
consciously **aware**
of messages and
how they may be
perceived

Staying aware

Puts you in a position to make
a positive impression

�(pause) ↺ 4:14 / 4:24 ▸ □ □ ⚙ ◀ ⤢

Sending the Right Message across Cultures

skillsoft

Relationship-oriented

who you are and who you're with

1:10 / 4:13

Words and nonverbal

actions send messages

Body language, tone of voice,

expression, behavior

2:22 / 4:13

Set up and adhere to appropriate conditions of intercultural communication

Guidelines that everyone needs to follow:

- Nobody patronizes anyone
- No one makes assumptions
- Avoid assuming anyone is representative of everyone
- Avoid trying to speak like a different culture

3:13 / 4:13

Cultural differences

will likely always remain

Culture:
way of **life** of groups of **people**

Vary within **subgroups** or **regions**

Cultural **models provide** common **vocabulary**

Low-context — more explicit

Barriers
can be
overcome

Best practices
for **successful**
intercultural
communication