Unit 1

What would foreigners need to know about your culture to be able to communicate well with people?

Duncan Well, I'm Irish originally so the language, uh, is obviously very important. Uh, everyone speaks English, um, in Ireland. I think other things, for example like the, the history of a place, uh, is also important, uh, you know, to have some understanding of what people celebrate, what they remember, um, and, you know, what's important for them as a, as a group of people.

Tom I think that foreigners would need to know that English people on the whole are quite reserved. So, they would find that English people might not necessarily say what they want or how they feel sometimes. So, that can be quite challenging for people visiting our culture.

Mary I think actually that Canadians are really friendly. So, as long as the person is polite they will be really polite back and do everything possible to help.

Michael Well, I think it would be easy to have misunderstandings because our sense of humour in Britain is quite dry, so people quite often say the opposite of what they mean.

Have you had experiences of making cultural mistakes? What happened?

Tom I haven't had the experience, uh, of making a cultural mistake, necessarily. But on my last trip to China, um, I was using chopsticks for the first time, and it took me around six minutes to eat my first bit of food, so that was quite embarrassing.

Michael One time when I was working in Switzerland I was in a hurry to get to a meeting and I crossed the road without using a pedestrian crossing. And, uh, a car stopped and the man got out and told me I shouldn't be doing that. I was quite surprised because in Britain nobody would ever say that to anybody.

Sacha Yeah, the, the only kind of times it's happened has been when I've been trying to speak a foreign language but I haven't got the pronunciation quite right. So, in, in Chinese for example there's a … the, the word for *mother* and *horse* sound very, very similar to me; but obviously to a, a Chinese, uh, local, very, very different.

Unit 2

Would you like to go on an adventure?

Barbara I would like to go on an adventure, and I'd like to go to the North Pole to see the Northern Lights.

Fraser I would definitely like to go on an adventure. I'd like to return to Lagos in Nigeria, where I've been before, um, with, uh, a culture that is completely unlike what I'm used to; completely different to what I've experienced before. Um, but so rich and so varied I'd definitely like to see it again.

Dominika Absolutely. I'd like to go anywhere in the world, preferably around the world, and travel in any sort of transport just to meet people and discover new cultures.

Can you think of a time when you were out of your comfort zone? What happened?

Barbara Yes. Um, I was eighteen and I was in India. Uh, it was very confusing; I was lost. It was very busy; there was a lot of people. I didn't necessarily know how to communicate. But in the end I used my hands and my body and the language I could, and in the end of the situation I got where I was going and it all worked out OK.

Fraser The last time that I visited Lagos I was very much out of my comfort zone. A completely different culture; something I've never experienced before. Um, I had to lead a band of musicians, uh, from the UK to Lagos and back for an event. Uh, very stressful, very anxious, very difficult, but rewarding nonetheless. It was great.

Dominika When I was ten years old, my family and I moved abroad to Luxembourg and I had to adapt to a completely new environment. And, um, I was in a school with mostly French speakers, um, which was quite a difficult time for me. Um, and I had to sort of embrace it with all, with all of my strength and, um, learn a completely new language.

Stuart When I was out of my comfort zone … yeah, I think, um … look, there's a lot of times at work, um, when there are certain things that need to be done that are, uh, difficult and complex. Now, my comfort zone is actually, um, numbers, maths, the technical side of my industry. Funnily enough, when we have complex things going on with individuals or people, that actually pulls me out of my comfort zone.

Unit 3

What do you think are essential qualities for finding a job at the moment and why?

Mickey I think essential qualities are that you really do need to be hard-working, committed, um, understand where the economy is at the moment and realize that things aren't quite as easy as they used to be, so we've all got to put in a bit more of an effort, I would think, at the end of the day.

Daniel That's a good question. I think a can-do attitude is definitely a good thing. Um, knowing languages, especially, um, if, if you're from a non- … a non-, um, Anglo-Saxon culture, I think … knowing English actually is quite useful. Um, yeah, but a can-do attitude – it makes, makes a big difference.

Sarah Good communication skills. Um, got to look the part; can't just be turning up for interviews in jeans and scruffy tops and things like that. Uh, to know a little bit about the job that you're going into; so, uh … if you're going for an interview, know a little bit about the company, um, just so that you've got a general idea, um, as to what they, they … that particular company does.

Do you think it's important to plan for the future? Why/why not?

Mickey It's very important to plan for the future, um, otherwise you'll find yourself in a bit of a muddle, I suppose – something I haven't personally done and I keep meaning to address. You know, I think I'm probably from the generation where we spent before we thought. Now, well, I think we're all going to suffer a bit at the end of the day.

Daniel I think it's important. Uh, I think we live in a generation where people don't make enough money just by working, like probably my parents did. I think it's important to think about investments and things like that, honestly. So, I think it's important to plan for the future.

Mary Yes and no. Um, yes, in terms of, you know, figuring out what you want to do in terms of work; um, making sure you have the right qualifications for that. Uh, saving obviously is important. But I also think that it's important to not focus so much on the future, uh, and also learn how to live in the present.

Michael I think it's important to plan for the next two years, but beyond that seems a bit of a waste of time to me.

Unit 4

Which invention of the past twenty years has had the most impact on your life? In what ways?

Brian I think it would have to be some sort of digital technology, really. Um, the internet, uh, mobile phones, digital technology communication. I mean, just the way … it's completely … it's a complete shift to how we used to communicate and meet compared to twenty years ago.

Pat Well, lots of things. But I, I do have an iPad and that's had quite an impact in that I can look up things very easily. I don't have to go to the computer and switch on; I've got my iPad.

Scott Probably from my own point of view travelling around London, the Oyster Card – uh, which is basically, uh, um, a smart card you tap into, uh, Underground stations to go through the gate. It automatically opens; it charges you the right fee. Uh, and it just makes things a lot easier than buying a ticket.

Kate Google Maps. I live in London and I have no spatial awareness or, or sense of direction at all. So, Google Maps for me has been an absolute lifesaver.

Can you describe a working environment that would make you more creative?

Pat Yes, I, well, I would like to have actually, um, a small teashop so I could bake and, and decorate cakes and things like that. That's the sort of thing I like to do.

Scott I think, uh, from my own point of view, somewhere like Hawaii where you're, you're out in the open. You've got, uh, beautiful scenery and just … generally a, a great place to be.

Kate Yes. Um, I think one, I don't know, I want to say with lots of colour. Um, and I think one where it's just not necessarily arranged in the usual way, you know, with desks and rows of chairs; but creative spaces. I think use of space is really important.

Jan I think I work in a very creative working environment because I work in an office, but we're on a fifty-acre site in the middle of a forest and you can go and take lunchtime walks and go and feed the horses and the sheep, and it's beautiful.

Unit 5

Would you describe yourself as very organized? Can you give an example of why or why not?

Morgane I think I'm not an organized person as, um, for, for an example, I just decided to come to London yesterday and I booked my ticket yesterday. So, I'm not organized.

Sheldon I would say I am organized sometimes when I need to be; but there are things that I'm not always organized about. Um, it depends on priorities. I'm a teacher, so I have to be organized to do my job well. Um, so the sort of things I have to organize: I've got to think about what the boys have coming ahead of them in the next twelve months, so I've got to plan for that. Um, so it is, it is important. But sometimes I think it's also good to be relaxed about things.

Ann I work, uh, as an account manager at my job and so I do have to be organized. I look after many clients and so we have to be organized. So, I create folders and then sub-folders. I take notes. I have reminders in my Outlook calendar; um, little prompts that, um, remind me that I need to do certain task for either my clients or for myself.

Sacha Uh, not really. Um, I like to think of myself as just being able to do things right on time. So, I'll often leave booking a flight or a holiday till the last minute, which annoys my girlfriend quite a lot.

What does your workspace look like and are you neater at work or at home?

Ronwen My workspace is a small back room. It's a jewellery workspace. Um, and no, it's pretty chaotic. But I am tidy and well organized at home in my normal life. I like to know what I'm doing for the day when I wake in the morning.

Sacha Oh, I think I'm neater at work. We have a, a policy to not have any papers on the desk. Um, so my desk actually looks quite clean.

Ann Unfortunately, my workspace is a bit cluttered. I wish I could be neater at the office than I am at home. At the moment, I have, um, a busy work schedule, so I have stacks of notebooks piling up on my desk. And I do need to do shredding.

Sheldon I think I'm neater at, at both places, because you've got to be so careful in, in a workplace with data, um, that you can't have a, a messy desk. And not just because it's aesthetically important, but because of, uh, confidentiality, etc. So, that's, that's important in the workplace, having a, a neat working environment. And at home I think, uh, if I leave things, um … if I, if I leave a mess at home, then my wife's at me, so I've got to answer to her.

Unit 6

Can you describe an important or traditional ceremony or cultural event in your country?

Barbara The country I live in is the United States of America, and an important cultural event there is Thanksgiving. And it's something that I experienced for the first time four years ago. And it's lovely because it's like Christmas but without all the presents; you just get to eat food all day long and, uh, be thankful for what you have.

Fraser In Scotland we have a traditional ceremony, uh, at, uh, Burns Night in January celebrating the work of Robert Burns. Um, it's the only ceremony or celebration where you'll have people doing an Address to the Haggis, which is a poem all about the stomach of a sheep.

Scott Yeah, I think, uh, obviously the Notting Hill Carnival. Um, central to London; one of the biggest, uh, uh, carnivals in, in Europe, uh, and one that attracts a lot of people, too. I think, you know, it's, it's a colourful event.

Have you ever taken part in a ceremony or event? If yes, how did you feel? If no, would you like to?

Barbara Yes, I've taken parts in many events. I used to work as a, as a wedding coordinator and planner. And it's a wonderful experience to work with people from the beginning when they're planning their, their wedding day, right to the end when you see them with their friends and their family celebrating this wonderful day. Um, it's very emotional and it gives you a great sense of satisfaction.

Fraser Part of what I do involves playing at lots of events, um, in, in Scotland. We've played at, uh, lots of ceilidhs and celebratory dances. So, my job is fantastic; I get to be a huge part of the, the music and the dancing. And it feels fantastic to make people's evening enjoyable.

Brian Well, I obviously have. I mean, I don't know, I mean, I've been married – is that a ceremony? I've taken part in a traditional … I was married, actually, at a traditional Gaucho wedding in Argentina with Gauchos and, um, and a big, what they call *asado*, a barbecue traditional. And that felt very nice.

Unit 7

Are you expected to work or check emails or mobile phones outside working hours? How do you feel about that?

Tom Our company says that you're not expected to check emails outside of work, but the problem is there are so many emails and there's always so much to do that if you don't I can feel that I feel quite stressed at work. So, unfortunately I do end up sometimes checking them at home.

Mary I am expected to check emails and to pick up the phone. Um, I try to limit how much I do that. If it's dinner with a friend or if I'm with my husband, I turn off my phone so that I can focus on the person I'm with. Um, but I actually don't feel too great about it. I wish it was kind of, you know: go to work, leave work in the evening and everything is done. But that's not really the world we live in.

Diandra Um, I'm not expected to check them but I do. Um, and I feel absolutely comfortable with that. I think it's a good way of working; it shows flexibility in the workforce. And if you, if you have children or … and you have flexible working hours it's a must, really.

Mickey Well, I work for myself so it's really entirely up to me whether I want to do that or not. So, sometimes I do, sometimes I don't; it just depends on how my mood takes me.

What do you find motivates you to work hard? Do you respond better to a stick or a carrot?

Tom I definitely don't respond well to a stick. Uh, I'm quite a sensitive person, so I respond better to praise and encouragement. So, for me it would be the carrot.

Mary I would say I'm pretty … my motivation comes from inside. I'm probably my harshest critic and so I do the best I can because if I didn't I wouldn't be able to live with myself. And I would say a stick is what motivates me: the threat of, of like failure or what will happen if I don't do my absolute best.

Diandra Oh, a bit of both, really. Um, I think self-motivation is important: to sort of motivate yourself and to, you know, achieve your own personal aims and goals. But at the same time, I do like to sort of please other people and do a good job for others.

Mickey Mm, carrot definitely. Um, I just feel that that's more motivating at the end of the day; it makes me want to work hard and achieve more than rather somebody telling me I must do something. I don't really respond very well to that kind of authority.

Unit 8

In what ways are people who were brought up in the age of social media different from older generations?

Fraser Uh, they don't know how to have a conversation. Um, they are fixated on the device in their hand. And they don't have common courtesy or manners, I think – myself included; I'm as guilty of that as anybody.

Brian I think particularly in terms of relationships things have changed. I notice that my children they seem to have more online relationships than actual face-to-face relationships. I think that's a fundamental difference, and I think very often it kind of stops there, and they're quite happy having a digital presence or a digital communication.

Pat The difference is they have, um, every sort of information at their fingertips so, so they should be, uh, not better educated but differently educated. I, I think social media is quite a good thing; it can … but it does have its downside.

Kate Um, I think, uh, it … this is a subject quite close to my heart. They are, um, just … they have huge access to information. Uh, I think they tend to go to technology, um, as a first port of call in, in ways that maybe older generations would not.

Are you comfortable with technology?

Fraser Yes, very much so. Uh, I have no problems with technology whatsoever.

Samuel Personally I think I'm up to date with technology and I carry it all the time with me. Um, it's basically like a second skin to our new generation, I think, um, which keeps me away from the real world out there because it's always with me. Like, you know, the invention of the iWatch – it's kind of, like, integrated to your skin. Um, and I think I'm starting to hate technology as it grows faster and faster, and I feel like … that human beings that actually produce technology are now being controlled by technology and it's kind of reversing.

Kate I'm comfortable-ish with technology. I'm OK. I'm not the world's best, but I'm, I'm not too far behind, I think.

Unit 9

Do you find it easy to get to sleep?

Tom On the whole, I do find it easy to get to sleep. Uh, I find it much easier if I've done some exercise in the day. I find that makes me feel nice and relaxed.

Ronwen I don't now; I used to. But, um, my husband died a couple of years ago and I don't find it so easy now. Um, some days I do; um, some days I don't.

Romain Uh, sometimes yeah, sometimes no; it depends. But as I say, I'm working from home so I can manage my own sleep time. Uh, I never had any real issue to sleep because I don't need a lot of sleep.

Lyndsay I do find it easy to get to sleep, but, um, I could probably use more.

What can people do to make sure they get a good night's sleep?

Tom One thing I like to do is to do meditation, and I sometimes do that ten minutes before sleeping. Uh, and switching off screens an hour before bed – that helps me to wind down also.

Ronwen From what I've read, I understand that … well, meditation I think is good, and I have tried that. Um, and I think, um, exercise during the day, but not absolutely before you go to bed; evidently you shouldn't do that. Um, yeah, just calm and perhaps not watching some thriller on TV at the last … before you put the light out! And no, uh, no television in the, in the bedroom.

Romain I would say you need to focus on your sleep, so just stop doing anything with … relating to screens or computers or TV before you go to sleep. So, maybe grab a book and listen to relaxing music on the bed; turn off the lights and try to, to focus on your own body.

Sacha The, the best thing would be to go for a nice long run or other, otherwise take some other exercise. Um, or just simply having a nice hot drink before bed also works quite well.

Unit 10

What sort of TV programmes do you watch to relax?

Barbara I like food programmes, travel programmes … um, I like some really embarrassing girly programmes. *Grey's Anatomy* would be my secret … my secret show.

Brian Depending on content, probably a good documentary I would watch. Um, I like, uh, a good political programme if there's an interview with somebody I like, like a writ … I like cultural programmes as well.

Linda Travel programmes, uh, a lot of those, uh … especially with Michael Palin who used to be in Monty Python and now he is, uh, well a writer as well.

Stuart Probably, look, I don't watch a huge amount of TV, but I, I enjoy, uh, s … such things as *Sopranos*, *The Godfather*, some of the classic old gangster stuff, and as, as, as, perhaps as heavy as that can be, it's, it's escapism. So, that would also be reflected in movies such as maybe *Casino* and, and, uh, well one that's just out recently, uh, some of the Mad Max films or the remakes as well.

Do you watch comedy programmes? What's your favourite and why?

Barbara Um, I can only think of one that I watch: now and again, I watch *Modern Family* and I enjoy that. I think it's quirky and edgy and I enjoy the characters.

Linda Not too many comedy programmes. I'm a bit in the past: I, I like *Fawlty Towers* with, uh, John Cleese. Um, and the classics like that, they make me laugh.

Jan I do watch comedy programmes. My favourites of the recent years have been *2012*, which was a spoof of the Oly– London Olympics. And that, the same team then went on to make *W1A*, which is a spoof made by the BBC about the BBC, and it's hilarious.

Unit 11

Do you like binge-watching and if so what shows do you watch?

Duncan I never watch TV shows, um, like dramas or anything like that. The only thing that I might binge-watch, uh, would be football. Um, sometimes if it's raining outside and I've got nothing to do, it's very possible for me to watch three football matches, um, in a row with no break in between them. So, that's probably about, what, six hours of football. That's a bit of a binge.

Mary Yes, I do; I like binge-watching. And my binge-watching is junk TV, so like *Keeping up with the Kardashians* or *The Real Housewives of Beverly Hills*. It's just awful and I'm really embarrassed.

Sheldon I, I have watched things back to back, just because I don't always have time to watch them when they're aired on television. So, I recently had a holiday and I watched *Game of Thrones*. Um, I caught up with about four seasons quite quickly, because the fifth season was, uh, was being advertised so widely, so I thought I'd give it a go. And I enjoy that. I'm on *Downton Abbey* now. So, I've done the first two seasons, um … so, I'm enjoying that. It's nice, you know. There is a lot of better television out now than about ten years ago.

How do you get news? From the internet, TV, or newspapers?

Duncan I don't really watch the TV news, but I do look at newspaper websites most days. Uh, I think my two favourite are probably *The Guardian* and *The Independent*. Uh, and those are the ones I think that fit my politics best and I trust them the most.

Mary I don't watch TV because it's a little bit too much for me. I mean, with everything that's going on in the world I don't like to watch TV. But if it, I would read the news, and if it was for something serious I would probably go to *The Telegraph* maybe; and for my celebrity news, *The Daily Mail*.

Ann I get my news updates from the *Metro* in the morning; the *Evening Standard* in the evening. I see updates on my, um, Facebook. I subscribe to BBC, Sky and other news, um, subscriptions and so they pop up on my Facebook. So, these are the ways I catch up with my news.

Unit 12

Who do you take after most in your family? In what ways?

Fraser Um, I don't think I take after anybody in my family particularly because there's nobody hugely musical in my, in my family. However, my mum has a fantastic taste in music; huge influence on me growing up. Big part of the reason why I chose to become a musician was her taste in music when I was younger. So, I think that's been a huge influence on me in my formative years and growing up.

Brian I would think, um, my uncle Tom, who's passed on now. I think we were kind of … well, we got on very well; we, we had kind of a lot of similarities. Um, he was a great storyteller. Um, he was good company. He was a bit of an eccentric.

Pat Well, I don't know actually who I actually take after. But I would like to take after my grandmother who was quite a strong woman; had lots of ad, adverse things happen in her life but was quite a strong person. And I'd like to be like that.

Kate I think probably my dad, um, because we both worry a lot.

What do you think is the ideal family size? Why?

Barbara I don't think there is an ideal family size. Um, I have two children; I'm expecting my third. I always wanted to be in a big family because I grew up as an only child. Um, I think I like the idea of having four or five children and a busy house, um, lots of chaos. And … but I also had a lovely time growing up just me and my parents. So, the ideal family is just where there's love and that's it.

Brian Um, well I come from a family of five kids. That was nice; that was good having lots of brothers and sisters and we all got on. Probably at the moment I would probably think ideal – I'm not sure there is one. I have two kids; maybe three would have been nice, you know.

Pat I don't think there's an ideal family size, actually. I think it's what you're comfortable with. I mean, for some people an ideal family size – you mean immediate family, I take it – um, can be three or four, but some people like to have lots of children and it can be, be large. I don't think there's an ideal.

Kate I would say, uh, two parents, two children, so a family of four. Um, I think actually from a cost perspective, uh, if you started having more than two it becomes a little bit, um, expensive.