

UNIT 1:

STARTING SOMEWHERE NEW

Starting off

1. Match the reasons for studying in a different country (a–d) with the photos (1–4).

- a. to get internationally recognised qualifications
- b. to learn a foreign language
- c. to experience living in a different culture
- d. to make friends with people from other countries



2. Now discuss these questions.

- Which reason for studying abroad would be the most important for you?
- What other reasons do people have for studying abroad?

Reading Section 1

Exam information

- *Reading Passage 1 is usually a factual text.*
- *You need to find specific information.*
- *It is usually easier than the other parts, so it's a good idea to do it first.*

1. Look at the list of things people do when they live or study in a different country. Which do you think are quite easy and which are more difficult? Why?

- eating different food
- understanding people
- getting to know local people
- using public transport
- missing family and friends
- obtaining the correct papers

2. You are going to read a passage about culture shock. Read the title of the passage and the subheading in italics. What do you think culture shock is?

Australian culture and culture shock



Sometimes work, study or a sense of adventure take us out of our familiar surroundings to go and live in a different culture. The experience can be difficult, even shocking.

Almost everyone who studies, lives or works abroad has problems adjusting to a new culture. This response is commonly referred to as '**culture shock**'. Culture shock can be defined as 'the physical and emotional discomfort a person experiences when entering a culture different from their own' (Weaver, 1993).

For people moving to Australia, Price (2001) has identified certain values which may give rise to culture shock. Firstly, he argues that Australians place a high value on independence and personal choice. This means that a teacher or course tutor will not tell students what to do, but will give them a number of options and suggest they work out which one is the best in their

circumstances. It also means that they are expected to take action if something goes wrong and seek out resources and support for themselves.

Australians are also prepared to accept a range of opinions rather than believing there is one truth. This means that in an educational setting, students will be expected to form their own opinions and defend the reasons for that point of view and the evidence for it.

Price also comments that Australians are uncomfortable with differences in status and hence idealise the idea of treating everyone equally. An illustration of this is that most adult Australians call each other by their first names. This concern with equality means that Australians are uncomfortable taking anything too seriously and are even ready to joke about themselves. Australians believe that life should have a balance between work and leisure time. As a consequence, some students may be critical of others who they perceive as doing nothing but study.

Australian notions of privacy mean that areas such as financial matters, appearance and relationships are only discussed with close friends. While people may volunteer such information, they may resent someone actually asking them unless the friendship is firmly established. Even then, it is considered very impolite to ask someone what they earn. With older people, it is also rude to ask how old they are, why they are not married or why they do not have children. It is also impolite to ask people how much they have paid for something, unless there is a very good reason for asking.

Kohls (1996) describes culture shock as a process of change marked by four basic stages. During the first stage, the new arrival is excited to be in a new place, so this is often referred to as the "honeymoon" stage. Like a tourist, they are intrigued by all the new sights and sounds, new smells and tastes of their surroundings. They may have some problems, but usually they accept them as just part of the novelty. At this point, it is the similarities that stand out, and it seems to the newcomer that people everywhere and their way of life are very much alike. This period of euphoria may last from a couple of weeks to a month, but the letdown is inevitable.

During the second stage, known as the 'rejection' stage, the newcomer starts to experience difficulties due to the differences between the new culture and the way they were accustomed to living. The initial enthusiasm turns into irritation, frustration, anger and depression, and these feelings may have the effect of people rejecting the new culture so that they notice only the things that cause them trouble, which they then complain about. In addition, they may feel homesick, bored, withdrawn and irritable during this period as well.

Fortunately, most people gradually learn to adapt to the new culture and move on to the third stage, known as 'adjustment and reorientation'. During this stage a transition occurs to a new optimistic attitude. As the newcomer begins to understand more of the new culture, they are able to interpret some of the subtle cultural clues which passed by unnoticed earlier. Now things make more sense and the culture seems more familiar. As a result, they begin to develop problem-solving skills, and feelings of disorientation and anxiety no longer affect them.

In Kohls's model, in the fourth stage, newcomers undergo a process of adaptation. They have settled into the new culture, and this results in a feeling of direction and self-confidence. They have accepted the new food, drinks, habits and customs and may even find themselves enjoying some of the very customs that bothered them so much previously. In addition, they realise that the new culture has good and bad things to offer and that no way is really better than another, just different.

Questions 1-6

Do the following statements agree with the information given in the reading passage?

Write

TRUE *if the statement agrees with the information*

FALSE *if the statement contradicts the information*

NOT GIVEN *if there is no information on this*

1 Australian teachers will suggest alternatives to students rather than offer one solution.

2 In Australia, teachers will show interest in students' personal circumstances.

3 Australians use people's first names so that everyone feels their status is similar.

4 Students who study all the time may receive positive comments from their colleagues.

5 It is acceptable to discuss financial issues with people you do not know well.

6 Younger Australians tend to be friendlier than older Australians.

Questions 7-13

Complete the table below.

*Choose **NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS** from the passage for each answer.*

THE STAGES OF CULTURE SHOCK

	Name	Newcomers' reaction to problems
Stage 1	7	They notice the 8 between different nationalities and cultures. They may experience this stage for up to 9
Stage 2	Rejection	They reject the new culture and lose the 10 they had at the beginning.
Stage 3	Adjustment and reorientation	They can understand some 11 which they had not previously observed. They learn 12 for dealing with difficulties.
Stage 4	13	They enjoy some of the customs that annoyed them before.

HOMWORK:

THIRD CULTURE KIDS

In a world where international careers are becoming commonplace, the phenomenon of third culture kids (TCKs) children who spend a significant portion of their developmental years in a culture outside their parents' passport culture(s) is increasing exponentially. Not only is their number increasing, but the cultural complexity and relevance of their experience and the adult TCKs (ATCKs) they become, is also growing.

When Ruth Hill Useem, a sociologist, first coined this term in the 1950s, she spent a year researching expatriates in India. She discovered that folks who came from their home (or first) culture and moved to a host (or second) culture, had, in reality, formed a culture, or lifestyle, different from either the first or second cultures. She called this the third culture and the children who grew up in this lifestyle 'third culture kids'. At that time, most expatriate families had parents from the same culture and they often remained in one host culture while overseas.

This is no longer the case. Take, for example, Brice Royer, the founder of TCKid.com. His father is a half-French/half-Vietnamese UN peacekeeper, while his mom is Ethiopian. Brice lived in seven countries before he was eighteen including France, Mayotte, La Reunion, Ethiopia, Egypt,

Canada and England. He writes, 'When people ask me 'Where are you from?' I just joke around and say, -My mom says I'm from heaven.' What other answer can he give? ATCK Elizabeth Dunbar's father, Roy, moved from Jamaica to Britain as a young boy. Her mother, Hortense, was born in Britain as the child of Jamaican immigrants who always planned to repatriate 'one day'. While Elizabeth began life in Britain, her dad's international career took the family to the United States, then to Venezuela and back to living in three different cities in the U.S. She soon realised that while racial diversity may be recognised, the hidden cultural diversity of her life remained invisible.

Despite such complexities, however, most ATCKs say their experience of growing up among different cultural worlds has given them many priceless gifts. They have seen the world and often learnt several languages. More importantly, through friendships that cross the usual racial, national or social barriers, they have also learned the very different ways people see life. This offers a great opportunity to become social and cultural bridges between worlds that traditionally would never connect. ATCK Mikel Jentzsch, author of a best-selling book in Germany, *Bloodbrothers- Our Friendship in Liberia*, has a German passport but grew up in Niger and then Liberia. Before the Liberian civil war forced his family to leave, Mikel played daily with those who were later forced to become soldiers for that war. Through his eyes, the stories of those we would otherwise overlook come to life for the rest of us.

Understanding the TCK experience is also important for other reasons. Many ATCKs are now in positions of influence and power. Their capacity to often think 'outside the box' can offer new and creative thinking for doing business and living in our globalizing works. But that same thinking can create fear for those who see the world from a more traditional world view. Neither the non-ATCKs nor the ATCKs may recognise that there may be a cultural clash going on because, by traditional measures of diversity such as race or gender, they are alike.

In addition, many people hear the benefits and challenges of the TCK profile described and wonder why they relate to it when they never lived overseas because of a parent's career. Usually, however, they have grown up cross-culturally in another way, perhaps as children of immigrants, refugees, bi-racial or bi-cultural unions, international adoptees, even children of minorities. If we see the TCK experience as a Petri dish of sorts a place where the effects of growing up among many cultural worlds accompanied by a high degree of mobility have been studied then we can look for what lessons may also be relevant to helping us understand issues other cross-cultural kids (CCKs) may also face. It is possible we may discover that we need to rethink our traditional ways of defining diversity and identity. For some, as for TCKs, 'culture' may be something defined by shared experience rather than shared nationality or ethnicity. In telling their stories and developing new models for our changing world, many will be able to recognize and use well the great gifts of a cross-cultural childhood and deal successfully with the challenges for their persona, communal and corporate good.

Questions 1-6

Do the following statements agree with the information given in the reading passage?

Write

TRUE if the statement agrees with the information

FALSE if the statement contradicts the information

NOT GIVEN if there is no information on this

- 1 There is a close connection between careers and the number of TCKs.
- 2 An increasing number of people describe themselves as TCKs.
- 3 Ruth Hill Useem studied children in several countries.
- 4 Ruth Hill Useem defined the third culture as a mixture of two parents' original cultures.
- 5 Brice Royer feels that he has benefited greatly from living in many different countries.
- 6 Elizabeth Dunbar felt that she had a culture that was different from most people's.

Questions 7-13

Complete the table below.

Choose NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS from the passage for each answer.

THIRD CULTURE KIDS - ADVANTAGES AND RESULTS		
Area	Advantage for ATCKs	Possible result
Friendships	know how different people (7).....	can act as bridges between worlds that are usually separate
Business	creative thinking	May cause (8)..... among certain people Can lead to (9)..... despite similarities
Whole experience	knowledge of many cultural worlds and a great deal of (10).....	Can teach us about problems faced by (11)..... of all kinds Current ideas of what both (12)..... mean may be considered wrong Belief that culture depends on (13).....