

These days, it's not uncommon for people to move abroad **temporarily** for various reasons: work, studies, **love**, adventure... Whatever your reason is, it's good to be aware of cultural differences in the new country and also to prepare for what lies ahead. **No matter how cosmopolitan you think you are**, things will be somewhat different and **surprising** or even shocking. Hence the term "culture shock". //

Culture shock is part of the **process of becoming familiar with a new culture**, also known as "cultural **adaptation**." At first you can experience some **discomfort in your new setting**. Things seem strange and even "wrong" somehow. The key is to remember that this is a normal part of the process of adapting, and the uneasy feeling will pass eventually. You should realize that you are carrying "**cultural baggage**": **that is, your own values and beliefs that stem from your culture and traditions**. It's easier to understand new cultures and customs when you can appreciate how your background affects your behaviour. //

It is easier to adjust to the new culture and avoid getting homesick if you can **anticipate what will happen**. You can plan how you will keep in touch with your family and friends. This will make your departure easier for you and people who are important to you. Stay in touch regularly, but also remember that you will be busy when you first move, so make sure your family understands that you won't be calling them every five minutes. Expect things to **be different and be flexible**. Try to maintain a **positive mindset** even when you are faced with new challenges daily. Think of these as an essential part of your experience and as a way to learn new things. //

At first you will probably be excited in your new country. Everything will seem fascinating and curious and you **will be making constant comparisons between your home country and the new host country**. You will find many similarities, but as time passes you will also notice many **differences**. After the initial excitement wears off, **these differences may start to seem annoying**. You might find that the way things are done in **your new culture irritates you**. Finally you can start to experience homesickness, which might be so extreme that you start having **sleep problems**, you feel **emotional** and burst into tears unexpectedly. You might even want to avoid people and the stress of social situations. //

Luckily, most **people survive** culture shock. There is **no evidence of anybody dying of this kind of shock**. Over time you are likely to **get over your negative** feelings and you will be able to enjoy the host culture again. **No doubt there will still be some cultural clashes** when your values contradict the local values and customs. But eventually you will learn to appreciate the differences and you will get a better understanding of the new culture. //

1. According to the story

A. Few people move abroad for good.

B. Some people find a relationship in a foreign country.

C. **Most** people move abroad because of work.

2. What do people often think?

A. That they know other cultures very well.

B. That things will be very similar in other countries.

C. That they don't like **surprises**.

3. Why do people experience culture shock?

A. Because of the problems of the new country.

B. Things have the wrong settings.

C. They are learning new things.

4. What can be a problem when you are moving to a new country?

A. You have too much **luggage** at the airport.

B. You **cannot** understand their traditions.

C. You have fixed ways of thinking.

5. What will make things easier?

A. If you can guess what will happen.

B. If you can prevent what will happen.

C. If you can delay what will happen.

6. What kind of attitude should you have?

A. Realistic but also optimistic.

B. Neutral and **indifferent**.

C. Firm, not spontaneous.

7. What happens **after a while** in the new country?

A. You start comparing the countries.

B. You find the differences more interesting.

C. You find some things problematic.

8. What is **not** a symptom of homesickness?

A. Tiredness

B. Nausea

C. Sensitivity

9. What is said about culture shock?

A. It can even kill you.

B. It is not permanent.

C. It is not serious.

10. What happens when the negative feelings are beaten?

A. You can enjoy **everything** about the new culture.

B. You start understanding the local **language** better.

C. You might still face challenges.

Reading comprehension

I liked being a mess. **My floor was a vacuum in itself**, eating anything entering my room. It consumed sweaters, stuffed animals, socks, shoes. My shelves overflowed with containers of little odds and ends: hair bands, matches, coins, earring backings. **I couldn't always see these things, but I knew that they were safe, nestled somewhere on a shelf. Like old friends, I figured that someday I would find all the loose strings and tie them together. //**

One lonely day in August when all of my friends had yet to return from camp in Maine or some community-service trip in Mexico, something inside me began to itch. I tried taking a shower, scrubbing myself with every body-wash I could find. I brushed my hair and my teeth, but didn't feel any cleaner. I checked my e-mail, which was empty. //

I went downstairs and found my brother playing video games, my mom on the phone, and my dad in his office. I told my mom that something didn't feel right, and she suggested that for once I should clean my room. The thought itself made me **nauseous**. I went upstairs to **sulk**, feeling so overwhelmed that **I might as well have been floundering without a boat in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean. //**

When I opened the door to my bedroom, everything was in its usual cluttered arrangement. A plate of half-eaten pancakes sat on my desk, soggy with syrup from the morning. My bikini hung lifelessly from my doorknob, dripping pool water. Piles of dirty clothes sat unsorted, collecting dust.

I stood in the middle of the cluttered room, breathing in **the filthy air** that I had become so used to. In the silence of that moment, I began to hear the clock ticking. I became aware of **the mouldy smell**. I noticed that a spider had spun a shimmering line from my lamp to the top of my mirror. I shivered in disgust. I remembered that winter how **my stuffed animal, Vanilla**, had fallen behind my dresser and I hadn't noticed until I caught the repulsive scent of her fur burning against the heater until it was too late and she was permanently covered in brown spots. //

I suddenly felt **sympathy** for everything in my room that I had buried, never to be seen again. Lost items I had blocked out for years **made their way back into my consciousness**: my favourite yellow tank top, the picture of my mom and me on that boat in Jamaica, my baseball card collection.

I had an urge to dive under my bed and **uncover everything lurking in the murky depths of dust**, and to climb up into the highest corners of my closet and **rescue items that had been mingling with the spiders**. The innocent piles were growing higher and higher until they were looming monsters before my eyes. They were threatening to swallow me whole. I had to get rid of them. And so I started to clean. //

In a box buried under old textbooks, I found a letter that my Poppy had written **me at camp**. I hadn't thought of him since his funeral. I suddenly remembered **the spicy smell of barbecue mixing with the salty air at his beach house, and the distinct feel of his soft sweater rubbing warmly against my cheek each time he enveloped me in a hug. I remembered my dad rocking me to sleep the night Poppy died, and how the tears wouldn't stop. //**

I sat with his picture, blocking out the rest of the mess around me. I was in the middle of a storm, but I sat there and studied him until I had memorized every line in his face. **Tears began to roll down my cheeks again, and the relief was like the sound of heavy rain pounding on a roof at the end of a drought.**

In the drawer next to my bed, I found a friendship bracelet my best friend, Aubrey, had given to me before she moved to California. I traced the green and purple pattern with my thumb, realizing that I hadn't spoken to her in years. The next day I called her, and we talked all night, laughing about memories. She reminded me of the time we built a family of snowmen in my backyard and had a funeral for them when they melted. **I had lost so many precious childhood memories over time, letting**

them slip away into the tide like grains of sand. //

Under my bed I even found that picture of my mom and me in Jamaica. I had forgotten how turquoise the water had looked from our ship, but what really caught my attention, though, was my image. I had buck teeth, short hair, and pimples covering my face. I stared at that girl. I decided to completely reorganize and revamp my room so that all the books, belts, and baskets were in their right place. **It was like finding the missing pieces of the puzzle.** The finishing touch was framing that photo and hanging it high up on my wall. **After all, it was me I had been searching for. //**

Choose the correct alternative according to the text. Write your answer on the answer sheet!

1. How does the writer describe her room at the beginning of the text?

A. She is confident she'll be able to find everything that she needs eventually.

B. The shelves resemble birds' nests already.

C. It's a bit odd as far as rooms go but vacuums itself when necessary.

2. What happened one lonely day in August?

A. The writer got a rash from an unknown source.

B. Her friends had come back but she still felt lonely.

C. She got restless but didn't understand why.

3. How did the writer feel when she was told to clean her room?

A. As if she had been stranded at sea.

B. She didn't feel like moping around but got to work.

C. She found the suggestion ridiculous.

4. What does the writer notice when she re-enters her room?

A. She realizes that there is a bad odour in the room.

B. There's a strong smell of vanilla and brown fur in there.

C. There is a lovely, fresh scent in the room.

5. What kind of thoughts crosses the writer's mind next?

A. She wants to clean the room from top to bottom.

B. She feels sorry for herself for having so much to do.

C. She's surprised that so many treasures have remained hidden for so long.

6. What does the writer recall about her grandfather?

A. That she danced with her dad to feel better about her grandfather's death.

B. Childhood smells and good feelings.

C. The letters he wrote her from the war.

7. When the writer looks at the picture of her grandfather, how does she feel?

A. Sad but relieved at the same time.

B. There is a storm of strange feelings going through her mind.

C. She can't shake the sensation that she should really be cleaning.

8. What does the writer realize when she speaks on the phone with her friend?

A. She hadn't preserved valuable moments the way they deserved.

B. It had been odd to have a funeral for snowmen.

C. A friendship bracelet hadn't helped her to remember her friend.

9. Why is finding the photograph a significant moment for the writer?

A. She hadn't realized how pretty she had been as a child.

B. Thanks to the photo, she realized why the mess in her room had disturbed her.

C. She realized that she was a puzzle and more complicated than most people understood.

10. What's the main message of the whole text?

A. Cleaning up your room can lead to few surprising discoveries.

B. Sometimes who we are gets buried under a lot of needless clutter.

C. No matter how hard we try, we can't hide.