## WORKING ABROAD

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GENERAL

1) Introduction
'Working Abroad' is for those of you who've always wanted to get out of your chairs and go and do something else instead.

Each unit on the left explores different issues connected with working abroad and by clicking on the photographs on the right, you can find out about people's personal experiences.

There are also vocabulary pages, exercises and quizzes to help you develop and test your English.

For a more detailed guide to the site, click on the link below. Or go to the next page to hear our interviewees introduced themselves.

This site is based upon a six part radio series. You can access the programmes by using the links on the left.

Eight people, all of whom were working abroad, were interviewed for the series. You can find out more about five of them by clicking on their photos on the right.

But for now, listen to four of our interviewees introduce themselves. Can you identify what jobs they each do?

Answer
Adam - a musician
Chris - a doctor (a clinical fellow)
Maralde - a financial analyst
Federico - he didn't mention what job he did

2) Cultural Differences
Living and working abroad would be really easy if everyone spoke the same way and behaved in the same way. But, as soon as you leave your own culture it quickly becomes clear that things are not the same.

There are small and large differences between cultures. And how well you are able to deal with these differences will affect how good your experience will be.

THINK
What sort of things do you think might be different between two cultures?

Transcript
When people go into another cultural environment some of the things that can be different for them are such things as the verbal communication style, that can be radically different. And we're not just talking about a different language but literally the way that we use verbal communication.

Secondly, the non-verbal communication, body language, the gestures and the things that we do as part of our communication.
Things like time. Do we see time as a linear process with a fixed series of events following each other, or is time something much looser, much more flexible?

3) Why work abroad?
As we've seen, there can be many things that make working abroad difficult, things like language differences and time. So why do you think that people do it?

Professor Petruska Clarkson believes that people may go abroad because they are unhappy where they currently are. But she also has two other reasons.

Listen to the audio and work out what Professor Clarkson's other reasons are.

Transcript
People are curious, or they might feel I don't know very much what to do and I want to have the equivalent of a gap year. I want to experience other cultures and then once you know, you've had some familiarity working in a foreign culture you can think about whether you want to go back to own.

Another reason for going is where people really want to go and improve themselves. Where the situation that they are in in their countries may not give them the scope for their ambitions and of course many people do go and work abroad for those reasons - to find a place where they can fulfil themselves.

Answers
people are curious and they also want to improve themselves

Professor Clarkson gave three reasons why people go to work in different countries. First, that they are unhappy where there are. Two, that they are not sure what they want to do and are curious about other cultures and three that they want to improve themselves.

Listen to four of our interviewees. For each person decide which one of Professor Clarkson's reasons is their reason for moving abroad.

Transcript

Chris
I always had a dream to come over to the UK, to work in this country and to benefit. That's the reason for me to live in Europe and to experience that to the full.

Maralde
I always wanted to work in a multicultural environment and that really made me come to Paris and apply for a job, like really living here.

Federico
I decided to come to Germany because I wanted to fully develop my international experience that I started in London. I didn't want to go back to Argentina right at this moment. I thought that the best thing was to fully develop that experience.

Adam
I work here in England because I need money to live here and for equipment for my band. I spent my money for my band, so I need money only for this yeah.
**Answers**

Chris said that he always had a dream to visit England (curiosity and to improve himself)

Maralde said that she wanted to work in a multi-cultural environment (this was for Maralde's own benefit, although it might not improve her - so Maralde's reason doesn't fit in with Professor Clarkson's)

Federico said that he wanted to fully develop his international experience (to improve himself)

Adam said that he wanted money to support his band (it would be possible to argue then that this was to improve himself and his band)

**4) First Impressions**

Whatever the difficulties working abroad might cause, there are millions of people working abroad right now, experiencing and enjoying life in a different culture. But what's it like the first time you arrive in a new country?

Listen to our interviewees to hear their first impressions of life abroad. As you listen try to answer these three questions.

1. What was the difficulty in France?

2. Which person learnt about what food the British ate?

3. Is non-verbal communication more important in northern or southern Europe?

**Transcript**

**Maralde**

I arrived here and I just wanted to call my parents and say that I had arrived. So I tried to plug in my telephone and realised that they have got a completely different system and I wouldn't have thought this because we are like neighbouring countries. So I really supposed it was exactly the same.

**Adam**

In the beginning it was really difficult to feel this place like London, understand the culture what English people eat, what they're talking about.

**Chris**

The non-verbal communication in Southern European countries is certainly much more important than in Northern European countries and there you wouldn't keep that much of a distance between a person, for example, as you do in Germany

**Answers**

Maralde (person 1) couldn't plug her German telephone into the French phone system

Adam (person 2) learnt about what food British people ate

Chris (person 3) said that non-verbal communication was more important in southern Europe.
LANGUAGE (002)

1) Introduction
This unit explores verbal communication and language; the words we use, how we use them and how we say or write them.

To be successful you need to both understand what you are being told and to know that people understand you.

Over the next few pages, you'll find out about some of the more common ways in which language creates difficulties and hear some advice on how to overcome them.

ACTIVITY
Listen to our interviewees’ experiences. What did one interviewee have to do in a canteen apart from speak French?

Transcript
Andre
As soon as you start working with refugees languages stops being the barrier because everyone has a difficulty in communicating themselves.

Maralde
At the canteen you have to speak French or just point, otherwise you won't get what you wanted.

Emma
Some of them good because they are English, some of them from other countries they speak quite good and they speak quite quick, so I can't understand properly everything.

Answers
point

Maralde said that she had to point at things in the canteen to get what she wanted.

2) Misunderstandings
So verbal communication is all about the words that you say, write and read. And it's easy to get this wrong.

Most misunderstandings happen because people use the wrong word or mispronounce particular sounds. We then think that they mean one thing when, in fact, they mean something else.

ACTIVITY
Maralde and Emma have had some language misunderstandings. As you listen to them explain, try to answer these questions:

What was the name of Maralde's t-shirt and what did it mean in French? What were the two words that Emma mixed up?

Transcript
Maralde
I think the funniest one that sort of happened to me was when I, one day, wore my TATE
gallery t-shirt to work and it has got TATE written in huge pink letters on it. I sat at my desk and then I realised that all the French colleagues that came in grinned at me broadly. After sometime I just asked another colleague, like, 'What's going on here?'

Then the colleague was a bit embarrassed and he explained to me that in French TATEZ means to touch. So TATE is the imperative and so I was wearing this t-shirt saying, like, touch, all day.

Emma
One time was that a customer and a stylist did her highlights and just leave for a while and she said can you give her water. And she said so quick that I understand she want that I wash her highlights. And I put her hair in the basin and I wash her highlights and then she come to me and said, 'What are you doing?', 'I'm washing', 'No, no, no, she want just the water.'

Answers
Answer: TATE and touch
Whilst at work in Paris, Maralde wore a t-shirt from the TATE Gallery, an art gallery in Britain. The t-shirt had TATE written across the front of it. Unfortunately, in French, Tate is an imperative and means touch!

Answer: Water and wash
The two words Emma mixed up were water and wash. Because of that, she washed the customer's hair too soon.

How can you make it easier for yourself to not make these types of mistakes? Richard Cook's here to help.

ACTIVITY
Listen to what Richard has to say. What are the three suggestions that he offers to help your communication with others?

Transcript
Well I think the first thing to do is really be aware of yourself as a communicator; how are you speaking? Are you clear? And secondly, what are the rules of the people that you are now working with?

I think as well that you need to become more aware of the actual process of communication and slow it down. So you can say, 'Well is it alright if I just ask a few questions sometimes when we are having a meeting?'

I think people, generally, are happy about you asking questions rather than you making mistakes.

Answers
1) Be aware of how you communicate.
If you know the difficulties that people have understanding you, then you can change what you say and do.

2) Know the language rules of the culture you're in.
People use different ways of communicating or they might use jargon. If you know about these you can prepare yourself.

3) Slow down the communication.
Be prepared to ask questions or use other techniques that slow the conversation down. That will then give you time to think about and understand what you have heard.

**THINK**
Richard gave an example of a question to help understanding. What other questions could you ask? Have a look at the vocabulary page for some examples.

### 3) Accents
The problem with a different language is that once you've learnt the words and phrases, got used to the sounds of the language, there's always something else to trip you up. The particular way that a person speaks, their accent.

**ACTIVITY**
Listen to Adam and Chris talking about some of the difficulties they've had with accents.

Which nationality's accent does Adam have trouble with and what phrase does Chris use to describe a very controlled and old form of English?

**Transcripts**

**Adam**
Some people is from Scotland, some people is from Ireland, some people is from Europe and sometimes it is difficult to understand everything. And when I start talking with some from Scotland, this for me this is very difficult English. This guy starts speak with me, so I try to understand but sometimes I might ask three times, so, what he wants. So, yeah, sometimes it is difficult, yeah.

**Chris**
I certainly had some difficulties initially when I came over to this country because not everyone does speak Queen's English, so it sometimes makes it quite difficult to communicate. For example, with parents, if they speak a very strong regional accent, sometimes, unfortunately, I had to ask and re-ask and really specify my question again. And sometimes I was sitting there and I thought, how can I just really get this question right to really get the information I need to really evaluate this situation properly.

**Answers**

**Answer:** A person from Scotland
Adam had trouble understanding a Scottish accent.

**Answer:** Queen's English
Chris talked about Queen's English. Traditionally, Queen's (or King's) English was the language spoken at the courts in Britain.

**TIP**
To help you understand different accents, try to listen to a wide variety of people speaking in English.

### 4) Tone, Volume and Stress
You know the words, you understand the accents and yet… and yet there's another difficulty with verbal communication!
No one speaks in exactly the same way or with the same style. And across cultures, the ways that people speak can vary considerably.

To help make yourself understood you need to find out how a particular culture uses language. Getting it wrong can create very unexpected problems.

**ACTIVITY**

Listen to psychologist Petruska Clarkson. What is the main thing that she says people get wrong when using language in a new culture?

**Transcript**

One of the differences that I have noticed a lot from people who have changed cultures has to do with loudness of your voice. And sometimes people can live in a culture for a very long time and be doing it wrong all the time and not understanding why because people from inside that culture may not know to tell them, 'The fact is, when you speak you speak too loudly for people in this culture'.

So everybody just kind of shies away from you and don't talk to you and they may experience you as aggressive or loud or extrovert or something not right. But basically it's because your tone of your voice is louder than the people around you. This is one I have often come across. Of course, when people come into English culture they have to drop their voices a lot.

**Answers**

Loudness of voice

Professor Clarkson said that in some cultures people speak quietly but in other cultures they speak loudly. And if you speak loudly in a culture that usually talks quietly, then people may feel that you are aggressive or that their is something wrong with you.

So whatever language you need to speak in, there are certain characteristics of that language. For example, loudness of voice.

Other characteristics include the **intonation pattern**, how fast you speak and where the **stress** in a sentence falls. But if you get the words right, why does it matter if you get the intonation or stress wrong?

**ACTIVITY**

Listen to Richard Cook explain the two different ways that stress is added to speech. What are they and why does it matter if you get it wrong?

**Transcript**

Some languages are stressed time language some languages are syllable timed language. The English language, for example, is much more stress timed where we stress key words so that you will get the main message. It's almost like sending a telegram, 'lets go to the beach'. It's lets go something beach - the 'the' is less stressed. As an English speaker you might be expecting to hear the key words stressed out. If that doesn't happen, the first response is confusion. You may ask them to repeat or you may need a little bit more time to process

**Answers**

Misunderstanding and confusion

Richard said that if you get the stress wrong a native English speaker may not immediately understand you
5) Richard’s tip
For each programme topic, Richard Cook provides one key piece of advice for you to think about and consider. Listen to and read his advice on language verbal communication.

THINK
Do you agree with Richard? How might you find out about how a different culture communicates.

Transcript
First of all, understand yourself as a communicator, understand the other culture and what they are doing with language, with verbal communication. And secondly, be easy on yourself, give yourself a break and accept that is going to be more tiring, particularly at the beginning
BODY LANGUAGE (003)

1) Introduction
Body language or, as it is also known, non-verbal communication, is about all the things that people say and do without using words. Research suggests that more than 70% of communication occurs without people having to say a single word.

Like language, the way we communicate non-verbally varies across cultures. But, unlike language, it can be very difficult to find out what the non-verbal rules are.

ACTIVITY
In Europe, for example, there is great confusion over one way of greeting other people. Listen to our working abroad interviewees. What is the difficulty they all have?

Transcript
Maralde
Well, I mean, with the French kisses, even within France, some people kiss on one cheek only, some on two cheeks, some on three cheeks, so if you don't know you might start on the wrong side or whatever and the you end in very strange situations or you try to do three kisses and the other person has already turned away or whatever. So that might cause some embarrassing situations sometimes.

Federico
In Latin America you give a kiss to women and, yeah, usually here you may shake hands. I gave a kiss to a friend's wife. That would be pretty normal in Argentina, but not in London. She felt a little bit shy but that was it.

Sophie
I've just learn that you have to grab people and be really dynamic. Just grab them and say how many kisses you are going to do before you do it and go for it. And then pull away before you get into that embarrassing situation where you can't get out.

Answers
kissing someone to say hello

All of our interviewees were confused about how to kiss as a greeting. Should they kiss one cheek, two or more. Or is it occur to kiss a friend's wife as a greeting?

Sophie suggested that to make this situation easier just tell the other person how many times to kiss before you start.

2) Why it is important
With over 70% of communication between people being non-verbal, you need to know how to act to be properly understood.

Also, if you behave in ways that people don't understand or don't like they may judge you negatively, not take you seriously, or even think that you there is something wrong with you.

For example, in some cultures it is wrong to make eye contact but in others it is expected. If you get it wrong people can think that you are insulting them.
ACTIVITY
Listen to Richard describe some other 'hidden' rules of culture. How many does he mention and what are they?

Transcript
Well kissing is just one of many different aspects of interaction that you need to be aware of. You can get into difficult or embarrassing or even worst situations if you are not aware. Eye contact, tone of voice, how close you can stand, any touching, how many times you kiss, a long handshake, a short handshake, it can go on and on and on. So I think, yes you do need to get these correct and you need to have good observation skills.

Answers
Richard mentions five things other than kissing. They were eye contact, tone of voice, how close you can stand, whether you can touch and handshakes.

He also mentioned that one way to find out about these things to is watch people, observe what they do.

THINK
How many 'hidden' rules of your culture can you list? Was it easy to think of them?

3) Finding out the rules
It's all very well being aware that there are differences in the ways that cultures work, but what can you do to try to prepare yourself for living and surviving in another culture?

Richard Cook believes that there are at least two important things that you should think about.

ACTIVITY
As you listen to Richard, try to answer this question. What are the two things that he suggests you do to 'fit in' with the culture?
(hint: one thing is something that you shouldn't do)

Transcript
I think you've got two things to think about. I personally don't fully endorse the concept of 'When in Rome do as the Romans do'. I don't think people expect you to completely adopt all of the things that they do. What I think that people would like is that you acknowledge that you understand it and that you do your best.

One of the things you can do is actually explain to the other culture say, 'Well, you know, actually we don't normally kiss in my culture so it's a bit awkward'. But then do your best, so it's a learning process.

Answers
Don't do as the Romans do and
Explain to people the things that you find difficult

Richard said:
1) Don't 'do as the Romans do' - by which he meant don't just copy what people in the other culture do. You should observe it and work with it but don't just copy it.
2) Explain to the other culture about the differences between the two cultures so that you both understand each other.

Federico grew up in Argentina but has studied and worked in the United Kingdom and Germany. Two cultures very different from his own.

**ACTIVITY**

Listen to Federico's advice on how to find out about non-verbal cultural differences. Who are the people that he says are the best to talk too for help and advice?

**Transcript**

It's really important to make research before you move to a different country. You have to talk to people who are living here. Even more helpful if you can talk to people who actually are from your own country and live abroad and if they do not speak the language, even better. Or if they started by not speaking the language it's even better because they went already through your situation.

I talked to people in the company, especially the Argentineans, the *expats*, people who are from abroad and who went through the same problems you would in the end face. It's amazing, all the knowledge that you can just recover by talking to them.

**Answer**

The best people are people from your own culture who do not know the language of the culture they are now living in.

The reason for this is that if you have grown up in a culture, you often don't realise what the cultural rules are, you just do them without thinking.

4) Proximity

Richard Cook mentioned a number of areas where confusion can happen between cultures, eye contact, or touching for example. But there is one very important area and that is **proximity**.

**THINK**

As Richard explains about proximity think about your own culture and proximity. How close do you stand to people and does it change depending upon who you are talking too?

**Transcript**

Well it's an interesting and serious one because if you're having a conversation with somebody you need to feel comfortable if you're going to be talking to them and getting information or sharing.

An example according to the experts, in Asia, the usual distance between two people is 3 1/2, 4 feet. Now that's quite a big gap, I suppose if you think bowing there's a space there for bowing into. But then if you take a culture like Spanish or Latin, the typical distance between two people there is between 12 and 18 inches.

Does proximity really matter? What problems could happen if you stand to close to someone?
ACTIVITY
Listen to this real life example discussed between Susan Fearn (the radio series presenter) and Richard Cook. Which two cultures are they talking about?

Transcript
I saw a very interesting conversation once between a Columbian boy and a Japanese girl and the Japanese girl was moving away because she was presumably trying to find her own comfort space.

That's right, she was trying to get comfortable so that she could have the conversation, as was the Columbian who wanted to move closer in order for him to be comfortable. The result is a strange sort of dance with one person moving backwards and the other person continuing to move forwards.

And presumably one person feeling rejected and the other person feeling threatened.

Yeah, exactly, the Columbian will feel rejected and the Japanese person will feel threatened and there's not much you can do about that until you have some understanding of what is going on.

Answers
Japanese and Columbian

The two cultures mentioned were Japanese (who have a personal space of about 4 foot - 48 inches) and Columbian (who have a personal space of between 12 and 18 inches).

5) Richard's tip
For each programme topic, Richard Cook provides one key piece of advice for you to think about and consider. Listen to and read what he has to say about non-verbal communication.

THINK
Do you agree with him? How can you get to know the other culture's rules?

Transcript
I think the main thing is that you need to focus on understanding the other culture's rules, their norms, their ways of doing things, not necessarily conceding to them but certainly understanding and working with them.
1) Introduction
Tick, tick, tick, tock, tock tock - however you say it, time is everywhere and it affects everyone. But surprisingly, one second in Beijing is not necessarily the same as one second in Cairo.

Why? Because people have different attitudes to time and experience time in different ways. Complete this unit to find out more.

THINK
First, listen to our working abroad interviewees to hear their experiences of time. How would you describe your attitude to time?

Transcript
Andre
Because in the first week I actually didn't make any phone calls the person just thought that I wasn't capable of doing the job.

Maralde
An Italian person is probably most happy if they achieved a good solution and everybody was pleased but it might take a little bit longer than the German approach.

Chris
A course will start on time, work will start on time and the trains will run on time most of the time and certainly this was a very different experience when I came over to this country.

Federico
One day my boss came to me and said, 'You know, in this company we don't work long hours, we don't need you to work long hours and we do not like you coming at very long hours in the night.'

2) A theory of time
As we've heard, people can experience time in different ways when they cross cultures, but what is the reason behind this?

According to Richard Cook there is a theory of time that breaks down time into two distinct types.

ACTIVITY
Listen to Richard. What are the two types of time and how are they different?

Transcript
When you look at time according to the theory that is currently accepted there are two categories of time. One is a monochronic attitude to time and in monochronic time things are linear, there is a straight line, there's a beginning and there's an end and more importantly there is one thing happening at a time.

And polychronic attitude to time where you've got a number of things that can be happening at the same time, that the actual attitude to time is much looser.

So in the sense of who is the servant and who is the master, in cultures that are monochronic
and that would certainly be in the German culture as well as our own (*British culture*), time is often the master. We are always short of time, there's never enough time, we have to manage time, and its always escaping from us.

In polychronic cultures time is in abundance. People are the masters of time, we give time as we wish, when we wish, to whom we wish and so there's a much more flexible approach and maybe more than one event occurring at the same time.

**Answers**

**Monochronic and polychronic time**

In monochronic time, time seen as linear with one thing happening after another. But in polychronic time a number of things happen at the same time.

**THINK**

Which type of time does your culture use? Why?

**THINK**

Richard mentioned the German culture as a good example of a monochronic time base culture. But what cultures do you think would be good polychronic time base cultures?

**ACTIVITY**

Listen to Richard's examples. What cultures does he mention and what things does he suggest that they feel are more important than time?

**Transcript**

Well, a good example of a polychronic culture would be Latin, Latin cultures, Latin America, the Arab world, places where something else becomes more important. It's not just that they have a different attitude to time but time takes a second or even a third place to other things that are much more important in that cultural environment.

And what would be more important would actually be something like relationships, building trust with people.

So how long should a meeting be? Can we have a 5 minute meeting? Not in some cultures because that wouldn't be enough time to achieve those kinds of results of getting trust and building relationships.

**Answers**

Latin American and Arabic cultures

Some of the things they see as more important than simply being on time include developing relationships and building trust.

"Time may change me, but I can't change time" as David Bowie one sung. Mr Bowie may just have been talking about getting older but Chris, our German doctor, has also experienced time changing him. Or at least experienced time changing his attitude to time.

Confused? Well, here he is to explain.

**Transcript**

I recently had a friend over from Germany visiting me here who actually told me, 'Chris, I have a feeling that you changed a lot over the years. I think that you're less often on time and time seems to be less important for you nowadays'
Answers
Chris's friend said that Chris is less often on time and that he seems to not find time as important as he used to.

3) Getting time wrong
Usually, differences in attitude to time do not create major problems between people. Often, you will quickly learn how another culture works, whether you need to be punctual for meetings or whether 'Let's meet at 9.00am' really means 1pm.

But, on occasion, it can go wrong and then it can have distressing effects, as Andre, our film producer from Brazil, found out.

ACTIVITY
Listen to Andre's story. How do you think it fits in with the theory of monochronic and polychronic time?

Transcript
This was an office based job and I was invited to work on a film production on a project that was already happening. And someone else was doing all the paperwork and the computer based work and everything. So when I joined the project I want to know what's happening, so please give me as much information as you can.

And it took me about a week to go through all the paperwork on the computer to understand what was actually happening.

And because my function was actually making phone calls and arranging things to happen actually, and because in the first week, I actually didn't make any phone calls, just because I wanted to know what was happening before even calling people and, you know, not having the answers, you know, when they ask me particular questions, the person just thought I wasn't capable of doing the job.

And without even telling me anything he just came to me one day and said we don't need you anymore

Answers
Andre is from Brazil which, in general, is a polychronic time based culture. But British people often treat time as a linear progression. So, in Britain, the expectation would have been that Andre should immediately begin making phone calls because that was the main part of the job.

Andre, on the other hand, thought it was important get lots of other things going first, like collecting information he might need when he made a telephone call.

So there was a difference between Andre's approach to the job and how his employer felt he should have carried out his work.

4) Richard’s tip
For each programme topic, Richard Cook provides one key piece of advice for you to think about and consider. Listen to and read his advice on time.
THINK
Do you agree with Richard? Do you think one attitude is better than another attitude to time? Why?
STATUS (005)

1) Introduction
How important are you? Are you sure? Who told you? Will you be just as important if you change cultures or are you moving cultures to get a less important job?

Whatever your answers, status is something that will affect you wherever you're from and wherever you go. And you perceived status will also have an effect on how you are treated.

THINK
What sorts of things might status include? Listen to our working abroad interviewees to hear some examples.

Transcript
Maralde
It actually feels still strange to me if I have to address my boss or somebody else who is older than I am, with the informal form.

Andre
Suddenly I was in an environment which I was very much appreciated for what I am and for the things that I can do.

Chris
Nowadays I personally feel that I don't have any disadvantage in comparison to any of my English colleagues. Actually, many of my patients and their parents do appreciate it very much of me not being English and they appreciate very much, for example, some skills that are stereotypically German

Over the next few pages we will look more closely at the individual experiences of our interviewees to help understand status and its effects.

2) Chris’s experience
Chris is a doctor from Germany working in United Kingdom. In Germany being a doctor has very high status and people treat Chris in a particular way. But in Britain, he found that the situation was more relaxed and less formal.

ACTIVITY
Listen to Chris's story. What was he called in Germany and what in he called in Britain when at the hospital?

Transcript
Yeah, I think status is very important in Germany, especially being a doctor, a medical doctor. I think the medical profession overall in Germany has got a very high position in the social ladder. So these things are different in this country and they are different within the team.

I think here, in this country, it's not important for me being a doctor or not. For example, every patient names me Chris, every parent names me Chris, my colleagues they name me Chris. In Germany this is completely different. In Germany, I'm Herr Doctor and I'm Herr Doctor for the nurses, for my colleagues, certainly for the parents and this makes a difference, I think, in working style of everyday life
Answers
Germany: Herr doctor  Britain: Chris

Chris was called Herr doctor in Germany by his patients, parents and other staff, but in Britain he discovered that most people simply used his first name, Chris.

Chris's experience showed a difference in attitude to the status of working as a doctor between Germany and England. This difference of regard for a profession is not unusual as Richard Cook explained to Susan Fearn.

ACTIVITY
Listen to Richard. How does he describes the British culture?

Transcript
Chris's experience of Germany is that his status as a doctor is very formal, it carries a great deal more formality and it impacts on the way he communicates with people. In the UK, much more informal kind of culture, probably as a result of American influence and interestingly enough he is comfortable with that.

So in Germany he's Herr doctor, or he's somebody, a very respectable and in England, it's not quite the same, that's what he is saying.

But that's quite normal, that would be a kind of change you would look out for, particularly from a professional perspective. We tend to be a more informal culture, it's very common now for people to use first names, even dress down Fridays' in companies and organisations. So we're getting more informal and, I think, on the other hand, in Germany, things have still remained pretty formal and status and so on being conferred. You're going to have a much more regulated and structured and formal situation in a German hospital.

Answers
An informal culture

Richard described the British culture as informal. This is particularly true with regard to how people are addressed. In Britain, as in the United States of America, it is quite usual to use people's first names when addressing them.

3) Maralde’s experience
Some cultures prefer to use people's first names, some cultures prefer to use titles like Mr, Dr or Professor. There is also another way that some cultures use to give or take away status from people. Educational qualifications verses job titles.

In Maralde's job as a financial analyst, she works with people from many different countries and cultures.

ACTIVITY
Listen to Maralde's experiences. What country puts more emphasis on job titles?

Transcript
Titles do play a different role in different cultures. For example, I've seen quite a few times that Germans have put their PhD title on their email address or on the IBM email address book. But having said that, Italians are called doctori, like, anybody who went to university is called doctori.
But these are all university related whereas with Americans I’ve seen more work related titles, so they put, like, vice-president, director or something, so that’s, I think, a bit of a different approach

**Answers**
United States of America

According to Maralde, Americans like to use work related titles like vice-president or director.

Why are titles important and how do you know which sort of title to use when? Our expert, Richard Cook, has the answers.

**ACTIVITY**
As you listen to Richard answer this question. What sort of title is most important in a structured, formal society?

**Transcript**
You need to introduce yourself, its part of your identity, people will understand who you are and in cultures where it's a very structured situation, your title or your business card title or your PhD will provide the status immediately. If you don't have those in those cultures then you really are at an enormous disadvantage.

The alternative side of course is the US / UK where again you've built yourself up, you've developed your own success. Therefore your job title, vice-president or head of this or head of that, that's going to really stand for a lot about what's going on for you and give you that status.

**Answers**
A formal qualification like a degree

Usually in formal, structured cultures greater weight is given to formal qualifications from universities and colleges. But, in some cultures, where they celebrate self-made people, work related titles are more

4) Adam’s experience
People work abroad for different reasons. Some do so because they want to improve themselves others for fun, to travel or to support personal projects.

Adam is a musician who works occasionally in a restaurant so that he can support his band.

**ACTIVITY**
Listen to Adam describing the differences between his home country, Poland, and Britain. What advantage has he discovered since moving to London?

**Transcript**
In Poland when you start working your boss he thinks you must work so work is more important than other things. So when you need the day off or two day off because you go play gigs or you have rehearsal, it's difficult to get this day off because the boss is not happy with this. He says, so this is money and he not agree with this.
So in England it's different. If I need day off it's not a problem, if I play a gig or going somewhere it's not a problem with this.

**Answers**  
Adam finds it easier to get time off work in England than he did in Poland.

An employer of a particular type of job, like restaurant work, in one culture will not necessarily have the same expectations of staff as an employer of the same job in another culture. This leads to different ways that people are treated, including how easy it is for them to get time off work.

**ACTIVITY**  
Listen to Richard Cook. What are the reasons that Richard Cook suggests Adam was able to get time off work in Britain more easily than in Poland?

**Transcript**  
Well I think there's a number of things going on here. You've got a difference in social economic conditions which is always going to be a factor, you've got Poland that clearly has a more professionalisation of such things as bar work, restaurant work, and therefore his status will be, in a sense, higher. In the UK, much more informal culture, a lower status for such kind of work and therefore it's easier to get time off.

**Answers**  
Economic conditions and job status

The reasons Richard gave include:

economic conditions - in a country with high unemployment it is harder to take time off work as you may lose the job and not be able to get another one

job status - if a job has a lower status or is seen as a more informal work area, then it is much more likely that you can get more freedom in that area of work and so be able to have time off.

5) **Federico’s experience**  
Adam was only working to support himself and his band. However, Federico, our businessman from Argentina, is working in Germany to help his career.

Since being there he has been surprised at how structured the German work environment is, particularly in relation to career development.

**ACTIVITY**  
Listen to Federico and answer these questions. What phrase does he use to explain things that happen in some cultures that aren't happening in Germany? And what word does he use to describe the German system?

**Transcript**  
There is, kind of, like a ladder where there is hierarchy especially when you negotiate your compensation package. You are put up in a **matrix** and your career develops according to that matrix.
That's very, very much a German thing. It doesn't happen in Argentina, that's not what's happening in London, or America.

Here it's like you got a matrix and your salary is raised by x% next year and, like, everything is planned like that.

I think in other cultures what you get is what you deserve many times. Here it's like more structured and also you can see people in German companies stay for ever. There's a lot about loyalty to the company but that doesn't happen in other cultures.

**Answers**

What you get is what you deserve and matrix

Federico is used to working in cultures where 'what you get' depends upon how well you perform at work. If you are good at your job then the company will reward you. But in Germany, it is his experience that whatever you do, your career will progress at the plan that has been agreed.

He describe the system in Germany as a matrix and you, as an employee, are placed somewhere in that matrix. the matrix then determines how your career will progress.

Federico is surprised at the company culture within Germany. According to Richard Cook though, his experience is not unusual and that often when people cross cultures they have to learn what to expect from that culture.

**ACTIVITY**

Listen to Richard discuss Federico's problem with Susan Fearn. Does Richard think that Federico is being too competitive or not competitive enough?

**Transcript**

What he is experiencing is the very structured system that you have within German business organisations and he's having some trouble getting a handle on that if you like and then he's comparing it back, of course, to much looser organisations.

I think this is one of those things that you find when you move from one culture to another - the things that give you success or the things that you need to do to be successful can vary greatly.

Clearly he believes that hard work on your own merit is more the norm in his own country and perhaps the UK but in the structured Germany situation he's kind of fitting into something that is already there

**Susan Fearn**

And is he using the wrong techniques?

**Richard Cook**

Well he may get frustrated of course trying to be very competitive when it's not considered necessary or even considered detrimental

**Susan Fearn**

So in Germany he might be perceived as unnecessarily competitive according to the cultural rules?
Richard Cook
Yeah going beyond what is needed to do the work, maybe even upsetting people by doing so

Susan Fearn
There could be problems with this, you have to be really careful then don't you?

Richard Cook
Well what gains your success and therefore the status in one culture can **radically alter**
despite the **consistency** of profession when moving into another

Answers
Federico is being too competitive

Richard believes that Federico could be being too competitive and in a formal culture that can make people unhappy with you.

6) Richard's tip
For each programme topic, Richard Cook provides one key piece of advice for you to think about and consider. Listen to and read Richard's advice on status.

THINK
As you listen to Richard think about how would you find out the correct way to address people in another country?

Transcript
Find out the appropriate way to be respectful and effective in that particular culture. It may be using a title. It may be talking about your university or relationships but make sure that you follow that culturally defined route.
RELATIONSHIPS (006)

1) Introduction
When you grow up in one country, you have a lot of time to build relationships and friendships. But when you move abroad, often you won't know anyone before you get there. This can be one of the most difficult parts of working and living abroad.

This unit looks at the sort of issues that can occur and the different things that you can do to develop relationships.

ACTIVITY
First, listen to our interviewees. Have they all found it easy to make friends and colleagues?

Transcript
Maralde
You don't have to go out with colleagues and they won't be offended if you don't. So I really welcomed it and was happy about it.

Chris
She stills feels that she has got excellent working relationship and personal relationship with this person which I think is something about a different generation.

Andre
There was a problem with trust that I couldn't overcome and I actually had to change a little bit of directions.

Answers
No, two people suggested it was easy but one person found it difficult.

2) Can I work abroad?
Working in your own country can be difficult enough. You may not like your work colleagues, the department or company culture or simply the job itself. But when you move abroad you have all of these problems and cultural differences too. So should you work abroad?

Well, theory suggests that some people may be able to deal with life in another culture more easily than others.

ACTIVITY
Listen to Richard Cook. What four characteristics does he say you need to work abroad successfully?

Transcript
There are certain characteristics that will make some people be more successful working across cultures. A good example would be being open minded, accepting or being tolerant of different ways of doing things.

And something else that is important is to have a tolerance of ambiguity. In simple terms when you move into a new culture the rules have changed but you don't know what the rules are so there is a lot of ambiguity around, you don't quite know what is going to happen next in some cases.
Flexibility in the way that you can think and in the way you behave and finally I think probably, just as good as those, good communication skills.

Answers
Open minded, tolerance, flexibility and good communication skills

Richard said that people need to be open minded, prepared to accept differences, and they need to be tolerant, especially of ambiguities. So, if you need things to be very clear then you may find working abroad difficult.

Richard also said that people need to be flexible, so they are able to do things differently to how they might do them at home. And finally, Richard mentioned that people need to be good communicators.

Four characteristics to be success at working in another culture. But it's not as difficult as it sounds. Honest. You can even have fun and be successful.

To convince yourself listen to the experiences of some of our interviewees.

ACTIVITY
As you listen answer these questions. How many of them have good working relationships? What does the first person say is a sign of success in building a relationship?

Transcript

Federico
It's not difficult to build relationships but it takes time until they invite you to their home. Until they get to know you and they trust you and they can consider you more as a friend you do not get invited to their homes. Luckily I have been invited to a number of homes already.

Maralde
I found it much easier here to go out with colleagues after work and go for a drink and things. And people here mix generally quite well. I would have probably expected that all the assignees from the different regions would probably group together or all the Germans.

There is some tendencies at the beginning maybe that people from one region stick together a bit but people here really mix well. In the evenings we always go out in groups, like English people, French people, Americans, whatever, everybody.

Chris
Certainly in the UK I think I do have much better personal relationship with my working colleagues and that is different in comparison to Germany. Very often here we do go out after work, we meet in a pub and we sit down for an hour or so for a drink and just have a bit of chat and we go out for dinner together.

Answers
All 3 people have good working relationships.

Federico said that, in Germany, a sign of success was being invited to people's homes. And happily for Federico he has already been invited to a few people's homes.
3) Stereotypes and other issues
All 3 people have good working relationships.

Federico said that, in Germany, a sign of success was being invited to people's homes. And happily for Federico he has already been invited to a few people's homes.

Transcript
Only the other day when we went to the hospital and the doctor felt that my wife was very sad because of the situation of the baby. Last week my baby was sick and we took him three times to the hospital. Twice they sent us back, they said it wouldn't be anything but the third time they said, 'Well, you stay here.'

And my wife was really worried and the doctor he put his hand over her shoulder and told her, well don't worry, everything would be fine. I was impressed at that, I was surprised and said well actually this guy, he feels other people's pain and needs.

Answers
Federico was surprised that the doctor showed empathy for other people. He had a stereotypical view of Germans as being unemotional but discovered that he was wrong.

Federico's experience is not unusual. Like many people do, he had already decided what one culture was like and then discovered that, in fact, the people weren't necessarily like he thought they would be.

ACTIVITY
Listen to Richard Cook talk about the issues of stereotyping. What word does he say he prefers to use instead of stereotype? What does he suggest people do with their ideas about other cultures?

Transcript
The danger of stereotypes is that we end up taking action based on them before we find out if the people in front of us really reflect that stereotype. Stereotypes tend to be outdated and rather broad.

You need to find out exactly what sort of people you are working with and if you look at the cultural curve on this, you will find that broadly the majority of the population will fit into a set of characteristics, a stereotype or a generalisation as we prefer to say. But there will always be people at the edges who will be deviants from that population.

I think probably the best thing to say is to make broad generalisations and then go and test them out and keep testing them out because culture is fluid, it changes and with the globalisation of the world and business, people are moving around a great deal more so they may spend periods of time abroad themselves. So they may not be exactly like the broad stereotype at all.

Answers
Generalisations and people should test their generalisations

Richard said that he preferred to use the word generalisation rather than stereotype. He also said that people should make broad generalisations about other cultures and then test out their generalisations. By doing this, people can get closer to the real culture rather than keep their wrong idea of a culture.
THINK
How would you find out if your views on a culture were wrong?

4) Sources of help
Some of the problems you might face if you go to work abroad have been highlighted. So now consider how you might make your life easier once you've made the decision to change cultures.

ACTIVITY
Professor Petruska Clarkson has three suggestions for helping people create friendships in a new country. What are these three suggestions?

Transcript
I think ways in which you can ease the process is not to hang out only with your own cultural group. If you make friends with people from different cultures, even if it's not the dominant culture, this is important to keep your perspective, to hear other people and not to sink into a ghetto of where you come from. I think to be careful about not aligning and going living, talking, socialising, working only with people from your home country.

Secondly, you can be informed that this is a, on the whole, a very positive process, but like all change processes there will be time when it will be very painful. So you will go through a period of homesickness or loss of identity or loss of confidence and this is a normal part of adjusting to a new culture.

Thirdly, find other people who have made the cultural transition well but from other cultures.

Answers
Mix with different cultural groups, remember that it will be difficult at times and find other people who have moved abroad.

Chris is a German doctor working in England. Working in England brought him into contact with many different cultures for the first time and this created some problems for him.

ACTIVITY
Listen to Chris's story. What culture does he mention and what didn't he know how to do?

Transcript
The multi-ethnic background in this hospital for example, has also helped me to learn a bit more about different cultures and certainly of communicating with other people of a different background. I never, for example, worked previously with so many parents and patients from Arabic countries.

Certainly being of Christian background it is difference in how do you approach an Arabic woman, for example? How do you greet? Do you shake hands, do you just say hello, do you focus on that person and try to focus on the person's eyes?

It's very difficult to really find the right way of approaching this person. Initially I was a bit scared, I have to say, and I needed a bit of guidance by one of our Arabic advocates and translators in this hospital who helped me very well in understanding these cultural differences and in how to approach, for example, an Arabic woman, a mother coming over to this hospital with a child for our care.
Answers
Chris mentioned the Arabic culture. He was unsure of how to greet a woman from this culture.

THINK
What would you have done in Chris's situation?

5) Richard’s tip
As this is the final topic in the 'Working Abroad' series, Richard Cook provides some general advice for when you go to work abroad. Have a listen to what his says.

THINK
What excites you about going to work in another country? What scares you about going to work in another country?

Transcript
Keep open, keep learning, never give up.
FEDERICO

1) The person
Listen to Federico introduce himself and his family. As you listen, try to answer the three questions below. You can use the transcript to help you if you want.

Transcript
My name is Federico Petersen. I'm 33 years old. I am married and I have two children. My daughter has 2 and a half and my son is four months old. I work in Wintershalle AG, it's an oil and gas company, a member of the BSF Group.

I speak Spanish, I try to speak English and I am learning German. I'm working in Germany.

I grew up in Buenos Aires; I lived there for 30 years. I had a very nice childhood, a good education, lots of friends, lots of sports. I met my wife when I was twenty, married when I was twenty-seven.

I am an actuary as a first background, worked from there on. Since I'm twenty-three I worked for PWC and I worked there for seven years, that was in Buenos Aires. When I was thirty I started my MBA in London Business school. Stayed in London for two years and then got a job in Kasse, Germany and moved here with all my family after I got my MBA.

Quiz

Federico - Quiz 1

1) How old is Federico's daughter?
   a) 2 1/2
   b) 33
   c) 4

2) How many languages does Federico speak?
   a) 3
   b) 4
   c) 2

3) How long did Federico stay in London?
   a) 1 year
   b) 2 years
   c) 3 years

Answers

1) a: Federico's daughter was 2 1/2 years old

2) a: Federico speaks Spanish, English and German

3) b: Federico stayed in London for two years

Federico described himself as an actuary. He is very used to people asking him what that means. What do you think he does for a living?
Listen to Federico explain and then answer the three multiple choice questions.

**Transcript**

An actuary is a guy that knows about risk and measures the risks and analyses the risks. The risk involved with insurance companies or it could be with health care companies, financial risks. Anything that carries a probability can be analysed by an actuary.

**Quiz**

**Federico - Quiz 2**

1) **What word does Federico use that means man?**
   a) Actuary  
   b) Person  
   c) Guy

2) **What does an actuary measure?**
   a) Companies  
   b) Risk  
   c) Distances

3) **Which two types of company are mentioned?**
   a) Health and finance companies  
   b) Health and insurance companies  
   c) Insurance and finance companies

**Answers**

1) c: A guy means a man

2) b: An actuary measures risk

3) b: Health and insurance companies

**2) The job**

Federico was born in Argentina but he has lived, studied and worked abroad. He completed his MBA in London, England before moving to Germany. Listen to the next part of his story where he explains what he does for a living. Afterwards, try to answer the three multiple choice questions.

**Transcript**

Currently I'm a finance manager. I analyse projects in the Middle East and in the Caspian Sea. In the case of acquisition of companies, I am in charge of the whole of Europe. So, if there is any acquisition, any possible acquisition, then I would analyse it and decide whether it's worth making a bid. And if there is a bid to be made, how much we should bid for that company. I do not do, of course, this by myself but we are a group of people and usually when there's a big acquisition we work as a bigger team.
Quiz
Federico - Quiz 3

1) What is Federico's current job?
   a) Finance minister
   b) Finance assistant
   c) Finance manager

2) With acquisitions, is Federico in charge of ...?
   a) Europe
   b) The Middle East
   c) The world

3) How does Federico work?
   a) As part of a team
   b) On his own
   c) He doesn't say

Answers
1) c: Federico is a finance manager
2) a: Federico is responsible for Europe
3) a: Federico works as part of a team

So we know what Federico does for a living. But why did he bother moving abroad. Surely, it would have been easier to stay in Argentina?

Listen to Federico explain why he choose to live abroad. Afterwards, try to answer the three multiple choice questions.

Transcript
I decided to come to Germany because I wanted to fully develop my international experience that I started in London. I hadn't worked abroad until I started my MBA. That was the first approach to becoming an international person. I really enjoyed the experience of working abroad and coming back to Argentina would be, in my opinion would be, a set back and I got this opportunity here in Germany which fulfilled that aim. There was also the other thing, I also wanted to learn a new language

Quiz
Federico - Quiz 4

1) Why did Federico move to Germany?
   a) He didn't like London
   b) He wanted more international experience
   c) To study for an MBA

2) When did Federico first move abroad?
   a) When he got a job in Germany
   b) When he started his MBA
   c) When he was 33 years of age
3) Why else did Federico move to Germany?
   a) He would get more money
   b) He liked the country
   c) He wanted to learn another language

**Answers**
1) b: Federico wanted more international experience
2) b: Federico first worked abroad when he started his MBA
3) c: Federico wanted to learn another language

3) The experience
On the next two pages, you can find out about Federico’s experiences of working abroad. Most of his experiences are listed under the same headings as the programme titles. If you want to know more about these different issues then visit the appropriate programme page.

As you listen to Federico, think about your own culture and how different things might be for Federico if he was to work there. And how different do you think it would be for you to work in England or Germany.

**Language**
I was expecting that most people spoke English because Germany has a very good standard of English, so I really expect this to happen. I didn't expect that I would have so much trouble outside (of the job) because of different reasons. Some people do not speak English not because they don't know it but because they feel shy or they think that they do not speak that well. Some people do not speak to you in English because they don't like it, even for political reasons they do not like speaking in English.

I do have language problems. For example, this was going to the canteen and having something to eat. I was asking for a piece of meat, for a steak, and she said 'English oder Deutsch?' which is English or German. And I thought she was asking me whether I spoke English or German and I said, 'English of course, Spanish as well'. Yeah, here English means that the steak is almost raw. I couldn't eat it later, especially being Argentinean.

**Time**
I was working very long hours, coming from a different industry, different culture, different everything. I had to work very long hours because I thought it was, and still think, it's my job is my responsibility. It doesn't matter how long it takes. And I was working very very long hours until very late, very very late at night until one day, my boss came to me and told me, 'You know, in this company we don't work long hours, we don't need you to work long hours and we don't like you coming at very long hours in the night'. So, it's the policy of the company that you have your job done but within the working time not afterwards. So that time is for you, the time left is for you and for you your family.

**Status**
There is, kind of, like a ladder where there is hierarchy especially when you negotiate your compensation package. You are put up in a matrix and your career develops according to that matrix. That's very, very much a German thing. It doesn't happen in Argentina, that's not
what's happening in London, or what happens in America.

**Relationships**

It is not difficult to build relationships, but it takes time until they invite you to their home. This is not something I didn't know, this is something they told me. And it's true, until they get to know you and they trust you and they can consider you more as a friend you do not get invited to their homes. Luckily I have been invited to a number of homes already.
ADAM

1) The person
Listen to Adam introduce himself and his background. As you listen, try to answer the three questions below. You can use the transcript to help you if you want

Transcript
Ok, my name's Adam, I'm from Poland. I came here one half year ago. I came to England for music because I am a musician and I play in a band. I have a band here and we play in gigs and for me this is a very important thing.

I work here, in England, because I need money to live here and for equipment for my band. I spend my money for my band. So I need money only for this.

Quiz
Adam - Quiz 1

1) Where was Adam born?
   a) England
   b) Poland
   c) Russia

2) Does Adam call himself a ...?
   a) musician
   b) waiter
   c) chef

3) Why does Adam work in a restaurant?
   a) To support his band
   b) To learn how to be a waiter
   c) Because it was the only job he could get

Answers
1) b: Adam was born in Poland

2) a: Adam is a musician

3) a: To support his band

2) The band
Adam's main reason for coming to Britain was not to get a job, but instead to support his band. Listen to him describing his band and answer the questions below.

Transcript
It's four, four people at the moment. It's me and my friend on the guitar because I am the drummer. We are from Poland. The singer is from Hungary and the bassist, she is a girl, she is from Portugal.

We speak English because everybody speaks different language. Me and my friend we sometimes speak Polish but if we're together we speak English because it's difficult to
communicate with Portuguese or Hungary because we don't know this language. So these people don't know the Polish language, so everybody speak English.

Quiz
Adam - Quiz 2

1) How many people are there in the band?
a) 3  
b) 5  
c) 4

2) What does the girl in the band do?
a) She is the lead singer  
b) She is the drummer  
c) She is the bassist

3) Why do they all speak English to each other?
a) Because it is their favourite language  
b) Because it is the only language they all know  
c) Because they are all English

Answers
1) c: They are four band members
2) c: She is the bassist
3) b: It is the one language that they all know

3) The experience
On the next two pages, you can hear about Adam's experiences of working abroad. Most of his experiences are listed under the same headings as the programme titles. If you want to know more about these different issues then visit the appropriate programme pages.

THINK
As you listen to Adam's experiences think about what people might say if they came to your country. What sort of things might surprise them the first time? How easy would it be for them to feel part of the country?

First impressions
Beginning it was difficult, didn’t understand the culture of British people, didn’t feel culture perfectly. But now feel better, understand what English people eat, what they’re talking about, so now easy, but in the beginning it was really difficult

Language
Some people is from Scotland, some people is from Ireland, some people is from Europe and sometimes it is difficult to understand everything and when I start talking with some from Scotland, this for me is very difficult English. This starts speak with me so I try to understand but sometimes I might ask three times, so, what he wants. So, yeah, sometimes it is difficult.
In England, everybody when you go to the shop or the bar, they always say like the word please. Everybody is nice and they say can I get this please on the end. And for me this was strange because we are using this in Poland always on the beginning.

**Status**

In Poland when you start working your boss he thinks you must work so work is more important than other things. So when you need the day off or two day off because you need to go play gigs or you have rehearsal, it's difficult to get this day off because the boss is not happy with this. He says, so this is money and he's not agree with this. So in England it's different. If I need day off it's not a problem, if I play a gig or going somewhere it's not a problem with this.
MARALDE

1) The person
Maralde has only recently moved abroad, crossing from her home country of Germany into one Germany's closest neighbours, France. Listen to Maralde to find out why she moved and what she is doing. Afterwards, try to answer the three multiple choice questions

Transcript
My name is Maralde Auth and I work here at IBM European Headquarters in Paris as a financial analyst for IBM's outsourcing business. I always wanted to work in a multicultural environment, and that really made me come to Paris, apply for a job, like really living here, and so I have been here for 6 months now. I used to have the job with IBM already working with the European Headquarters here in Paris, but on a virtual basis and that's quite a good concept IBM has got where you can work in one location but actually do a job that sorts of belongs to other location. So I used to work from Germany but came over to Paris one time per month, and the rest I was just working from Germany.

Quiz
Maralde - Quiz 1

1) What city does Maralde work in?
   a) London
   b) Paris
   c) Munich

2) Why did Maralde go to Paris?
   a) Because she wanted to work in a multicultural environment
   b) Because she wanted to work with French people
   c) Because her company told her that she had to

3) How many days a month did she work in Paris?
   a) 3
   b) 2
   c) 1

Answers
1) b: Maralde moved to Paris
2) a: Maralde wanted to work in a multicultural environment
3) c: Maralde used to work one day a month in Paris

2) The job
Maralde is a financial analyst. But what does that mean you have to do on a day by day basis? Listen to Maralde explain.

Transcript
I deal with the people in all the different countries and I ask them for their financial forecasts, and also what is driving their actual results. And then try to build an European
perspective of that, and then I would prepare presentations for management as we have to
tell the USA, where our headquarters are, what is happening and what our best estimates for
financials like revenues, gross profit, margins, whatever.

I am in touch a lot with people from lots of different countries, as you can imagine, so that's
quite interesting to have, like, these people from the countries, from the regions one side,
Americans on the other, so communication is really crucial.

**Quiz**

**Maralde - Quiz 2**

1) **What does Maralde have to prepare?**
   a) A list of employees
   b) A presentation on other departments' financial forecasts
   c) A presentation about IBM

2) **Which country is the head office in?**
   a) France
   b) Spain
   c) USA

3) **What is really crucial for Maralde?**
   a) friends
   b) work colleagues
   c) communication

**Answers**

1) **b:** A presentation on financial forecasts

2) **c:** The head office is in the USA

3) **c:** Communication is crucial for Maralde

3) **The experience**

Living and working abroad is not the same as living and working in your own country, as
Maralde has found out.

**THINK**

Listen to her experiences of working abroad and think about how her experiences compare to
the other interviewees.

**First Impressions**

I arrived here and I just wanted to call my parents and say that I arrived so I tried to plug in
my telephone and I realised that they've got a completely different system. And I wouldn't
have thought this because we are like neighbourly countries so I really supposed that it is
exactly the same. So that was just the biggest impact at the beginning but I managed to sort
that one out.

What I found a bit strange is that in Germany if you move into a building you would go round
and say hello to the neighbours, and introduce yourself and maybe invite them for a glass of wine or whatever, and that's quite uncommon here. You really don't know your neighbours, maybe that's just a Paris thing, maybe that's not France, so that's a bit unusual.

**Filling words**
What also often causes misunderstandings are like these little filling words people use or like reassurances, and they might differ from country to country. For example, a German person maybe put 'or' at the end of the sentence, which translates to the German 'Uder' which is really like English 'isn't it?' And people from other countries are often just lost because they don't know what this 'or' thing stands for.

Also, for example, a Spanish colleague of mine, she always puts 'no' at the end. And it's the same kind of thing, it's also just a reassurance, but people often misunderstand it as her saying no for something, but it's of course not.

Next Maralde talks about time

**Time**
I was surprise as we do not have that in Germany for example, IBM in Italy and Nordics they close completely for one month in summer. So they really shut down because it's the custom in these countries. For example, in Spain, IBM has flexible working hours so they would work longer in winter, and then close at 2 or 3 in the summer because it gets too hot. So that it is also common there, but I was not aware of that before I came here.
CHRIS

1) The person
Chris works in London but was born in Germany. Listen to Chris describe himself and what he does for a living and then try to answer the three questions. Use the transcript to help you.

Transcript
My name is Dr Chris Spencer. I am 35 years old and I am a clinical fellow working in London, in one of the big London children's hospital, specialise in respiratory medicine and cystic fibrosis. I am responsible to work with the children and their families on a day to day basis, and I review many of our patients on a annual assessment for detail clinical check up.

Quiz
Chris - Quiz 1

1) How old is Chris?
   a) 53
   b) 35
   c) 33

2) Which patient group does he look after?
   a) children
   b) adults
   c) parents

3) What does Chris do on a yearly basis?
   a) He speaks with the family
   b) He changes jobs
   c) He reviews some of his patients to check how they are

Answers
1) b: Chris is 35 years old
2) a: Chris works with children
3) c: Every year Chris reviews how well some of his patients are getting on

2) The experience
Now find out about Chris's experiences when working abroad.

Advantage of working abroad
The big advantage I think of working in another country is it's the only way for you to get to know the people in another country. You can always read about another country, you can read a travel guide, you can watch television and reports on television and read newspapers, but the only way you really get to know people, to understand their ideas and their ethical and social background, the only way to do that is really to visit a country and even better to live in a country.
Status
If you want to work in another country then you always have to overcome the normal
difficulties of your degree being recognised by another institution, you're trained in a different
country, you need visa and you need registration, specially for the medical professional, it's
important. So before I came to the UK, to be able to work in the UK, I needed to register
with the General Medical Council in the UK in London.

Next Chris suggests a way to help overcome cultural differences

Now find out about Chris’s experiences when working abroad.

Overcoming cultural differences
I think the most important thing to overcome these cultural differences is to sit down with
the people and talk, and what is very interesting for me is looking back over these years. If I
look back, for example, and check who are my friends in this country, and most of my
friends in this country are not German.

I've only one very good German friend in this country and interestingly when we are together
we very often speak actually English, not German which I think is very surprisingly initially
for me.

And I think the more time I spend with people here outside my working hours, for example,
sitting down in the pub, you know having a beer together and just chatting around, I think
this is the best way for me to overcome cultural differences.

Next Chris talks about teamworking differences

Teamworking
Certainly when I started here initially, it was a completely different approach of working
style compare, for example, to a German Hospital. The system in Germany is very static and
there's a lot of pressure, especially to perform well when you are a junior doctor.

I was very impressed when I started initially on this post when the Chief Executive of the
hospital said during the introductory session 'we are working here as a team, and team stands
for together everyone achieves more'.

That was a very impressive statement for me coming over from Germany where I felt team
was not as important as every single person performs as well as one can.
ANDRE

1) The person
Andre is a Brazilian and he lives and works in London. He has worked abroad for a number of years. Listen to him describe what he does for a living and then try to answer the three questions below. You can use the transcript to help you.

Transcript
My name is Andre Silvestri and I'm a filmmaker. I am a producer-director and I make documentaries, I make also some corporate videos and community related projects as well. I've being living abroad for about seven years now.

Quiz
Andre - Quiz 1

1) What is Andre's job?
   a) He is a beekeeper
   b) He makes documentaries
   c) He is a student

2) Andre makes corporate videos and ...?
   a) community videos
   b) pop videos
   c) short films

3) How long has Andre worked abroad?
   a) 7 years
   b) 8 years
   c) 9 years

Answers
1) b: Andre makes documentaries

2) a: Andre also makes community videos

3) c: Andre said he had worked abroad for about 7 years

2) The job
As you've heard, Andre works as a filmmaker, or producer-director. But what does a producer or a director do? Listen to Andre explain and then try the quiz.

Transcript
Producer
The job of a producer is very much office based. If you are a producer and you want to develop a project you need to think about all different aspects regarding that film from where to find the funding, the money to make it, the people and the equipment that you will need to get this project together, the places where you need to go to actually film it and how you are going to be able to put the film together after you filmed it, after you shot it. So this work can be very stressful sometimes but it is very rewarding when you finish your project and you see it and so it's quite nice.
**Director**

The job of the director on the other hand is a little bit different. The director would be more involved with everything that is creative within that particular piece of film or that particular documentary. So the director would be interested in who's the person who is going to be in the film and why? What does he have to say, what is important about that and how can we portray this person in a way that would make sense to the piece that we want to show. And apart from that, all the technicalities involved in order to achieve your aims.

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**Quiz**
**Andre - Quiz 2**

1) A producer works where mainly?
   a) On a film shoot  
   b) At home  
   c) In an office

2) Is a producer's job difficult?
   a) Yes it is  
   b) No it isn't  
   c) Andre doesn't say

3) What is the director most involved with?
   a) The creative part of film making  
   b) Finding the funding for a film  
   c) Both

**Answers**
1) c: A producer work's mainly in an office
2) a: Andre says a producer's job can be very stressful
3) a: A director is most involved with the creative part of film making

Andre works with some corporate clients. But with a small group of people he has also set up an organisation called Grassroots. They are involved in projects that focus on community groups.

Listen to Andre talk about one of the projects he worked on in Latin America. Then try to answer the three questions.

**Transcript**

**The Midwives project**

About a year and a half ago we been back to the Amazon - being Brazilian it was something I always wanted to go there - to develop a project, a beautiful project, with midwives there. So we went to the middle of the forest just to see the work of these old ladies, just to follow their way, they are very, very important within the environment of the forest because they are the ones that would go from village to village to help the ladies give birth.

At the moment they are actually setting an example to the whole Brazilian society to try to
go back to the old traditional way of caring and delivering a baby without being through a caesarean.

Quiz
Andre - Quiz 3

1) Where did Andre go?
a) The Amazon
b) Brazil
c) Latin America

2) What was the documentary about?
a) Construction
b) Midwives
c) Villages

3) What age were the midwives?
a) Old
b) Middle-aged
c) Young

Answers
1) a: Andre went to the Amazon
2) b: The documentary was about midwives
3) a: The midwives were old

3) The experience
What experience has Andre had in his 7 years working abroad? Over the next two pages you hear about a few of the things that have happened to him.

Some of them relate to things covered in the programmes so don't forget to check the programmes side of the site for more information

Time
This was an office based job and I was invited to work on a film production on a project that was already happening. And someone else was already doing all the paperwork and computer based work and everything. So when I joined the project I want to know what's happening, so please give me as much information as you can.

And it took me about a week to go through all the paperwork on the computer to understand what was actually happening. And because my function was actually making phone calls and arranging things to happen actually, and because in the first week I actually didn't make any phone calls, just because I wanted to know what was happening before even calling people and, you know, not having the answers, you know, when the ask me particular questions, the person just thought I wasn't capable of doing the job. And without even telling me anything he just came to me one day and said we don't need you anymore.
**Stereotypes**
When I first start as a freelancer my idea was to pitch ideas for documentaries to be broadcast on television here in the UK, and I tried the normal routes. So I went to different festivals and got to know a little bit more about the whole process, the commissioning process. And once I done that, I learnt what was the normal standard procedures. So, basically started approaching commissioning editors and production companies.

What I noticed is that every time you get a chance to talk personally with a commissioning editor, the first thing they will look or the first thing that they will listen is, hmmm, there's a strange accent going on there, who's this guy, where's he from, what's his background? And they just couldn't picture me. And this would make things a little more difficult.

**Language**
I had a chance to work with some refugees in this country and obviously as soon as you start working with refugees, language stops being a barrier because everyone has a difficulty in communicating themselves and would not necessarily speak good English.

And for me that was a great open door because suddenly I was in an environment in which I was very much appreciated for what I am and for the things that I can do.

**Trying to hard**
One of the things that I think was most important when I came abroad. When I first came here I, somehow, tried to adapt myself to the British way of living let's say. And I, somehow, started to behave a little bit different from my natural way of being and this didn't help at all, because, first of all, I wasn't being myself. Secondly I was trying to adapt to something that wasn't really in my nature, my way of being.

After a while, it took me sometime, but after a while I think, when I started being more self confident and just relaxing and being able to be the person I am, a little bit more happy, a little bit more bubbly, I start making really good friends. And even professionally, I believe, I start having more success.
RICHARD COOK

1) The Person
Richard co-presented the 'Working Abroad' radio series with BBC Learning English producer, Susan Fearn. He is a fully qualified language and cultural management consultant, has been working at organizational, managerial and personal levels for international clients for the last twenty-one years. He has lived and worked in North and South America, Japan, Africa, the Middle East and Europe. This has provided him with a full understanding of the complexities of communicating across cultures and disciplines. He is also a qualified Master NLP (neuro-linguistic programming) practitioner.

For the five major topics covered in the radio series, Richard provided a 'final' tip that you should consider when thinking about working in another country. Over the next two pages you can listen to those tips. And below, you can access all 6 radio programmes. The programmes (edited for copyright purposes) are available as an mp3 download or you can listen to them immediately using realplayer.

2) Richard’s tips

Language
First of all, understand yourself as a communicator, understand the other culture and what they are doing with language, with verbal communication. And secondly, be easy on yourself, give yourself a break and accept that is going to be more tiring, particularly at the beginning.

Body Language
I think the main thing is that you need to focus on understanding the other culture's rules, their norms, their ways of doing things, not necessarily conceding to them but certainly understanding and working with them.

Time
If you want to be effective in the culture that you are going into you need to be aware of your own attitude to time and task.

If you come from a culture which is more flexible and perhaps focuses on relationships more, then you will need to adjust that if you come into a culture which is much more focussed on getting things done in a short period of time and much more linear in its time management.

Vice-versa, if you are coming from a culture such as the UK, Germany or the US and you are going into a culture where time is flexible, where relationships are more important, you will need to make some major adjustments.

Status
Find out the appropriate way to be respectful and effective in that particular culture. It may be using a title. It may be talking about your university or relationships but make sure that you follow that culturally defined route.

Overall tip
Keep open, keep learning, never give up.
Site Vocabulary

GENERAL (001)

access:
A national, local or individual way of pronouncing or saying words

ambitions:
Usual or familiar activities

based upon:
The regular rise and fall of the voice when speaking

culture:
Words or expressions commonly used by people in a particular profession

differences:
The main forms of language used within a country

first impressions:
Hear something incorrectly

foreign culture:
Say something incorrectly

gap year:
Fail to understand something correctly

identify:
Succeed in dealing with something

personal experiences:
To direction a person's attention to something by extending a finger towards it

scope:
In Britain, the correct, standard for of English. Originally connected with the language spoken in the courts of Britain

to deal with:
A national, local or individual way of pronouncing or saying words

to go and improve themselves:
Someone or something that is Scottish comes from Scotland

unit
Refers to a person's rank or position within a country

LANGUAGE (002)

accent:
A national, local or individual way of pronouncing or saying words
common ways:
Usual or familiar activities

intonation pattern:
The regular rise and fall of the voice when speaking

jargon:
Words or expressions commonly used by people in a particular profession

major dialects:
The main forms of language used within a country

mishear:
Hear something incorrectly

mispronounce:
Say something incorrectly

misunderstandings:
Fail to understand something correctly

overcome:
Succeed in dealing with something

point at something:
To direction a person's attention to something by extending a finger towards it

Queen's English:
In Britain, the correct, standard form of English. Originally connected with the language spoken in the courts of Britain

regional accent:
An accent (see accent above) from a particular part of a country

Scottish:
Someone or something that is Scottish comes from Scotland

social status:
Refers to a person's rank or position within a country

stress:
Extra force used when saying a particular word or syllable

techniques:
Methods for doing certain things

telegram:
An old way of sending a message using electric current in wires which is given in a written or printed form

tone:
The quality, strength and pitch of a sound

trip you up:
If something trips you up, it makes you make a mistake or do something wrong

**vary considerably:**
Change a lot

**verbal communication:**
All forms of speaking and writing

**volume:**
The amount of sound produced by something

**Phrases**

Can you speak more slowly please?
Can you repeat that please?
I'm sorry, but I didn't understand you

**BODY LANGUAGE (003)**

**adopt:**
If you adopt something you take it on as if it's yours - here, an aspect of non-verbal communication for example

**body language:**
Also known as non-verbal communication - the process of communicating by the way one sits, stands, moves etc. rather than by words

**close:**
How near something is in distance or time

**conceding:**
If you concede something then you admit that something is true or correct

**dynamic:**
Here, be forceful and take control of the 'kissing' decision

**eye contact:**
If you make eye contact with someone you look them in the eye

**Expats (expatriates):**
People living outside their home country

**judge you negatively:**
If you are judged negatively then people think badly of you

**go for it:**
Do something immediately without really thinking through what you are doing or how you are going to do it

**greeting:**
A sign or word of welcome to someone

**grew up:**
The place you grew up in is the place where you lived as a child

**observation skills:**
Abilities in watching things closely so as to notice things that you would not otherwise notice

**proximity:**
The state of being near something else in space or time

**When in Rome do as the Romans do:**
A saying meaning to behave in the same way as the local population of the country that you are in

**TIME (004)**

**attitudes:**
If you adopt something you take it on as if it's yours - here, an aspect of non-verbal communication for example

**distressing:**
Also known as non-verbal communication - the process of communicating by the way one sits, stands, moves etc. rather than by words

**focuses:**
How near something is in distance or time

**monochromic time:**
If you concede something then you admit that something is true or correct

**polychronic time:**
Here, be forceful and take control of the 'kissing' decision

**punctual:**
If you make eye contact with someone you look them in the eye

**vice-versa:**
People living outside their home country

**STATUS (005)**

**business card:**
A piece of card which has you and your company's contact details on it

**conferred:**
If something is conferred it is given to you

**consistency:**
The quality of being consistent (being the same again and again)

**detrimental:**
Harmful
dress down Friday:
If a company has a 'dress down Friday' then on one day (usually a Friday) it relaxes the rules on what people can wear to work on that day

first name:
The name your parents gave you when you were born - formally known as forename

getting a handle on that:
If you get a handle on something, then you finally understand it

identity:
Who or what someone or something is

matrix:
The social, political etc conditions that exist within a company. Where you are placed within the matrix will affect what position you have, how much you earn etc

norm:
A standard from which other things can be measured

perceived status:
The social or professional position that you or people think you have rather than your real social or professional position

radically alter:
Change a lot

raised by x%:
Increased by a certain amount (the amount being represented by x)

regulated:
Controlled by rules and regulations

self-made people:
People who have become successful or rich by their own efforts

weight:
If you don't give much weight to something, then you don't think it's very good

on your own merit:
If you get something on your own merit, then you get because of what you've done not because of who you are

RELATIONSHIPS (006)
advocates:
A person who speaks on behalf of someone else

ambiguity:
The state of having more than one possible meaning

assignees:
People who have been chosen to work on particular projects
deviants:
A person who is different in moral or social standards from what would be considered normal in society (see norm)

fixed ideas:
If you have fixed ideas about something, then your ideas will always remain the same

flexibility:
Have a degree of being flexible, so able to change one's position or ideas easily

generation:
All the people born at the same time - the average period of time is seen as about 30 years

ghetto:
An area of a town or city usually lived in by one particular national or social group - often associated with poor living conditions

mix well:
If a group mixes well, then they get on with each other, enjoy being in each others' company

multi-ethnic:
Of many different races, national or tribal groups

offended:
If you are offended then you feel hurt or upset by someone

open minded:
Willing to consider new ideas without prejudice

outdated:
Old fashioned, no longer current

stereotypes:
A fixed idea or image of a group of people

tendencies:
Ways that a person generally behaves

tolerant:
If you are tolerant then you are prepared to let something happen that you don't like or agree with

translators:
People who rewrite things from one language into another language