

## In this unit

### Grammar

- reported speech
- reporting verbs

### Vocabulary

- culture
- adjectives

### Scenario

- Kaleidoscope World

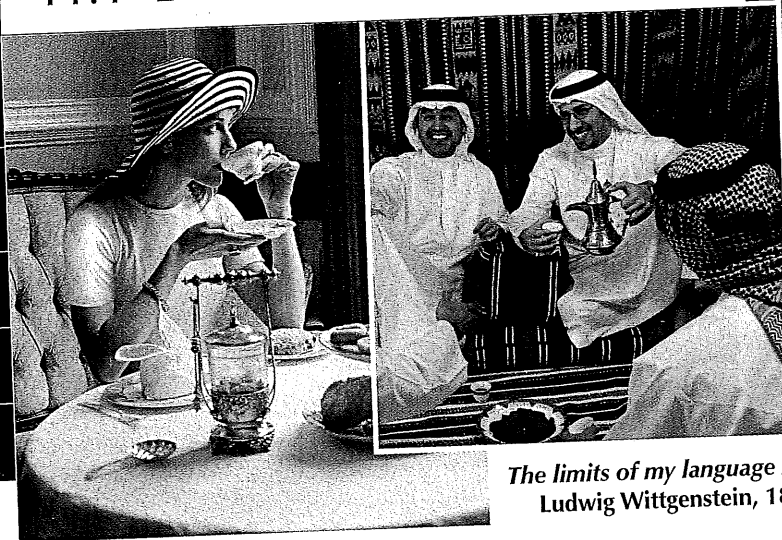
### Study skills

- improving reading skills

### Writing skills

- a formal letter

## 11.1 DEFINING CULTURE



*The limits of my language mean the limits of my world.*  
Ludwig Wittgenstein, 1889–1951, German philosopher

### READING AND VOCABULARY: culture

1a What do you understand by a *culture*? What comes into your mind?

1b What do you think are the typical features of your own national culture?

2 Read the website below quickly and choose an appropriate heading for each section from the box.

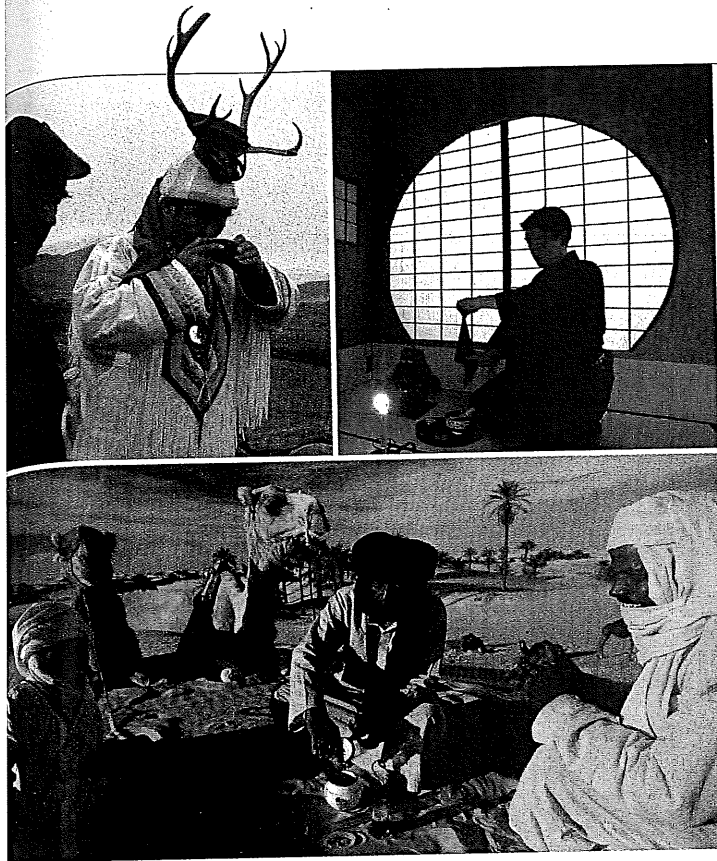
- |              |                   |                    |                    |
|--------------|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Architecture | Climate           | Cuisine            | Customs/Traditions |
| Geography    | Historical events | Institutions       | Language           |
| Life rituals | Religion          | Rules of behaviour | The arts           |
|              |                   |                    | Values             |

## WHAT IS CULTURE?

The word 'culture' has a number of meanings, but in its widest sense it refers to everything that makes up the identity of a particular group of people, society or nation.

- \_\_\_\_\_ – the general terrain and physical features such as mountains, rivers, proximity to the sea, whether there is a coastline
- \_\_\_\_\_ – weather conditions in different seasons, length of seasons, average temperatures and types of extreme weather if appropriate, e.g. hurricanes, typhoons, droughts
- \_\_\_\_\_ – written and spoken means of communication used by a particular group of people; this may include particular dialects, and characteristics of grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation
- \_\_\_\_\_ – a particular style of cooking; this will include specialities, unusual dishes and staple diet of a particular area, e.g. rice, potatoes, pasta
- \_\_\_\_\_ – things which are considered important to people and tend to guide their lives, e.g. attitudes to family, money, honesty, superstitions, nature, animals
- \_\_\_\_\_ – characteristic styles of music, theatre, film, painting, opera, literature, etc. and their relative importance and status
- \_\_\_\_\_ – particular faith/belief systems, e.g. Islam, Christianity, Buddhism, Judaism, including sects within a particular tradition
- \_\_\_\_\_ – unspoken/unwritten ways of doing things, e.g. rules of etiquette and manners regarding how to eat, socialise, dress, drive, greet and address each other; punctuality, tipping, the way people treat each other (male/female/adults/children), etc.
- \_\_\_\_\_ – particular national/public holidays, feast days, festivals (e.g. carnivals), commemorations, anniversaries and activities associated with and performed on these occasions
- \_\_\_\_\_ – (civil) wars, invasions, revolutions, famines, natural disasters, etc.
- \_\_\_\_\_ – birth, marriage, maturity, employment, retirement, death, and how these are treated
- \_\_\_\_\_ – the political system and type of government and/or monarchy, the legal system, education, financial system
- \_\_\_\_\_ – characteristic style of buildings and interior design; also common building materials used, ratio of old/new buildings, the built environment and its heritage

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**3a** Look at these definitions for words and expressions from the website. Which section do you think you might find each of the words in?

- a) kind of food eaten every day
- b) particular linguistic form (often spoken)
- c) ways of behaving politely
- d) belief that some things are lucky/unlucky
- e) particular type of land
- f) a date on which we remember something special or important from the past
- g) small group with particular beliefs and practices
- h) traditional aspects of parts of a culture, e.g. building

**3b** Find the words or expressions on the website which match the definitions in Exercise 3a.

**3c** Select three or four of the words from Exercise 3b to discuss. Give an example from your country, or another country you know well.

**4** In pairs or small groups, discuss the questions.

- 1 Which of the 13 factors listed in the text do you think are the most important in defining a culture?
- 2 Was there anything in the list which surprised you? Why?
- 3 Which factors do you think make your culture different from those of other countries? (Think about countries which are far away and those that are near neighbours.)
- 4 Are there aspects of any other cultures which you admire? What? Why?

**LISTENING**

**5** What do/would you miss about your culture when you are abroad?

**6a** **3.12** Listen to six people answering the question in Exercise 5. Which person misses which of these things?

- a) the sound of rain
- b) expressing ideas in their own language
- c) the smell of coffee
- d) jokes and loud laughter
- e) a special drink
- f) cycling everywhere

**6b** Listen again. What does ...

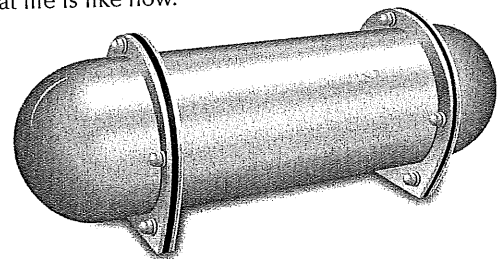
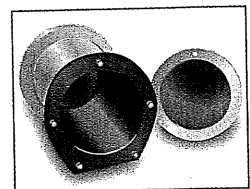
- 1 Ayla say about Turkish hospitality?
- 2 Carola say about supermarkets in Germany?
- 3 Anna say about Russian friendship?
- 4 Danielle say about food in Cameroon?
- 5 Alessandra say about hearing her dialect of Italian?
- 6 Nancy say about making arrangements in Argentina?

**7** Which of the speakers' opinions is most like yours? Is there anything which the speakers said which you thought of? Has anything you have heard changed your ideas from Exercise 5?

**SPEAKING**

**8a** In groups, agree on 12 items to be placed in a time capsule which will be opened in 200 years' time. Choose the items which you think best represent your culture as it is today.

A time capsule is a sealed container filled with objects. It is then buried in the ground and not opened until some time in the future. The idea behind this is to communicate to people in the future about what life is like now.



**8b** Join with another group and explain the content of your time capsule and the reasons for your choices.

## **CPI1 Cultural differences Listening practice**

### **www.elllo.org : Views 1309 Going Home**

Abidemi grew up in both Nigeria and Canada. She is currently living in Japan, where she teaches English. **Listen to the interview WITHOUT LOOKING AT THE SCRIPT and write your answers to the questions below:**

1. What makes her feel at home in Nigeria?
2. What makes her feel at home in Canada?
3. What does she mean when she says “I don’t really feel a conflict of interest”?
4. How long does it take her to readjust when she goes home to Canada?
5. What does she mean by “eavesdropping”? Why does she mention this?
6. What does she say about relationships with friends at home?
7. What does she make a beeline for when she goes back to Canada?

**Listen again with the transcript to check your answers. Complete the Vocabulary Challenge.**

### **Views 1320 Shockingly Different**

Abidemi talks about how being from Nigeria made her different and interesting at the same time. **Listen to the interview WITHOUT LOOKING AT THE SCRIPT and write your answers to the questions below:**

1. According to Abidemi “Differences come in weird places sometimes.” Give examples of such differences that she describes.
2. What is her anecdote about nachos?

**Listen again with the transcript to check your answers. Complete the Vocabulary Challenge.**