

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

10-11 классы / 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> Grades

Вариант 7 / Version 7

**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).**

**Navigating uncertainty**

Here is the situation one may encounter: on one side - a Swedish company, on the other - a Saudi Arabian company. While discussing a business partnership, their priorities differ based on their level of uncertainty avoidance. The Swedish negotiators are more open to exploring creative solutions and adapting to changing circumstances. The Saudi negotiators prefer clear agreements, detailed contracts, and a structured approach to minimize uncertainty and risk.

This situation illustrates that there are certain cultural traits that are different depending on where in the world you go. One of those cultural traits is uncertainty avoidance, which is defined as the extent to which the members of a culture feel threatened by ambiguous or unknown situations and have created beliefs and institutions that try to avoid these. This ambiguity or fear of the unknown results in different levels of anxiety and stress which have shaped the way different countries interact with each other.

One of the traits we sometimes can observe with uncertainty avoidance, is a country's refusal of anything that is new or unusual. This refusal can be of any ideas, concepts, and situations that are out of the norm, along with different types of people, or lifestyles. Countries that show these traits tend to stay away from possible conflicts while balancing optimal stability with minimal risk. These countries are also known as high uncertainty avoidance countries meaning that the extent to which they feel threatened by unknown situations is high which interweaves throughout their society as a whole. Many countries in Latin America, Spain, Italy, also Poland and Russia are very close to that end of the scale.

One more country in this category is Japan. One of the major reasons for this is because Japan lives in constant fear of natural disasters like earthquakes, tsunamis, typhoons, and volcanic eruptions. Due to these fears and uncertainties, the Japanese have learned not only to prepare themselves for natural disasters but for any type of situation. It is said that the Japanese, “from cradle to grave” have a ritual and ceremony for everything. School opening and closing ceremonies, weddings, funerals, social events, and even the do’s and don’ts of how people should behave are written in etiquette books in great detail.

Some of the tell-tale signs of prototypical high uncertainty avoidance cultures include:

- People in these cultures love having rules and guidelines. These rules can be formalised or informal. This helps to make unknown situations easier because there is a fixed way of doing just about everything.
- Life is stressful. It’s generally acceptable to lose your temper in order to blow off steam, and it wouldn’t be strange to see people arguing loudly in the street.
- Structure. Education, life, and business are all handled in very structured ways. Structures and strategies for risk management are always in place. Just in case.
- Ritual. Fundamental religious rituals are commonplace in these societies.
- Conservatism. Most people in these cultures are highly traditional and resistant to new ideas and change. This provides a type of security for them.

Conversely, cultures with low uncertainty avoidance, such as those in the United States, the UK or Northern Europe and the Nordics may be more comfortable with ambiguity and uncertainty, less structure, and the diversity of new ideas.

By understanding a culture’s levels of uncertainty avoidance (including your own), you will have a baseline measurement of expectations. These will help you gauge what people expect of you as a member of a certain culture, and it will help you know what to expect from them.

*by J. Wittwer and Cassandra Maris Landis*

1. According to the authors, the way the representatives of different cultures communicate with each other does NOT depend on the attitudes towards the unknown.
  - a) True
  - b) False
2. The situation with the Swedish and Saudi Arabian negotiators demonstrates that
  - a) they prefer direct communication styles and lack of ambiguity.
  - b) their approaches to the ways they deal with uncertainty are contrasting.
  - c) they share similar cultural values and beliefs in business ethics.
  - d) their views on contract flexibility are identical.
3. According to the text, what are the consequences of Japan having a high level of uncertainty avoidance? Check all that apply.
  - a) Thorough preparation for natural disasters.
  - b) Spontaneous and informal social interactions.
  - c) Extensive ritualisation of social events.
  - d) Flexibility in adapting to unpredictable circumstances.

4. The Nordics are categorised as low uncertainty countries because of their geographic location.
  - a) True
  - b) False
  - c) Not stated
5. Match these characteristics with the concept of high or low uncertainty avoidance descriptions given in the text.
  - a) Expressing strong emotions and engaging in public arguments. HIGH/LOW
  - b) Being less reliant on strict rules and being more flexible. HIGH/LOW
  - c) Rigorously applying risk prevention and management strategies. HIGH/LOW
  - d) More willing to welcome unconventional approaches and new ideas. HIGH/LOW
6. In the last paragraph, find the word that means the following: ‘to make a judgement about something; to calculate’ = \_\_\_\_\_ (*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. If you give \_\_\_\_\_ and leave, the work won't get done. (Portuguese proverb)  
It is easier to give \_\_\_\_\_ than to work. (Lithuanian proverb)  
The man who never makes a mistake always takes \_\_\_\_\_ from one who does. (Traditional proverb)
8. To \_\_\_\_\_ and to improve are two different things. (German proverb)  
If you don't like something, \_\_\_\_\_ it. (Maya Angelou)  
Progress is impossible without \_\_\_\_\_, and those who cannot \_\_\_\_\_ their minds cannot \_\_\_\_\_ anything. (George Bernard Shaw)
9. Better to \_\_\_\_\_ a little than to lose the whole. (American proverb)  
He that holds the handle of a frying-pan runs the \_\_\_\_\_ of burning himself. (French proverb)  
A cat loves fish, but won't \_\_\_\_\_ its claws. (Yiddish proverb)
10. If you are wearing shoes, you don't \_\_\_\_\_ the thorns. (Sudanese proverb)  
\_\_\_\_\_ blows wind into your sails. (Japanese proverb)  
\_\_\_\_\_ the law, not the judge. (Russian proverb)
11. There is no luck except where there is \_\_\_\_\_. (Irish proverb)  
Without a goal, \_\_\_\_\_ is nothing but self-punishment. (Traditional proverb)  
Mistakes and errors are the \_\_\_\_\_ through which we advance. (William Ellery Channing)
12. The worst is not always \_\_\_\_\_ but it's very likely. (French proverb)  
No gain is so \_\_\_\_\_ as that which proceeds from the economical use of what you already have. (Latin proverb)  
We lose the \_\_\_\_\_ things, while we seek the uncertain ones. (Latin 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).**

<b>A</b>	Finland	<b>D</b>	Germany	<b>G</b>	South Africa
<b>B</b>	Japan	<b>E</b>	Brazil	<b>H</b>	Singapore
<b>C</b>	Greece	<b>F</b>	Switzerland	<b>I</b>	the USA

13. The country favours detailed planning, clear regulations, punctuality and there is a strong focus on quality and precision in products and services. This is reflected in the country's renowned engineering and manufacturing sectors, where rigorous quality control processes are in place.
14. This country's concept of "sisu" embodies determination, resilience, and the courage to take on challenges and risk despite uncertainty and adversity, which is reflected in the saying: "If you look at the enormous grey outcrops of granite scattered since the ice age through our countryside and forests, you'll realise that getting through them is not just difficult, it is pretty well impossible."
15. The country's culture is rich with festivals and traditions that have been passed down through generations, reflecting the nation's deep historical and religious roots and providing a sense of continuity, community, and predictability. For example, there are harvest festivals which celebrate the successful harvest of crops such as olives, grapes, and wheat.
16. In this country, where risk-taking is valued, the standup comedy genre is said to originate and is very popular nowadays as standing up to crack a joke to a broad audience – even if there's a risk it will fall flat – is acceptable.
17. This country's culture places a high value on precision, stability, and meticulous planning. This is reflected in its renowned banking sector and high-quality manufacturing industries, where risk is managed through careful planning and robust systems.
18. This country scores high on uncertainty avoidance, with strict laws and regulations ensuring order and predictability. It is estimated that there are close to one million CCTV cameras installed in the country and there are plans to increase the number of cameras to enhance public safety and security, and aid in police investigations. The country's efficient bureaucracy and transparent policies help mitigate risks and manage uncertainties in both business and everyday life.
19. In this country, the concept of choosing a profession for a lifetime is deeply rooted in cultural, educational, and economic factors: long-term commitment to a single career path has traditionally been emphasised, reflecting the broader societal values of stability, loyalty, and dedication. Students attend career seminars in the junior years and submit applications for openings announced by companies in the senior years.

**PART 2. ANALYTICAL WRITING (50 points)**

**Task 4. Now you have learned about the concept of uncertainty avoidance in intercultural communication. Write an essay analysing the level of uncertainty avoidance in your culture, and the role of rules and regulations from the perspective of your cultural 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 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) B
- 2) B
- 3) A, C
- 4) C
- 5) a - HIGH; b - LOW; c - HIGH; d - LOW
- 6) (to) gauge

**TASK 2**

- 7) orders
- 8) change
- 9) risk
- 10) fear
- 11) discipline
- 12) certain

**TASK 3**

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