



English and Culture Tutoring Services

Quiz! Do You Know How to Work with Americans?

Quiz Answers

1) B

"The squeaky wheel gets the grease"

Persistence and directness are highly valued in American culture. What does this mean at work? Your manager might expect you to keep working on making a big sale even if you get "no" for an answer at first. If you work in a large corporation, you might need to continue to follow up on any requests that you make (time off, office supplies) to be sure that you get what you need.

2) B

You should not start small talk with this question, "I love your tie! How much did it cost?"

Remember, some topics that you should avoid during small talk are money, sex, religion, and politics.

Asking someone how much a tie cost is intrusive and not very tasteful. It would be better to ask them where they got the tie or just say that you like the tie and nothing more.

3) C

In many countries it is common to live with your parents throughout your twenties until you get married.

In the U.S., individualism and “standing on your own two feet” is highly valued. College students often move away from home to go to school at age 18 and are not expected to move back home unless they are in a tough financial situation.

If a person still lives with his parents at age 25, it is often looked down upon. However, with the recent recession, more people in their twenties and thirties are starting to live at home, but this trend is new.

4) A

Because American culture is quite individualistic, many Americans (though not all) form an identity based on their careers.

Religion, family name, and social class are often not something that is discussed the first time you meet someone new in the United States.

5) B

It is much more respected to work your way up the social ladder than it is to inherit money and remain in the same place on the social ladder.

Americans love the "rags to riches" story and many are able to achieve this dream. Many of our movies idealize the story of someone being born into a poor family and working very hard to move up to a higher level of economic stability to achieve the “American dream.”

However, while the American Dream seem to be available to everyone, discrimination based on race, gender, sexual orientation, and social class still exists in American society today.

6) C

In your culture, is it ok to disagree with your boss in front of other colleagues if you have a better idea? In many US companies, this is ok and it is encouraged.

The U.S. is a country with a relatively small amount of power distance. That means that the leaders in a company are often at the same level as the workers and want workers to speak their mind if they don't agree with an idea.

Some companies in the U.S. today (many in the tech field and in urban areas) have an open office structure where all members of the company (including the boss) work at an open desk and there are no closed- door offices that would distance upper- level management from the other employees.

This might be very strange for you if you come from some Latin American countries or Middle Eastern countries where there is a very clear distinction between managers and employees.

7) C

The importance of "saving face" is not as significant as the importance of figuring out the truth and sticking to the facts in American culture.

Many Asian cultures such as Japan might consider it more important to let a colleague maintain a respectable status so they would not disagree with him publicly, even if they thought he was wrong. This is not the case in the U.S. and ideas are often debated publicly.

8) A

Americans are encouraged to come up with creative solutions and ideas from their early days in school all the way through university and into the working world.

While some cultures believe, "the nail that sticks up gets hammered down," Americans believe just the opposite.

They often strive to do something unique and different. Hard work is also very much encouraged and respected in American business culture.

9) C

If you are leading a meeting in the United States, remember that time is valuable.

In many situations, the most important thing is to start and end the meeting on time and to stick to the items on the agenda. However, keep in mind that this will vary depending

on which industry you work in and the corporate culture of your company. Small talk is often important, but it's only used as a way to ease into the real business of the meeting, and that is getting things done.

If you come from a culture where relationship- building is given a higher priority and is necessary before any business gets done, you should be aware of this difference.

Want to learn more about doing business with Americans? Please read our other articles on cultural competence:

- [Intercultural Communication: Become a Master in 5 Steps](#)
- [3 Tips for your Next Business Meeting with Americans](#)
- [6 Myths about American Culture that You Learned from Hollywood](#)