

Culture Shock

Pre-Reading

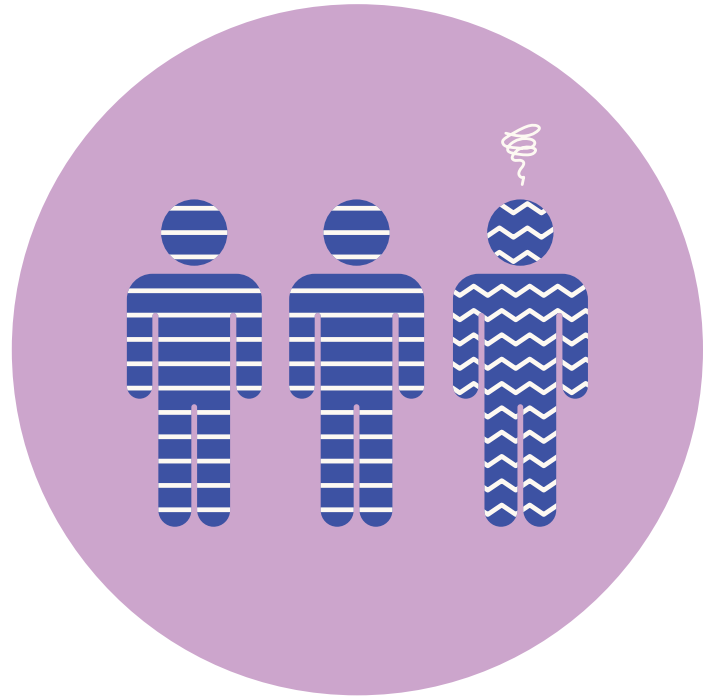
A. Warm-Up

1. Have you ever lived abroad? If so, what was it like? If not, would you like to?
2. What might be some challenges people face when moving to a different country?
3. Which challenge do you think would be the hardest to overcome? Why?

B. Vocabulary Preview

Match up as many words and meanings as you can. Check this exercise again after seeing the words in context on page 2.

- | | | |
|-----|-------------------|--|
| ___ | 1. barrier | a) to combine and unite into a whole |
| ___ | 2. disorientation | b) a romantic vacation that newly married couples take |
| ___ | 3. anthropologist | c) interesting, fascinating |
| ___ | 4. honeymoon | d) an emotion toward something, an outlook |
| ___ | 5. emerge | e) the loss of one's sense of direction |
| ___ | 6. intriguing | f) to come out, to appear |
| ___ | 7. overcome | g) to deal with a difficult situation successfully |
| ___ | 8. integrate | h) something that stops movement |
| ___ | 9. attitude | i) the movement from one place to another |
| ___ | 10. transition | j) a person who studies people and culture |



Reading

CULTURE SHOCK

An emotional roller coaster

1. The term “culture shock” describes a range of emotions that many people experience when they travel abroad and come in contact with an unfamiliar way of life. These feelings include curiosity, confusion, and homesickness. Language **barriers** and physical **disorientation** can increase the intensity of some of the more negative emotions.
2. The Canadian **anthropologist** Kalervo Oberg suggested that culture shock should be divided into four phases. These four phases are often called the **honeymoon** stage, the crisis stage, the adjustment stage, and the adaptation stage.
3. The honeymoon stage is a period of excitement and interest in the new culture. During this phase, people wish to explore their new surroundings and interact with locals. They enjoy the sense of adventure their journey has brought them.
4. During the crisis stage, the positive feelings of the honeymoon phase begin to fade as more negative emotions associated with culture shock start to **emerge**. The crisis stage usually begins about three months after arrival. Things that were at first **intriguing** about the new culture may now seem strange and frustrating.
5. The adjustment stage typically begins between six months and a year of being in a new place. People begin to accept the differences between the host culture and their own. They start to **overcome** some of the challenges faced regarding customs and language. While still difficult, things tend to become more manageable on a day-to-day basis.
6. Life gets easier as people enter the adaptation stage and become more **integrated** into the new culture. By this point, they have made new friends and gotten used to new routines. Frustrations may still arise, but the newcomers realize they don't need to understand everything to live a balanced and meaningful life.
7. People who return to their own country after a long time away may experience reverse culture shock. They often expect to come back to a place that feels familiar, but instead are surprised to discover many things have changed. Furthermore, they are not the same person they once were before they left. Friends and family members may not know how to respond to their new **attitudes**, values, and habits, and it might take time to rebuild relationships. Understanding that reverse culture shock is real can help with the **transition**, but that doesn't mean that it'll be easy.

Comprehension

Discuss these questions in pairs, and write the answers on the handout.

1. Define “culture shock” in your own words.

2. List five emotions that someone with culture shock might feel.

3. In which of the 4 stages are negative emotions the most prevalent?

4. Use words and phrases to summarize the 4 stages of culture shock.

Honeymoon: _____

Crisis: _____

Adjustment: _____

Adaptation: _____

5. Explain the difference between “culture shock” and “reverse culture shock.”

Vocabulary Review

A. Complete the Sentences

Complete the sentences using vocabulary from page 1.
You may need to change the word form.

1. As more and more witnesses were interviewed, facts about the crime began to _____ .
2. Beth has always been interested in people and culture, so she has decided to become an _____ .
3. Suffering a serious head injury may result in a feeling of _____ .
4. After the wedding, Victor and Serena went to Prague for their _____ .
5. The _____ from elementary school to middle school is often very difficult for children.
6. Mei was seriously injured in a race last year. However, with a lot of hard work, she has _____ the injury and qualified for the Olympics.
7. The book sounds _____ , so I am definitely going to read it.
8. The organization helps _____ immigrants into their new community by introducing them to locals.
9. Moving to Argentina was difficult at first. However, once I learned some Spanish and got over the language _____ , it became much more enjoyable.
10. My _____ toward religion changed after I attended church with my aunt several times last year.

B. Words in Context

Look back at the reading and find the correct word.
The paragraph where it is found is given in parentheses.

1. (para. 1) a feeling of sadness when one is away from home for a period of time _____
2. (para. 1) a word that means "overseas, in a foreign country" _____
3. (para. 3) another word for "environment" _____
4. (para. 4) a phrase meaning "connected to or related to" _____
5. (para. 4) a verb that means "to slowly disappear" _____
6. (para. 6) feelings of unhappiness because goals cannot be met _____

Sorting

Work with a partner or in small groups to categorize the situations in the Word List below into the 4 stages of culture shock.

Honeymoon Stage	Crisis Stage	Adjustment Stage	Adaptation Stage

Word List:

- I'm so proud of myself. I finally figured out how to use the ticket machine at the bus terminal.
- I've never tasted such delicious cake. I'm going to have a piece after every meal!
- I really enjoy my neighborhood gardening club. We meet twice a month.
- Why is everyone always so late for meetings?
- I never drank coffee before I came here, but now I have two cups a day—one at breakfast and one in the middle of the afternoon.
- I just told the cashier that I didn't need a receipt, and he understood me!
- I hate taking my shoes off when I go to other people's houses. It's so embarrassing.
- I love the parks in this city. And the architecture is stunning. I feel like I'm on a movie set.

Discussion

1. Have you ever experienced culture shock or reverse culture shock? If so, when? How did you overcome it?
2. In what ways might being in the crisis stage of culture shock affect your ability to function on a day-to-day basis?
3. What could you do before moving to another country to lessen the impact of culture shock?
4. Which aspects of your own culture do you think that people from other countries would find challenging to deal with?
5. Do you think there is always a honeymoon stage when people move to a new country? Explain your answer.

Listening

Fill in the blanks as you listen to the recording.

CULTURE SHOCK

An emotional roller coaster

1. The term “culture shock” describes a range of emotions that many people experience when they travel _____ and come in contact with an unfamiliar way of life. These feelings include curiosity, confusion, and homesickness. Language _____ and physical disorientation can increase the intensity of some of the more negative emotions.
2. The Canadian _____ Kalervo Oberg suggested that culture shock should be divided into four phases. These four phases are often called the honeymoon stage, the crisis stage, the adjustment stage, and the adaptation stage.
3. The honeymoon stage is a period of excitement and interest in the new culture. During this phase, people wish to explore their new _____ and interact with locals. They enjoy the sense of adventure their journey has brought them.
4. During the crisis stage, the positive feelings of the honeymoon phase begin to fade as more negative emotions associated with culture shock start to _____. The crisis stage usually begins about three months after arrival. Things that were at first _____ about the new culture may now seem strange and frustrating.
5. The adjustment stage typically begins between six months and a year of being in a new place. People begin to accept the differences between the host culture and their own. They start to _____ some of the _____ faced regarding customs and language. While still difficult, things tend to become more manageable on a day-to-day basis.
6. Life gets easier as people enter the adaptation stage and become more _____ into the new culture. By this point, they have made new friends and gotten used to new routines. Frustrations may still arise, but the newcomers realize they don’t need to understand everything to live a _____ and meaningful life.
7. People who return to their own country after a long time away may experience reverse culture shock. They often expect to come back to a place that feels familiar, but instead are surprised to discover many things have changed. Furthermore, they are not the same person they once were before they left. Friends and family members may not know how to respond to their new _____, values, and habits, and it might take time to rebuild relationships. Understanding that reverse culture shock is real can help with the _____, but that doesn’t mean that it’ll be easy.

Answer Key

LESSON DESCRIPTION:

In this lesson, students read about the four stages of culture shock. They also discuss what makes their own culture unique and use a graphic organizer to sort statements into categories.

LEVEL: High Int

TIME: 1.5–2 hours

TAGS: discussion, culture, culture shock, stress, anxiety, sorting, graphic organizer

Pre-Reading

A. WARM-UP QUESTIONS

Answers will vary. Have students work in small groups or as a class.

B. VOCABULARY PREVIEW

- | | | | | |
|------|------|------|------|-------|
| 1. h | 3. j | 5. f | 7. g | 9. d |
| 2. e | 4. b | 6. c | 8. a | 10. i |

Reading (and/or Listening)

Read individually, in small groups, or as a class. You can also play the listening as your students read along. A gap-fill version of the reading is available on page 7. Help your students with vocabulary and expressions that they are unfamiliar with.

Comprehension

Answers may vary. Suggested answers:

- Culture shock: feelings people experience when they move to a different country
- Answers may include: curiosity, confusion, homesickness, disorientation, excitement, interest, frustration.
- Negative emotions are most prevalent in the crisis stage.

- Honeymoon stage:** excitement and interest in the new culture

Crisis stage: positive feelings fade and negative feelings, including frustration, emerge

Adjustment stage: accept cultural differences, overcome problems

Adaptation stage: live comfortably in the new environment
- Culture shock occurs when you move to a new country. Reverse culture shock takes place when you move back to your own country after a long time away.

Vocabulary Review

A. COMPLETE THE SENTENCES

- | | |
|-------------------|---------------|
| 1. emerge | 6. overcome |
| 2. anthropologist | 7. intriguing |
| 3. disorientation | 8. integrate |
| 4. honeymoon | 9. barrier |
| 5. transition | 10. attitude |

B. WORDS IN CONTEXT

- | | |
|--------------------|-----------------|
| 1. homesickness | 5. fade |
| 2. abroad | 6. frustrations |
| 3. surroundings | |
| 4. associated with | |

(continued on the next page...)

Answer Key cont.

Sorting

Honeymoon Stage: I've never tasted such delicious cake. I'm going to have a piece after every meal! / I love the parks in this city. And the architecture is stunning. I feel like I'm on a movie set.

Crisis Stage: Why is everyone always so late for meetings? / I hate taking my shoes off when I go to other people's houses. It's so embarrassing.

Adjustment Stage: I'm so proud of myself. I finally figured out how to use the ticket machine at the bus terminal. / I just told the cashier that I didn't need a receipt, and he understood me!

Adaptation Stage: I really enjoy my neighborhood gardening club. We meet twice a month. / I never drank coffee before I came here, but now I have two cups a day—one at breakfast and one in the middle of the afternoon.

Discussion

Answers will vary.

Can be done individually or in small groups or pairs.

Listening

1. abroad, barriers
2. anthropologist
3. surroundings
4. emerge, intriguing
5. overcome, challenges
6. integrated, balanced
7. attitudes, transition

SPELLING NOTE:

This lesson shows the American spelling of the word *Neighborhood*. Most other English-speaking countries spell it this way: *Neighbourhood*. Make it a challenge for your students to find this word in the lesson and see if they know the alternate spelling.