



## Reading and speaking

- 9** Work in pairs and discuss the questions.
- 1 Look at the photos. What aspects of culture do they represent?
  - 2 What are some typical features of your culture?
  - 3 How is your culture different from other cultures you know about? How is it similar?

- 10 a** Work in pairs. You are each going to read about a cultural misunderstanding.

**Student A:** read the text on this page and answer the questions below.

- 1 What did Kyle's father-in-law keep doing?
- 2 How did she usually react?
- 3 What happened when she got angry?
- 4 What did her husband explain?

**Student B:** read the text and answer the questions on page 147.

**b** Tell your partner about the story you read and listen to your partner's story. Ask questions about anything you don't understand.

**c** Have you ever had a cultural misunderstanding? Tell your partner what happened.

## Not in my culture...

*'Ah, Kyle, gordita, como estas?' (translation: 'Ah, Kyle, fatty, how are you?').'*

**T**his is how my father-in-law would greet me every time we went over to his house. At first, I thought I needed to be on my best behaviour for my husband's parents, so I would just smile and nod, when really I felt furious as he insulted me about my weight over and over again.

Finally, one day I'd had enough. When my father-in-law mentioned my weight at the dinner table once again, in front of everybody, telling me I looked 'even fatter than normal', I lost my temper, 'Well, you look older and more wrinkly than normal.' Silence. I turned bright red as I realised I'd just said something truly offensive. Eventually someone coughed politely and changed the subject. But, after dinner my husband took me aside. 'Why in the world would you insult my dad like that?!' he asked. I told him, 'I've had enough of the weight comments, tell him to stop insulting me.' And then my husband told me that in Chile, 'gordita' is a term of endearment and is only used lovingly. He also explained that it's not at all impolite to bring up other people's weight loss/weight gain and that if people do, that just means they care about you enough to notice.

So I explained to my husband that telling someone they look fat/fatter is one of the rudest things you can possibly do in my culture. Well, my husband had a little chat with my father-in-law and my size was never mentioned again.