

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

10-11 классы / 10th and 11th Grades

Вариант 3 / Version 3

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 Barriers to Learning

Certain cultural barriers provide major challenges for learning. Whether you're learning a curriculum at school, learning the trade of a new job or simply sitting down with a new book in order to get some information, cross-cultural barriers can inhibit your learning. Through a thorough understanding of another culture, you can begin to see the ways in which cultural barriers influence learning.

Language is the most obvious cultural barrier to learning. Language, which includes proper words, slang, idioms and accents, can pose a huge obstacle for those who are studying another culture. As philosopher Umberto Eco points out, language constructs the way that we describe and think about the world around us. So, cultures with different languages will think of things in different ways. As a result, learning about another culture can often entail a mastery of the culture's native language.

Stereotypes also create problems for those who engage in cross-cultural learning. These stereotypes may be offensive or inoffensive, and they may hold true or false. Either way, stereotypes are generalisations about a culture that can give the clues to studying the culture, but you should always remember that these are not definitive. Cultures, like people, are always changing. So, the generalisations about cultures can be misleading. For example, people in the United States may seem very individualistic to some, but this is definitely not true for all U.S. citizens. However, this information may be helpful for someone in a collectivist society who is learning about the Americans.

History is also a huge barrier to cross-cultural learning. Historical facts may seem definitive, but a lot of historical events have numerous interpretations. Certain cultures may look at these historical facts in a certain light. For example, the conflict between China and Taiwan currently relies on a

different historical interpretation for both countries. As a result, the residents of each area face a historical barrier when trying to learn about the other. It happens because each views the historical events that shape their current cultural identities very differently.

Many cultures have certain sensitivities that they do not share with other cultures. For example, Western cultures typically have a lot of sensuality in the media. Middle Eastern cultures, in their more conservative forms, may find this nature of Western media to be extremely sinful. This type of cultural barrier comes from certain sensitivities in cultures. These perspectives may be defended from religious or moral standpoints, but they simply represent debates on heated issues on which cultures disagree.

In summary, cultural barriers, including language differences, stereotyping, varied histories, and sensitive topics, present significant obstacles to cross-cultural learning. Awareness and acknowledgment of these hindrances are essential to overcoming them and enhancing cross-cultural educational outcomes.

by John McDaniel

1. According to the author, cross-cultural difficulties can hinder your learning experience.
 - a) True
 - b) False
2. According to the text, language
 - a) is characterised by its historical and cultural diversity.
 - b) is subjective.
 - c) shapes our perception of the world.
 - d) displays group identity.
3. What should everyone be aware of when dealing with cross-cultural stereotypes? Check all that apply.
 - a) they cannot help make sense of the world
 - b) they do not create cultural hurdles to learning
 - c) they should not be taken as absolute truths
 - d) they are often over-generalised
4. According to the text, different interpretations of historical events can shape cultural identities.
 - a) True
 - b) False
 - c) Not stated
5. Match the cultural barriers with the descriptions given in the text.
 - a) What is acceptable in one culture may be deemed inappropriate in another. HISTORY/SENSITIVITY
 - b) Different narratives from different countries create barriers to the understanding between them. HISTORY/SENSITIVITY
 - c) Various understandings of past occurrences affect individuals' perspectives on one another. HISTORY/SENSITIVITY

d) Differences in religious beliefs can cause misunderstandings between cultures.

HISTORY/SENSITIVITY

6. In the last paragraph, find the word that means ‘obstacles, barriers’ = _____
(*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. As the man is, so is his _____. (Danish proverb)
A wise person must know the _____, sayings and tales of his society. (African proverb)
Better wise _____ than well-combed hair. (Icelandic proverb)
8. _____ is the treasure no thief can touch. (Chinese proverb)
There are no national frontiers to _____. (Japanese proverb)
One pound of _____ requires ten pounds of common sense to apply it. (Persian proverb)
9. To break through _____, you need to believe that they exist only in the mind. (Vietnamese proverb)
Providence our herald, no _____ can oppose us. (Latin proverb)
The world of humans is divided by lines, but the mind knows no limits, the heart no _____. (Moroccan proverb)
10. Happy is the country which has no _____. (Italian proverb)
_____ is constantly teaching, but it does not find many pupils. (Austrian proverb)
Old men and women in the village are books of _____ and wisdom. (African proverb)
11. Even from a foe a man may learn _____. (Greek proverb)
You cannot buy _____ abroad if there is none at home. (Russian proverb)
The hot sun melts away the snow; when anger comes, does _____ go. (Indian proverb)
12. The _____ is the path. (Zen proverb)
To turn an _____ into one's advantage is a great step towards victory. (French proverb)
Merit is often an _____ to fortune; the reason is it produces two bad effects – envy and fear. (Traditional 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 | Brazil | D | Australia | G | Germany |
| B | the USA | E | Kazakhstan | H | Scotland |
| C | Greece | F | China | I | Sweden |

13. In this populous country a high value is placed on achieving academic success through rote learning and memorization.
14. In this vast country with an arid climate emphasis is placed on open discussion and debate which may be uncomfortable for those used to more formal learning environments.
15. People in this country have a deep-rooted connection to their country's mythology and rich history, and often incorporate these elements into their learning experiences.
16. Citizens of this country are often seen as sociable, talkative and receptive to engaging in discussions that can potentially create challenges in communication for some individuals from other nationalities.
17. Residents of this country value efficiency and punctuality which can create challenges for those from cultures with more flexible attitudes.
18. In this country social connections are the key to success in both personal and professional contexts that can sometimes be a barrier for people from other cultures.
19. In this highly-developed country there is a strong emphasis on equality, thorough discussions and consensus-building in the decision-making processes.

PART 2. ANALYTICAL WRITING (50 points)

Task 4. Now you have learned about cultural barriers to learning. Write an essay analysing the ways of overcoming linguistic and cultural obstacles in learning from the perspective of your experience and background. 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 your life;
- analyse the ways in which obstacles associated with this cultural phenomenon are overcome in your culture providing examples.

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

ANSWER KEY

TASK 1

- 1) A
- 2) C
- 3) C, D
- 4) A
- 5) a - SENSITIVITY; b - HISTORY; c - HISTORY; d - SENSITIVITY
- 6) hindrances

TASK 2

- 7) language
- 8) learning
- 9) barriers
- 10) history
- 11) wisdom
- 12) obstacle

TASK 3

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