

# SECTION 1: INTERCULTURAL THEORY

In intercultural encounters, it can be helpful to have some basic knowledge of culture dimensions and characteristics of different culture types and standards. This, however, does not necessarily mean a great deal of theoretical input, as in most cases the pragmatic use of language is of more immediate importance than the background to or the theory of intercultural communication i.e. the *what and how* rather than the *why*. For some learners the *why* is helpful, for others less so. The following worksheets make aspects of intercultural theory accessible to language learners without dealing with the subject too theoretically. Input is given, not in the form of lectures, but rather by using personal experiences and insights to disclose cultural standards and the differences between different cultures. It is useful to reflect upon the differences between what is taken for granted and what is new and possibly strange and to be prepared for these differences to have an effect on encounters with other cultures. The main aim of this section is to confront learners with the fact that these differences exist.

Page	Title	Aim	Communication / Language	Level
5	THE CULTURE ICEBERG	Visible / invisible aspects of culture	Asking for information, explaining, expressing an opinion, balancing reasons	1 & 2
7	HOW DO YOU SEE THE WORLD ?	Different ways of perceiving "reality". Transfer to culture-bound perception in general	Agreeing/disagreeing, expressing hesitation, reaching a consensus	1 & 2
9	GESTURES	Body language: Discretion in using and interpreting gestures and other signals of body language	Explaining, comparing	1 & 2
11	GREETINGS	Greeting conventions and their implications	Describing, giving reasons	1
13	CONVERSATION STYLES	Turn-taking in different cultures	Criticising, expressing feelings	1 & 2
15	WHAT TO DO IN INTERCULTURAL ENCOUNTERS	Awareness of and familiarity with basic rules of intercultural communication	Agreeing, disagreeing, expressing opinions, giving reasons	2

---

# SECTION 1: INTERCULTURAL THEORY

## REFERENCES:

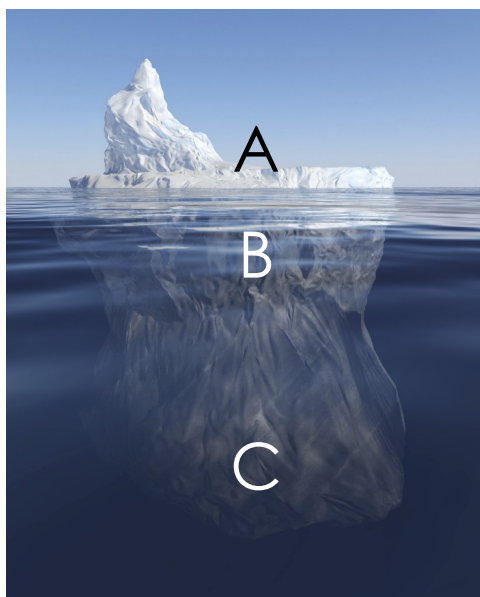
### CULTURE DIMENSIONS, CULTURE TYPES, CULTURE STANDARDS

- Edward T. Hall: The Hidden Dimension (1966).
- Edward T. Hall: Understanding Cultural Differences: Germans, French and Americans (1996).
- Geert Hofstede: Culture's Consequences (1980).
- Geert Hofstede /Gert Jan Hofstede: Cultures and Organisations. Software of the Mind (2005).
- Alexander Thomas (Hg.): Kulturstandards in der internationalen Begegnung (1991).
- Alexander Thomas (Hg.): Psychologie interkulturellen Handelns (1996).
- Alexander Thomas, Eva-Ulrike Kinast, Sylvia Schroll-Machl (Hg.): Handbuch interkulturelle Kommunikation und Kooperation (2003).
- Fons Trompenaars, Charles Hampden-Turner: Riding the Waves of Culture. Understanding Cultural Diversity in Business (1997).
- Fons Trompenaars, Charles Hampden-Turner: Managing People across Cultures (2004).
- Milton J. Bennett: Basic Concepts of Intercultural Communication: Selected Readings (2002).
- Michael Byram: Languages and Identities. Preliminary Study. Languages of Education (2006).
- Cheryl Nakata (ed): Beyond Hofstede. Culture Frameworks for Global Marketing and Management (2009).
- Helen Spencer-Oatey, Peter Franklin: Intercultural Interaction. A Multidisciplinary Approach to Intercultural Communication (2009).

### INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE AND LANGUAGE

- Michael Byram: Teaching and Assessing Intercultural Communicative Competence (1997).
- Michael Byram, Adam Nichols, David Stevens (eds): Developing Intercultural Competence in Practice (2001).
- Ernst Apeltauer: „Zur Bedeutung der Körpersprache für die interkulturelle Kommunikation“. In: Annelie Knapp-Potthoff, Martina Liedke (eds): Aspekte interkultureller Kommunikationsfähigkeit (1997), pp. 17-40.
- Jürgen Beneke: "Intercultural Competence". In Ulrich Bliesener (ed.): Training the Trainers. Theory and Practice of Foreign Language Teacher Education (2000), pp. 107-125.
- Bernd-Dietrich Müller-Jacquier: "Linguistic Awareness of Cultures. Grundlagen eines Trainingsmoduls." In Jürgen Bolten (Hg.), Studien zur internationalen Unternehmens-Kommunikation (2000), pp. 20-49.
- Hans Jürgen Heringer: Interkulturelle Kommunikation. Grundlagen und Konzepte (2004).
- Rudolf Camerer: „Sprache – Quelle aller Missverständnisse. Zum Verhältnis von interkultureller Kompetenz und Sprachkompetenz. In: Zeitschrift für Interkulturellen Fremdsprachenunterricht (2007) 12: 3, Online <http://zif.spz.tu-darmstadt.de/jg-12-3/beitrag/Camerer.htm>
- Rudolf Camerer: „Sprache, Kultur und Kompetenz: Überlegungen zur interkulturellen Kompetenz und ihrer Testbarkeit“ in: Anke Bahl (Hg.): Kompetenzen für die globale Wirtschaft. Begriffe - Erwartungen - Entwicklungsansätze (2009), pp. 41-64.

# THE CULTURE ICEBERG



What do you think is the most interesting thing about an iceberg?

For most people, it is that the largest part of the iceberg is invisible, i.e. that most of the iceberg is under the surface. What you can see is a very small and unimportant part of the whole. The part that really matters cannot immediately be recognised, but it is this enormous hidden part which makes all the difference – as the Captain of the Titanic found out to his cost.

The deeper you go in the water, the more essential — and potentially dangerous — the iceberg becomes.

1. How can culture be compared to an iceberg?
2. What do you think are the most important elements of a culture (your own or another)?
3. Where would you place the following aspects of culture on the iceberg — A, B or C?

EDUCATION		HUMOUR	
TABLE MANNERS		ORGANISATION OF COMPANIES	
DEMOCRACY		PERSONAL FRIENDSHIP	
DIRECTNESS OF SPEECH IN BUSINESS		PHYSICAL GESTURES	
ARCHITECTURE		AUTHORITY & RESPECT	
EMOTION SHOWN IN PUBLIC		ATTITUDE TO TIME / PUNCTUALITY	
FAMILY LIFE		SOCIAL LIFE: PUBLIC AND PRIVATE	
ROLES OF MALES AND FEMALES		TREATMENT OF OUTSIDERS/FOREIGNERS	
GREETINGS		VALUES AND BELIEFS	
RELIGION		NATIONAL ANTHEM	

## 4. Take notes.

## 5. Discuss your notes with your partner.

### You may find these phrases useful:

#### EXPRESSING AN OPINION:

- I feel ...
- I think ...
- I believe ...

#### DISAGREEING:

- I see your point, but ...
- Maybe you're right, but ...

#### REPAIRING / COMPENSATING:

- What I'm trying to say is ...
- How do you say ... ?

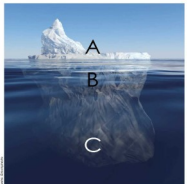
#### AGREEING:

- You are absolutely right.
- I absolutely agree.
- That's correct.

#### SUGGESTING SOMETHING:

- Perhaps we should also consider ...

**THE CULTURE ICEBERG**



What do you think is the most interesting thing about an iceberg?

For most people, it is that the largest part of the iceberg is invisible, i.e. that most of the iceberg is under the surface. What you can see is a very small and unimportant part of the whole. The part that really matters cannot immediately be recognised but it is this enormous hidden part which makes all the difference – as the Captain of the Titanic found out to his cost.

The deeper you go in the water the more essential – and potentially dangerous – the iceberg becomes.

- How can culture be compared to an iceberg?
- What do you think are the most important elements of a culture (your own or another)?
- Where would you place the following aspects of culture on the iceberg – A, B or C?

EDUCATION	HUMOUR
TABLE MANNERS	ORGANISATION OF COMPANIES
DEMOCRACY	PERSONAL FRIENDSHIP
DIRECTNESS OF SPEECH IN BUSINESS	PHYSICAL GESTURES
ARCHITECTURE	AUTHORITY & RESPECT
EMOTION SHOWN IN PUBLIC	ATTITUDE TO TIME / PUNCTUALITY
FAMILY LIFE	SOCIAL LIFE: PUBLIC AND PRIVATE
ROLES OF MALES AND FEMALES	TREATMENT OF OUTSIDERS/FOREIGNERS
GREETINGS	VALUES AND BELIEFS
RELIGION	NATIONAL ANTHEM

b. Take notes of your answers.  
c. Discuss your notes with your partner.

You may find these phrases useful: EX

<p>PRESSING AN OPINION:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I feel ...</li> <li>I think ...</li> <li>I believe ...</li> </ul> <p>DISAGREEING:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I see your point, but ...</li> <li>Maybe you're right, but ...</li> </ul>	<p>REPAIRING / COMPENSATING:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What I'm trying to say is ...</li> <li>How does one say ...?</li> </ul> <p>AGREEING:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You are absolutely right.</li> <li>I absolutely agree.</li> <li>That's correct.</li> </ul> <p>SUGGESTING SOMETHING:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Perhaps we should also consider ...</li> </ul>
---	---

ICE © European Language Competence Frankfurt am Main 2020 INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE IN ENGLISH 2

## AIM

To raise awareness of visible and hidden features of cultures and the crucial importance of hidden cultural features, as awareness or ignorance of these can make or break intercultural relationships.

## LEAD-IN

Begin making a rough sketch of an iceberg on the board and ask learners to say what it is. Then ask what they know about icebergs. Elicit the main features (i.e. most of it is below the surface and the most dangerous) Ask what icebergs may have to do with culture. Then brainstorm what they consider to be the most important aspects of a culture (their own or a foreign culture) and write these on the board. Make sure all learners understand what these terms mean.

## WORKSHEET

Give learners time to read the text. Then ask them to think individually about where they would place the different aspects on the iceberg and then discuss their ideas in pairs or groups. Point out that they should conduct the discussion using as many of the phrases on the sheet as possible. Give them enough time to discuss as many different aspects as they

want. Then collect the results of the group discussion. This can be done by drawing an iceberg on the board and asking someone from each group to write one aspect on it or by using cards and a pin board.

## FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

- Ask learners to think of a culture they are familiar with and assign the features to particular, more tangible things. If the group consists of learners from different cultures, this can be particularly interesting. Learners can also be asked to do this outside the class.
- Ask different groups to choose one aspect (e.g. family life, national anthem) and ask them to relate them to levels A, B and C. They can then present their ideas to the whole group and discuss them.

## BACKGROUND

This model of culture is becoming increasingly familiar to trainers, but it is still not well-known by many learners. Trainers should not make the mistake of assuming that learners will know about this and be bored by the activity as this is rarely the case if they have not done any work on intercultural theory. Certain features of culture have visible as well as invisible parts and could be placed at A, B or C on the iceberg. These include religion (churches are visible, practices less so and beliefs not at all) and roles of males and females (some rules and laws are easily accessible and behaviour may be visible, but its deeper meaning is largely concealed to outsiders). The difference between B (what cannot easily be seen) and C (what cannot be seen at all or only by someone who is very familiar with the culture) is not always entirely clear. In general, B refers to attitudes and behaviour which

### SUGGESTED ANSWERS:

EDUCATION	A, B	HUMOUR	A, B
TABLE MANNERS	A	ORGANISATION OF COMPANIES	A, B
DEMOCRACY	A, B	PERSONAL FRIENDSHIP	A, B
DIRECTNESS OF SPEECH IN BUSINESS	A, B	PHYSICAL GESTURES	A
ARCHITECTURE	A	AUTHORITY & RESPECT	A, B, C
EMOTION SHOWN IN PUBLIC	A, B	ATTITUDE TO TIME / PUNCTUALITY	A, B, C
FAMILY LIFE	A, B, C	SOCIAL LIFE: PUBLIC AND PRIVATE	A
ROLES OF MALES AND FEMALES	A, B, C	TREATMENT OF OUTSIDERS/FOREIGNERS	A, B
GREETINGS	A	VALUES AND BELIEFS	C
RELIGION	A, B, C	NATIONAL ANTHEM	A

are only recognisable on closer inspection, for instance different attitudes to time. C refers to the deeper meaning of these attitudes which is generally hidden; for instance, feelings about the past and present or feelings about authority and hierarchy.