

Culture File 1, Unit 1

Tips

In America, you usually give tips to waiters, bartenders, cab drivers, etc. Tips are a large part of their pay. Think of 15% to 20% for most services. This is a guide:

Waiter - 20 %
Bellhop - \$1 per bag
Cab driver - 15%
Housekeeper - \$1 per day

Hairdresser - 20%

You don't give tips at gas stations, the movies or at theaters.

Money

Remember! American bills are all the same color and the same size!

The bills in common use are \$1, \$5, \$10, \$20, \$50 and \$100.

Culture File 2, Unit 2

Names

English speakers like to use first names as soon as possible. British and Australian people use first names faster than Americans. In Britain, a doctor or a lawyer will often use first names. In North America, wait until someone invites you to use his / her first name.

When you are introducing yourself, you can indicate which name you want people to use.

Look at these examples.

My name's Robertson. Michael Robertson. - People will call you Mr. Robertson.

My name's Adams. Jessica Adams. - People will call you Ms. Adams.

My name's Michael. Michael Robertson. - People will call you Michael.

My name's Jessica. Jessica Adams. - People will call you Jessica.

Don't introduce yourself as "I'm Mr. Robertson" or "I'm Ms. Adams."

But you can introduce other people with titles, "This is Mr. Tanaka ..." and you can introduce yourself and your partner as "We're Mr. and Mrs. Lopez ..."

Don't use titles with first names. You can't say "~~Mr. Peter~~" or "~~Mrs. Anne~~."

Women can choose whether to use Ms., Mrs. or Miss. If you don't know, use Ms.

Culture File 3, Unit 3

Time

In the U.S.A., the 12-hour clock is used in business and in timetables. Add 'a.m.' for morning, or 'p.m.' for afternoon.

At three o'clock / At three p.m. / At six thirty / At six forty-five

In many other English-speaking countries, the twelve-hour clock is used in conversation, but the 24-hour clock is used for timetables.

At seventeen hundred / at twenty-one fifteen

Dates

In the U.S.A. and Canada, abbreviations are written MONTH-DAY-YEAR, so 5/12/05 is May 12th 2005.

In the rest of the world, abbreviations are written DAY-MONTH-YEAR, so 5/12/05 is 5th December 2005.

On U.S. visa and immigration forms, they use the international system, DAY-MONTH-YEAR.

Culture File 4, Unit 4

Cell phones

There are three main systems of cell phone (U.K. - mobile phone) in the world. To use a phone in all countries you need a 'tri-band' phone.

Cell phones took longer to become widely popular in the U.S.A. and for a long time were more expensive than in Europe or Asia. In most of the world, you pay to make cell phone calls. In the U.S.A., you usually pay to receive and make cell phone calls.