

MODULE 8

UNIT III – Globalizing Without Leaving Home

Time: Development and planning time will vary.

Why Important: The reference materials will prove helpful in hosting international visitors or developing community programs. The Global School Bus program utilizes international university students in a service learning approach that can bring international understanding to P-12 classrooms across the state and could be adapted for use with 4-H audiences in club, camping and special program opportunities as well.

Objectives: To develop linkages between extension, university international programs offices, international students and communities.

Utilization:

The Background Guide can be used with international visitors to gain important background information and assist the host in developing a meaningful experience for his/her guest. The Guide could also be adapted for use by a group of U.S. citizens preparing to tour another country to introduce themselves and their interests.

The fact sheets found in the section on Globalizing without Leaving Home are useful for educators planning to host international visitors or learn more about immigrants now living in their own communities.

The Global School Bus project examples shows how international students can assist U.S. school youth in learning more about various countries and cultures.

Supporting Materials:

8.3.1 International Visitor Background Guide (OSU)

8.3.2 Globalizing without Leaving Home

- Orientation Packet for International Visitors
 - Planning for an International Visit
 - Language
 - First Impressions
 - Questions about America and Cultural
 - Dining Differences
 - The Values Americans Live By

8.3.3 Cultural Diversity, Eating in America

- Eating in America: African-American
<http://ohioline.osu.edu/hyg-fact/5000/5250.html>
- Eating in America: Appalachian
<http://ohioline.osu.edu/hyg-fact/5000/5252.html>
- Eating in America: Asian
<http://ohioline.osu.edu/hyg-fact/5000/5253.html>
- Eating in America: Hmong
<http://ohioline.osu.edu/hyg-fact/5000/5254.html>
- Eating in America: Mexican-American
<http://ohioline.osu.edu/hyg-fact/5000/5255.html>
- Eating in America: Middle Eastern
<http://ohioline.osu.edu/hyg-fact/5000/5256.html>
- Eating in America: Puerto Rican
<http://ohioline.osu.edu/hyg-fact/5000/5257.html>
- Eating in America: Vietnamese
<http://ohioline.osu.edu/hyg-fact/5000/5258.html>

8.3.4 The Global School Bus program is in the development stage and materials will be added as they become available. In supplemental file marked UNIT IV you will find the logo and introductory promotional materials. The idea behind the Global School Bus program developed and directed by Jenny Spolnik in the OSU Office of International Affairs can be adapted and adopted in other settings (Global101@osu.edu). Local universities may already have similar programs in place which Extension professionals could explore as part of the total university's outreach and engagement efforts. Consider asking a 4-H club or major program activity to invite an international guest to visit classrooms during the day and participate in a 4-H club meeting in the evening. Offering an overnight homestay could be a win-win for everyone.

The supporting materials below are examples of resource materials which can be helpful in planning experiential learning experiences for international visitors.

References:

Axtell, R. (1990). Do's and taboos of hosting international visitors. New York, John Wiley and Sons Publishers.

Ludwig, B. G. (1992, revised 1998). International Visitor Background Guide. (Available from Ohio State University Extension, Columbus, Ohio.)

Ludwig, B. G. (1991). Orientation packet for international visitors. (Available from Ohio State University Extension, Columbus, Ohio.)

Michigan Cooperative Extension Service. (1989). International Connections Notebook. (Available from Michigan State University, Michigan.)

OSU Extension. Cultural Diversity: Eating In America. Ohio State University Extension. Retrieved from <http://ohioline.osu.edu/hyg-fact/5000/5250.html> (through 5258).

Item 8.3.1

OSU EXTENSION INTERNATIONAL VISITOR BACKGROUND GUIDE



OSUE CONTACT PERSON:

PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND:

International Visitor Name:

- _____ Mr.
- _____ Mrs.
- _____ Miss
- _____ Ms.
- _____ Dr.

(First Name)	(Middle Initial)	(Last Name)
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Title: _____
(At Home Institution)

Institution: _____
City _____
Country _____

Description of position: primary responsibilities in home country:

Degree Held:	Institution Name:
_____	From: _____
_____	From: _____
_____	From: _____

Length of Visit to U.S.A. (Indicate number of _____ Weeks
weeks or months) _____ Months
_____ Other _____

Languages Spoken: _____

English Ability: (identify as: E = Excellent; G = Good; F = Fair; P = Poor)

Written: _____

Spoken: _____
Please continue to next page

OHIO INFORMATION:

Arrival Date to Ohio: _____

Departure Date from
Ohio: _____

Purpose of Visit to
Ohio: _____

Primary areas of interest, research priorities:

(Optional): Personal background information on: interests and family:

COUNTY VISITATION:

Preferred length of visit: _____ 1 day
(Check the appropriate
blank) _____ 2 days
_____ 3-5 days
_____ More,
Specify _____



Best dates for visit: (give 3
alternatives)

1st Choice: _____ (Date) To _____ (Date)
2nd Choice: _____ (Date) To _____ (Date)

3rd _____ (Date) To _____ (Date)
 Choice: _____

Is there a particular county or region of the state you wish to visit?

Yes Please indicate particular location: _____

 No

Do you have special dietary requirements:

Yes Yes, please explain: _____

 No

Please continue to next page

INTEREST AREAS:

Identify interest areas (listed below) you would like to learn about as a result of your VISIT. Place a check (✓) before interest areas. Mark with an *three (3) areas of greatest interest.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation Tillage Practices | <input type="checkbox"/> Economic Development Projects in Rural Communities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Forestry, Woodland Management | <input type="checkbox"/> Land Use Issues (Rural/Urban Interface) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> In-Service Education for Extension Staff | <input type="checkbox"/> Water Quality Programming |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Evaluation of Program Impacts | <input type="checkbox"/> Economic Development |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Methods of Assessing Community Needs | <input type="checkbox"/> Work and Family Issues (i.e.-Day Care, Elderly Care) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Work with Part-Time Farmers | <input type="checkbox"/> Use of _____ Rural pesticides: _____ Urban |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Funding of Extension Programs | <input type="checkbox"/> Operation/Management of Local Extension Office |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family Financial Management | <input type="checkbox"/> Administration and Supervision of Extension Staff |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4-H/youth Development Programs | <input type="checkbox"/> Tourism, Recreation Resources |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Farm Financial Management | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Visitation with a Family (Family Life and Well-Being) | |
| Farm Visitation: _____ Dairy | |
| Check (✓) _____ 'Beef | |
| those of _____ Sheep | |
| interest _____ | |

<input type="checkbox"/> Poultry <input type="checkbox"/> Agronomic Crops <input type="checkbox"/> Organic Farming <input type="checkbox"/> Horticulture Crops <input type="checkbox"/> Low Input Sustain-able Agriculture <input type="checkbox"/> Computer Usage in Extension Programs <input type="checkbox"/> Teaching Methods of Extension Agents <input type="checkbox"/> Use of Advisory Committees <input type="checkbox"/> Nutrition and Physical Well-Being of Families <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Extension Programming <input type="checkbox"/> Extension Programs to Reach Youth and Families at Risk <input type="checkbox"/> Schools & Community Education Programs	<input type="checkbox"/> Development, Parks and Natural Areas <input type="checkbox"/> Business Retention and Expansion <input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural Production & Marketing <input type="checkbox"/> Solid Waste Disposal <input type="checkbox"/> Other <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
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What do you wish to gain from your visit?

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Item 8.3.2

GLOBALIZING WITHOUT LEAVING HOME

PLANNING FOR AN INTERNATIONAL VISIT

Planners inevitably, as a visit goes on, begin to realize they have planned too much. By trying to show everything, we fail to explain any one aspect enough to really discuss it with our visitor.

Treat your visitor as you would wish to be treated, if you were a visitor in a strange country. Go out of your way to learn about the person as an individual, what he/she likes, what he/she will do when they return home or what he/she is interested in seeing. Review in advance the Background Guide and use that as a starting point for identifying areas of interest and mutual concern. If you are not familiar with the country, locate it on the map and perhaps borrow a library book about it.

- 1) When your guest arrives, review and adapt an agenda or plan for the visit, discover any special dietary requirements and be certain that he/she has the following information:
 - Your office telephone number and address
 - Your home phone number (if it should be needed in an emergency)
 - Where he or she will be staying
- 2) Try to provide an overview of what your community is like. Maps or materials often available from the Chamber of Commerce are helpful. A visit to someone's home (possibly participating in a family meal) would be a special occasion for the visitor. Likewise, visiting with local businessmen, touring a school or a day care facility may be of interest.
- 3) Consider holding an Extension Advisory Committee Meeting during the visitor's stay. It's an excellent way to show democracy in action and provide your guest with an understanding of how clientele are involved in helping Extension establish priorities. Allow time for discussion.
- 4) Often farm and agricultural enterprise visits are key focuses for international visitors to the Extension program. Use the following guidelines in planning your tour or visit.
 - Don't limit the visit to one farm, if possible. Show the diversity of agriculture in your county. Visitors from developing countries are interested in seeing high tech, but often gain the most from discussions with small farmers whose operations may be more on a scale with their own.
 - Consider inviting several other farmers to join the tour and leave plenty of time for discussion at each stop.
 - Encourage the farm family you're visiting to be prepared to **briefly** describe the farm business: size, crops, livestock, number of families involved, business arrangements.

- 5) Possible discussion questions might include:
 - What is the future of farming?
 - What will happen to the farm when the farmer retires or leaves farming?
- 6) Talk about mutual problems farmers face:
 - Prices - How do they influence farm operations
 - Marketing
 - Competition
 - Environment
 - Legislation - What effects do government policies have on farm operations?
How are policies changed?
 - Pest and diseases
 - Services provided and needed from the Extension Service
 - How farmers get information to solve their problems or ideas to try new crops or farming approaches.
- 7) Discuss differences between the visitor's country and your area, for instance:
 - Level of mechanization
 - Use of fertilizers and chemicals
 - Size of farm
- 8) Talk about how the family interacts and is involved in the farming operation. What comparisons can be made related to:
 - Child labor
 - Men working off the farm
 - Women working off the farm
 - Role of the extended family
- 9) Invite the visitor to talk about how people he knows at home look at and think about the United States, Ohio and farming.
- 10) Follow up by seeing whether his/her opinion has changed.

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LANGUAGE

English is the native tongue of barely a dozen countries, but it is either widely spoken or studied in more than 90 others. It is very likely that your international visitor will speak some English. The problem which may emerge is that they may not understand your English. That is because American/English is replete with slang, colloquialisms, idioms, jargon, buzz words, lingo, officialese, acronyms, and metaphors. Here is an example:

An American magazine editor was hosting a group of Chinese when one of them said, "Please, if you will, explain what is a turkey?" The editor launched into a lengthy explanation of the ungainly American bird that has become the centerpiece at American Thanksgiving tables. And then, of course, he had to explain about the American holiday, Thanksgiving. The Chinese waited patiently and then replied, "Well, I still do not understand what is meant when you Americans say 'Come on, you turkey, let's get moving.'"

Another communication barrier comes from words called "cognates". That means words that look or sound alike between two languages. Some cognates are twins in meaning. But others have important differences in meaning. For example, a limousine to a Frenchman from Normandy is not a fancy auto but instead a type of cow; the Spanish word *embarrasada* does not necessarily mean "embarrassed" - in fact, in Mexico it means "pregnant"; when a French person uses the word *demand* he or she means "ask".

Encourage your guest to interrupt any conversation or lecture when an unfamiliar word or phrase interferes with comprehension. Finally, if you still have trouble accepting the premise that our language is extremely difficult for any non-English speaking person, the following ditty from an unknown source might win you over:

*/ take it you already know
Of tough and bough and cough and dough?
Others may stumble, but not you
On hiccough, thorough, slough and through.
Well don't! And now you wish, perhaps,
To learn of less familiar traps.
Beware of heard, a dreadful word
That looks like beard but sounds like bird.
And dead: it's said like bed, not bead,
For goodness sake don't call it deed!
Watch out for meat and great and threat
(They rhyme with suite and straight and debt).
A moth is not a moth as in mother
Nor both in bother, nor broth in brother,
And here is not a match for there,
Nor dear and fear, for bear and pear.
And then there's dose and rose and lose-*

*Just look them up - and goose and choose
And cork and work and card and ward
And font and front and word and sword
And do and go, then thwart and cart,
Come, come! I've hardly made a start.
A dreadful language? Why man alive!
I'd learned to talk it when I was five.
And yet to write it, the more I tried,
I hadn't learned it at fifty-five.*

Adapted from: Do's and Taboos of Hosting International Visitors, Roger E. Axtell. John Wiley and Sons Publisher, 1990. Pages 164-167

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FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Whether we are traveling abroad or hosting foreign guests it's important to maintain a positive attitude. If at first your guest seems strange or difficult or, well, truly "foreign," find ways to think positively. First impressions can be both fickle and dangerous. Look beyond fleeting impressions for positive reasons to turn a short visit into a mutually enjoyable and prosperous professional friendship. If you show objectivity and understanding, your guest will see this and react to what they see in front of them.

GETTING ACQUAINTED

Americans appear to be in love with first names. We like to be instant friends. We wear friendship and informality on our sleeves. When meeting people we immediately use the person's Christian or so-called "given" name - with two exceptions. The exceptions are when the person is (a) elderly or, (b) clearly very senior in rank. In those cases most people show respect by attaching "Mister" or "Mrs." or whatever.

Overseas, the practice of immediately jumping to first names is generally frowned upon. The rule in most countries overseas is when first introduced, use "Mister" or "Miss" or "Mrs." Or "Doctor" or whatever formal title applies. The next rule is what appears to be the first name often is not. When hosting people from China, Korea, and certain other Southeast Asian countries, for example, you will be confronted with three names: Lee Kwan Ho. In that case, he is "Mr. Lee" because his family name comes first, and his so-called "given" names follow. In Latin America, a man named Juan Hernandez Garcia is actually "Mr. Hernandez" because "Garcia" refers to his mother's maiden name and is attached to distinguish and identify him from all the other people named Hernandez.

Yes, it gets confusing. Just bear in mind two bits of advice: first, if confused, just politely **ask** the person what is the proper way of addressing him or her, and second, don't jump to first name basis **until invited**.

Barbara G. Ludwig, Professor and Chair, OSU Department of Extension -11/90

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QUESTIONS MOST ASKED ABOUT AMERICA

To prepare for questions you may get from international guests the following list will start you thinking. The basis for these questions is Dr. Charles T. Vetter, Jr's. Citizens Ambassadors. Dr. Vetter served as a senior training officer for the U.S. Foreign Service Institute.

AMERICAN CULTURE AND SOCIETY

- 1) The American wife/mother seems, from the outside looking in, to run the family. Is that true? Why?
- 2) Over half of American mothers work outside the home; doesn't this threaten the unity and well-being of the family?
- 3) The American society does not seem to have the respect for the elderly held by most cultures. This is evidenced by the number of nursing homes for the aged. Is this correct? Why?
- 4) Americans seem to know very little about world geography - names, places, locations. Why is this?
- 5) Your newspapers do not carry much international news. How well-informed is the average American about international politics and current events?
- 6) I am thinking of sending my children to school in America but several things worry me: class demands seem geared to the "average" student; students seem to have so much freedom and independence; alcohol and drugs and sexual permissiveness seem so prevalent. What do you think?

AMERICAN GOVERNMENT

- 1) I have difficulty understanding the differences between your Democrat and Republican political parties. What are the basic differences?
- 2) Your Congress and your President always seem to be squabbling and disagreeing with each other. And it seems to take so long to get things done. Why is that?
- 3) What is the U.S. government doing about all the corporate buyouts and mergers? There seems to be a frenzy of corporate raids and what you call leveraged buyouts. Isn't that weakening your system?
- 4) While your administrations seem to favor freer trade, you still have strong pockets and waves of protectionism in America. Don't these people understand the economic interdependence that exists around the world today.

AMERICANS IN THE WORLD ECONOMY

- 1) America seems to use such a huge amount of energy supplies - big cars, comparatively low gasoline prices, and an endless stream of appliances. That forces prices up for countries like mine. Why can't America conserve more energy?
- 2) I don't understand how you can have poverty and hunger and homelessness in the

midst of such wealth. Why is this the case in America?

AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY

- 1) Explain the sometimes controversial American position on the following issues: The Middle East, South Africa, Gorbachev's *glasnost and perestroika*, The People's Republic of China and A Palestinian homeland
- 2) What are your views on the role of the CIA and the FBI? How do they differ? Don't they compete, or overlap or even conflict with each other?
- 3) What is the American government policy regarding the 1992 Unification of Europe?
- 4) What is the American solution to the Iran problem? To world-wide terrorism? To the reduction of human rights in so many other nations?

If, after reading this list, you'd like to throw up your hands in frustration, you can't be blamed. It is a challenging list of difficult and often embarrassing questions. It's not likely you will be confronted with more than a few of these, however, when questions do surface, here are some general tips on Grafting statesmanlike responses:

- 1) **Avoid arguments.** Try to avoid allowing a reasonable discussion to turn into an argument or, worse, a debate that could turn nasty. If your guest insists on forcing the issue, remember to listen, keep cool, ask softer questions, and keep an open mind.
- 2) **Determine what the critic is really thinking.** Good questioning can be an art form and a valuable skill not only when hosting but in all aspects of your job. Uncover the origin and concern of the individual's view. Extract facts, if they in fact exist. Look for any hidden agenda. Avoid lashing back by criticizing the guest's home country or personal viewpoint.
- 3) Draw on your own experience. Avoid generalities. Cite your own personal experiences, or, if possible, of a mutually respected third party. If you don't know the answer to the individual's concern, say so.
- 4) **Move the discussion beyond the American context.** Yes, the problems suggested exist here, but probably elsewhere in the world.
- 5) **Be reasonable.** Often your guest is using English as a second language and may inadvertently use words that are stronger or harsher than intended. Remain calm and objective.

Finally, realize that many visitors arrive here with questions they would **like** to ask, but dare not. In this case, you might want to help them along. Show your sensitivity plus a willingness to communicate by providing an opening to let those questions emerge. Once you've opened this conversational gate, however, keep the tips for responding well in mind so that the ensuing conversation does not become a runaway torrent.

BGL -11/90

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DINING DIFFERENCES

Breakfast, lunch, and dinner - sounds simple, but it isn't. No matter how well-intentioned we are, a visitor to the United States might well retreat to his hotel room to gulp stomach soothers simply because of the upsetting ways - and times - we Americans eat.

In the United States, we customarily call the midday meal "lunch" and it is normally a light meal. For most overseas residents, the main meal of the day is served at midday, not in the evening. As a host, the considerate gesture is to *ask* your guests if they prefer their main meal at midday, or if they would like to experiment with the American way.

Dietary rules around the world are too complex to cover in a one page handout. The best advice is to ask your guest if he/she has dietary preferences. Here are a few tips and guidelines which can be used.

- ❑ Muslims are increasing as guests in America and it is important—even critical—to respect their dietary rules. For strict Muslims, pork is absolutely forbidden. To be more precise, any animal that scavenges (pigs, goats, dogs, various birds, and, among some Muslims, even lobster and crab) is forbidden to be eaten. The same applies to any animal with a cloven hoof or foods cooked in the oils of any of these animals. This taboo list includes all forms of pork (ham, bacon, sausage, etc.). Nor may food be prepared by using pork products (bacon grease, lard, etc.) This also includes pates, terrines, and frankfurters if any pork is used in them. The same applies to foods cooked in alcohol. A considerate American host will review the menu in advance, even to the point of questioning the chef, and then reassuring the Muslim guest which dishes are absolutely safe to eat. So important is this abstention among devout Muslims that one veteran American international businessman reported that when his Middle Eastern devout Muslim guest learned, *after* the fact, that he had inadvertently eaten a piece of bacon wrapped around a filet mignon, he abruptly jumped up and raced to the bathroom to vomit.
- ❑ Visitors from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and so on, are often vegetarians. Buddhism has no dietary restrictions, however, since it is a personal and individualistic religion; restrictions may be self-imposed. Because Buddhists abhor killing, some do not eat meat. Most American restaurants can easily accommodate this preference and vegetarians are accustomed to making this habit known to hosts in advance, so it is usually not a problem.
- ❑ Orthodox Jews do not eat pork or shellfish, nor do they eat certain parts of the cow. "Kosher" means "ritually clean" so meat and poultry may be eaten if the cattle or fowl are ritually slaughtered. Milk and meat should not be served together.
- ❑ There are no stray dogs in Hong Kong or South Korea. No need to say more.

- ❑ In Japan, the *appearance* of food on a plate is just as important as the quality and the taste. In restaurant windows there, not only is the menu displayed, but full-size replicas of the dishes as well. (Ironically, many of these plastic replicas are produced in America and exported to Japan.) To help you remember that style and appearance are important in Japan, envision the ballet-like Japanese tea ceremony. The act of serving tea could be mundane, but the Japanese lift it to truly artistic levels.
- ❑ In Italy and France, salads are often served and eaten *after* the main course rather than before.
- ❑ Visitors to the United States are usually overwhelmed by the *quantity* of food served on each plate here. In most other countries, smaller portions are the norm. Moreover, in continental restaurants, the food is often cooked or carved alongside your table. Small portions are then served, with second helpings later, if desired. At a typical Oriental meal, smaller portions are also the rule.
- ❑ Japanese visitors particularly welcome beef of all kinds, but especially steaks. They also relish fresh melons. This is because both are scarce and terribly expensive commodities at home.
- ❑ Finally, it is important to take *nothing* for granted at the dining table. Take the basic word "entree/ an essential part of any menu. For Americans, the entree is the main course of the meal—the *plata fuerte* (literally, strong plate) as the Latins call it. But in Europe and many other countries, the entree is the starting course—what Americans would call the "appetizer." Not knowing this fact could create considerable confusion when you ask your guest "What would you like as an entree?" He or she believes you are asking which appetizer they wish, while you are asking which item they prefer as a main dish. The resulting confusing dialogue could rival an Abbott and Costello "Who's on first?" routine.

BGL – 1/01

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THE VALUES AMERICANS LIVE BY

1. PERSONAL CONTROL OVER THE ENVIRONMENT

Americans no longer believe in the power of Fate, and they have come to look at people who do as being backward, primitive, or hopelessly naive. To be called "fatalistic" is one of the worst criticisms one can receive in the American contest; to an American, it means one is superstitious and lazy, unwilling to take any initiative in bringing about improvements.

In the United States people consider it normal and right that Man should control Nature, rather than the other way around. More specifically, people believe every single individual should have control over whatever in the environment might potentially affect him or her. The problems of one's life are not seen as having resulted from bad luck as much as having come from one's laziness in pursuing a better life. Furthermore, it is considered normal that anyone should look out for his or her own self-interests first and foremost.

Most Americans find it impossible to accept that there are some things which lie beyond the power of humans to achieve. And Americans have literally gone to the moon, because they refused to accept earthly limitations. Americans seem to be challenged, even compelled, to do, by one means or another (and often at great cost) what seven-eighths of the world is certain cannot be done.

2. CHANGE

In the American mind, change is seen as an indisputably good condition. Change is strongly linked to development, improvement, progress, and growth. Many older, more traditional cultures consider change as a disruptive, destructive force, to be avoided if at all possible. Instead of change, such societies value stability, continuity, tradition, and a rich and ancient heritage — none of which are valued very much in the United States.

These first two values — the belief that we can do anything and the belief that any change is good — together with an American belief in the virtue of hard work and the belief that each individual has a responsibility to do the best he or she can do have helped Americans achieve some great accomplishments. So whether these beliefs are "true" is really irrelevant; what is important is that Americans have **considered** them to be true and have acted as if they were, thus, in effect, causing them to happen.

3. TIME AND ITS CONTROL

Time is, for the average American, of utmost importance. To the foreign visitor, Americans seem to be more concerned with getting things accomplished on time (according to a predetermined schedule) than they are with developing deep interpersonal relations. Schedules, for the American, are meant to be planned and then followed in the smallest detail.

It may seem to you that most Americans are completely controlled by the little machines they wear on their wrists, cutting their discussions off abruptly to make it to

their next appointment on time.

Americans* language is filled with references to time, giving a clear indication of how much it is valued. Time is something to be "on," to be "kept," "filled," "saved," "used," "spent," "wasted," "lost," "gained," "planned," "given," "made the most of," even "killed."

The international visitor soon learns that it is considered very rude to be late — even by ten minutes — for an appointment in the United States. (Whenever it is absolutely impossible to be on time, you should phone ahead and tell the person you have been unavoidably detained and will be a half hour — or whatever — late)

Time is so valued in America, because by considering time to be important one can clearly accomplish more than if one "wastes" time and does not keep busy. This philosophy has proven its worth. It has enabled Americans to be extremely productive, and productivity itself is highly valued in the United States. Many American proverbs stress the value in guarding our time, using it wisely, setting and working toward specific goals, and even expending our time and energy today so that the fruits of our labor may be enjoyed at a later time. (This latter concept is called "delayed gratification.")

4. EQUALITY/EGALITARIANISM

Equality is, for Americans, one of their most cherished values. This concept is so important for Americans that they have even given it a religious basis. They say all people have been "created equal." Most Americans believe that God views all humans alike without regard to intelligence, physical condition or economic status. In secular terms this belief is translated into the assertion that all people have an equal opportunity to succeed in life. Americans differ in opinion about how to make this idea into a reality. Yet virtually all agree that equality is an important civic and social goal.

The equality concept often makes Americans seem strange to foreign visitors. Seven-eighths of the world feels quite differently. To them, rank and status and authority are seen as much more desirable considerations — even if they personally happen to find themselves near the bottom of the social order. Class and authority seem to give people in those other societies a sense of security and certainty. People outside the United States consider it reassuring to know, from birth, who they are and where they fit into the complex system called "society."

Many highly-placed foreign visitors to the United States are insulted by the way they are treated by service personnel (such as waiters in restaurants, clerks in stores, taxi drivers, etc.). Americans have an aversion to treating people of high position in a deferential manner, and conversely, often treat lower class people as if they were very important. Newcomers to the United States should realize that no insult or personal indignity is intended by this lack of deference to rank or position in society. A foreigner should be prepared to be considered "just like anybody else" while in the country.

5. INDIVIDUALISM AND PRIVACY

The individualism which has been developed in the Western world since the Renaissance, beginning in the late 15th century, has taken its most exaggerated form in 20th century United States. Here, each individual is seen as completely and marvelously unique, that is, totally different from all other individuals and, therefore, particularly precious and wonderful.

Americans think they are more individualistic in their thoughts and actions than, in fact, they are. They resist being thought of as representatives of a homogeneous group, whatever the group. They may, and do, join groups — in fact many groups — but somehow believe they're just a little different, just a little unique, just a little special, from other members of the same group. And they tend to leave groups as easily as they enter them.

Privacy, the ultimate result of individualism is perhaps even more difficult for the foreigner to comprehend. The word "privacy" does not even exist in many languages. If it does, it is likely to have a strongly negative connotation, suggesting loneliness or isolation from the group. In the United States, privacy is not only seen as a very **positive** condition, but it is also viewed as a requirement which all humans would find equally necessary, desirable and satisfying. It is not uncommon for Americans to say — and believe — such statements as "If I don't have at least half an hour a day to myself, I will go stark raving mad!"

Individualism, as it exists in the United States, does mean that **you will find a much greater variety of opinions (along with the absolute freedom to express them anywhere and anytime) here. Yet, in spite of this wide range of personal opinion, almost all** Americans will ultimately vote for one of the two major political parties. That is what was meant by the statement made earlier that Americans take pride in crediting themselves with claiming more individualism than, in fact, they really have.

6. SELF-HELP CONCEPT

In the United States, a person can take credit only for what he or she has accomplished by himself or herself. Americans get no credit whatsoever for having been born into a rich family. (In the United States, that would be considered "an accident of birth.") Americans pride themselves in having been born poor and, through their own sacrifice and hard work, having climbed the difficult ladder of success to whatever level they have achieved — all **by themselves**. The American social system has, of course, made it possible for Americans to move, relatively easily, up the social ladder.

Take a look in an English language dictionary at the composite words that have the word "self" as a prefix. In the average desk dictionary, there will be more than 100 such words, words like self-confidence, self-conscious, self-contented, self-control, self-criticism, self-deception, self-defeating, self-denial, self-discipline, self-esteem, self-expression, self-importance, self-improvement, self-interest, self-reliance, self-respect, self-restraint, self-sacrifice — the list goes on and on. The equivalent of these words cannot be found in most other languages. This list is perhaps the best

indication of how seriously Americans take doing things for one's self. The "self-made man or woman" is still very much the ideal in 20th century America.

7. COMPETITION AND FREE ENTERPRISE

Americans believe that competition brings out the best in any individual. They assert that it challenges or forces each person to produce the very best that is humanly possible. Consequently, the foreign visitor will see competition being fostered in the American home and in the American classroom, even on the youngest age levels. Very young children, for instance, are encouraged to answer questions for which their classmates do not know the answers.

You may find the competitive value disagreeable, especially if you come from a society which promotes **cooperation** rather than competition, but many U.S. Peace Corps volunteers teaching in Third World countries found the **lack** of competitiveness in a classroom situation equally distressing. They soon learned that what they had thought to be one of the universal human characteristics represented only a peculiarly American (or Western) value.

Americans, valuing competition, have devised an economic system to go with it — free enterprise. Americans feel very strongly that a highly competitive economy will bring out the best in its people and ultimately, that the society which fosters competition will progress most rapidly. If you look for it, you will see evidence in all areas — even in fields as diverse as medicine, the arts, education, and sports — that free enterprise is the approach most often preferred in America.

8. FUTURE ORIENTATION

Valuing the future and the improvements Americans are sure the future will bring means that they **devalue** the past and are, to a large extent, unconscious of the present. Even a happy present goes largely unnoticed because, happy as it may be, Americans have traditionally been hopeful that the future would bring even greater happiness. Almost all energy is directed toward realizing that better future. At best, the present condition is seen as preparatory to a later and greater event, which will eventually culminate in something even more worthwhile.

Since Americans have been taught (in value #1) to believe that Man, and not Fate, can and should be the one who controls the environment, this has made them very good at planning and executing short-term projects. This ability, in turn, has caused Americans to be invited to all corners of the earth to plan and achieve the miracles which their goal-setting can produce.

If you come from a culture such as those in the traditional Moslem world, where talking about or actively planning the future is felt to be a futile, even sinful, activity, you will have not only philosophical problems with this very American characteristic but religious objections as well. Yet it is something you will have to learn to live with, for all around you Americans will be looking toward the future and what it will bring.

9. ACTION/WORK ORIENTATION

"Don't just stand there," goes a typical bit of American advice, "do something!" This expression is normally used in a crisis situation, yet, in a sense, it describes most Americans' entire waking life, where action — any action — is seen to be superior to inaction.

Americans routinely plan and schedule an extremely active day. Any relaxation must be limited in time, pre-planned, and aimed at "re-creating" their ability to work harder and more productively once the re-creation is over. Americans believe leisure activities should assume a relatively small portion of one's total life. People think that it is "sinful" to "waste one's time," "to sit around doing nothing," or just to "daydream."

Such a "no nonsense" attitude toward life has created many people who have come to be known as "workaholics," *or* people who are addicted to their work, who think constantly about their jobs and who are frustrated if they are kept away from them, even during their evening hours and weekends.

The workaholic syndrome, in turn, causes Americans to identify themselves wholly with their professions. The first question one American will ask another American when meeting for the first time is related to his or her work; "What do you do?," "Where do you work?," or "Who (what company) are you with?"

And when such a person finally goes on vacation, even the vacation will be carefully planned, very busy and active.

America may be one of the few countries in the world where it seems reasonable to speak about the "dignity of human labor," meaning by that, hard, physical labor. In America, even corporation presidents will engage in physical labor from time to time and gain, rather than lose, respect from others for such action.

10. INFORMALITY

If you come from a more formal society, you will likely find Americans to be extremely informal, and you will probably feel, even disrespectful of those in authority. Americans are one of the most informal and casual people in the world, even when compared to their near relative — the Western European.

As one example of this informality, American bosses often urge their employees to call them by their first names and even feel uncomfortable if they are called by the title "Mr." or "Mrs."

Dress is another area where American informality will be most noticeable, perhaps even shocking. One can go to a symphony performance, for example, in any large American city nowadays and find some people in the audience dressed in blue jeans and tieless, short-sleeved shirts.

Informality is also apparent in Americans' greetings. The more formal "How are you?" has largely been replaced with an informal "Hi." This is as likely to be used to one's superior as to one's best friend.

If you are a highly placed official in your own country, you will probably, at first, find such informality to be very unsettling. Americans, on the other hand, would consider such Informality as a compliment! Certainly it is not intended as an insult and should not be taken as such.

11. DIRECTNESS, OPENNESS AND HONESTY

Many other countries have developed subtle, sometimes highly ritualistic, ways of informing other people of unpleasant information. Americans, however, have always preferred the direct approach. They are likely to be completely honest in delivering their negative evaluations. If you come from a society which uses the indirect manner of conveying bad news or uncomplimentary evaluations, you will be shocked at Americans' bluntness.

If you come from a country where saving face is important, be assured that Americans are not trying to make you lose face with their directness. It is important to realize that an American would not, in such cases, lose face. The burden of adjustment, in all cases while you are in this country, will be on **you**. There is no way to soften the blow of such directness and openness if you are not used to it except to tell you that the rules have changed while you are here. Indeed, Americans are trying to urge their fellow countrymen to become even **more** open and direct. The large number of "assertiveness" training courses which appeared in the United States in the late 1970s reflects such a commitment.

Americans consider anything other than the most direct and open approach to be dishonest and insincere and will quickly lose confidence in and distrust for anyone who hints at what is **intended** rather than saying it outright. Anyone who, in the United States, chooses to use an intermediary to deliver the message will also be considered manipulative and untrustworthy.

12. PRACTICALITY AND EFFICIENCY

Americans have a reputation of being an extremely realistic, practical and efficient people. The practical consideration is likely to be given highest priority in making any important decision in the United States. Americans pride themselves in not being very philosophically or theoretically oriented. If Americans would even admit to having a philosophy, it would probably be that of pragmatism.

Will it make any money? Will it "pay its own way?" What can I gain from this activity? These are the kinds of questions which Americans are likely to ask in their practical pursuit, not such questions as: Is it aesthetically pleasing? Will it be enjoyable? Or will it advance the cause of knowledge?

This practical, pragmatic orientation has caused Americans to contribute more inventions to the world than any other country in human history. The love of "practicality" has also caused Americans to view some professions more favorably than others. Management and economics, for example, are much more popular in the United States than philosophy or anthropology, law and medicine more valued than the arts.

Another way in which this favoring of the practical makes itself felt in the United States, is a belittling of "emotional" and "subjective" evaluations in favor of "rational" and "objective" assessments. Americans try to avoid being too sentimental in making their decisions. They judge every situation "on its merits." The popular American "trial-and-error" approach to problem-solving also reflects the practical. This approach suggests listing several possible solutions to any given problem, then trying them out, one-by-one, to see which is most effective.

13. MATERIALISM/ACQUISITIVENESS

Foreigners generally consider Americans much more materialistic than Americans are likely to consider themselves. Americans would like to think that their material objects are just the natural benefits which always result from hard work and serious intent — a reward, they think, which all people could enjoy were they as industrious and hard-working as Americans.

But by any standard, Americans are materialistic. This means that they value and collect more material objects than most people would ever dream of owning. It also means they give higher priority to obtaining, maintaining and protecting their material objects than they do in developing and enjoying interpersonal relationships.

The modern American typically owns:

- One or more color television sets;
- An electric hair dryer;
- An electronic calculator;
- A tape recorder and a record player;
- A clothes washer and dryer;
- A vacuum cleaner;
- A powered lawn mower (for cutting grass);
- A refrigerator, a stove and a dishwasher;
- One or more automobiles;
- And a telephone. Many also own a personal computer.

Since Americans value newness and innovation, they sell or throw away their possessions frequently and replace them with newer ones. A car may be kept for only two or three years, a house for five or six before trading it in for another one.

SUMMARY

Now that we have discussed each of these 13 values separately, if all too briefly, let us look at them in list form (on the left) and then consider them paired with the counterpart values from a more traditional country (on the right):

U.S. VALUES

Personal Control over the Environment

Change

Time and Its Control

Equality

Individualism/Privacy

Self-Help

Competition

Future Orientation

Action/Work Orientation

Informality

Directness/Openness/Honesty

Practicality/Efficiency

Materialism/Acquisitiveness

SOME OTHER COUNTRY'S VALUES

Fate

Tradition

Human Interaction

Hierarchy/Rank/Status

Group's Welfare

Birthright Inheritance

Cooperation

Past Orientation

"Being" Orientation

Formality

Indirectness/Ritual/"Face"

Idealism

Spiritualism/Detachment

Which list more nearly represents the values of your native country?

APPLICATION

Before leaving this discussion of the values Americans live by, consider how knowledge of these values explains many things about Americans.

One can, for example, see America's impressive record of scientific and technological achievement as a natural result of several of these 13 values:

First of all, it was necessary to believe (1) these things **could be** achieved, that People do not have to simply sit and wait for fate to bestow them or not bestow them, and that People do have control over their own environment, if they are willing to take it. Other values which have contributed to this record of achievement include (2) an expectation of positive results to come from change (and the acceptance of an ever-faster rate of change as "normal"); (3) the necessity to schedule and plan one's time; (6) the self-help concept; (7) competition; (8) future orientation; (9) action work orientation; (12) practicality; and (13) materialism.

You can do the same sort of exercise as you consider other aspects of American society and analyze them to see which of the 13 values described here apply. By using this approach you will soon begin to understand Americans and their actions. And as you come to understand them, they will seem less "strange" than they did at first.

Source:

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