

ИНОСТРАННЫЕ ЯЗЫКИ И МЕЖКУЛЬТУРНАЯ КОММУНИКАЦИЯ
(Английский язык) /
FOREIGN LANGUAGES AND INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION
(English Language)

10-11 классы / 10th and 11th Grades

Вариант 1 / Version 1

Duration – 80 minutes
Maximum score – 100 points

The test consists of 2 parts: Language and Culture Studies and Analytical Writing.

PART 1. LANGUAGE AND CULTURE STUDIES (50 points)

Task 1. For questions 1-6, read the text below and answer the questions (24 points).

Cultural Differences in Education

Some years ago, my family relocated from West London to the San Francisco Bay Area. Excited (but very apprehensive) for my 7-year-old son to start second grade at his new school, we arrived nice and early on the first day. I was surprised to see the classroom door already open with other parents wandering freely in and out with their children, chatting casually to the teacher as though they were great friends.

This relative informality soon became evident in many other different ways – the students were always referred to as “kids”, never children. There was a uniform, but it was incredibly casual. Discipline seemed extremely lax – the kids were often interrupting their teachers, usually without being too heavily rebuked. Lessons often seemed somewhat chaotic. The focus on English and Math, while clearly considered important, seemed less rigorous than back home. At every opportunity, the school promoted experiential project learning, as well as the development of public speaking. Above all, if there was a problem, teachers would readily give their time to discuss it at length.

Imagine my discomfort when we returned to London three years later to my son’s old school. The closed doors policy meant that I never once was able to witness a class in action. The discipline system was a complicated process of escalating steps that didn’t encourage any motivation for self-redemption, nor allow for grey areas or discussion. In our absence, the school had introduced a tie to the school uniform, worn by even the youngest children. All these things that I had not questioned before, the things that seemed “necessary”, now appeared constraining, unimaginative, stuck in the past. Obviously, I was suffering from a classic case of “reverse culture shock”. Somehow, without me realising it, I had adapted so successfully to my Californian life that I had come to internalise the American values embodied in their education system.

Even though the UK scores highly in the cultural dimension of “individualism” as devised by the late Dutch social psychologist Hofstede, it is the US that can claim the title of the most individualist country in the world. In American schools, learning how to express yourself is

more important than correct spelling. In exact contrast to the UK system, breadth rather than depth of learning is favoured – mistakes can be made along the way because it is believed that there is time enough to perfect later. Well-roundedness is valued highly, as is problem solving and creative thinking. Unlike the UK, there is less of a belief in the importance of a social hierarchy, so the relationships between students and teachers are far more casual. US culture assigns greater meaning to the present and the future, whereas the UK assigns greater meaning to the past. Those differences in attitude are certainly evident in the education system – in Britain so much value is placed on long standing traditions (those ties), in the US they focus more on the way their students are being trained to shape the future.

by Polly

1. According to the author, a country's national education system is a mirror reflection of the social culture and the people.
 - a) True
 - b) False
2. American students often interrupt their teachers because
 - a) respecting elders is not considered important in the US.
 - b) chaos is viewed as a norm in American classrooms.
 - c) the emphasis of the education system is on public self-expression.
 - d) informality is a feature of communication in American classrooms.
3. What symptoms of the reverse culture shock did the author experience, according to the text? Check all that apply.
 - a) the feeling of homesickness for the people, places, and things
 - b) the adoption of a new 'foreign' perspective on certain things
 - c) the reevaluation of the things previously familiar and normal
 - d) the resistance to readapting to his home culture
4. According to the text, the US education system is more effective when preparing its students for future professions than the one in the UK.
 - a) True
 - b) False
 - c) Not stated
5. Match these characteristics with the UK or US education systems as described in the text.
 - a) Pursuit of a wide range of knowledge across different topics is prioritised. UK/US
 - b) A high power distance between teachers and students is present. UK/US
 - c) One needs to strictly stick to norms and traditions. UK/US
 - d) Mistakes made in the classroom are welcome. UK/US
6. In the third paragraph, find the word that means the following: 'to accept or absorb an idea, opinion, belief, so that it becomes part of your character' = _____ (*type it in small letters*).

Task 2. For questions 7-12, think of one word which can be used appropriately in all three idioms, proverbs, or expressions from around the world. Type the word in small letters (12 points).

7. Today is the scholar of _____. (British Proverb)

Time and words can't be recalled, even if it was only _____. (Yiddish Proverb)

It is too late to call back _____. (British Proverb)

8. Four things come not back: the spoken word, the spent arrow, the _____ life, and the neglected opportunity. (Chinese Proverb)

Sweet is the memory of _____ labour. (Greek Proverb)

He who forgets his _____ is lost. (African Proverb)

9. It's not healthy to swallow a(n) _____ without chewing. (German Proverb)

There is no _____ that contains absolutely nothing bad, and there is no _____ that contains absolutely nothing good. (Jewish Proverb)

More is to be got from one teacher than from two _____s. (German Proverb)

10. The young cannot teach _____ to the old. (Yoruba Proverb)

We must convince by reason, not prescribe by _____. (Cypress Proverb)

A person who wants to see people's progress must first set to look into their _____. (African Proverb)

11. The _____ belongs to the man who rises early. (French Proverb)

The flow of water and the _____ of human beings are uncertain. (Japanese Proverb)

When men speak of the _____, the gods laugh. (Chinese Proverb)

12. For the diligent, a week has seven days; for the slothful, seven _____s. (German Proverb)

It is the fear of what _____ may bring that makes the tortoise to carry his house along with him wherever he goes. (Nigerian Proverb)

No one knows the story of _____'s dawn. (African Proverb)

Task 3. For questions 13-19, match the sociocultural facts with their countries of origin. There are more countries than you will need (14 points).

A	Germany	D	China	G	Kazakhstan
B	Japan	E	the USA	H	Iceland
C	Norway	F	Russia	I	Bangladesh

13. In this country, children on their very first day of school receive *randoseru*: backpacks which will last them through their primary school years. They are durable and considered great keepsakes for people to remember their childhood. They are often passed down from one family member to another.

14. The schools of this country lean very strongly towards the memorisation and retention of facts. This is demonstrated in the *gaokao*, the university admissions exam, which depends on what a student can memorise and repeat; analysis and critical thinking are not tested.

15. In this country, September 1st is called the Day of Knowledge. Children present their teachers with bouquets of flowers. Formal attire is worn by all who participate. The day

includes puppet shows and entertainment and the ceremonies end with the ringing of the first bell, which heralds the start of a new school year.

16. School uniforms are quite rare in this country. Where branded school clothing does exist, it is carefully designed to look as unlike a military uniform as possible – branded hoodies and t-shirts in a range of bright colours are the usual choice – and it is very seldom compulsory to wear it.
17. 70% of the total land area of this country is less than a metre above sea level which makes it prone to flooding. Not to close schools during these periods, leaving millions of children with no access to education, the government came up with an innovative solution: flood-proof schools on boats.
18. *Russfeiring* is the champion of high school graduation celebrations around the globe. The tradition is that high school students of this country club together to buy an old car, bus or van, which they decorate and then spend the next three weeks in it having a wild party, finally culminating in their graduation.
19. When a seven-year-old child starts school for the first time in this country, it's a family-wide affair. The day is called *Tyl Ashar*, or "Initiation into Education," and caregivers organise a ceremony and cook a large feast with lamb, rice, vegetables, and sweet desserts. Guests gather and listen to the new students recite by memory the names of seven generations of grandfathers to honour their ancestors.

PART 2. ANALYTICAL WRITING (50 points)

Task 4. Now you have learned about the differences between past- and present/future-oriented education systems across the globe. Write an essay analysing the specifics of the education system in your country from the perspective of your cultural experience and background, its past or present/future orientation. Your essay should have an introduction, two/three body paragraphs, and a conclusion.

You must:

- define the cultural phenomenon using your own words;
- explain how this cultural phenomenon impacts intercultural communication;
- analyse how this cultural phenomenon is reflected in your culture in the given sphere providing examples.

You can receive a maximum of 50 points for this task.

ANSWER KEY

TASK 1

- 1) A
- 2) D
- 3) B, C
- 4) C
- 5) a - US; b - UK; c - UK; d - US
- 6) internalise

TASK 2

- 7) yesterday
- 8) past
- 9) book

- 10) tradition
- 11) future
- 12) tomorrow

TASK 3

- 13) B
- 14) D
- 15) F
- 16) A
- 17) I
- 18) C
- 19) G