

Across Cultures 5

I YOUR TURN You are going to evaluate an online health-related ad or news story. First, find an ad or news story on your own. Use any form of online media.

J Work in a group. Take turns reading and showing your ads or stories. Then choose one to evaluate as a group. Use these questions to help you evaluate, and take notes. Use the expressions in the box as needed to encourage people to share their thoughts.

- What is the main message? Is it clear?
- What is the source? Is it reliable?
- What evidence is there? Where does it come from?
- Are there facts, opinions, or both? Are there any testimonials?
- Does it contain examples of clickbait?
- What effect might it have on the listener or reader? How did it impact you?

ENCOURAGING PEOPLE TO SPEAK UP

What do you think?

Do you have anything to add?

I'd love to hear your thoughts on this.

Does anyone have more thoughts on ... ?



K As a group, present your ad or story to the class. Talk about the things you discussed in Exercise J. Then take a class vote to decide which ad or story is the most reliable.

Reflect

1 Complete these sentences with your own ideas.

a For me, media literacy means _____

b An interesting thing I learned in this lesson is _____

2 Think back over what you have learned in this lesson. Do you think any of the ideas will change the way you interact with health-related ads or news? In what way?



Rotorua, New Zealand

In this unit, you will ...

- explore body language, gestures, and customs
- watch a talk about intercultural communication
- read an article about travel
- make small talk
- write an informal email giving cultural advice

Warm Up

Discuss the questions with a partner.

- 1 The photo shows a Maori man and a tourist doing a traditional *hongi* greeting. How do you think the tourist feels?
- 2 What are some things that define a culture? (e.g., language, music, etc.)
- 3 What is your country or culture well-known for?

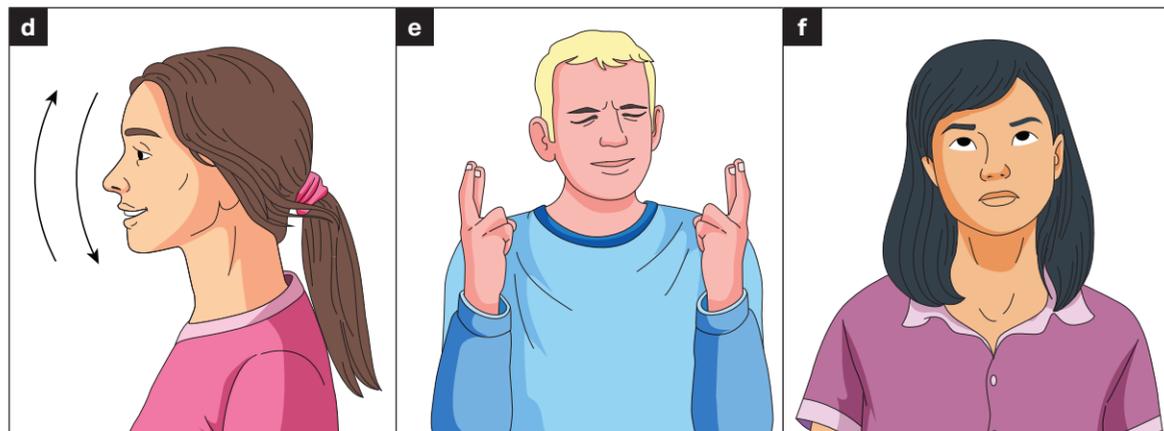
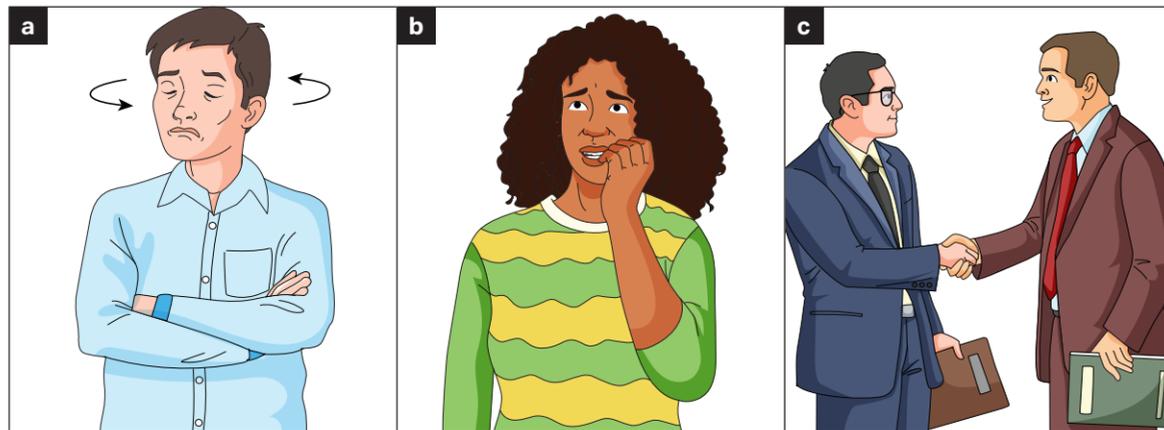
5A I think that means ...

Use vocabulary related to body language • Understand people talking about cultural mistakes • Guess meaning

Vocabulary Body language and gestures

A Below are some common gestures that people in the United States use. Write the phrase under the correct picture.

- | | | |
|-----------------|--------------------------|-----------------|
| bite your nails | cross your fingers | nod your head |
| roll your eyes | shake hands with someone | shake your head |



B Match the gestures in Exercise A with what they mean. Write the letter (a–f).

- | | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------|----------------------|
| 1 _____ Hello, nice to meet you. | 3 _____ No. | 5 _____ Good luck. |
| 2 _____ That's annoying. | 4 _____ Yes. | 6 _____ I'm nervous. |

C Work in a group. What gestures or body language do you use to express the phrases below?

I'm bored. Good job! That's interesting. I'm so embarrassed. Hurry up!

Listening

D **5.1** Listen to three people talking about cultural misunderstandings, or "faux pas," that they have experienced. Complete the chart.

	Where is the speaker from?	What country and city did this happen in?
1 Max		
2 Junko		
3 Sonia		

E **5.1** Listen again. Complete the sentences.

- Max was on a _____ trip and met some clients. He was shaking hands with all of them, but he was surprised when a woman declined to shake his hand. Some women there prefer not to shake hands with _____.
- After dinner, the _____ followed Junko out of the restaurant and asked if everything was OK. He did this because it's the custom to leave a tip, but Junko didn't. She went back and left a _____% tip.
- Sonia made a mistake while she was introducing a man named Arthur to her friend. She said that Arthur was _____, but he was actually _____.

F What has surprised you when you've met people from other countries? Have you ever made a cultural faux pas? Discuss with a partner.

Speaking

G Work in groups of four. Within your group, break into two pairs.

Students A and B: Turn to page 180.

Students C and D: Turn to page 181.

You are going to act out the situation to the other pair using only body language and gestures. Plan and practice the gestures you and your partner will use.

SPEAKING SKILL Guessing meaning

Here are some expressions you can use to guess the meaning of something you don't know.

I think you are in a restaurant or café.

It seems that you didn't hear her.

It looks like you are annoyed or upset.

I'm not sure, but maybe you're colleagues?

H Take turns acting out your situations from Exercise G. The other pair then guesses what is happening. When guessing, use phrases from the Speaking Skill box to help you. Try to answer these questions about the other pair's situation.

- What is the relationship of the people in the situation? Where are they?
- What is happening?
- How do you think the people feel?

It looks like the two of you are ...

Sorry, that's not right.

I think ... Is that correct?

Language in Context

Customs and traditions around the world



It's the custom to tip servers 15%–25% of the bill in **the United States**.

In **Venezuela**, it's common to arrive at an event 15–20 minutes after it is scheduled to begin.

A kiss on the cheek is a common way to greet someone in **Mexico**.



If you invite someone to have a meal with you in **Ghana**, you are usually expected to pay.

You don't have to, but in **Australia** it's normal to sit in the front seat of a taxi.

If you are offered a business card in **Japan**, you should accept it with both hands.

In **India**, it's rude to eat or take food with your left hand.

In **Saudi Arabia**, it's not common to work on Fridays because it's a day of rest.

A Study the infographic. Which customs and traditions did you already know about? Do any surprise you? Discuss with a partner.

B Read these situations. Did the person do the right thing? Choose Y for yes or N for no.

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| 1 Venezuela: Julia arrived 15 minutes late to lunch with her friend Ana. | Y | N |
| 2 Mexico: Rosa greeted her friend Marta with a kiss on the cheek. | Y | N |
| 3 Japan: Michael accepted a coworker's business card with his right hand. | Y | N |
| 4 United States: Damien's dinner bill was \$30. He left a tip of \$3. | Y | N |
| 5 Ghana: Kai invited a friend to lunch, and paid for both of their meals. | Y | N |

C What other customs and traditions from around the world do you know of? Share with the class.

Language Focus Discussing cultural expectations (1)

GRAMMAR 1 *It's* + adjective / noun phrase + infinitive

When discussing cultural expectations, we can use phrases beginning with *It's* ...

It's (not) important / common / normal / customary / polite to tip servers.

It's (not) the custom / a tradition to pay for your guest's meal.

It's a good / bad idea to arrive at an event before the scheduled time.

For more information and practice, see Grammar Reference.

D Look at the Grammar 1 box. Then read the sentences below and choose T for true or F for false.

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 In this structure, <i>It's</i> can be followed by either an adjective or a noun phrase. | T | F |
| 2 The word <i>not</i> comes after the adjective or noun phrase. | T | F |
| 3 The adjective or noun phrase is followed by a gerund. | T | F |

E 5.2 Choose the correct options to complete the text. Then listen and check your answers.

In the age of virtual meetings, cross-cultural communication can be a challenge. Here are some tips to help you have a successful online meeting. First, the people in your meeting may be from all over the world, so **it's important / it's not normal** to choose a time that works for everyone. Before the meeting starts, **it's not polite / it's a good idea** to check that your microphone, camera, and other equipment are all working properly. Also, be sure to dress appropriately. During the meeting, **it's common / it's not common** to mute your microphone when you're not speaking. And stay focused—**it's good / it's not good** to try and multitask. Finally, at the end of the meeting, **it's custom / it's useful** to summarize the main ideas that were discussed.

Language Focus Discussing cultural expectations (2)

GRAMMAR 2 Modals *have to*, *don't have to*, *should*, and *shouldn't*

We use *have to* to say something is necessary.

She has to have a passport to travel overseas.

Do I have to pay for my guest's meal?

We use *don't have to* to say something is not necessary.

You don't have to sit in the back seat of the taxi.

Why don't we have to work on Fridays?

We use *should* and *shouldn't* to give a strong recommendation.

You should accept a business card with both hands in Japan.

In India, it's customary to eat with your right hand. You shouldn't eat with your left hand.

For more information and practice, see Grammar Reference.

F Look at the Grammar 2 box. Then match sentences 1–4 below with their meanings (a–d).

- | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1 ____ You have to go. | a It's a good idea to go. |
| 2 ____ You don't have to go. | b It's necessary to go. |
| 3 ____ You should go. | c It's not necessary to go. |
| 4 ____ You shouldn't go. | d It's a bad idea to go. |

G Rewrite the sentences in a different way. Use *have to*, *don't have to*, *should*, or *shouldn't*.

- 1 You need to make a reservation at that café. _____
- 2 It's a good idea for you to learn English. _____
- 3 It's not necessary for you to bring a gift. _____
- 4 It's a bad idea to wear shorts to your meeting. _____

H Complete the tips with *have to*, *don't have to*, *should*, or *shouldn't*.

When visiting France, it's important to respect the local culture. Keep these tips in mind:

Greeting people

- In formal situations, it's customary to address people using titles like *Mr.* or *Ms.*
- You ¹ _____ speak perfect French, but to be polite you ² _____ learn some basic phrases.

Daily life

- You ³ _____ have a passport to enter France, but you ⁴ _____ carry it with you all the time.
- Most French people value their personal space, so you ⁵ _____ sit or stand too close to people.

Dining

- When dining, you ⁶ _____ put your elbows on the table; doing so can make you seem lazy.
- You ⁷ _____ wait for the host's signal to start eating because people may find it impolite if you start eating before your host does.

Speaking Talking about local customs

I What should a visitor to your country know about local customs? Work in pairs.

Student A: Make a list of customs for the topics in the first column.

Student B: Make a list of customs for the topics in the second column.

Student A	Student B
Greeting people	Tipping servers
Dining	Traveling by public transportation
Giving gifts	Dressing appropriately

J Now imagine you are a visitor in the country and want to know about the local customs. With your partner, take turns asking and answering questions about each other's topics from Exercise I.

How do I greet people?

You should shake hands with them. A firm handshake is important.

Do I have to shake hands with young children too?

No, you don't have to, but it's polite to say hello to them.

5C Improving intercultural communication

Understand a talk about communication • Relate information to personal experience • Provide background information



Before Viewing

A Read the information in the box. Would you say that you have good communication skills? Why or why not? Discuss with a partner.

B Read the sentences. The words in **blue** are used in Jessica Chen's talk. Write the correct form of the words next to their definitions.

- a There is a lot of **friction** between Ying and her parents because she doesn't agree with their old-fashioned and **conservative** views.
- b My grandparents **immigrated** to Canada over 50 years ago, leaving the life they knew to seek better opportunities.
- c Bryan showed a lot of **humility** when he said he needed help.
- d When Katherine moved to Egypt, she had to **adapt** to the local customs and way of life there.

- 1 _____ : to move to a new country to live there
- 2 _____ : disagreement or conflict
- 3 _____ : to change your behavior so that it is suitable for a new situation
- 4 _____ : following older ideas and values rather than modern ones
- 5 _____ : the quality of not thinking that you are better than other people

JESSICA CHEN is the author of the bestselling book, *Smart, Not Loud: How to Get Noticed at Work for All the Right Reasons*. An expert on cross-cultural communication, she teaches people how to communicate with confidence. In her talk, *Communicating Across Cultures*, Chen describes the differences between low-context and high-context communication, and gives some tips for talking to people from different cultures.

LISTENING SKILL Hedging

It's common for speakers to soften statements or make them less definite. Common hedging words include determiners (*some, many*), adverbs (*generally, probably, sometimes*), and modals (*can, might*). Listening for hedging words helps you understand when someone is avoiding making absolute claims.

- C** **5.3** Chen hedges these sentences from her talk using the words in parentheses. Listen and add the word(s) where they occur in the sentence.
- 1 "In fact, researchers have found that some countries and cultures are more high-context, while others are more low-context." (generally)
 - 2 "The differences between low-context and high-context speaking cause friction." (can sometimes)

Viewing

- D** **5.1** Watch Part 1 of Jessica Chen's talk. Choose the correct option to complete the sentences.
- 1 Chen says that she experienced communication friction when she **was a child / first started working**.
 - 2 Chen grew up in a household that placed more importance on **listening to others / speaking up**.
 - 3 Low-context communication is more **direct / indirect**, whereas high-context communication is more **direct / indirect**.
 - 4 Because of how she was raised, Chen felt comfortable being more **low-context / high-context**.
- E** Chen talks about low-context countries, where people communicate using simple and clear messages, and high-context countries, where messages are often implied (e.g., through body language). Mark where you think your country is on the diagram below.



- F** **5.2** Watch Part 2 of Chen's talk. Complete the chart.

TIPS FOR INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

1 Be aware.

Ask yourself:

- How am I ¹_____?
- How might it be different from the way other people communicate?

2 Ask clarifying questions.

Useful language:

- "Can you please explain that again?" or "Can you give me an ²_____?"
- "Do you know what I mean?" or "Does that make ³_____?"

3 Use small talk.

Things to keep in mind:

- Choose a fun topic; find out what you have in ⁴_____ with the other person
- Ask ⁵_____ questions
- Be honest; remember an ⁶_____ thing the other person has told you

- G** Look back at your answer in Exercise E. Do you think it's correct, or should your country be in a different position on the diagram? Discuss with a partner and give reasons for your answer.

Critical Thinking Relating information to personal experience

When you relate information to personal experience, you compare situations that you read or hear about to experiences in your own life. Ask yourself: What would I do in that situation? Have I experienced something like that? By asking these questions, you can understand ideas more deeply and apply knowledge to real-life situations.

- H** Work with a partner. Read each situation and discuss how you would react.

Your partner expects you to provide feedback on their work. Do you give them direct, clear feedback, or do you give more indirect feedback and suggestions?

You have a disagreement with someone. Do you let them know exactly how you feel, or do you use less direct strategies to try and smooth over the situation?

You are talking with someone but notice there are long periods of silence. Do you feel uncomfortable, seeing it as a lack of communication, or do you find it natural?

- I** Discuss the questions with a partner.

- 1 Think about your responses in Exercise H. What do they suggest about your own communication preferences? Are you personally more low-context or high-context?
- 2 Do you think your responses align with where your country is on the diagram?

PRESENTING SKILL Providing background information

During a presentation, it's often useful to include some information about your own background. This could be information about your childhood, your family or educational background, your work experience, or personal interests and hobbies. Explain how this information about yourself relates to the topic you're talking about. This can help the audience understand why you're interested in that topic.

- J** **5.3** Watch the excerpt from Chen's talk. Check (✓) the background information she provides.

- a** the country her parents were born in
- b** the country she was born in
- c** the kinds of values her parents taught her
- d** the name of the first company she worked for

- K** Think of a topic you are interested in. Now imagine you are going to give a presentation about it. What background information about yourself would you provide to help explain your interest in this topic? Make notes.

- L** Work in a group. Take turns sharing your ideas from Exercise K.

5D Traveling abroad

Understand an article about travel • Form verbs with the suffix *-en* • Infer meaning

Reading

A Do you enjoy traveling? What are some good and bad things about visiting other countries? Discuss with a partner.

B Read the article and complete the sentence below. Check (✓) the things mentioned.

A tourist who travels with an *open mind* _____.

- a** is willing to learn or try new things
- b** doesn't mind spending more money to fly first class
- c** wants to meet people from different backgrounds
- d** prefers outdoor activities to indoor activities

C Choose the best title from the options below for each section (1–3). Write the letters (a–c) in the article.

- a** Travel Slowly
- b** Study the History
- c** Engage with the Local Community

D Answer the questions. Choose the correct option.

- 1 Which of these better describes a person in a "tourist bubble"?
 - a** someone who visits an island but stays on a cruise ship
 - b** someone who takes trains instead of buses
- 2 According to the article, what is a good way to practice slow travel?
 - a** joining long lines to see all the popular spots
 - b** walking or cycling instead of renting a car
- 3 Imagine you are visiting a country for the first time. Which piece of advice is the writer more likely to give you?
 - a** Watch a documentary about things that happened in the country 50 years ago.
 - b** Stay in a hotel that has a gym so you can keep fit while traveling.

E Find the four words in **blue** in the article. Write a definition for each. Use a dictionary to help you.

- 1 **lessen**: _____
- 2 **deepen**: _____
- 3 **lengthen**: _____
- 4 **broaden**: _____

Critical Thinking

F What do you think the proverb "When in Rome, do as the Romans do" means? Do you think this is always good advice? Discuss with a partner.

TIP

Vocabulary

Forming verbs using *-en*

We can change some adjectives and nouns into verbs by adding the suffix *-en*. For example, adding *-en* to *dark* forms *darken*, which means "to make darker."



Mongolian tourists in Japan greet their homestay host.

Traveling with an Open Mind

5.4

Many people travel abroad to explore new places and cultures. Some might want to visit popular spots they saw on social media. However, real cultural understanding involves more than just buying a plane ticket and hopping from one top attraction to another. It's about being open to unfamiliar ideas and experiences. Here are some ways to improve your cultural understanding when you travel.

1 _____

Before traveling to a new place, do some research online and learn about its history. You could also read a book about it, listen to a podcast, or watch a movie. Then, after arriving, visit historical sites and local museums. This will provide you with a better understanding of the place, and help to **lessen** any "culture shock" you might feel.

2 _____

When travelers stay in places like major hotel chains, they often find themselves in "tourist bubbles" that offer a limited understanding of the local area. A good way to avoid this is by meeting with people who live there. For example, think about staying at a homestay.

Your host will likely prepare local dishes for you and tell interesting stories about their family. It's also a good idea to hire a local tour guide. Try to form connections with these people who come from different backgrounds. This will **deepen** your understanding of their lives and experiences.

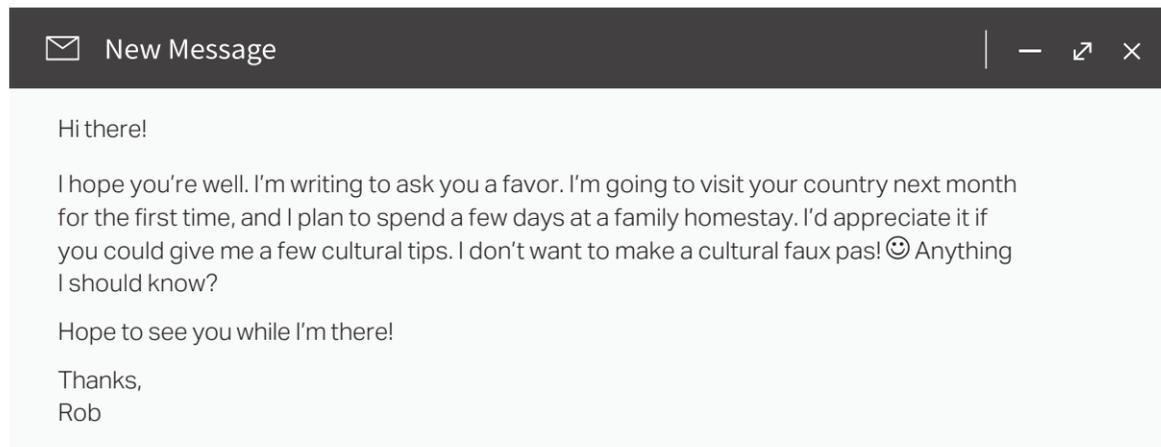
3 _____

Many tourists try to rush through as many activities and places as possible because they don't want to miss out on anything. However, this is a stressful way to travel. Instead, stay longer in one location. You don't have to see everything—just be fully there for the moments that matter. Also, choose a slower pace of travel. For instance, take a cycling tour from town to town, or use public transportation to get around. When you slow down and **lengthen** your stay in a place, you get to know it better.

So, does travel increase cultural understanding? It can—if we approach it with curiosity, respect, and a willingness to learn. Traveling with an open mind can **broaden** our horizons and help us see the world in a new way.

Preparing to Write

- A** Imagine you received this email from your friend Rob, who lives overseas. What kind of information would he like to know? Tell a partner.



- B** Work with a partner. What cultural information about your country would be useful to know? Make notes on at least three of these topics.

Greeting people	Gift giving	Paying for things
Managing time	Dining	Dressing appropriately

Writing

- C** Choose the most important information from Exercise B. Then write a response to Rob's email. Say what he should keep in mind while staying at a homestay.
- D** Exchange emails with a partner. Use the following questions to evaluate your partner's email and give feedback.
- Does the email include a greeting?
 - Does the email provide at least three practical tips or pieces of advice? Are they explained clearly?
 - Does the email have a sign-off?
 - Is the email written in a friendly, informal tone?
- E** Work in a group. Read each other's emails. Who do you think has the best advice? Why?

Vocabulary

- A** Complete the sentences using the words in the box.

bite	brother-in-law
confusing	fundraiser
nephew	nod
kite flying	scuba diving
thriller	blog

- I think she's a nervous person because she tends to _____ her nails.
- My sister had a baby recently—at last I have a _____!
- It might be a good idea to hold a _____ to get some money for the animal rescue center.
- The doctor told me to _____ my head if I felt any pain.
- We went _____ in the Caribbean and the sea life was amazing.
- The story in this book is so _____ because it keeps moving from past to present and back again.
- I asked my _____ for ideas for my sister's birthday as they've been married for 20 years.
- It's a nice day today. There's a light breeze, but it's not too windy—perfect weather for _____!
- Let's go and watch an exciting _____ at the movie theater this weekend.
- They wrote about their travel experiences on a _____.

Conversation

- B** Choose the correct options to complete the conversation.

- A:** Some students from South Korea will be visiting our school next month. We'd like to do a cultural exchange on the first day of their visit. I'd like to hear your ideas.
- B:** What do you ¹**say / mean** exactly by a cultural exchange? Can you ²**explain / talk** that, please?
- A:** Yes, I'm ³**great / happy** to do that. If it's ⁴**works / OK** with you, I'll show you a video of what we did in my last school.
- B:** Yes, of course. [*video plays*] I see, it's interesting. ⁵**Unfortunately / Thankfully**, we don't have a lot of money for food for events like that. Why ⁶**don't / could** we ask the students to cook some traditional dishes? They ⁷**might / can** be happy to do that.
- A:** That's ⁸**fine / well** with me. I'm ⁹**sure / possible** they'll agree.
- B:** And ¹⁰**suddenly / surprisingly**, there are some people in our school who can speak Korean really well. They could greet the visitors and make them feel welcome.
- A:** Good idea!