

Customs and traditions

Pre-task:

How do you greet someone in your country?

- Do you shake hands? Do you give him or her a kiss on the cheek? (How many?) Which cheek do you start with? Or do you give a hug? Do you greet friends and colleagues differently?
- What are typical expressions to say “hello?”
- How do you address someone you don’t know well (Mr., Mrs., first name...)?

Task 1:

Fill out the form together. What are some of the dos and don’ts of polite behavior in your country?

| | Your own country | Partner country |
|---|------------------|-----------------|
| Acceptable small talk topics/topics to avoid | | |
| Visiting people at home (Do you bring gifts? Do you take off your shoes? Do you arrive on time?) | | |
| Standing in line (Do people queue? Is it ok to jump the line?) | | |
| Meetings/being on time (Are you expected to be on time? Or are people usually late? How late is ok?) | | |
| Personal space/touch | | |

Task 2:

Some languages use a lot of body language and hand gestures.

- What about your own language? Do you use hand gestures in your language?
- Are there typical examples of body language to express astonishment, frustration, anger etc. in a non-verbal way?
- How do you count using your fingers and hands?

Follow-up activity:

- HSBC has created a series of commercials on cultural differences and proper etiquette. Watch the following two short commercials:
- [“Smashed car”](#) (video 1)
- [“Eels add”](#) (video 2)
- Explain the cultural misunderstanding.
- What would be considered polite in your country in these situations?

Sources

Video 1 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v1vvLQd53Ps&list=PL27E01FF1BD50D762>

Video 2 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6_WAmt3cMdk&list=PL92C8DD689D6BEDC1