

GET SMART BEFORE YOU START.- Culture and People.

Caso práctico

As a member of the international commerce world, you have to understand and respect cultural diversity: the differences between regions, countries and cultures. You have to learn the skills of proper etiquette, manners, and intercultural communication.



When people go into another cultural environment some of the things that can be different for them are such things as the verbal communication style, that can be radically different. And we're not just talking about a different language but literally the way that we use verbal communication.

Secondly, the non-verbal communication, body language, the gestures and the things that we do as part of our communication. For example, when you greet someone, body contact is generally taboo in most Asian countries but in other parts of the world hugging and kissing is acceptable. Even within France, some people kiss on one cheek only, some on two cheeks, some on three cheeks.

Another good example of cultural difference is in the way different cultures view time. Do we see time as a linear process with a fixed series of events following each other, or is time something much looser, much more flexible? People have different attitudes to time and experience time in different ways. Westerners feel that Easterners are rude when they come 20 minutes to half an hour late to an appointment. But when an Easterner says "11:00" he or she means "between 11 and 12". In contrast Westerners divide time into strictly-measured hours, minutes and seconds, into which one carefully arranges one's plans, appointments, and activities so as to fit exactly and not cause delays to one's own or anyone else's plans. When persons with different assumptions come into contact there is great room for misunderstanding!

A step ahead

Here you have a link on international etiquette, customs, manners and protocol.

[International etiquette.](#)

More specifically, by countries, here is the source of the information you will

need to do the exercise on the next page.

[International Etiquette Guide.](#)



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[Aviso Legal](#)

1.- International Etiquette.

Autoevaluación

Decide if the following are true or false.



In Spain when attending a business dinner, be prepared to stay up late. Most restaurants do not open until after nine o'clock.

- True.
 False.

Well done!

Not really.

Solución

1. **Opción correcta** (Retroalimentación)
 2. **Incorrecto** (Retroalimentación)

The Japanese tend to be rather direct in their questioning of foreigners. You may be asked personal questions such as how much money do you earn or how large is your house.

- True.
 False.

Well done!

Not really.

Solución

1. **Opción correcta** (Retroalimentación)
 2. **Incorrecto** (Retroalimentación)

In the USA it is common to smoke in business meetings.

- True.
 False.

Not really. Ask permission to smoke before lighting a cigarette or cigar. Due to health concerns, you may or may not be given permission.

Well done! Ask permission to smoke before lighting a cigarette or cigar. Due to health concerns, you may or may not be given permission.

Solución

1. **Incorrecto** (Retroalimentación)
 2. **Opción correcta** (Retroalimentación)

Negotiations with Russians often involve flared tempers. During negotiations and meetings, temper tantrums and walkouts often occur.

- True.
 False.

Well done!

Not really.

Solución

1. **Opción correcta** (Retroalimentación)
 2. **Incorrecto** (Retroalimentación)

Typically, you do not wait to be seated in German restaurants, and it is not uncommon to share a table with strangers. However, most Germans will think it odd if you try to initiate a conversation with them beyond just establishing that the chairs are available.

- True.
 False.

Well done!

Not really.

Solución

- 1. [Opción correcta \(Retroalimentación\)](#)
- 2. [Incorrecto \(Retroalimentación\)](#)

Business is viewed as being very serious, and Germans do not appreciate humour in a business context.

- True.
- False.

Well done!

Not really.

Solución

- 1. [Opción correcta \(Retroalimentación\)](#)
- 2. [Incorrecto \(Retroalimentación\)](#)

In Indonesia no physical contact between men and women is made in public, except a possible handshake.

- True.
- False.

Well done!

Not really.

Solución

- 1. [Opción correcta \(Retroalimentación\)](#)
- 2. [Incorrecto \(Retroalimentación\)](#)

Indonesia is a very polite country. The native language has 6 words that "say yes but really mean no". Since saying no to someone is impolite, don't assume a positive response means you have agreement.

- True.
- False.

Not really. There are actually 12 such words!

Well done! There are actually 12 such words!

Solución

- 1. [Incorrecto \(Retroalimentación\)](#)
- 2. [Opción correcta \(Retroalimentación\)](#)

In the USA, because of work ethic, time is money and punctuality is highly regarded, so a cellular phone can save the day when automobile traffic in a major city causes unexpected delays.

- True.
- False.

Well done!

Not really.

Solución

- 1. [Opción correcta \(Retroalimentación\)](#)
- 2. [Incorrecto \(Retroalimentación\)](#)

In China always arrive on time or early if you are the guest.

- True.
- False.

Well done!

Not really.

Solución

- 1. [Opción correcta \(Retroalimentación\)](#)
- 2. [Incorrecto \(Retroalimentación\)](#)

New Zealand is a very forward thinking country. In 1893, this British Commonwealth gave women the right to vote, and in 1898, established an old-age pension, the first Commonwealth member to do so.

- True.
- False.

Well done!

Not really.

Solución

- 1. [Opción correcta \(Retroalimentación\)](#)
- 2. [Incorrecto \(Retroalimentación\)](#)

In Saudi Arabia it is against the law for a man to walk hand in hand with another man.

- True.
- False.

Not really. Men walking hand in hand is a sign a friendship.

Well done! Men walking hand in hand is a sign a friendship.

Solución

- 1. [Incorrecto \(Retroalimentación\)](#)
- 2. [Opción correcta \(Retroalimentación\)](#)

In Egypt try not to sit with your legs crossed. Showing the sole of your shoe is considered an insult to another person.

- True.
- False.

Well done!

Not really.

Solución

- 1. [Opción correcta \(Retroalimentación\)](#)
- 2. [Incorrecto \(Retroalimentación\)](#)

If you do not speak French, it is very important that you apologize to French people for your lack of knowledge.

- True.
- False.

Well done!

Not really.

Solución

- 1. [Opción correcta \(Retroalimentación\)](#)
- 2. [Incorrecto \(Retroalimentación\)](#)

In Africa you should not open a present when you receive it, but wait until later.

- True.
- False.

Not really. Gifts will be opened upon receipt.

Well done! Gifts will be opened upon receipt.

Solución

- 1. [Incorrecto \(Retroalimentación\)](#)
- 2. [Opción correcta \(Retroalimentación\)](#)

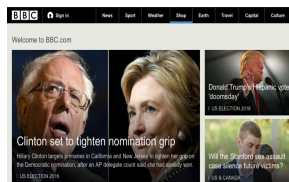
2.- Stereotypes.

However, you have to be very careful with stereotypes. National stereotype is a system of culture-specific beliefs connected with the nationality of a person. This system includes beliefs concerning those properties of human beings that may vary across nations, such as appearance, language, food, habits, psychological traits, attitudes, values etc. When we stereotype someone, we assume that they will behave in a certain way. That is what we are doing in the joke that illustrates the beginning of this section. Do you agree with the stereotypes that Andalusians are lazy or Catalonians stingy? Of course not. So don't stereotype people from other nationalities. Keep an open mind and remember that we all are individuals.



What is British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC)?

British Broadcasting Corporation (**BBC**) is the first and largest national broadcasting network in the world, headquartered in the United Kingdom. BBC became a publicly funded company in 1922 and grosses billions of dollars a year. The corporation's primary sources of funding come from fees imposed on British viewers and government grants. BBC provides a multitude of media resources including publications, radio and television broadcasts. Most programs produced by the company focus on global news and are translated into various languages to reach countries across the world.



If you want to know more you can visit the following link: [BBC](http://www.bbc.com)

Fawlty Towers is a famous British sitcom produced by BBC Television and first broadcast on BBC2 in 1975. The setting is a fictional hotel of the same name located in the seaside town of Torquay.

The series focuses on the misadventures of hotelier Basil Fawlty, his wife Sybil, and their employees, porter and waiter



Manuel, maid Polly, and chef Terry. The episodes typically revolve around Basil's efforts to succeed in improving the quality of his hotel and his increasing frustration at the numerous complications and mistakes, both his own and those of others, which prevent him from doing so.



Around the time the series was created British hotel owners often employed foreigners who could not speak English, which often resulted in communication problems with the guests and the rest of the staff. Manuel was included as a representative of these foreign workers. He is a Spanish waiter, well-meaning but disorganised and constantly confused. He is from Barcelona and has a limited grasp of the English language and customs.

Manuel is a less than flattering stereotype. The character's nationality was switched to an Italian from Naples called Paolo for the Spanish dub of the show broadcast in Spain. In the Catalanian TV3 channel, Manuel's origin was changed from Barcelona to Mexico. The version dubbed into French also gives his nationality as Mexican.

A step ahead

Watch the extremely funny Manuel in action.

[Text summary.](#)

Here you visit [Fawlty Towers at BBC Online.](#)

[Fawlty Towers.](#)

3.- Travel writing.

Travel writing of literary value typically records the experiences of an author touring a place for the pleasure of travel. We have a fine example in Spanish: Camilo José Cela's *Viaje a la Alcarria*. Some famous travel writers include Paul Theroux (*The Great Railway Bazaar*), Gerald Durrell (*My Family and Other Animals*), Jack Kerouac (*On the Road*) Bruce Chatwin (*In Patagonia*), Robert Louis Stevenson (*Travels with a Donkey in the Cévennes*) or Bill Bryson who, in *Notes from a Small Island* (1995) describes his travels in the United Kingdom.



Read and listen to the text by American travel writer Bill Bryson.

Script

Citas Para Pensar

The sun was shining in a kindly way. This was France, and I was in that happy frame of mind that always comes with the start of a long trip. My wife and I had recently taken the decision to move back to the USA for a bit, to give the kids the chance to see where their father comes from and my wife the chance to shop until 10 p.m. seven nights a week. However, I had insisted on having one last look at Britain – a **valedictory** tour round the green and kindly island that had so long been my home. I had come to Calais because I wanted to re-enter England as I'd first seen it, from the sea. The next day I would begin the serious business of investigating Britain, but today I was **carefree** and unattached.

In the morning, I breakfasted early and stepped out to another promising day. Clutching an inadequate little map that came with my ferry ticket, I set off in search of the ferry terminus. On the map it looked to be quite near, practically in the town centre, but in reality it was a good two miles away. And all the while I walked I was uncomfortably aware – actually in a panic – that departure time was approaching and that the ferry terminus, though always visible, never actually seemed to get any closer. Eventually, I arrived



Bill Bryson

breathless and late and looking like someone who'd just survived a disaster. I **boarded** the ship with a certain **disquiet**, as I am not a

good sailor. However, before long, it seemed, we were sailing into Dover harbour and the welcoming, watery sunshine of England.

Adapted from *Notes from a Small Island*, by **Bill Bryson**.

Autoevaluación

Choose the correct meaning of the words in bold in the text.

Valedictory.

- First.
- Farewell.

Are you sure?

Excellent!

Solución

1. **Incorrecto** (Retroalimentación)
2. **Opción correcta** (Retroalimentación)

Carefree.

- Without worries.
- Worried.

That's fantastic!

Not exactly.

Solución

1. **Opción correcta** (Retroalimentación)
2. **Incorrecto** (Retroalimentación)

Breathless.

- Dirty.

Tired.

Not exactly.

You are incredible!

Solución

- 1. **Incorrecto** (Retroalimentación)
- 2. **Opción correcta** (Retroalimentación)

Boarded.

Got off.
 Got on.

Not exactly.

Brilliant!

Solución

- 1. **Incorrecto** (Retroalimentación)
- 2. **Opción correcta** (Retroalimentación)

Disquiet.

Anxiety.
 Happiness.

You are doing great!

Try again.

Solución

- 1. **Opción correcta** (Retroalimentación)
- 2. **Incorrecto** (Retroalimentación)

3.1.- Now you put it into practice.

Autoevaluación



Choose the correct answer.

(Literary texts are difficult to read. Do not worry if you did not get all the answers).

This passage is from...

- a holiday brochure.
- an information leaflet.
- a travel book

Are you sure?

Not really.

Excellent!

Solución

- 1. **Incorrecto** (Retroalimentación)
- 2. **Incorrecto** (Retroalimentación)
- 3. **Opción correcta** (Retroalimentación)

The writer is travelling...

- alone.
- with his family.
- on a business trip.

That's fantastic!

Are you sure?

Not exactly.

Solución

- 1. [Opción correcta \(Retroalimentación\)](#)
- 2. [Incorrecto \(Retroalimentación\)](#)
- 3. [Incorrecto \(Retroalimentación\)](#)

The writer...

- is going to England for the first time.
- has lived in England for some time.
- lives in France.

Not exactly.

You are incredible!

Not exactly.

Solución

- 1. [Incorrecto \(Retroalimentación\)](#)
- 2. [Opción correcta \(Retroalimentación\)](#)
- 3. [Incorrecto \(Retroalimentación\)](#)

The writer...

- couldn't find the terminus.
- took a long time to get to the terminus.
- arrived at the terminus too late for the ferry.

Not exactly.

Brilliant!

Try again.

Solución

- 1. [Incorrecto \(Retroalimentación\)](#)
- 2. [Opción correcta \(Retroalimentación\)](#)
- 3. [Incorrecto \(Retroalimentación\)](#)

The writer...

- seems to like England.
- doesn't seem to like England.
- prefers America to England.

You are doing great!

Try again.

Not exactly.

Solución

- 1. [Opción correcta \(Retroalimentación\)](#)
- 2. [Incorrecto \(Retroalimentación\)](#)
- 3. [Incorrecto \(Retroalimentación\)](#)

A step ahead

You can log on to Bill Bryson's site.

[The Official Website of Bill Bryson.](#)

4.- If music be the food of love...

Citas Para Pensar

"If music be the food of love, play on."

Twelfth Night, William Shakespeare.

Billy Bragg is an English alternative rock musician who mixes elements of folk music, punk rock and protest songs. His lyrics mostly deal with political or romantic themes. His song "Qualifications" (originally a bonus track on the vinyl edition of the album *William Bloke* and then released on the 1997 outtakes compilation *Bloke on Bloke*) is about how in the current work market people with high qualifications end up doing dead-end jobs (with no prospects of promotion).



You should know

Read the lyrics.

[Qualifications Lyrics.](#)

¿Can you identify the jobs mentioned?

You can listen to the song here.

[Qualifications - billy bragg.](#)

A step ahead

You can visit Billy Bragg's official web page and his myspace.

[Billy Bragg's web.](#)

[Billy Bragg's myspace.](#)

Appendix.- Licenses of Resources.

Licenses of Resources used in Culture and people

Resource (1)	Resource information (1)	Resource (2)	Resource information (2)
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	<p>By: kk.</p> <p>License: CC by-nc-sa.</p> <p>From: http://www.flickr.com/photos/kk/2333739526/</p>		<p>By: Bill Bryson</p> <p>License: CC by-nc-sa.</p> <p>From: Official Website of Bill Bryson www.billbrysonbooks.com/</p>