

CULTURAL KNOW-HOW

1. Idioms

Study the following sentences and match each underlined idiom to its correct definition below.

1. At the end of the meal, we decided to go Dutch.
2. If you want to win the argument, you should stick to your guns.
3. Thank you for all your help. I hope someday we can return the compliment.
4. The politician managed to save face by escaping blame for the mistake.
5. Everyone at the party was wearing special costumes, and we had to follow suit.
6. During the negotiation, they decided to give ground in order to reach an agreement.
7. We were wined and dined all over the city.
8. I was trying to be polite, but he got the wrong idea.

- a. change your position in order to make it easier to reach an agreement
- b. do something for someone because they have done something for you
- c. do what other people are doing
- d. keep your position even if people try to criticize you
- e. misunderstood
- f. pay 50% of the bill each
- g. protect your reputation
- h. taken out for expensive meals

2. Cultural etiquette

Decide whether the statements are true or false and then check your answers by reading the article.

1. In Singapore, the word 'no' is considered impolite.
2. In Greece, you should nod your head upwards to say 'yes'.
3. In Italy, it is a bad idea to turn up late for a meeting.
4. In the Netherlands, it is a bad idea to turn up late for a meeting.
5. In Japan, the business card is very important and should be treated with respect.
6. In Ukraine, you should not argue during business deals.

7. In Turkey, you should not insist on sharing the restaurant bill with your host.
8. In Mexico, you should be careful about proposing dinner arrangements with your client.

3. Reading . Cultural know-how

Learning about a country's culture can help you secure good working relations on your travels.

1. Do you arrive 10 minutes early for an important business meeting in Rio or 10 minutes late in Amsterdam? In Kyiv, is it a good idea to give ground at an early stage of the negotiations? And in Istanbul, should you offer to go Dutch with the host on the restaurant bill?
2. Mastering the local etiquette can be more valuable than learning the language, because so much of the world does business in English. Or a form of English. "Beware that an English word or phrase doesn't always mean the same thing abroad," warns Michael Bennett, who sells security systems in South East Asia. "In Japan and Singapore, people feel that 'no' is an impolite word, and will sometimes say 'yes' to avoid causing offence. What they really mean is 'I understand what you're saying', not 'I agree'. I'm told that in Indonesia there are 12 words for 'yes' that mean precisely the opposite."
3. Even the movement of your head can be open to misinterpretation. Publisher Robin Touquet has had difficulties in Athens: "The Greeks traditionally use an upward nod of the head to say 'no', and a tilt of the head from side to side to mean 'yes'. I was ready for that, but didn't realise the younger generation have learnt to do it our way. Confusion all round. If in doubt, keep still."
4. The issue of punctuality is almost as complicated. Oil company executive Malcolm Thorburn deliberately turns up a few minutes late for meetings in

Brazil "because Brazilians believe latecomers are more likely to be commercially successful than people who arrive early. They're impressed by people who are relaxed enough not to worry about the clock. The Italians take a similar attitude. They believe that arriving late shows who is the boss." However, don't risk that in the Netherlands. "The Dutch frown upon lateness," warns film finance agent James Hindle: "They believe that people who can't use their time wisely cannot be trusted."

4. Find a word or phrase in the article which means...

1. offending people (**phrase, P2**) _____
2. understood incorrectly (**phrase, P3**) _____
3. an upward or downward movement of the head (**noun, P3**) _____
4. do not move (**phrase, P3**) _____
5. people who arrive late (**noun, P4**) _____
6. disapprove of (**phrasal verb, P4**) _____
7. make someone feel nervous or uncomfortable (**verb, P6**) _____
8. sudden periods of uncontrolled childish anger (**plural noun, P** _____)

