

## 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.

## Culture File 5, Unit 5

### Difficult questions

Some questions are not polite in English. Don't ask new acquaintances about:

#### AGE:

How old are you?  
When were you born?

#### MONEY:

How much do you earn?  
What's your salary?  
Do they pay you well?

#### MARITAL STATUS:

Are you married?  
Why aren't you married?

## Culture File 6, Unit 6

### Prices

Because American dollar bills are all the same color and the same size, store clerks often check by saying "Out of (twenty)" when you give them a bill.

### Tax

In the U.S.A., every state has a state tax (between 5% and 9%). This tax is not shown in the price. It is added to the

total at the cash register. So if you buy something at \$6 in a state with 7% tax, the price you pay is \$6.42.

In Europe, part of the price is VAT (Value Added Tax), which was 17.5% in the U.K. in 2003. This tax is already included in the price. If the price tag shows £6 or €6, this is what you pay at the cash register.

## Culture File 7, Unit 7

### Credit cards

There are a high percentage of **credit card** users in English-speaking countries. People also carry **charge cards** (from stores or gas stations), and **debit cards**. Debit cards replace checks and are used instead of cash. The money is immediately transferred from your bank account.

**Debit cards** are usually also **ATM** cards (ATM is **Automatic Teller Machine** in the U.S.A., **cash machine** or **cashpoint** in Europe). You have a **PIN** (Personal Identification Number) which you use with the cards for security. You never write this down, nor tell it to anyone. When you check in at a hotel, they prefer credit cards to checks or cash. They will ask to **swipe** your card on arrival, or they may **take an impression** of your card.

## Culture File 8, Unit 8

### Hotel facilities

In large hotels you can assume that rooms will have facilities like a bathroom, color TV, and direct-dial telephone. Small hotels (or 'boutique' hotels) are becoming more popular.

In larger hotels in North America, most rooms have two double beds. The charge is usually for the room, and in many hotels children can stay free in a room with their parents.

## Culture File 9, Unit 9

### Greetings

People who meet regularly on business will normally use first names. In North America, they often meet socially too, which is why Josh asks about Michael's wife, Jodie. It is also common to ask about children.

North Americans and British people shake hands on introduction, and if they meet after a long time. In the rest of Europe, people shake hands more often. Business colleagues may shake hands each day or more than once a day.

People don't bow on meeting. Women meeting men acquaintances and friends may kiss them on the cheek or even hug. Women may do the same to other women. This used to be more frequent in non-English-speaking countries in Europe and Latin America, but the custom is increasing rapidly in English-speaking countries.

## Culture File 10, Unit 10

### Starting conversations

People often start with an ice-breaker. The weather is a good topic (unless you're somewhere like the desert where it never changes!) because it's neutral. People comment on the weather to be friendly and to see if the other person wants to speak.

If you're traveling, the ice-breaker is usually to talk about the journey. (It looks like we're going to be late / on time / early.) At a reception or party, the food or drink is a good topic for an ice-breaker.

Be careful with question intonation. Sound as if you're interested and making friendly conversation. Don't sound like a police detective! If you do, "Why are you here?" may sound rude.

## Culture File 11, Unit 11

### Lunch

Lunch isn't the main meal of the day for most people in North America, Australia or the U.K. (but Julie is on a business trip and hungry). Lunch breaks are short, and are rarely longer than an hour. Some factories and offices have their own self-service cafeterias.

Many workers in cities just have a sandwich or other snack from a deli or sandwich bar. Some bring a lunchbox from home.

Lunch times are earlier in the U.S.A. than in the U.K., and earlier in the U.K. than in Southern Europe. The lunch break is sometime between 11:30 and 1:30 in the U.S.A.

## Culture File 12, Unit 12

### Check-in

Since 9.11.01 all airlines have introduced new security checks. They must ask you some questions by law. British airlines must use specific words for this. Always answer clearly and simply with "yes" or "no" plus a short answer.

Regulations about checked and carry-on baggage are also changed frequently and may be out-of-date by the time you read this. You can check on the Internet or phone your airline. Most airline Web addresses are easy to guess. e.g. [www.united.com](http://www.united.com) is United Airlines. [www.ana.com](http://www.ana.com) is All-Nippon Airways. [www.ba.com](http://www.ba.com) is British Airways.

### Culture File 13, Unit 13

#### Security

Security checks are different in different countries. In some countries you have all your baggage scanned before (or when) you enter the terminal building, and often there is a separate line to scan baggage before you can go to the check-in desk.

At check-in there are questions (see Unit 12). For international flights you will have to go through a security check before you enter the departure lounges.

In the U.S.A., this security check will usually be later, at the boarding gate. You will have to pass through a scanner. There is normally a plastic tray at the side, and you should put any metal objects (keys, coins) on this tray before passing through the scanner. A security officer may want to check your clothes and pockets. Raise your arms and stand still. Occasionally, they may ask to check your shoes. Always be polite and courteous and don't forget your belongings. Some airlines have a further check at the gate, as you board the airplane.

### Culture File 14, Unit 14

#### Titles and jobs

Only a few jobs have 'titles' in English. The most important ones are listed in the unit.

Professor is used for university teachers in North America, but in the U.K. a Professor is the head of a university department. Other teachers don't have job titles (but those with doctor's degrees, Ph.D., or D.Sc., are called Doctor ...).

You can address some people by just their job titles. There are very few examples like this. You can't address teachers as "Teacher" or "Teacher Smith" in English. Use the name (Ms. Smith, or Dr. Green). In North America, you can address professors as 'Professor ...'

In American English, write titles like Mr. / Mrs. / Dr. / Ms. with a period (but not Miss). In the U.K. most people don't write periods after these titles.

### Culture File 15, Unit 15

#### In flight

Smoking is prohibited on all flights within the U.S.A., and between most European countries. Most airlines ban smoking on all flights.

Budget airlines are becoming more popular. On budget airlines you pay less for your ticket, but have to pay for food, headsets or drinks. On major, (full-service) airlines, these may be free. Some American budget airlines have food trays at the gate and you have to carry on your own meal. With others, no food is available and you may want to buy a sandwich or a drink before boarding.

### Culture File 16, Unit 16

#### Numbers

When keying into a computer or typing, you use a comma (,) or sometimes a blank space, to separate the thousands. 150,000 is one hundred and fifty thousand  
150 000 is one hundred and fifty thousand  
A period (.) is used for decimals (0.5), and therefore to separate dollars and cents (or pounds and pence, euros and cents etc.). In British English a **period** is called a **full stop**.  
150.00 is one hundred and fifty (and no cents if it's money).

#### Temperature

17°C is "seventeen degrees Celsius" (or Centigrade).  
In the Celsius system, water freezes at 0°C and water boils at 100°C.  
58°F is "fifty-eight degrees Fahrenheit."  
In the Fahrenheit system, water freezes at 32°F and water boils at 212°F.  
Fahrenheit is used in the U.S.A. (except for science), Celsius is used in almost all other countries.

## Culture File 17, Unit 17

### Etiquette

There are many different 'unwritten rules' about eating and drinking. They are different in different countries. These are some 'rules' which are common in the U.S.A.

- Don't put your elbows on the table.
- Always serve women with food before men.
- Always serve guests first.
- To cut up food, hold your knife in the right hand and your fork in the left.
- When you eat soup, move the spoon away from you.
- Don't speak with your mouth full.

## Culture File 18, Unit 18

### Socializing

In North America, people may invite business acquaintances or co-workers to their homes. American houses are generally large and people like to entertain at home. It is seen as more personal than entertaining in a restaurant. It would be normal to take a gift if invited to someone's home.

Flowers are always a safe gift. Others are chocolate or wine, but something typical from your country is best of all. It will be a friendly occasion, and you will eat with their partner, and possibly their children. Once you have met the family of a business acquaintance, it is polite to ask about them at subsequent meetings.

## Culture File 19, Unit 19

### Weights and measures

The U.S.A. does not generally use the metric system. Canada, Australia and the U.K. do, but the U.K. still uses miles for road distances.

Spelling note: The endings of metric measures are written as *-er* in the U.S., but as *-re* in the U.K. and elsewhere: liter / litre, meter / metre.

### Conversion chart:

#### Linear (approximately)

1 inch = 25 millimeters      1 foot = 30 centimeters  
1 yard = 90 centimeters      1 mile = 1.6 kilometers

#### Weight

1 ounce = 28 grams      1 pound = 0.454 kilograms

#### Size

When you're shopping, you can ask, "Can you measure me?" if you don't know the sizes for clothes. But most stores can tell you your clothes size, or your shoe size in the U.S., British or 'Continental' (= International) systems.

## Culture File 20, Unit 20

### Cars

Words for cars are often different in American and British English.

American	British
Sports utility vehicle / SUV	Four wheel drive
MPV (multi purpose vehicle) / van	MPV / People Carrier
Sedan	Saloon
Station Wagon	Estate
Convertible	Convertible
sports car	sports car
limo	limousine

Words for parts of cars are also different.

American	British
(gear) shift / gear stick	gear lever
windshield	windscreen
fender / bumper	bumper
hood	bonnet
trunk	boot
gas pedal	accelerator
gas	petrol

## Culture File 21, Unit 21

### Maintaining a conversation

If you just answer "yes" or "no" a conversation soon stops. Notice that in the conversation,

Keiko adds an opinion or extra information:

*It's a nice pool.*

*I'm visiting my company's Los Angeles office.*

*It's a very interesting place.*

Keiko also asks questions:

*Have you heard of it?*

*Have you ever been there?*

Always try to add a statement or a question after "yes" and "no" answers.

## Culture File 22, Unit 22

### Business events

Business events (conferences, training courses, seminars etc.) are good opportunities for socializing. People value informal contacts and many people believe that the social side of these events is as important as the course or conference.

You meet people doing similar jobs with similar problems.

The contacts may be useful later. During courses and conferences try to socialize – and remember that it shouldn't all be business conversation.

## Culture File 23, Unit 23

### Topics of conversation

The safest topics are the weather and food and drink. The most dangerous topics are religion and politics, which should be avoided unless you know someone well. Medical problems aren't usually interesting to strangers. Before you talk about personal interests, try to find out what the other person's interests are. Jokes are a difficult area. Always avoid jokes about sex, ethnic origin, sexist jokes, religion or politics.

Talking about your country and about business acquaintances who you both know are useful topics. In business lunches, always begin with social conversation. At some point, the host can introduce business. The guest should wait for that.

## Culture File 24, Unit 24

### Food taboos

Airlines say that chicken is the most popular international food, because few people have taboos about it. People who have taboos won't eat certain foods. It is usually polite not to eat these things in front of them, even if you do not share their taboos.

### Religious taboos

Muslims and Jews don't eat pork, pork products or some kinds of seafood. Hindus don't eat beef or beef products.

### Animal welfare

Some people only eat 'cruelty-free' foods out of concern for animal welfare. They won't eat veal or factory-farmed chicken. Most Americans will not eat meat from whales or dolphins.

### Health

Some people will avoid some food for health reasons. People on a low-cholesterol diet avoid red meat.

### Vegetarians

Vegetarians don't eat meat. Most vegetarians don't eat fish, either.

## Culture File 25, Unit 25

### Phones

\* # These buttons are called STAR (\*) and HACHE or POUND SIGN (#) on recorded messages.

In North America, they say **cell phones**. In Europe they say **mobiles**. Other countries say **handphone**. There are three cell phone systems in the world, and you need a **tri-band** phone to use a cell phone everywhere. If you use a cell phone in other countries it is best to store all the numbers in your directory using the International Direct Dialing Codes, even the numbers from your own country. Instead of the first '0' of the number, store + and the country code, e.g. 44 for Britain. So a British person who wanted to store 0270

123 4567, can store +44 270 123 4567 instead. This number then works in Britain and anywhere in the world.

Here are some international country codes:

Australia	61	Korea	82
Brazil	55	Malaysia	60
France	33	Mexico	52
Germany	49	Russia	7
China	86	Taiwan	886
Indonesia	62	Thailand	66
Italy	39	United Kingdom	44
Japan	81	U.S.A. & Canada	1

## Culture File 26, Unit 26

### The Internet

Anything we say here about the Internet will be out of date by the time you read this note, because things are changing so quickly. A few years ago there were some small differences between British and American words for computers (British – wastebasket, U.S. – trash), but they are now the same (the American version), because the same software is used all over the world.

There are many Web sites with English language teaching exercises, picture dictionaries, magazines etc. You should try to spend some time on them. For a start, go to the Macmillan Education Web site [www.macmillaneducation.com](http://www.macmillaneducation.com)

The very best way of using the Internet is to search for things that interest you. Maybe you're a fan of a rock group, or a sports star, or interested in a topic like the environment. Don't be afraid to post messages on guest books and chat rooms. Many non-English-speaking people do this and you will find that English speakers will be interested in your message, not in how accurate your grammar is.

## Culture File 27, Unit 27

### Immigration control

See also Culture file 3, dates. U.S. immigration and customs forms ask for the international order for dates, DAY > MONTH > YEAR

Airlines give instructions for filling in immigration forms. Follow the instructions carefully, because if there are any mistakes, you will have to begin again. Don't forget to sign U.S. forms on the back. You need a **visa form** if you have a U.S. visa. Many countries don't need visas for the U.S.A. and citizens of these countries have a **visa waiver form**.

When you arrive at immigration there will be separate lines for U.S. citizens and for visitors to the U.S.A. The inspector will staple the **Departure record** in your passport. When you leave the U.S.A., make certain that the airline removes your Departure record from your passport.

## Culture File 28, Unit 28

### Airline baggage

Most lost baggage does eventually arrive at its destination. Most airlines barcode baggage which means they can track it easily.

Airlines say it's best to mark baggage with your name, zip code and a phone contact number.

Some airlines now advise you not to put your home address on the outside of baggage (you should put it inside your luggage). The name and zip code (U.K. – postcode) should be enough information for the airline to locate you. Never carry sharp objects (such as scissors) in hand baggage.

## Culture File 29, Unit 29

### Allowances

Allowances for international travel are changing all the time. Many people think that 'duty-free' or 'tax-free' allowances are out-of-date, and that airlines use a lot of aviation fuel carrying duty-free goods. Some airports (e.g. London) allow you to buy your allowances on arrival, and in the future this may be the normal method, or duty-free allowances may stop completely.

Travel inside the European Union (**EU**) is not international travel. In airport shops in the EU, goods in the 'green area' are tax-free. Goods in the blue area are not 'tax free.' When you arrive at customs, there are two or three **channels**. The green channel is **nothing to declare**. The red channel is **goods to declare**. In the European Union, there is a third blue channel for travelers from an EU country. If you are traveling from an EU country (e.g. from Rome to London) you go through the blue channel. Your nationality is not important.

## Culture File 30, Unit 30

### Walking in the U.S.A.

In some American cities, it's quite difficult to walk between buildings outside the downtown area. Some cities were built with six lane highways, with very few sidewalks. Because these highways have complex crossroads it can be difficult to cross the highway on foot.

As suburban shopping areas ('strip malls') and offices have large parking lots, it's often easier to drive between two buildings, even when the distance is short – 300 or 400 meters.

In downtown areas, people usually give directions in blocks where cities are built in a grid pattern. *Walk four blocks along Michigan Avenue and it's on the right ...*

## Culture File 31, Unit 31

### Daylight Savings Time

Many countries have Daylight Savings Time. This is called Summer Time in Europe (BST or British Summer Time in the U.K.).

In the winter, London is on GMT or Greenwich Mean Time. GMT times are used for international air travel, and all time differences are measured from GMT.

In the summer many countries 'change the clocks' so as to change the number of useful daylight hours.

So in Britain, BST is one hour ahead of GMT. The clocks change in March and October. In March 6 a.m. becomes 7 a.m. and we say the clocks 'go forward.' In October the clocks 'go back.' Children are often taught, "Spring forward. Fall back."

In comparison, Japan does not use daylight saving time, so that in the summer daylight can begin at 4:30 a.m., and it gets dark at 7 p.m. New York (on the same line of latitude) uses daylight saving time, so that daylight begins later at 5:30 a.m. and it gets dark later at 8 p.m.

## Culture File 32, Unit 32

### American breakfasts

An American breakfast (or a traditional Canadian, English or Irish breakfast) is very large and is a hot, cooked breakfast. They are popular in hotels, and in diners. An 'American breakfast' might include juice, coffee, cereal or hot oatmeal, a cooked main course with eggs, bacon, sausages, pancakes, breakfast potatoes or hash browns, then toast and jelly or breakfast rolls. 'Grits' are a Southern U.S. specialty and are a kind of hot cereal.

A Full English breakfast is similar, but would not include grits or pancakes. Kippers (a smoked fish, served hot) might be offered as a choice instead of eggs and bacon, and tea is the usual drink.

Nowadays, few people eat breakfasts like this at home (except perhaps on weekends). Many people have cereal, fruit, yoghurt or a Continental breakfast (Continental = Europe without Britain) of rolls, jam and tea or coffee.

In hotels, breakfast is often a buffet where you can choose hot or cold food. There is a standard charge and you can eat as much as you like.

### Culture File 33, Unit 33

#### Describing people 1

In English-speaking countries, you should be careful when describing people's ethnic origins and it's best to avoid doing so, if you can describe them without mentioning ethnicity. You should always avoid words for color.

If you have to describe ethnic origins, use these words:

African-American (U.S.), Afro-Caribbean (U.K.)

Oriental (U.S., U.K.)

Asian – in the U.S. this usually means from East Asia, but in the U.K. it usually means from South Asia (India, Pakistan, Bangladesh)

Middle-Eastern

Hispanic (U.S.), Latin, Latin American (U.K., Latin America)

Caucasian (U.S.), Northern European (U.K.)

Mediterranean (U.S., U.K.), Southern European (U.K.)

### Culture File 34, Unit 34

#### Describing people 2

Be careful when you describe people. Some descriptions are rude.

Look at the table:

not polite	more polite	most polite
fat	plump	well-built
skinny	thin	svelte
old	elderly	mature
short	small	petite
insane	crazy	eccentric
drunk	tipsy	tired and emotional
ugly	characterful	interesting
dumb	less intelligent	average

### Culture File 35, Unit 35

#### Comparing things

*It isn't as expensive as that one ...* sounds better than *It's cheaper than that one* (because we often think of *cheap* as poor quality as well as lower price).

Sales people should be careful when making comparisons. It's poor sales technique to criticize something the customer has already bought: *The new one is much faster and better than the one you have* because this suggests the person is wrong to have bought it.

Always point out the good points about the new product, rather than criticize the customer's choice.

### Culture File 36, Unit 36

#### Working times

Office workers talk about a nine-to-five job, and this is still typical in both North America and the U.K. Finishing at four (or even earlier) on Friday is normal.

In the U.K., most employees get three to four weeks vacation a year. In the U.S.A., two weeks is more common (but there are more national holidays as compensation).

Factory workers begin earlier, with 8 to 4:30 being common in the U.K. In the U.S.A., a 7 a.m. start in factories is normal, and workers might have breakfast at work at 9 and finish by 3:30 p.m.

Many businesses have cafeterias for employees. Very few British or American workers go home for lunch (though in Southern Europe over 40% of workers do, but a two or three hour break at lunch times makes this possible).

### Culture File 37, Unit 37

#### Vacations

In North America, a **vacation** is time off work, and a **holiday** is a special national day, like Thanksgiving, Christmas Day, Independence Day or Labor Day. In British English both are called holidays. In the U.K., a day when all offices and factories are closed is a **bank holiday**. The majority of Americans spend their vacation in the

U.S.A., but it is a very large country. Mexico, The Caribbean and Canada (which are also in North America) are the most popular destinations outside the U.S.A. However, a greater percentage of British people travel abroad for their vacations. Spain, France, Italy, Greece and the U.S.A. and Canada are the most popular destinations for British tourists.

### Culture File 38, Unit 38

#### Air tickets

Open tickets cost you more. All **First** and **Business class** tickets are open, i.e. you can change your flight times. Full-fare Coach / **Economy** tickets are usually open. Cheaper tickets are usually **Restricted**, i.e. you can't change them. The best-known type is **APEX** (Advance Purchase Excursion).

Often you have to stay overnight – something most business travelers won't want to do! It's also cheaper if you stay over on a Saturday night for the same reason. In the U.S.A., it's cheaper to travel at **off peak** times. Flights on Monday mornings and Friday afternoons are the most expensive.

### Culture File 39, Unit 39

#### Paying over the phone

When you pay by credit card over the phone, they will ask for your name 'as printed' on the card. This must be exact. For example, Jack Smith could be:  
Jack Smith / J. Smith / J.D. Smith / Jack D. Smith / J. Daniel Smith  
And some people put a title in front (Mr.) and others don't.

On U.K. cards, some men put esq. (esquire) at the end instead of Mr. at the front. It means the same.

**Expiration date** is **expiry date** in British English. If you have to telephone your credit card company, they will want to check that you are the correct person. You may be asked for a password. This is often your mother's maiden name (her name before she was married) and your place of birth.

### Culture File 40, Unit 40

#### Medical services

There is no national health plan in the U.S.A. so private medical insurance is essential for visitors. If you don't have insurance, you could be refused admission to a hospital (unless your problem is very serious).

You will have to pay even in a public hospital. Even with a simple illness, you may have more tests than in your own country because American doctors can have legal problems if they have not checked every possibility.

In the U.S.A., Canada, the U.K. and Australia, many medicines (e.g. antibiotics) must be prescribed by a doctor. You cannot simply buy them at a pharmacy.

### Culture File 41, Unit 41

#### Confrontations

On public relations courses, people are taught to avoid confrontation. When a customer is complaining, you should acknowledge the complaint sympathetically: *I hear you. I understand what you're saying. I'm sorry to hear that. I'm sorry that you're unhappy with this.*

However, for legal reasons, public relations personnel will not actually agree (or disagree) with the complaint.

In all situations, asking politely is usually more successful than demanding things. In North America and in the U.K., employees are told that they do not have to talk to customers who are **abusive** (rude and aggressive).

### Culture File 42, Unit 42

#### Complaining

Sometimes you need to complain. It is best to be polite, but firm. You can ask to speak to a manager, but don't do this unless you have to. It is insulting to the person you are talking to.

#### Receiving complaints

When you are in a business situation, you may have to answer complaints. It's important to answer complaints immediately, and to have a system where people can complain if they are unhappy with a product or a service. It's worse if the customer doesn't complain to you, but goes away and tells everyone that your product or service was bad.

### Culture File 43, Unit 43

#### Concierge services

Large North American hotels have a concierge desk. The concierge desk is responsible for excursions, and postal services and generally helping guests. The concierge can

arrange tickets for theaters and sports events. They can also arrange limos, transport and anything you require. You don't tip concierges.

### Culture File 44, Unit 44

#### Invitations

Invitations are always a problem! People usually refuse the *first* invitation, in case the person inviting is only being polite. If you're inviting someone (and you really mean it)

you should expect to ask twice. Americans sometimes say that British people refuse three, four or even more times before accepting an offer or invitation!

### Culture File 45, Unit 45

#### Renting a car

In North America, many people prefer to fly and then rent a car. Remember that you should buy CDW (**Collision Damage Waiver**) and PAI (**Personal Accident Insurance**). The basic insurance doesn't cover collisions (crashes) that are your fault, or injuries to you or your passengers. By the time you've paid state taxes, the extras can double the cost of rental. Some rentals are for **unlimited mileage**. With others you pay extra per mile after a certain distance.

In North America, cars drive on the right of the road. The driver sits on the left, so cars are 'LHD' (Left Hand Drive). In countries where you drive on the left of the road, the driver sits on the right and cars are 'RHD' (Right Hand Drive). Countries where cars drive on the left include the U.K., Ireland, Australia, Japan, Thailand, Malaysia, India, Pakistan and Nigeria.

### Culture File 46, Unit 46

#### Compliments

In North America, people usually accept compliments (A. *Your English is very good.* B. *Thank you.*) In the U.K., people often reject them. (A. *Your English is very good.* B. *Oh, no. It isn't really.*) In many cultures people will say something negative about themselves after a compliment, because they're embarrassed. If you're going to say something negative, don't forget to thank the person first.

Women give more compliments than men. Men should be careful about compliments to women. You should avoid mentioning anything personal. This is probably why people often compliment men on possessions (watch, laptop computer, car) and compliment women on accessories (earrings, jewelry, handbag).

### Culture File 47, Unit 47

#### Check-out

Many hotels have an on-screen accounts system so that you can review your account on your room TV at any time. At many international hotels you don't actually need to go to the desk to check-out. They either have an on-screen display or put a bill under your door on the last morning.

If it's correct you don't need to do anything and the hotel will charge your credit card. If it isn't correct, you go to the front desk. It's a good idea to check your credit card statements carefully afterwards.

### Culture File 48, Unit 48

#### Goodbyes

You may wave, shake hands, hug or kiss on the cheek. It depends on how well you know someone. Men should let women choose the form of farewell, as with greetings (see Culture File 9). Always thank people for any help that they've given you. It's unusual to give farewell gifts in North America or the U.K.