



U.S. CULTURE AND CULTURE SHOCK



WHAT IS CULTURE SHOCK?



Culture shock is the feeling you have when suddenly in an unfamiliar place, culture or way of life.



HOW TO ADDRESS PEOPLE YOU DON'T KNOW WELL

- American culture does not have an established custom for speaking with people of different social positions or age.
- Americans are more informal when greeting other people. Most people speak to each other using their first names.

However!

- When speaking to someone with a title, such as Professor or Doctor, it is more appropriate to use their title when speaking to them until you know them well. For example, “Professor Smith, how are you?”
- When meeting someone for the first time, they will inform you how they like to be addressed. Some professors will want to be addressed by their title, others by their first name.



Culture shock-What to do

- While most feelings of culture shock do not last very long. However, culture shock can lead to loneliness, homesickness, or even depression. Culture Shock is real.
- If you are struggling with culture shock, it is important to remember that there are adjustment strategies and resources available if you need help finding your place. The MTSU Counseling Center has free services for students.



HOW CAN I DEAL WITH CULTURE SHOCK?

- First, remind yourself that it is perfectly normal to experience culture shock. Just about everyone who moves somewhere new feels a little out of place, and it does not matter how old they are or what country they call home. If you are having trouble adjusting, here are some tips for adapting to a new culture:
- Stay Positive
- Remember, Culture Shock Passes
- Be Social
- Know Yourself and Give Yourself a Break
- Talk to someone
- Make use of the MTSU counseling center



WORK ETHIC

- Many Americans judge success by how many hours you devote to your work, school or project.
- Although, a normal work week for a full-time job is 40 hours a week, for many industries you are expected to work more especially at the beginning of your career.
- For school, there is the same mentality to work hard to get good grades, graduate with your degree, build your resume, and get good references from your professors.





THE VALUE OF TIME

- Americans treasure their time.
- You've probably heard the phrase, "time is money,"
- When Americans talk about time, the time is not a general estimate, but an exact expectation.
- For example, in the USA it is expected that when meeting someone you show up at that exact time.
- Arriving 10 minutes late or later, without notifying the person you are meeting, is not socially acceptable and can be considered impolite.
- For class, arrive at least 10 minutes early if you can
- Some professors deduct points for being late



PERSONAL SPACE

- Each culture has a different notion of personal space.
- If you intrude into someone's personal space, you will make them feel uncomfortable, unless you are a very close friend.
- Americans tend to require more personal space than people from other cultures. If you approach Americans too closely, they will back away from you.
- Do not touch their face or put your arm around their shoulder. It is ok to shake hands when you first meet, but only for a brief time.





INFORMAL GATHERINGS

- Spontaneous invitations to informal gatherings are common.
- If invited to dinner at someone's home, as opposed to a restaurant, it is OK to bring a small gift, such as a bottle of wine or flowers for the host.
- The situation guides what you take when visiting someone.





FOOD

American Meal System

- Breakfast – usually around 7:00am
- Lunch- Noon
- Dinner- Around 6:00pm

Recently, it is expected that you order something when spending time in a restaurant or studying in a coffee shop.



National Parks



Refusing to use the metric system



Writing the date out of order



Conversations with Strangers



DRINK SIZES AND UNLIMITED REFILLS



Taking leftovers home



Serving sizes are huge



**Giving a
credit
card to the
waiter
or waitress**



DATING IN THE U.S.

- Meeting People- There are many ways to meet people, Class at the library and at university events. You may meet someone you want to get to know better
- Communication- Recently it is common start a conversation through chat or messaging applications. Some people prefer speaking face to face. It is best to ask how the person would like to communicate with you.
- Always, Always, Always, if someone does not respond, do not pressure them to answer.
- Dates
- Relationships
- Affection



DATING ETIQUETTE

- First dates are fun and low pressure.
- Physical touch depends on the people. Both parties must be comfortable with the physical nature of the relationship.
- Remember No always means no. There are no instances where no means anything else.
- Use caution with the decisions you make and the actions you take. Someone may agree today but have regrets later.
- Take it all slow and deliberate. The entire university experience does not happen in the first few semesters. Be smart, think smart and act smart!

TO DO LIST

- 
- Attend the Webinars
 - Set Up student accounts
 - Arrange housing
 - Send immunizations
 - Send a copy of visa

UPCOMING EVENTS

May

Visa Interview
May 29

June

Next Steps
June 3

Student Accounts
June 12

Pre-Arrival Checklist
June 17

AIRPORT PICKUP DATES

August
16,
2025

Airport
Pick up # 1

2:00 pm

August
24,
2025

Airport
Pick up #2

2:00 pm



Q & A



THANK
YOU!



Blue Horseshoe
A symbol of good luck and good fortune,
the Blue Horseshoe is a tradition
of Middle Tennessee State University.
The sculpture was dedicated on
the campus of Middle Tennessee State University
in 1991. It is a symbol of good luck
and good fortune, and it is a tradition
of Middle Tennessee State University.
Dedicated in 1991