



**TEMLATE**  
TECHNOLOGY - PLURILINGUALISM - TEACHING



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## **ACTIVITY DEVELOPED BY IN-SERVICE TEACHERS**

**Title of activity: Doing business around the world**

**COUNTRY OF IMPLEMENTATION**

**Belgium**



**TITLE OF THE ACTIVITY**

Doing business around the world

**LEVEL**

From B1 to B2

**LANGUAGES INVOLVED**

English

**TECHNOLOGY INVOLVED**

PowerPoint presentation. The anticipation and verification phases require to use "learningapps".

<https://learningapps.org/watch?v=p4ojhipz522>

<https://learningapps.org/watch?v=paxmfy10322>

<https://learningapps.org/watch?v=peixeioe222>

**CONTENT**

Reading comprehension about business protocol in various countries.

**OBJECTIVE OF THE ACTIVITY**

Developing the intercultural competence.

More specifically, and in line with the Intercultural Knowledge and Competence VALUE Rubric<sup>1</sup>:

- Developing learners' knowledge about "the complexity of elements important to members of another culture in relation to its history, values, politics, communication styles, economy, or beliefs and practices."
- Developing learners' "awareness of own cultural rules and biases"

**CONTEXT DESCRIPTION**

**Learners:** 20 pre-service teachers of English in their first year of college. Their level ranges from B1 to B2.

**Material:**

The text is about what is held acceptable or unacceptable in the business world in certain cultures. The fact that the article relies on professional situations shows the

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<sup>1</sup> Association Of American Colleges And Universities. (2017). Intercultural Knowledge And Competence Value Rubric. Retrieved 10 October 2023 From: [https://www.umass.edu/oapa/sites/default/files/pdf/tools/rubrics/intercultural\\_knowledge\\_and\\_competence\\_value\\_rubric.pdf](https://www.umass.edu/oapa/sites/default/files/pdf/tools/rubrics/intercultural_knowledge_and_competence_value_rubric.pdf)

learners the importance of paying attention to cultural differences, as being aware of what is acceptable or unacceptable can directly influence their chances to obtain or maintain a job. Similarly, cultural knowledge can help them become more inclusive and acceptant of future colleagues from different cultural backgrounds.

## **DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY**

### Phase 1: Anticipation (5-10')

The teacher introduces the concept of business etiquette/ protocol. Then, the teacher presents a list of the countries mentioned in the article (see appendix I). First, the learners match the countries with their corresponding flags. Then, they find their locations. Finally, the learners are asked to rank the countries according to how close their business etiquette is to that of the learners' own country. They do this individually, then compare their answers with their neighbor, and finally with the whole group. The rankings are purely subjective and there are no good answers.

### Phase 2: Reading for gist (10')

The learners read the article a first time and put the name of the countries above the correct paragraph (see appendix II).

### Phase 3: Reading for details (10-15')

The learners read the article a second time and answer open-ended questions about the text (see appendix III)  
They then scan through the text to list criteria that could help them investigate a workplace's business etiquette/ protocol.

### Phase 4: Verification (5-10')

The learners are asked to adapt their initial ranking after having read the text. A discussion ensues.

## **EXPECTED LEARNING OUTCOMES**

The learners will develop their cultural self-awareness as well as their knowledge of protocol in different working environments.

## Appendix I – Anticipation



### Anticipation

- a. What is business protocol/etiquette?
- b. What is it like in Belgium?



### Reading - Anticipation

- The text you're about to read describes cultural differences in business in 6 countries. The three following learning apps will prepare you to read this text:
  - a) [Countries and flags](#)
  - b) [Locations and flags](#)
  - c) [Ranking](#)

## Appendix II – Reading for gist (reference: [linguahouse.com](http://linguahouse.com))

## Reading for gist

- Read the article and put the headings above the correct paragraph.

The United States	The United Kingdom
Malaysia	India
Turkey	France



## Doing business around the world

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 1  
Business dealings tend to be quite formal and business people are usually reserved on first meeting. Make sure you are punctual for meetings as it is considered rude to keep people waiting. A firm handshake when greeting someone is customary, unlike the continental style of kissing on both cheeks. Men and women tend to dress conservatively in business suits, and they often exchange business cards at the beginning or end of a meeting.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ 2  
During negotiations, avoid speaking too directly and do not flatter your counterparts, as it will make them uncomfortable. The people have a fairly sarcastic sense of humour, but they don't mean to be offensive.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ 2  
When you meet your business contacts for the first time, a firm handshake, a friendly smile and good eye contact will make a good first impression. The culture can be quite relaxed. Here, people often call each other by their first names, even their bosses. It's wise to make polite, friendly small talk at the beginning of the meeting. Good small talk topics include hobbies and leisure, tips concerning local arts and entertainment, restaurants, nightlife and popular sports teams. People here are quite direct in the way they communicate, so feel free to express yourself in a straightforward manner. But avoid being too negative or critical. This will look unprofessional.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ 3  
During meetings and negotiations, it's important to establish the ethnic identity of your counterparts. This is a diverse country with three main ethnic groups and more than 50 smaller groups. Therefore, be careful to respect the customs of each ethnic group. When speaking to a native person, for example, use "Encik" (Mr) before a man's first name, and "Puan" (Mrs) or "Cik" (Miss) before a woman's. This protocol does not apply to business people of Chinese and Indian descent, who may be called "Mr", "Mrs", or "Miss".
5. \_\_\_\_\_ 4  
The traditional greeting is to hold your hands together at chest level and bend your head towards your fingertips, but Westerners are more likely to be greeted with a handshake. However, if you are a woman, you shouldn't initiate a handshake with a man.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ 4  
Meetings usually start with tea and small talk, as building personal relationships is an important part of doing business here. Bring plenty of business cards and be flexible about timing - itineraries often change at the last minute.
7. \_\_\_\_\_ 4  
Most business meals are lunches, although you may be invited to an associate's home for dinner. The locals enjoy entertaining and many of them believe that "serving a guest is like serving God". Leave a little food on your plate to avoid offending your host as an empty plate may suggest you are still hungry.
8. \_\_\_\_\_ 5  
The business culture here is very formal. You should wear quality business clothes and always address those you meet for the first time using Monsieur or Madame. When introducing yourself, use both your first and last name, and greet your associates with a light handshake.
9. \_\_\_\_\_ 5  
During negotiations, people consider it rude to mention money at the start of a meeting so leave this until you are near the end. Expect people to interrupt you a lot - this is a sign that the other side is interested in what you are saying.
10. \_\_\_\_\_ 6  
People's body language may be confusing for some foreigners. For example, locals usually indicate "no" by raising their eyebrows, while making the sound "tsk". Equally, if a business associate moves his head from side to side, it does not mean "no", but "I don't understand". Use the phone, not email, to follow up meetings, as people here prefer to communicate directly.

## Appendix III – Reading for details

### Reading for details:

#### According to the text :

- 1) Do American and British business people share the same etiquette? Explain.
- 2) What makes it difficult to do business in Malaysia?
- 3) Are Indian business people punctual?
- 4) Can Americans and French people fare well without any prior knowledge of each other's etiquette?
- 5) What should you know about Turkish people's body language?

Reread the text and list criteria that could help you investigate a workplace's business etiquette.

- E.g. body language, ...