

Topic 4 **CULTURE**

1. **Vocabulary**

- | | | | |
|-------------------|-----------|---------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Quirks | Quirk | 6. Impartial | Im•par•tial |
| 2. Spouse | Spouse | 7. Sarced | Sa•cred |
| 3. Immoral | Im•mor•al | 8. Anthropologists | An•thro•pol•o•gists |
| 4. Customs | Cus•toms | 9. Impeded | Im•pede |
| 5. Empathy | Em•pa•thy | 10. Naïve | Na•ive |

2. **Vocabulary Definitions and Samples**

| | Word | Form | Definition | Example | Usage Tips | Parts of Speech |
|---|----------------|-------------|---|--|--|--|
| 1 | Quirks | <i>n.</i> | A strange trait/characteristic | Wearing red shoes every day is just one of her quirks . | Used usually in a fun way to talk about a persons behaviors. | Quirk•i•ly <i>adv.</i> Quirk•i•ness <i>n.</i> Quirk•ish <i>adj.</i> Quir•ky <i>adj.</i> |
| 2 | Spouse | <i>n.</i> | Married person | His spouse was not at home at the time of the murder. | Used more in formal legal documentation. | Spou•sal <i>adj.</i> |
| 3 | Immoral | <i>adj.</i> | Not moral/good | It was immoral of her to tell lies like that. | We use this to mean someone who has bad values. | Im•mor•al•ly <i>adv.</i> |
| 4 | Customs | <i>n.</i> | A practice common to a group/place or habit for a person | It is custom for the bride to wear white on her wedding day. | | Cus•tom•ary <i>adj.</i> Cus•tom <i>adj.</i> |
| 5 | Empathy | <i>n.</i> | The action of understanding, being aware of, being sensitive to | Seanan feels empathy with his students, knowing how difficult English is. | Different from sympathy, which means sorrow. | Em•pa•thize <i>v.</i> Em•pa•the•tic <i>adj.</i> |

| | Word | Form | Definition | Example | Usage Tips | Parts of Speech |
|----|------------------------|--------------|--|--|---|---|
| 6 | Impartial | <i>adj.</i> | Not partial or biased. Treating all equal. | The referee was found not to be impartial , after taking bribes from the home team. | Used when talking about judgement. | Im•par•tial•i•ty <i>n.</i> Im•par•tial•ly <i>adv.</i> |
| 7 | Sacred | <i>adj.</i> | Highly valued and important, religious worth. | The sacred image of the deity was destroyed in the fire. | | |
| 8 | Anthropologists | <i>n.</i> | People who study the history, culture of human beings and their ancestors. | Anthropologists examine, analyze, report on, and compare different cultures and how they grow, develop, and interact. | | An•thro•pol•o•gy <i>n.</i> An•thro•po•log•i•cal <i>adj.</i> An•thro•po•log•i•cal•ly <i>adv.</i> |
| 9 | Impeded | <i>tr v.</i> | To interfere with or slow the progress of. | Seanan complained that the game rules impeded his success. | | Im•pe•der <i>n.</i> |
| 10 | Naïve | <i>adj.</i> | Deficient in worldly wisdom or informed judgment, simple. | I was young and naive at the time, and I didn't think anything bad could happen to me. | French <i>naïve</i> , feminine of <i>naïf</i> , from Old French, inborn, natural. | Na•ive•ty <i>n.</i> |

3. Vocabulary Practice

a. Please match the words on the left with their synonym on the right.

- | | |
|-------------------|------------------|
| 1. Quirk | a. Prevent |
| 2. Customs | b. Wrong |
| 3. Impede | c. Understanding |
| 4. Immoral | d. Traditions |
| 5. Empathy | e. Strange |

b. Please put the correct word below into the blank.

Anthropologists **Spouses** **Naïve** **Sacred** **Impartial**

1. Employees and their _____ are covered by this health plan.
2. A judge needs to be _____ when considered the facts of a case.
3. The natives were fearful of entering the burial grounds, as they were _____ sites.
4. If you're _____ enough to believe him, you'll believe anyone.
5. The _____ discovered that the tribe had learned how to speak English from trading with explorers in the early 19th century.

4. Listening & Reading (MP3 is available to download online)

We all consider ourselves unique individuals. We all have our own opinions, preferences, habits and quirks. In fact, we are unique individuals. We do have our own opinions, preferences, habits and **quirks**, yet most of us share a large number of feelings, beliefs, and habits with other members of our society. These things we share, these characteristics, many of which we take for granted and never think about, make up what anthropologists call culture. When we compare ourselves with people in other societies, we become especially aware of cultural similarities and differences. For example, many societies in the world think it is perfectly normal, correct and even desirable, for a man to have more than one wife at a time. In our society, we do not allow this kind of marriage. However, it is perfectly legal, normal and acceptable for

a man or a woman to marry a series of **spouses**, as long as he or she is not married to more than one person at a time. Each of us may have a different opinion about whether or not we want to get married, or if we do marry, what kind of person we consider an ideal partner. But hardly anyone in our society would question why we can't be married to more than one person at a time. In addition, newly married couples in many societies around the world live with, or very near, one set of in-laws. In Irish society, most newly married couples do not live near their parents or in-laws, in fact they try very hard to live far away and separate from them. These are just two examples of how things that are normal in one society, something members of that society would not think about, are considered strange in another society. They are just two examples of what the idea of culture is.

Cultural Relativity

In any society, people usually believe that their own usual behaviors and attitudes are correct and that people who do not share those behaviors and attitudes are **immoral** or inferior. However, our own **customs** and ideas may appear strange and awful to someone from another culture. A Hindu in India, for example, would consider our custom of eating beef both primitive and disgusting. In his culture, the cow is a **sacred** animal and may not be eaten. Even our most everyday activities might seem completely ridiculous when seen from the perspective of a foreign culture. Consider what a person from a culture that does not have dentists or regular dental care might think about the time, expense and ritual that we go through to visit the dentist, or who he may think of as the "holy mouth man." To understand and appreciate the behaviors of another society an observer must become knowledgeable with that society's culture and reasons for its customs. In the case of the dentist, we highly value dental care and are willing to spend time and money to keep our teeth and mouth healthy. To us going to the dentist is neither strange nor disgusting. It is our habit and custom.

The attitude of **anthropologists** that a society's customs and ideas must be understood in relation to the society as a whole and not compared to another society is called *cultural relativity*. Since this attitude promotes **empathy** and understanding, it is *humanistic*; because it requires **impartial** observation and involves trying to explain customs, the attitude is *scientific*.

Usually, cultural relativity is **impeded** or blocked by two different, but common, attitudes. The first attitude is a negative evaluation, which usually results in ethnocentrism. The second attitude is a positive evaluation, which often takes the form of a **naïve** desire for the simple life of the “noble savage.”

Ethnocentrism

A person who only thinks of himself and his wants and needs is generally not very good at dealing with other people. We call such people egocentric. A person who judges other cultures only in terms of his own culture is similarly called ethnocentric. Not only are such people ill equipped to do anthropological work, but they may be unable to recognize elements that make up their own culture. As a result, they may not be able to recognize and solve issues and problems in their own culture.

Ethnocentrism, then, gets in the way of our understanding the customs of other people and, at the same time, keeps us from having insight into our own culture.

The “Noble Savage”

When you first become aware of a new culture, especially a culture that is not as hi-tech or industrial as ours, life in that culture may seem to be simple, sensible, and easy. However, living in that culture might not be so wonderful. It is easy to be romantic about other cultures when you don’t know a lot about them.

5. Reading Practice

1. Many people think that life would be so simple if we didn’t live in this busy, urban, industrial society. They feel that life would be better if they lived a simple farmer’s life. What idea is this an example of?
 - a. *Cultural Relativity*
 - b. *Ethnocentrism*
 - c. *The Noble Savage*
2. Do you have any experience with cultural relativity? Have you ever learned something about another culture that made you become more understanding to that culture? *Please state your answer with your partner (45 seconds each)*

6. Conversation Strategies

Keeping or Killing the Conversation

Keepers

What do you think?

How do you feel?

How about you?

What about you?

Killers

I don't really know

That's a good question.

I'm not sure.

I have no idea.

I'd have to think about that.

Umm, ahhh, I'd rather not say.

7. Conversation Strategy Practice

Step 1. Ask your partner these questions. Also, listen to your partner's questions, but do not answer them. Use the "killers" and "keepers" to respond.

Student A:

1. What's the best age to get married?
2. Do you like my hair?
3. How old are you?
4. How much money do you make?

Student B:

1. Do you think there will be a big war soon?
2. Do you believe in ghosts?
3. How much do you weigh?
4. Have you ever stolen something?

8. Phrasal Verbs

These Phrasal Verbs are very common in relation to **Culture**.

| Phrase | Meaning | Collocation | Structure | Example |
|---------------------|---|---|--|---|
| Soak up | To spend time experiencing, listening to, or feeling something enjoyable | Culture Sun | Soak+ up+O Soak+O+up Soak+ Opr+ up | When I travel, I really try to soak up the local culture. We're having a great time, soaking up the sun. |
| Tap into | To understand and express something such as people's beliefs or attitudes | Culture | Tap+into+O | As a foreigner, even though I am married to a Korean, it is difficult to tap into Korean culture sometimes, especially when it comes to understanding Korean people. |
| Grow up in | To be raised or brought up in a place or situation | Culture Name (Country, City...) | Grow+up+in+O | I grew up in a liberal culture, despite my father being quite conservative. |
| Dive into | To do something in a very enthusiastic way | Culture Work Study | Dive+ into+ O | I love diving into a new culture, meeting its people, tasting new foods and trying the language. |
| Keep up with | To remain in contact with | Friends The News Current Events Trends | Keep+up+with+O | I do make a point of keeping up with current trends in society. It's just part of who I am. |

9. Phrasal Verb Practice

Please put the correct Phrasal Verb into the sentences below. Please change the form of the verb if needed. Thanks.

Keep up with **Dive into** **Grow up in** **Tap into** **Soak up**

1. He tried his best to _____ Spanish culture by learning the language and making as many contacts as possible.
2. I'd love to be a cat, just lazing about and _____ the sun.
3. I read BBC every morning, just to _____ what's going on in the world.
4. I am way behind in my work. I will need to _____ my study this weekend, if I am to make any headway.
5. I _____ Maynooth, a small university town outside of Dublin, known for its ecclesiastical history.

10. Idioms

These Idioms are very common and they are connected to **Culture**.

| Idiom | Meaning | Situation | Example |
|------------------------|---|--|--|
| Culture shock | A condition of disorientation affecting someone who is suddenly exposed to an unfamiliar culture or way of life or set of attitudes | Used with – <i>experience, have</i> | Have you ever <i>experienced culture shock</i> while in a foreign country? |
| Greek to me | If you don't understand something, it's all Greek to you. | | I haven't a clue what this menu says. It's <i>all Greek to me!</i> |
| Culture vulture | someone who is very keen to see and experience art, theatre, literature, music etc. | Humorous (funny) idiom, a bit negative actually. | She's a bit of a <i>culture vulture</i> . She'll only visit places that have at least one art gallery. |

| | | | |
|-------------------------|--|--|--|
| Dutch courage | Dutch courage is the reckless bravery caused by drinking too much. | Used when you need a lot of courage to do something (as in if I had a drink I could get courage) | I think I need a bit of Dutch courage to go up and talk to her. She is too beautiful. |
| A good Samaritan | A good Samaritan is a person who helps others in need. | | Look at that kid helping the old woman cross the road. He is such a good Samaritan . |

11. Idiom Practice

Please put the correct Idiom into the sentences below. Thank you.

Culture culture a good Samaritan Dutch courage
Culture shock Greek to me

1. I try to be _____, but it isn't always easy. I mean, some people get a bit irate when I try to help them out.
2. I always have a shot of whiskey before I get on a plane, for a bit of _____.
3. My mother-in-law is a bit of a _____, in a good way. She loves soaking up new places.
4. The only _____ I had when I came to Korea was the amount of people with black hair.
5. Can you make head or tail of this? Nope, it's all _____.