

Culture Shock

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Pre-reading Discussion Questions:

1. What do you think the title of the article “Culture Shock” means?
2. Why did you come to the United States? Did you want to come here? Was it your own choice? Can you easily return to your country?
3. When you first arrived and in the first month, how was your life different from what it was in your home country?
4. How did you feel when you first arrived and for the first month?
5. Do you think it is easy or difficult to move to a new country?

Vocabulary:

Recognize

Sensations

Miserable

Frustration

Solution/Solve

Fear

Determination

Opportunity

Post-reading Comprehension and Discussion Questions:

1. When the writer first came to the U.S., she
 - a. spoke English
 - b. was afraid of everything
 - c. answered the telephone when it rang
2. When the writer arrived at the airport in Chicago, she
 - a. called her husband
 - b. could not use the telephone
 - c. ordered water
3. Why did the writer come to the U.S.? Did she want to come? Do you think she had a choice? Why or why not?

4. How did the writer feel in the beginning? Why? What was she not able to do? How was this different from her life in Italy?

5. Why did the writer go back to Italy? Was this a good solution to her problems? Why or why not?

6. What did she learn or realize while she was at home? What did she change about herself?

7. Do you think it is easy to change one's attitude? Why or why not?

8. What did the writer do differently when she returned to the U.S.? How do you think she felt then?

9. Do you feel now or have you felt in the past as the writer did during her first month in the U.S.? What is (was) the same or different for you, as compared to her?

10. What is the writer's advice to other newcomers? Do you think this advice is helpful? Do you have other advice?

11. What does 'culture shock' feel like, physically? Emotionally?

12. Do you think the ‘culture shock’ experience the writer describes varies depending on the reason people have for coming here? (For example, is it different for people who come with a family or alone? For people who come by their own choice or do not have a choice? For people who come with the idea to return home or with the idea to stay?)

How is it the same or different, and why?

13. What aspect of American culture do you find most difficult to understand?

14. What aspect of your own culture do you most appreciate and would not like to give up?

Note to the Teacher:

After reading and discussing this article, it may be helpful to share and discuss with students stages of culture adaptation. While there are variations, one model can be found on our website at www.charlottesville-esl.org/cultureshock.htm

Student, particularly those who will be returning to their native countries, may also find it interesting to read a follow-up article by the same writer titled Counter ‘Culture Shock’ in Volume 4 Issue 3, May 2003.

