

Writing 2 | AN ESSAY

IDEAS

You will read an essay responding to the two sources below.

Source 1

If your job requires you to do a lot of travelling, meeting people from all over the world, you need to make a good impression. To do this, it's important to consider the culture you're trying to do business in. One example would be to greet people in a culturally appropriate way, such as a *namaste* in India.

However, sometimes there is a risk of offending people by inadvertently using greetings incorrectly, for example by not bowing low enough to a senior Japanese businessman.

Source 2

A lot of cultural differences are not immediately obvious. For instance, research has shown that requirements for personal space vary from culture to culture. This means that for North Americans 1.2m is a necessary range of personal space, but for South Americans it can be much smaller.

It is a shame that these kinds of cultural differences are often not taught to those involved in global business, despite the fact that being aware of other cultures can make business run more smoothly.

Write your essay in 240–280 words in an appropriate style.

- 1 In the essay you need to address the four points covered in the sources. List them in the order they appear in the sources.

- a _____
b _____
c _____
d _____

MODEL

- 2 Read the essay. Match the four sections with a description (a–d) from Exercise 1.

- 1 2 3 4

'Culture' is a term that can be challenging to define. For many, it is the 'high culture' of art or literature, but for those in business, it is the subtle differences in the ways people act that differ from one social group to another.

¹ One example is the handshake: a strong handshake from an English supplier may be considered overly dominant by a Filipino customer. However, unless these differences are explicitly pointed out, it can be incredibly difficult to know what to research when you begin doing business abroad.

² In order to reduce the potential difficulties caused by a lack of cultural awareness, it is vital that business people who work with those from other cultural backgrounds are taught about these variations in social interaction.

³ This will reduce the likelihood of committing a faux pas. For example, an executive attending a business dinner in China should know that the dishes in the centre of the table are for everyone to share throughout the meal, and they should not pile food onto their plate before they begin, as you might in many Western countries. Such a mistake made during a negotiation could change people's impressions, and therefore influence prices they are willing to pay, to give just one example.

⁴ People will obviously understand you are a foreigner and cannot be expected to be familiar with all of the nuances of their culture. Nevertheless, attempting to increase awareness of the norms of the culture you are doing business in shows a level of respect which reflects well on your company.

I believe that learning more about other cultures can only be a benefit to international business, and will ease the job of negotiators around the world.

- 3 Correct the following statements.

- 'Culture' is defined as the art or literature of a group of people.
- Filipino people prefer a strong handshake.
- In China, you should take all of the food that you want to eat at the start of the meal.
- If you make a cultural mistake during negotiations, it doesn't matter.
- Many people expect you to understand their culture completely if you're doing business with them.

USEFUL LANGUAGE

- 4 Find words in the model essay which match the definitions.

- 1 small and not easily noticed (adjective)
- 2 too; very (adverb)
- 3 clearly or directly, so it is easy to understand (adverb)
- 4 an action or mistake that is embarrassing because it is socially incorrect (phrase)
- 5 very small differences that are not usually very obvious (noun)
- 6 behaviours that are usual or expected within a culture (noun)

- 5 Add prepositions to complete the paragraph.

When historians look ¹ _____ on the beginning of the 21st century, they are bound ² _____ mention the role of technology and how it has revolutionized our lives. ³ _____ name just one example, virtual reality headsets now allow us to immerse ourselves ⁴ _____ completely different surroundings. As this technology gets cheaper, it will become accessible ⁵ _____ more and more people, and the desire ⁶ _____ films and games that exploit these headsets will increase. Of course, there is also the question ⁷ _____ how to deal ⁸ _____ the downsides of such technology, like the motion sickness some people experience on wearing a VR headset, but it is only a matter ⁹ _____ time before solutions are found to these problems.

- 6 These words (1–5) could be used in the essay in Exercise 8. Match them with their definitions (a–e).

- | | |
|--------------|--------------------------|
| 1 beneficial | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2 instant | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3 frankly | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4 patently | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5 creativity | <input type="checkbox"/> |

- a without doubt
- b happening immediately
- c being able to think of something new or imaginative
- d with a helpful or useful effect which improves a situation
- e said in an honest or direct way, but which people might not like

- 7 Use the words (1–5) from Exercise 6 and those below (a–e) to create collocations.

- a unrealistic
- b blossoms
- c gratification
- d true
- e change

PLANNING

You will respond to the following two sources.

Source 1

The advent of the smartphone has led to a world of people constantly looking down to check what's happening on social media or to play mindless games, instead of engaging with the world around them. This is particularly true of young people who have grown up with mobile phones. Whether it's at home with the family or in the middle of a business meeting, attention is constantly divided and nobody seems to focus on one thing at a time any more.

Source 2

It's now possible for everyone to have the whole world in their pockets. No longer do you have to agonize for days over an elusive piece of information; you can simply pull out your phone and 'ask the Internet'. Communication and trade are easier than ever before, with products from around the world at the tips of your fingers and a huge range of options for communicating with the outside world.

Write your essay in 240–280 words in an appropriate style.

- 8 Plan your essay. Identify the four key points from the sources. Write notes to decide how you will respond to them. Don't write full sentences yet.

WRITING

- 9 Write an essay to respond to the sources in Exercise 8. In your essay you should:
- refer to all four of the key points you have identified
 - make your own opinion on the topic clear in the conclusion
 - use a neutral or formal style

Write 240–280 words.

ANALYSIS

- 10 Check your essay. Answer the questions.
- **Content:** Does the essay respond to all four points in the sources? Is it 240 to 280 words long?
 - **Communicative achievement:** Is it written in a neutral or formal style? Is it clear to the reader what your opinion on the topic is?
 - **Organization:** Is the essay logically organized? Does it use appropriate linking devices?
 - **Language:** Does it use correct grammar and vocabulary? Is a good range of structures used?