CULTURE SHOCK

The worry and feelings people experience when they have to live and survive within a new culture, such as a foreign country, are known as culture shock. These feelings may include surprise, uncertainty and confusion. They develop from the difficulties faced when people have to adjust to a new culture and don't know how to function within it. Gemma Atkinson, who is British, lived in Italy for three years. 'Everything was exciting at first', explains Gemma. 'I was thrilled by the charm of Italy, but as I settled into my new life, I began to feel overwhelmed and frustrated. Trying to find accommodation, getting a new phone line in a remote area and getting my work permit seemed impossible. What was wrong? All I could say was 'Do you speak English?'. I couldn't understand the Italian way of doing things. There were times when I wanted to pack up everything and return to Britain. In the end, I got used to my new environment and felt at home'.

Psychologist Rowan Bates explains what Gemma describes as the distinct phases of culture shock. 'The majority of people who move to a new country, whether to study there or as a permanent move, go through the following phases. The first, known as the honeymoon phase, lasts for a few weeks and is characterized by seeing the new culture as something wonderful. The food, lifestyle and architecture, for example, are admired and seem far more interesting than what one has left behind back home. However, after some time, the new culture begins to create feelings of anxiety. People may start to miss their old country and the way of life there. This is known as the negotiation phase and it is when people start to feel annoyed with their new culture. After about six months, most people enter the adjustment phase, which is when they become used to their new culture. They know how to behave appropriately and have accepted the new culture'.

But not all people react in the same way. Rowan explains there are three different forms of adjustment. Many people actually find it impossible to accept the new culture. They are miserable and only wish to return to their own culture, where they feel safe and secure. Other people integrate so completely into their new environment that they lose their original identity. Finally, there are those who successfully manage to combine the best parts of their new culture with their old culture. These people experience few problems and are the happiest of all.

Canadian Simon Hart, who went to Greece for a year-long working holiday, says a sense of humour helped him enormously. 'I couldn't speak a word of Greek when I arrived, which led to some funny misunderstandings. On my second day there, I bought what I thought was a bus ticket from an old man who had dozens of them. Once on the bus, an inspector took a look at my ticket and informed me that I had bought a lottery ticket, not a bus ticket'.

Rowan has this important advice for people thinking of moving to a new country. He says before you travel, you should learn as much as you can about the new culture so that you are better prepared for what you will face. Obviously, learning the new language will help. Once you are there, develop new friendships with both locals and foreigners, who will provide support because they've had a similar experience. Keep an open mind about the new culture and enjoy the differences. And try to see the funny side in your experiences.

PART ONE: DECIDE WHETHER THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS ARE TRUE, FALSE OR NOT GIVEN.

61. Gemma Atkinson is still living in Italy.
a. True **b.** False **c.** Not given

62. The stages of culture shock are different depending on the purpose of your stay in the foreign country.
a. True **b.** False **c.** Not given

63. Not all countries are easy to adapt to.
a. True **b.** False **c.** Not given

64. It takes about six months to get used to the new culture.
a. True **b.** False **c.** Not given

65. Most countries have laws to help foreigners integrate.
a. True **b.** False **c.** Not given

66. The more you learn about the new culture, the easier it will be to integrate.
a. True **b.** False **c.** Not given

PART TWO: CHOOSE THE CORRECT OPTION ACCORDING TO THE TEXT.

67. How was Gemma's experience in Italy?
a. it was fantastic after a bad start
b. it went from bad to worse
c. it ended too soon
d. it had its ups and downs

68. When you are in the honeymoon stage
a. you miss a lot of things from your home country
b. you risk losing your own identity
c. you compare the new culture with your own
d. you accept both the good and the bad things

69. According to Rowan,
a. there are people who should never leave their home country
b. you don't need to lose your culture to be happy in another country
c. you should integrate as completely as possible in the new country
d. all people can adapt to a new country if they want to

70. When Simon Hart arrived in Greece
a. he couldn't speak Greek
b. he had to learn the language
c. he found the Greeks very funny people
d. he tried to find a job as soon as possible

71. What happened to Simon on the bus was
a. embarrassing
b. amusing
c. frustrating
d. daunting

72. What is not advisable to do when you move to a foreign country?
a. learning the language
b. making local friends
c. avoiding other foreigners
d. having a sense of humour

LIVEWORKSHEETS

BORN TO RUN

A. Does your birth order influence your personality? Diana is organized and reliable. **(73)___**. It would come as no surprise to many experts that Diana is the oldest child in her family. Some psychologists believe that your place in the family can shape your personality, influencing whether you are responsible, a risk-taker, or ridiculously funny. 'Oldest children are usually responsible', says Frank Sulloway, researcher and author of a book about the significance of birth order. He says firstborns are more likely to serve as parents and, as a result, they tend to be more responsible. Also, he adds firstborns are rule keepers who are also ambitious and self-disciplined. Diana, with two younger siblings, says the responsible part is true and that her parents tend to ask her for help first. She says some of the other firstborn characteristics, like being organized, also are a good description of her because, for example, she always arranges the weekend plans with friends.

B. While oldest children are known for being dependable, middle kids are peacekeepers who are social and diplomatic, according to Sulloway. Bridget is a middle child in her family. She's the fourth child out of nine but says she wouldn't describe herself as outgoing. "Peacekeeper" is a better description for Bridget, who says she breaks up fights between her siblings. 'If some of my younger siblings are arguing about a toy, I try to work it out. I find something else that someone can play with and tell them to stop arguing with each other'. The little ones might argue occasionally, but last-born children tend to be the most agreeable, fun-loving and amusing. **(74)___**. Young children are also creative, outgoing and open to new experiences.

C. But what happens if you are an only child? **(75)___**. Only children are usually ambitious and good at following parents' rules. For instance, Willie, who is 11 years old and an only child, agrees. He says he never argues with his parents and always wears a helmet when he goes skating. He also cares for the family's four pets. But unlike kids with siblings, only children are usually quite comfortable around adults. On the contrary, youngest children question authority and usually are leaders in social movements. But there are exceptions to these norms. Age gaps can affect sibling relationships so you might be more like an only child, even if you are the youngest. And if you have a much older sibling but also have a younger sibling, then you are probably more like an oldest child than a middle. Kids who don't have siblings until they are more than six years old usually are like only children.

PART THREE: COMPLETE THE TEXT BY PUTTING THE SENTENCES (A-D) IN THE CORRECT PLACE (73-75). THERE IS ONE EXTRA SENTENCE WHICH YOU DO NOT HAVE TO USE.

a. Kids without siblings often have characteristics that are similar to those of firstborn kids

b. She hands in her homework on time and she keeps in touch with her parents while she's out with friends

c. As a firstborn child, he is very responsible and his parents usually trust him with taking care of his sister

d. Older children have physical strength over the younger kids, so humour is one way last-born children can get what they want

PART FOUR: FOR QUESTIONS 76-82 CHOOSE THE PARAGRAPH FROM THE TEXT (A-E). PARAGRAPHS MAY BE CHOSEN MORE THAN ONCE.

Which paragraph mentions …

76. a strategy to stop an argument?

77. which children enjoy spending time with older people?

78. a person who has eight siblings?

79. a person who is an expert on birth order?

80. a factor apart from birth order that can affect your personality?

81. someone who is good at planning activities?

82. which children aren't afraid to try new things?

LIVEWORKSHEETS