

**Муниципальная бюджетная общеобразовательная средняя школа  
СОШ№ 43**

## **EDUCATIONAL WORKSHOP “The problems of misunderstanding”**



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## «Педагогическая мастерская построения знаний».

Уважаемые коллеги, в своей разработке мастер-класса я хочу поделиться с вами опытом работы по технологии проведения педагогической мастерской построения знаний. Открыв для себя принципы технологии мастерских, начав работу по этим принципам, вы увидите, как **многое изменится в вас и в ваших учениках.**

**Образованный человек должен уметь создавать собственный опыт.**

### **Educational Workshop**

**Theme: What Leads to Misunderstanding? (3 часа)**

**Aim:** 1. Development of associative thinking; abilities and skills to compare, analyze and evaluate while solving problems and communication tasks.

2. Practice language skills in listening, reading, speaking on Grammar material:

- Used to, be used to
- Real and unreal conditional sentences
- Character describing adjectives

3. Development of tolerant awareness of other cultures.

### **The Procedure of the workshop**

#### **Первый этап мастерской.**

Мастерская начинается с организации пространства. Участники объединились в группы по желанию, организовали пространство для импровизации.

#### **Вступительное слово мастера:**

Используя технологию проблемного обучения, мы можем провести проблемное изложение темы или проблемную эвристическую беседу для создания проблемной ситуации с выходом на определение цели и задачи мастерской.

The theme of the workshop is “What Leads to misunderstanding?” Does the theme suggest that there should be problems of misunderstanding among people? How many people are there in the world? How many people live in our country? What about nationalities and languages? We have different religious background, traditions and customs, different understanding of the world.

Can we call an African “ill-mannered, unfriendly, and stupid?” No. We all behave according to our cultural believes. Culture plays a crucial role in shaping our values, beliefs, habits and expectations. Misunderstanding can prevent the formation of international business and social relationships, impede the development of global markets, and endanger world peace.

Have you ever been frustrated because you were misunderstood? How did it happen? So, what do you think the aim of the workshop is? (Pupils define the reasons for misunderstanding and the ways of solving them).

## I. Индуктор.

**Цель:** Мотивировать дальнейшую деятельность и актуализировать личный опыт участников.

Участники в группах отвечают на вопрос: "Have you ever been frustrated because you were misunderstood?" Во время обсуждения участники решают допущенные ошибки, которые привели к курьезным ситуациям.

Для того чтобы участники могли вжиться в ситуацию, когда тебя абсолютно не понимают и почувствовать весь трагизм этого, проводится упражнение "Registration" (John Harrington, "Teacher training program," March, 2006, Nizhnevartovsk).

Registration

### Procedures

1. This exercise usually takes 20-25 minutes to complete.
2. Begin by distributing a copy of the registration form to everyone.
3. Tell everyone that they should imagine that they are tourists, traveling not in a group but as individuals, who arrived a short while ago in Tunis, the capital city of Tunisia. They are now at a police station where they are attempting to register as foreign visitors.
4. No one at the police station can understand Russian or English, but the police officials understand why you have come and have given you a registration form to complete. The instructions which accompany the form are inadequate, but they indicate the following:
  - A. Every blank on the form must be filled in. No question can be ignored and left unanswered.
  - B. When answering questions, write everything from right to left-words, letters, and numbers.
  - C. When answering questions # 2 and #14, the Muslim calendar must be used. Assume that according to the Muslim calendar it is now the year 1426.
  - D. Do not ask for help, as no one can understand the language you speak.
  - E. Complete the form within ten minutes.
5. When approximately ten minutes have passed, instruct everyone to stop.
6. Ask everyone how they felt during the exercise and record their responses on the board, using single words or short phrases.
7. Take note if anyone uses descriptions such as "backwards" "stupid," or "frustrating" rather than comments such as "opposite from the way I usually write" to describe how they felt.
8. As everyone the following questions:

- A. How many people finished the form?
- B. Did the information about the Muslim calendar cause you any problems?
- C. Was any information on the form confusing? If so, what?
- D. Did the questions make sense? Why do you think they were asked? If you wanted to obtain information about a visitor to your country, what questions would you ask?

### **Purpose**

Explain that this exercise has a dual purpose. First, it can be used to increase awareness of how very different some cultures are. Second, it demonstrates that all of us—regardless of our nationality or cultural background—have been taught by our culture to view situations and perform tasks in ways that are familiar to us (e.g., writing from left to right instead of from right to left).

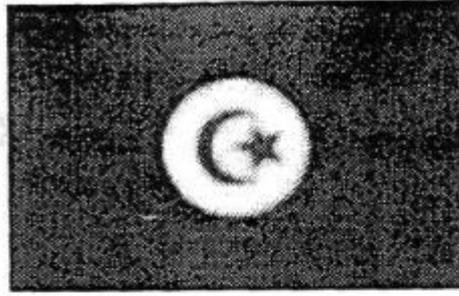
Point out how frustrated non-English speaking people from Arab or Asian countries must feel when they visit Russia or an English speaking country and are given forms to complete using an alphabet that is unfamiliar to them, having to use a different calendar than their own, etc.

What does this exercise teach us? Do you feel how different we are, how different cultures are?

### **Промежуточная рефлексия.**







سقوط "ال" التعريف أثناء الكلام، ولو سبقت بحرف واحد فمثلاً

REGISTRATION

10. DEGREE WHAT KIND	1. NAME
_____	_____
_____	FAMILY
_____	_____
11. LANGUAGE	2. YEAR
_____	_____
YES	3. WHERE
_____	_____
NO	4. KIND SEX
_____	_____
ENGLISH	5. STATUS
WHAT KIND	_____
ENGLISH	6. FATHER
SCOTLAND	_____
AMERICA	7. BELIEVE
AUSTRALIA	_____
12. DISEASE	8. PASSPORT
_____	_____
_____	9. OTHER COUNTRY
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
13. MEAT WHAT KIND	14. TODAY
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	15. NAME
_____	_____

## **II. Создание творческого продукта.**

Предлагается ролевая игра “Cultural encounter”.

(John Harrington, “Teacher training program,” March, 2006, Nizhnevartovsk).

**Цель:** Познакомиться с иноязычной культурой на собственном опыте, используя имеющиеся языковые умения и навыки.

По завершению ролевой игры участникам мастерской предлагается в группах рассказать о своих мыслях и ощущениях, вызванных пережитым в игре.

### **Cultural Encounter**

#### **Procedures**

1. This is a role play exercise which usually requires 25-30 minutes to complete.
2. It concerns the visit of three anthropologists to an island in the Pacific Ocean that few outsiders have ever visited.
3. The purpose of their visit is to obtain information about the culture of the people who live on the island, which will be described in a future research paper that the anthropologists plan to write.
4. To conduct this exercise three people must be chosen to play the roles of the anthropologists (include one male, if possible).
5. Everyone else will play the role of people who live on the island.
6. The task of the anthropologists will be to interview in small groups as many islanders as possible in 10 minutes time and to make notes about what they say and do.
7. Explain that you will now leave the room with the anthropologists for 1-2 minutes to give them the instructions they will need to perform their roles. Before leaving give the islanders written handouts which explain how they should behave when interviewed by the anthropologists.
8. Allow approximately 10 minutes for the interviews to take place.
9. After about 10 minutes pass, instruct the anthropologists to stop their interviews immediately and then to spend 1-2 minutes deciding what conclusions they can reach from the results of their interviews.

#### **Debriefing**

1. Ask each anthropologist to describe to the class what conclusions he or she reached about the culture of the islanders, based on their replies to questions and on their behavior.
2. If the anthropologists reached different conclusions, ask them for an explanation, since presumably they interviewed approximately the same people.



3. Ask a representative of the islanders to explain the cultural beliefs that influenced their answers.
4. Ask everyone what they learned from this experience. Ask if this exercise reminds them of any experience they have had with people from another cultural background.
5. Ask everyone to consider the basis upon which people arrive at explanations for the behavior of people from another country or a different culture, e.g., people rarely ask themselves why people from a different culture have different attitudes than theirs or why they behave differently. Instead, they often consider those they encounter to be "stupid," "unfriendly," "ill-mannered," or "uncooperative."

Note: This exercise was adapted from a similar exercise called the "Culture Shock Game" which was demonstrated by Paul Pederson at the 1981 SIETAR Conference in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.

### **Instructions for the Islanders**

Several anthropologists are visiting your island to obtain information about your culture. They should not be trusted because it is unclear how they will use this information. The chief of your island has decided you should cooperate with the anthropologists, but only if they behave according to the rules of your culture. Accordingly, should they attempt to question you, you should respond in the following manner:

1. Answer all the questions by saying "yes" or "no".

**Do not provide any additional**

information. If you are asked a question that seeks a longer answer than "yes" or "no",

**Frown** (look unfriendly) and ignore the question. Your culture believes that it is ill-mannered for a stranger to ask questions that require long answers.

2. An anthropologist whose eyes are a different colour than yours has no right to ask you

question. This person is inferior to you - not your equal- therefore, don't waste your time answering his or her questions. Your culture also believes that foreigners who have **brown** eyes are likely to be dishonest. Don't trust such a person.

3. If an anthropologist smiles when questioning you, don't trust that person either. Your culture believes that strangers who smile at someone probably wish to deceive. Some of the answers you give to that person should be wrong.

4. If an anthropologist bows his head when talking to you, that person is inferior to you. Do not waste your time listening to an inferior. Walk away from him if you can and pay no attention to that person's questions.

Don't reveal any of the information on this sheet to an anthropologist or attempt to explain your behavior.

**Instructions for Anthropologist № 1**

- Your task is to collect information about the culture of the island's inhabitants by interviewing them in small groups. Conduct your interviews quickly, talking to as many people as possible. You will be allowed only 10 minutes to complete this task.
- You should be aware that the people on this island are likely to be suspicious of foreigners. To reduce their distrust, ALWAYS SMILE WHEN YOU ASK THEM QUESTIONS.



- At a minimum, ask everyone the questions listed below. You can ask additional questions of your own, if you wish.

1. Are all of you members of the same culture?
2. Do you all speak the same language?
3. Tell me about your religion.

4. Do you all eat the same kinds of food?
5. Do grandparents, parents and children all live together in the same home?
6. Do you educate your children in schools or at home?
7. What kind of work do you do?

- Try to complete your information gathering before the other anthropologists so you can write your research paper before they write theirs. You are in competition with the other anthropologists. **DO NOT REVEAL ANYTHING TO THEM ABOUT THESE INSTRUCTIONS NOR TELL THEM ABOUT THE QUESTIONS YOU WILL ASK.**

- After you have interviewed as many people as possible, spend 1-2 minutes thinking about the answers given to your questions and about the behavior of the islanders. Decide what conclusions you can reach about their culture, then be ready to describe your conclusions in a brief oral report to the class.

### **Instructions for Anthropologist № 2**

- Your task is to collect information about the culture of the island's inhabitants by interviewing them in small groups. Conduct your interviews quickly, talking to as many people as possible. You will be allowed only 10 minutes to complete this task.

- You should be aware that the people on this island are likely to be suspicious of foreigners. To reduce their distrust, **DO NOT SMILE AT ANYONE WHEN YOU ARE ASKING THEM QUESTIONS.** If you smile, the islanders will become even more suspicious of you

- At a minimum, ask everyone the questions listed below. You can ask additional questions of your own, if you wish.

1. Are all of you members of the same culture?
2. Do you all speak the same language?
3. Tell me about your religion.
4. Do you all eat the same kinds of food?
5. Do grandparents, parents and children all live together in the same home?
6. Do you educate your children in schools or at home?
7. What kind of work do you do?

- Try to complete your information gathering before the other two anthropologists so you can write your research paper before they write theirs. You are in competition with the other anthropologists. **DO NOT REVEAL ANYTHING TO THEM ABOUT THESE INSTRUCTIONS NOR TELL THEM ABOUT THE QUESTIONS YOU WILL ASK.**

- After you have interviewed as many people as possible, spend 1-2 minutes thinking about the answers given to your questions and about the behavior of the islanders. Decide what conclusions you can reach about their culture, and then be ready to describe your conclusions in a brief oral report to the class.

### **Instructions for Anthropologist № 3**

- Your task is to collect information about the culture of the island's inhabitants by interviewing them in small groups. Conduct your interviews quickly, talking to as many people as possible. You will be allowed only 10 minutes to complete this task.
- You should be aware that the people on this island are likely to be suspicious of foreigners. To reduce their distrust, **SHOW YOUR RESPECT FOR THEM BY BOWING YOUR HEAD BEFORE ASKING EACH INTERVIEW QUESTION.** Should you fail to bow, the islanders will conclude that you are ill-mannered and be less cooperative with you.
- At a minimum, ask everyone the questions listed below. You can ask additional questions of your own, if you wish.
  1. Are all of you members of the same culture?
  2. Do you all speak the same language?
  3. Tell me about your religion.
  4. Do you all eat the same kinds of food?
  5. Do grandparents, parents and children all live together in the same home?
  6. Do you educate your children in schools or at home?
  7. What kind of work do you do?
- Try to complete your data gathering before the other two anthropologists so you can write your research paper before they write theirs. You are in competition with the other anthropologists, **DO NOT REVEAL ANYTHING TO THEM ABOUT THESE INSTRUCTIONS NOR TELL THEM ABOUT THE QUESTIONS YOU WILL ASK.**
- After you have interviewed as many people as possible, spend 1-2 minutes thinking about the answers given to your questions and about the behavior of the islanders. Decide what conclusions you can reach about their culture, then be ready to describe your conclusions in a brief oral report to the class.

### III. Социализация.

Каждая группа кратко представляет результаты обмена впечатлениями и размышлениями. Все участники испытали страх за судьбу своих соплеменников.

Инстинкт самосохранения своей семьи и племени не позволил сразу же идти на создание дружеских отношений. Ученые казались подозрительными людьми, которым нельзя доверять и т.д. Учащиеся выполнявшие роли ученых рассказывают о сложностях, с которыми они столкнулись.



### IV. Промежуточная рефлексия (формирование информационного запроса, выстраивание новых проблем).

Ролевая игра помогает выявить причины “for misunderstanding”.

#### The reasons for misunderstanding (presentation)

- a. Lack of cultural knowledge (the definition of the word “culture” is cut into words, students have to make up it)
- b. Language problems
- c. Lack of education
- d. Different lifestyle etc.

The reasons for misunderstanding show us the ways of solving them.

How do you think you would feel if you were in England, America, and Norway?  
Etc.

Учащиеся делают предположения, используя структуры сослагательного наклонения, от каждой группы. Очевидно, что для представления более точной картины нужна новая информация.

Завершение первого этапа мастерской.

#### **Второй этап мастерской (этап формирования новых знаний)**

### V. Обращение к новой информации и ее переработка.

Материал для изучения по группам.

What are English People like? (1 группа)

What are American People Like? (2 группа)

См. приложение № 2. тексты:

1. “A world guide to good manners”, New-Headway, Intermediate.
2. “America as seen by Britons”, Headway, Intermediate.
3. “England as seen by Americans”, Headway, Intermediate.

4. “How to be an alien”, Blueprint, Intermediate.

How do you think you would feel if you were in England (America, Russia)?

**If I were... I would...**

После изучения материала участники разбиваются по парам (по одному из каждой группы) и предоставляют изученную информацию друг другу. Или по одному участнику рассказывают всем изученную информацию. После каждого рассказа предлагается задание по аудированию. После выступления первой группы Tape №9 Blueprint Intermediate.

**LISTENING №1:**

**Before you listen**

Imagine you are spending some time in Britain. In groups, make a list of some of the features of the British way of life which you might find difficult or unusual.

**Listen**

Some young foreign students are staying in Britain. What features of British life aren't they used to? Are they the same as the ones you discussed?

(Grammar structures: used to, get used to)

После выступления второй группы аудирование Tape №27Blueprint Intermediate.

**LISTENING №2:**

Listen to someone talking about how her original ideas about Americans and the USA- in particular New York-were altered by her visit.

Выполняется задание по аудированию.

Присутствие и участие в работе мастерской гостей из Америки и Норвегии- Джулии и Труды позволило внести задание на сравнение What are Russians Like? (Julia's experience of the Russian people). What did she think before her visit? What does she think now? Trudy's language problems.

Промежуточная рефлексия. What kind of people should we be?

We have found the reasons, learned some additional information about these people, so what do you think are the ways of being at peace with all people?

**We should be...**

Tolerance – tolerant

broad mind - broadminded

Patience – patient

friend - friendly

Respect – respectful

peace loving

Knowledge – knowledgeable

curiosity – curious etc.

## **VI. Создание и корректировка творческого продукта.**

Stereotypes of Mainstream English, American, Russian Culture. (работа в группах).

### **Instructions**

1. This exercise can take as little as 20-25 minutes to complete or an hour or longer should a teacher make use of various optional activities.

2. Begin by distributing a copy of the accompanying list of stereotypes to every student, pair or triad of students.
3. Instruct students to place a **V** beside those characteristics which they believe describe mainstream American culture accurately.
4. Ask them to write at the bottom of the list any other characteristics of American culture they think of.
5. Ask approximately 10 students to name one of the characteristics they selected.
6. Ask the students which of the characteristics they named are positive in nature (i.e., desirable or good).
7. Ask which of the characteristics they named are negative.
8. Ask the students why they believe that certain of the characteristics they named are positive in nature. Ask why they believe that some of the characteristics are negative. Ask how they can be sure that their opinions are correct. Discuss with them the possibility that some of the characteristics they named can be either good or bad, depending upon the circumstances in which they occur. Point out that one's cultural beliefs can influence one's thinking about the desirability or undesirability of a characteristic (e.g., patriotism is generally considered a positive characteristic, as is competitiveness, but they can also result in negative behavior).
9. Ask students to reveal the basis for their beliefs about Americans. For example, were their beliefs formed by American films, television programs, newspaper or magazine articles, personal contacts with Americans, or other sources of information? Ask if it is possible that each of these sources of information can be misleading. For instance, film makers are much more interested in producing films that entertain moviegoers than in presenting accurate information about life in the United States. The impressions formed by personal contacts with Americans can also be misleading because Americans, like Russians, are not all the same. Even lengthy periods of time spent in the United States can produce mistaken impressions since everything one witnesses is viewed through the lens of one's own culture.
10. Point out that while it can be useful to form generalizations about another culture (e.g., that mainstream Americans tend to be "direct and open" or that Americans are generally "in a hurry"), it is a mistake to assume that all the members of a particular culture think and behave in the same way.
11. Suggest to students that people from different cultures have much more in common than differences. Regardless of their nationality or culture, virtually everyone on earth wishes to experience love, to be respected, to experience a comfortable life style, to enjoy good health, to behave kindly toward their family and friends, etc. The differences in the way people of different cultures think and behave are the result of innumerable social and economic factors, historical events, religious influences, and myriad other factors. These encourage the members of one culture to, for example, be future oriented while the members of other cultures are more oriented to the

present or past. Ask students to offer explanations why they think most mainstream Americans have the characteristics they identified.

### **Variations**

1. Instead of distributing the accompanying list of characteristics to students, conduct a brainstorming activity in which students devise their own list of characteristics that they think are typical of Americans. If necessary, help them begin by writing three or four characteristics from the accompanying list on the chalkboard.

2. After completing the steps listed above, ask the students to examine once again the list of characteristics they were given but to place a **V** beside those characteristics which they believe describe mainstream Russians accurately. Repeat many of the steps listed above in an effort to identify their views about Russian culture. Or, as an alternative to the use of the prepared list of characteristics, use a brainstorming activity to produce a list of characteristics of mainstream Russian culture.

3. Ask students if Russian men and women have the same characteristics? If not, in which ways are they different?

4. Use either the prepared list of characteristics or a brainstorming activity to identify the characteristics of other cultural groups, such as Germans, the French, Ukrainians, Chinese, Chechens, or any other group that seems appropriate.



### **Purpose**

This activity has multiple purposes. It seeks to demonstrate that many commonly held beliefs about mainstream Americans and other cultures are based upon potentially misleading sources of information. It calls attention to the fact that one's assessment of other cultures is based upon one's own cultural values and assumptions. It strives to reveal possible explanations for the beliefs and behavior of other cultures or nationalities. It attempts to show that despite the many ways in which they are different, people from different parts of the world have more in common than significant differences.

## Stereotypes<sup>1</sup> of Mainstream<sup>2</sup> American (English, Russian) Culture

instruction

Listed below are numerous stereotypes of mainstream American (English, Russian) culture often held by people from other culture.

1. Place V beside those characteristics which you believe describe mainstream American (English, Russian) culture accurately.
2. Write at the bottom of the list any other characteristics of the American (English, Russian) that you think of.

don't care about old people  
war-like  
Loud, rude, like to shout  
talk a lot but don't say much  
think they are the experts  
Polite  
Aggressive  
believe in personal control, not fate  
Usually in a hurry  
Dislike authority  
motivated by money, possessions  
Competitive  
Adventurous  
Patriotic  
future-oriented  
believe in making decisions and taking action  
Violent  
spend too much on themselves  
Generous to others  
Hardworking but undisciplined (i.e., not able to control one's own behavior)  
like to improve themselves  
Direct and open  
Immature  
Ignorant about the rest of the world  
racially prejudiced but believe in equality  
Greedy  
Gloomy  
Moody  
open-hearted  
cold- hearted  
Funny  
Serious

Stereotype<sup>1</sup> (n) - a belief that all people from a particular culture, nationality, etc., behave a certain way

Mainstream<sup>2</sup> (adj) - the dominant group, trend or tendency

**VII. Социализация**, т.е. предъявление созданного продукта всем участникам. Социализация позволяет понять направление и способы деятельности других участников мастерской, соотнести результаты, оценить идеи.

**VIII. Общая рефлексия и выход на новую проблему.**

Каждый участник мастерской пытается осознать свой личный опыт, свои открытия, эмоциональное состояние которое он испытал в процессе работы, отвечая на вопрос руководителя “ What new things have you learned? How did you feel during the work of the workshop? Все участники мастерской подчеркивали необходимость языковых и культурных знаний для преодоления межкультурных проблем народов мира.

Для закрепления полученных новых знаний участникам предлагается написать сочинение (согласно требованиям ЕГЭ):

“Some people say that sharing the same international language can solve many problems. They suggest that all other languages should die because of no use. What can you say for and against it, using the information of the workshop?”



## America as seen by Britons

*Bob and Sheila spent two years living in New York because of Bob's work as a banker. Neither of them had lived in a big city before. They now live back in England in a small village outside London.*

**I = Interviewer**

**S = Sheila**

**B = Bob**

**I** How long did you live in the States?

**B** We were there for two and half years, in New York.

**I** And did you enjoy it?

**S** Oh, tremendously. We had a wonderful time.

**B** Yes. what I liked best was that I could work and still lead a normal life. I mean, the shops are open till 10 o'clock.

**I** All shops?

**S** Yes. everything, food shops, chemists...

**B** There's a huge department store called Gimble's on 86th Street that was open till 9.00.

**S** And some supermarkets are open twenty-four hours a day. Most shops don't open as early as in England, well they don't open until about uhm ... 10 or 11 in the morning.

**B** Yes, that's right.

**S** Because they all work much later. And everything's open on **Sundays**.

**B** And the holidays, the public holidays are much shorter than here, and in the States only the banks are shut. Everything else stays open, so it makes life much easier. You could do what you liked when you liked.

**S** And it was easier with the children, because I could wait till you got back and we did the shopping together, didn't we?

**B** Yes. I see, um... do you think New York is as cosmopolitan as London?

**S** Oh yes. but it's not as mixed. Nationalities stay in their own areas: like there's the Ukrainian section, the Russian section ...

**B** ... the German section. We were in German Town. York Town, which is called German Town. And there was a row of German shops, all German-speaking.

**S** Yes.

**B** But you didn't find that anywhere else. And the Ukrainians were down on 14th and 2nd. and the Spanish kept to Spanish Harlem.

**S** I think the major difference was the height of the place. Everything was up. We lived on the twenty -ninth floor

**B** And I worked on the sixty-third floor

**S** But I like heights. And of course Everything is faster. And the people are much ruder.

**B** Which means of course that we're much ruder ourselves now we're back in Britain.

**I** *Oh, in what ways?*

**B** Well, pushing in the street.

**S** Oh... I don't!

**B** Fights about getting on the bus. No good old British queues.

**I** But are all Americans like that?

**S** Oh yes. Well, all New Yorkers anyway. Not so much in other places. When we went to California it was very different There weren't the same pressures at all. were there?

**B** I think we were aware that New York is quite a dangerous place. We never had any problems at all. but when there was a crime, it was horrendous.

**S** Oh yes. the subways are unusable. They're dirty, uncomfortable.

**I** Did you make many friends?

**S** Well, that's what's interesting really. We made more friends there than we have after two y ears of living here. I think Americans are more open. They, you know, they speak their minds, so if they don't like something, they actually tell you directly. Not like the British, who might think one thing and say another. So I suppose you could say that the English are ruder than the Americans. Or, that they're less honest.

**S** Mmm. Yes.

**B** Something else. We're actually moving from here back into London to try to find the things we liked in New York, but I don't suppose we'll find them.

## **England as Seen by Americans**

*Terry Tomsha talks about her  
experience of living and working in  
England, where she has been for the  
past eleven years.*

**I** = Interviewer

**T** - Terry

**I** So. Terry. You've been in this country for quite a long time now.

**T** Mmm

**I** What differences do you notice

between the two countries?

**T** Obviously the biggest difference is the people. The average Englishman is... mm cold and not very open.

**I** Oh.

**T** In the States it's very different. We start conversations with people in the street, in the subway; we're a lot more enthusiastic and spontaneous than people here. You know, when I first came, I couldn't understand why I was getting so little reaction from people, but now I see that they thought I was overpowering and that I was trying to be too friendly too soon.

**I** But, tell me, does the Englishman improve as you get to know him?

**T** Oh yes.

**I** Oh good.

**T** Once you have made a friend, it's a friend for life, but it takes a very long time. I'll tell you something that I think is very important. An Englishman in America is respected. Everyone wants to talk to him. We're inquisitive, we love his accent and his country. An American though in England is thought to be a little inferior because of his behavior and his language. One thing I've learned - it's funny now, but it wasn't at the time - I couldn't understand why when I was talking to someone he would move away, you know, move backwards, and I thought "Do I smell? Am I boring him?" The reason was, you see, Americans stand closer when they're talking. Again, English people like a certain distance.

**I** That's true. What about your impressions of living here? How does that compare with the States?

**T** Well, mmm ... I think life's a lot easier in the States. It's easier to make money and it's easier to spend it. Shops are open all the time over there. Here you have to race to reach the supermarket by 5.30. Generally though I find life more inefficient here. If you need an electrician, it takes days to get one. He doesn't do the job very well, the system is so old that he can't get the parts to repair it, and he doesn't care. This leads to another very important point. Americans work a lot harder than you do. To the English their private lives are important, their holidays are important, their gardens are important, their animals are important, but an American wouldn't admit that. For us, our work is the most important thing in our lives. You know, holidays seem to be longer here, people make the most ridiculous excuses not to go to work - "My dog's got a cold", I heard the other day.

**I** Oh, come on.

**T** You have tea breaks that get longer and longer. In that respect we're quite like the Japanese, our jobs come first, but there are all sorts of services to make life easier around our jobs.

**I** Well, I take it you have a pretty negative opinion of England.

**T** You would think so from this interview, wouldn't you? No, in fact I really love it here. I go home once a year and really look forward to coming back here. This is my home now. I find life safer, more relaxed, and much more enjoyable. Maybe I've gotten into English habits! England doesn't have the dramatic beauty of the States, but oh, it's very pretty and charming in a way that I find comforting.



How to be an alien

*'Nice day, isn't it?'*

*Isn't it lovely!'*

### **THE LANGUAGE**

When I arrived in England I thought I knew English. After I'd been here an hour, I realised I did not understand a word.

### **THE WEATHER**

You must never contradict anybody when discussing the weather. Should it hail and snow, should hurricanes uproot the trees from the side of the road, and should someone remark to you: 'Nice day, isn't it?' — answer without hesitation: 'Isn't it lovely!'

### **QUEUEING**

An Englishman, even if he is alone, forms an orderly queue of one. At weekends an Englishman queues up at the bus stop, travels out to Richmond, queues up for a boat, then queues up for tea, then queues up for ice cream, then joins a few more odd queues just for the fun of it, then queues up at the bus stop and has the time of his life.

### **PETS**

If you go out for a walk with a friend, don't say a word for hours; if you go out for a walk with your dog, keep chatting to him.

### **SEX**

Continental people have a sex life; the English have hot-water bottles.

### **HOW TO PLAN A TOWN**

1. First of all, never build a street straight.
2. Give a different name to a street whenever it bends.
3. Call streets by various names: street, road, place, mews, crescent, avenue, lane, way, park, gardens, path, walk, Broadway, promenade, gate, terrace, view, hill etc.

## TEA

The trouble with tea is that originally it was quite a good drink. So a group of the most eminent British scientists put their heads together, and made complicated biological experiments to find ways of spoiling it.

They suggested that if you do not drink it clear but pour a few drops of cold milk into it, and no sugar at all, the desired object is achieved. Once this refreshing, aromatic, oriental beverage was successfully transformed into colourless and tasteless gargling water, it suddenly became the national drink of Great Britain and Ireland.

There are some occasions when you must not refuse a cup of tea. If you are invited to an English home, at five o'clock in the morning a cup of tea is brought in by a heartily smiling hostess. You have to declare with your best five o'clock smile: 'Thank you so much. I do adore a cup of early morning tea, especially early in the morning.' If you are left alone with the liquid, you may pour it down the washbasin.

Then you have tea for breakfast; then you have tea at eleven o'clock in the morning; then after lunch; then you have tea for tea; then after supper; and again at eleven o'clock at night.

## Reading

*How to be an alien* was written by George Mikes (pronounced /mikejɪf), a Hungarian who came to live in Britain. It was first published in 1946 and has since been reprinted over forty times.

George Mikes said his book was meant: 'chiefly for xenophobes (people who dislike foreigners) and anglophobes (people who dislike England and the English)/ The extract on the left includes some of the observations which have delighted generations of readers.

**Guess** the meaning

alien   contradict   hurricane   eminent   complicated   experiment   spoil  
refreshing   aromatic   transform   adore

**COMPREHENSION** Read the text above and the extract on the left and answer the questions.

1. Where did George Mikes come from?
2. When was *How to be an alien* first published?
3. What sort of book is it?
4. What does George Mikes say about the English
  - language?
  - attitude to the weather?
  - habit of queueing?

- attitude to pets?
- attitude to sex?
- towns?
- way of serving tea?
- tea-drinking habits?

### Glossary

**Richmond** an attractive town on the river Thames has the time of his life has a marvellous time beverage drink  
 gargling liquid to wash inside the throat and mouth



### Reading

Look at the title of the article. Do you think the article will be serious or light-hearted? Why?

First read the article quite quickly. All the nationalities on page 39 are mentioned.

1. Write down one thing about each nationality that you can remember.
2. Share what you have written with other students in the class.

### How *not* to behave badly abroad

by Norman Ramshaw

Travelling to all corners of the world gets easier and easier. We live in a global village, but how well do we know and understand each other? Here is a simple

test. Imagine you have arranged a meeting at four o'clock. What time should you expect your foreign business colleagues to arrive?

If they're German, they'll be bang on time. If they're American, they'll probably be 15 minutes early. If they're British, they'll be 15 minutes late, and you should allow up to an hour for the Italians.

When the European Community began to increase in size, several guidebooks appeared giving advice on international etiquette. At first many people thought this was a joke, especially the British, who seemed to assume that the widespread understanding of their language meant a corresponding understanding of English customs. Very soon they had to change their ideas, as they realized that they had a lot to learn about how to behave with their foreign business friends.

### **For example:**

The British are happy to have a business lunch and discuss business matters with a drink during the meal; the Japanese prefer not to work while eating. Lunch is a time to relax and get to know one so another, and they rarely drink at lunchtime.

- The Germans like to talk business *before* dinner; the French like to eat first and talk afterwards. They have to be well fed and watered before they discuss anything.
- Taking off your jacket and rolling up your sleeves is a sign of getting down to work in Britain and Holland, but in Germany people regard it as taking it easy.
- American executives sometimes signal their feelings of ease and importance in their offices by putting their feet on the desk whilst on the telephone. In Japan, people would be shocked. Showing the soles of your feet is the height of bad manners. It is a social insult only exceeded by blowing your nose in public.

The Japanese have perhaps the strictest rules of social and business behavior. Seniority is very important, and a younger man should never be sent to complete a business deal with an older Japanese man. The Japanese business card almost needs a rulebook of its own. You must exchange business cards immediately on meeting because it is so essential to establish everyone's status and position. When it is handed to a person in a superior position, it must be given and received with both hands, and you must take time to read it carefully, and not just put it in your pocket! Also the bow is a very important part of greeting someone. You should not expect the Japanese to shake hands. Bowing the head is a mark of respect and the first bow of the day should be lower than when you meet thereafter.

The Americans sometimes find it difficult to accept the more formal Japanese manners. They prefer to be casual and more informal, as illustrated by the

universal 'Have a nice day!' American waiters have a one-word imperative 'Enjoy!' The British, of course, are cool and reserved. The great topic of conversation between strangers in Britain is the weather— unemotional and impersonal. In America, the main topic between strangers is the search to find a geographical link. 'Oh, really? You live in Ohio? I had an uncle who once worked there.'

### **'When in Rome, do as the Romans do.'**

**Here are some final tips for travellers.**

- In France you shouldn't sit down in a cafe until you've shaken-hands with everyone you know.
- In Afghanistan you should spend at least five minutes saying hello.
- In Pakistan you mustn't wink. It is offensive.
- In the Middle East you must never use the left hand for greeting, eating, drinking, or smoking. Also, you should take care not to admire anything in your hosts' home. They will feel that they have to give it to you.
- In Russia you must match your hosts drink for drink or they will think you are unfriendly.
- In Thailand you should clasp your hands together and lower your head and your eyes when you greet someone.
- In America you should eat your hamburger with both hands and as quickly as possible. You shouldn't try to have a conversation until it is eaten.

### **Comprehension check**

Read the article again and answer the questions. Discuss the questions in pairs.

1. Which nationalities are the most and least punctual?
2. Why did the British think that everyone understood their customs?
3. Which nationalities do *not* like to eat and do business at the same time?
4. They (the French) have to be well fed and watered.' What or who do you normally have to feed and water?
5. Look at the pictures. What nationality are they? How do you know?
6. An American friend of yours is going to work in Japan. Give some advice about how he/she should and shouldn't behave.
7. Imagine you are at a party in (a) England

(b) America. How could you begin a conversation with a stranger? Continue the conversations with your partner.

8. Which nationalities have rules of behavior about hands? What are the rules?
9. Why is it *not* a good idea to ...

- ... say that you absolutely love your Egyptian friend's vase.
- ... go to Russia if you don't drink alcohol.
- ... say 'Hi! See you later!' when you're introduced to someone in Afghanistan.
- ... discuss politics with your American friend in a McDonald's.

### **Discussion**

1. Do you agree with the saying 'When in Rome, do as the Romans do'? Do you have a similar saying in your language?
2. What are the 'rules' about greeting people in your country? When do you shake hands? When do you kiss? What about when you say goodbye?
3. Telling of one or two examples of bad manners. For example, in Britain it is considered impolite to ask people how much they earn.
4. What advice would you give somebody coming to live and work in your country?