



# Applied Intercultural Communication Handouts

The course was developed by J-ArtEck Youth Education Center  
In collaboration with  
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## Module 1. Introduction

### Handout 1: Cultural Identity (45 min.)

#### Building a cultural profile\*

Use the following questions to look at various elements of culture. Pick three sets of questions and talk about them in your group. Focus on similarities/difference across cultures. Summarise the outcomes in the table and present the outcomes in a whole group.

#### 1. Family

- Describe what the term “family” means to you.
- When you talk about your family, whom does that include?
- How far is the family involved in making important decisions, like marriage, divorce, profession, job, moving to another place, etc.
- In routine dealings, do you put relationships or tasks first? Give examples.

#### 2. Community

- Describe what the term “community” means to you.
- What are mutual obligations of the individual members and the community as a whole?
- Were you brought up in a community of people from your ethnic background?
- Do you now live in a community of people from your ethnic background?
- What happens if an individual violates rules & regulations established by the community?

#### 3. Work

- Why did you choose the work you are doing now or are planning to do?
- Is this work similar to the work of your parents or grandparents?
- What do you consider to be rewarding work?
- What do you value at work? (e.g., independence, money, friendship, etc.)
- How do you view authority? For example, if a boss asks a subordinate to help with a task outside of work and outside of his or her job description, what would you advise?
- How are you expected to dress for work?

#### 4. Customs

- What language do you use with your family, at work, and in your social environment?
- What occasions and festivals do you celebrate? How many people are invited to a wedding, a New Year or Christmas dinner? Do you celebrate public holidays at home?
- What foods do you like to eat? Have you always eaten these foods?
- Does your culture of origin have special forms of address or titles for people who are older, have higher status, or special professions?

#### 5. Sense of space

- How do you like to be greeted?
- How close or distant do you like people to stand when next to you?
- What voice pitches and volume and what speed of spoken communication are you comfortable with?
- What gestures and body language do you find challenging or confusing? For example, do you make eye contact with some people but not others?
- What does eye contact mean to you?

- How do you define privacy? Which questions do you consider to be an invasion of privacy?

## 6. Time

- What does time mean for you? Which words do you associate with time?
- What are some proverbs about time in your language? i.e. “A stitch in time saves nine.”  
“The early bird catches the worm.”
- What is “late” for you? What is “soon” for you? “*He (the boss) will be back soon.*”
- What do you typically do if you are late?
- How do you react if someone else is late?
- Do you feel that time is plentiful or scarce?
- In your language, do you have words or structures to express uncertainty about time?  
E.g. Russian ‘sozvonimsia’ which means “we’ll probably call each other some time in future”, or Mexican ‘*ahorita regreso*’ – literally ‘*I’ll be right back*’, in reality: ‘*I’ll be back at some point, but who knows exactly when*’.

\* **Critical Incidents for Intercultural Communication:** An Interactive Tool for Developing Awareness, Knowledge, and Skills. Facilitator and Activity Guide. Developed by Sarah Apedaile and Lenina Schill  
© NorQuest College Intercultural Education Programs, 2018, pp. 28-31

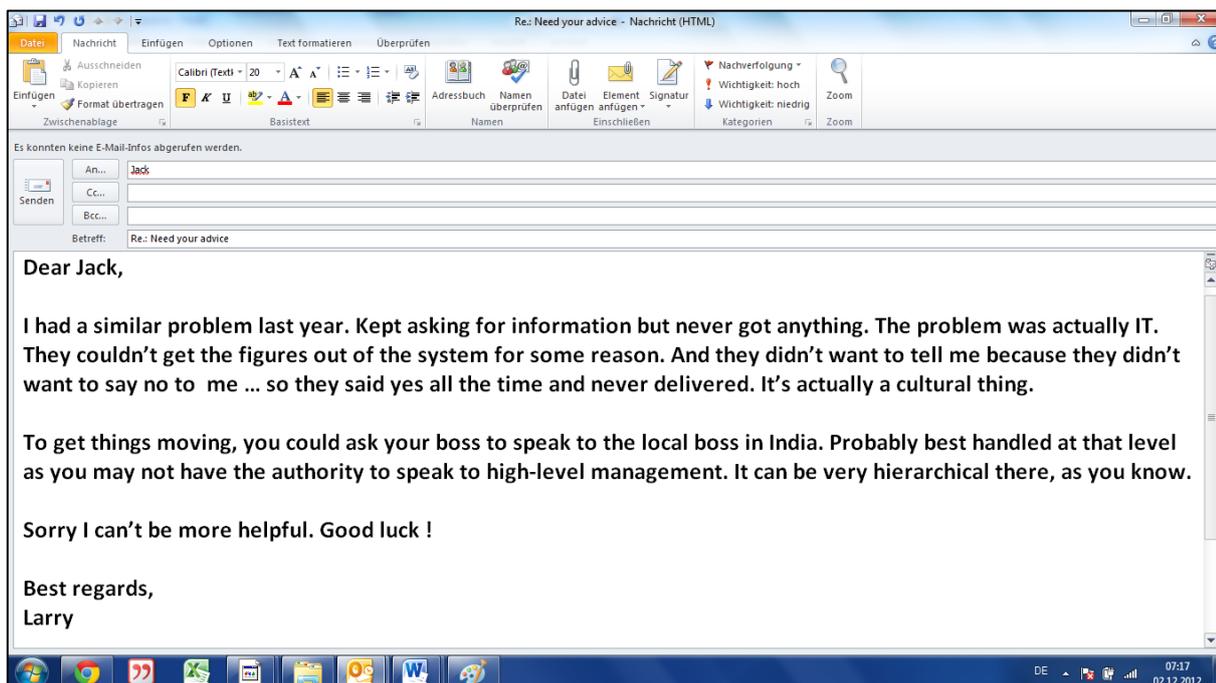
## Module 2. Basic Knowledge. Perception and Interpretation

### Handout 2: Jack’s email (45 min.)

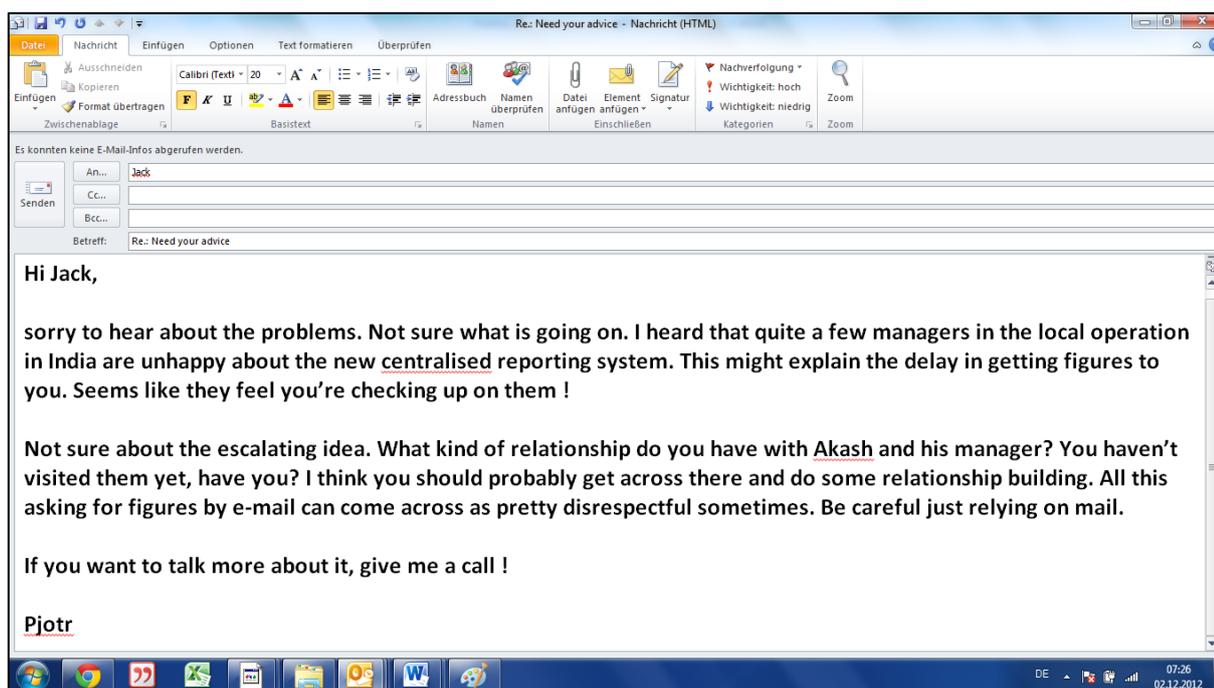
#### Work in pairs

1. Read the e-mails which Jack receives from his colleagues with advice on dealing with the problem.
2. Tell each other what the e-mails recommended.
3. Decide what would be the best thing for Jack to do.
4. Compare your recommendations with the rest of the class.

#### Response from Larry



## Response from Pjotr



### Module 3. Cultural Dimensions

#### Handout 3.1: Quote Cards (Excerpts from students' reports)

**Individualism and Collectivism (1):** Talk about the situations below and compare them to how it happens in your culture. During the time you've been staying in other countries – did you experience different norms of behaviour in similar situations? Think about more situations where group/individual-centred behaviours are demonstrated. Collect them in a mindmap. (45 min.)

#### India

- Watching TV with brothers/sisters/neighbors; living inside the family until the marriage age.
- In India, even though a person is 22 years old, they do not have the right to take a decision for themselves in many cases. Our schools and colleges, and the courses that we have to major in, and even marriages all are pre-decided by the family and, most of the time, we do not have a say in any of them!
- Self-identification: before I came to Germany, I was just known as my father's son and known because of and by family name. I used to carry around this tag everywhere. When one goes to another state (inside India) to study or to visit, their city and the place that they come from become their identity. I was known as the guy who is from Bangalore.

#### North Africa (islands)

- Lively life inside the family house - louder, more vivid, many kids, a lot of action and talking all day long;
- Celebrating birthdays: the whole village gets invitations, there is enough food for everybody.

#### Bulgaria

- Invite the visitor to dinner immediately, do their best to make a person feel comfortable – the whole family;
- Family – relatives visit at least once a month and stay overnight with the family, help to build a house, support with money.

## Italy

- Evening meal can last for 2 and more hours – the family is all there, telling stories of the day;
- Tradition to ask mother and father of the bride to marry their daughter. If they say No you must prove them that you are worth their daughter ☺

## Brazil

- Maria has 2 aunts: one lives across the road – visiting every day, another is in Texas – calls twice a week and talks for an hour or more;
- Inside the group (family, colleagues, friends) – full support, even if this might result in inconveniences or other not very comfortable things for people outside their group; smb from the family is ill or in trouble, the boss gives you time to go and attend to this;
- It is important what other people think of you, so we go round unpleasant questions or answer in a humorous way. We prefer to say things in which we represent ourselves well;
- In Brazil the value is in being Brazilian, in US the value is in being different.

## Russia

- If there is a common goal, people from outside of the group are integrated quickly and everybody supports each other;
- Everybody on board (a diving trip) seemed to be part of one big, tight-knit group, and everybody was helping each other;
- When a friend or a visitor comes the first question is “Would you like something to eat?” Even if you say No, I am not hungry the hosts will insist and give you food and tea and sit with you and talk. Our vast spaces and long distances make us hospitable and ready to share. I help people and people help me. Mutual help and support.
- In the evening we sit with Father in the kitchen – have meals, discuss how was the day, make plans for tomorrow.

## Handout 3.2: Quote Cards (Excerpts from students’ reports)

**Individualism and Collectivism (2):** Talk about the situations below and compare them to how it happens in your culture. During the time you’ve been staying in other countries – did you experience different norms of behaviour in similar situations? Think about more situations where group/individual-centred behaviours are demonstrated. Collect them in a mindmap, **(45 min.)**

### China:

- Group behavior – one has to wait until the group decides what and when to do (both leisure and work);
- Like to be surrounded by many people;
- No tourist in China would ever fall into fight with a Chinese – they all keep together and help each other in difficult situation;
- Lun must go back to China (from Germany) to take care of his parents.

### Guatemala

- Sergio lived together with his parents, 3 sisters, grandparents, father’s uncle and aunt and the aunt’s husband. A joke runs: “A father has 11 children – So, he is happy when one of his children gets married. But the happiness lasts only until the partner comes to live in the father’s house too”.

**Dagestan:**

- The parents are looking for a match from the same nationality to find people who are most suitable for their family.

**Armenia:**

- Armenian people are very sociable, like to be among other people and spend time with each other. Also, due to this characteristic there is one value which is of predominant importance to the Armenian people: the family. “We don’t have retirement homes in Armenia, the young take care of the old” is what Artur said. Therefore, the entire family – including up to four generations – live in one house. The young support the old by assisting them with physical duties but the concept of mutual support applies also vice versa. For the young can benefit from the older family members’ wisdom and life experience.
- When I (a German student) was around I just had to stay for lunch or dinner.
- Armenians do not shake hands but hug each other for salutation – this contributes to the feeling of togetherness and leads to a pleasant atmosphere whenever you are among the Armenian people.

**New Zealand:**

- People freely offer you a meal, a lift, a stay in their house, the keys to the house to stay there while they are on holiday, people do not lock their houses;
- Buy and sell houses quite frequently, move to a new place, change a career.

**Romania**

- Germans are distanced and impersonal: Anna went out with her German boy-friend, nobody talked to her as if they didn’t notice her. Now she sees the reasons: Germans are involved in many activities, clubs, associations, do volunteer work, whereas in Romania there are not many of these, so we spend time for each other, family and friends.

**Handout 4. Quote Cards.** Excerpts from students’ reports. **45 min.**

**Time Orientation:** Share your opinions about the situations. What about your own culture?

The situations below are mainly around schedules and punctuality. What other aspects of attitudes to time can you mention? Collect them in a mindmap.

**Guatemala:** The bus leaves an hour later because there are not enough people, but in De the bus leaves on time even though the bus driver sees smb running to catch it.

**Dagestan:** It is not allowed to warn a friend about your visit – he will be very angry.

**Australia:** The meeting may start 20 min behind the schedule.

**France:** Nadine was half an hour late for the skype interview.

**China:** Come late without informing others.

**Canada:** Spontaneous on planning trips, holidays: deciding on Thursday to go on a camping tour over the weekend is a normal thing.

**Brazil:**

- During the interview Fernanda writes a lot of text messages, looks up the words for me in the mobile dictionary, I tell her I’ll look it up later, but she still does it. **The solution** – plan more time, get back to the topic when the direction is changed;
- She not only answered my questions but also manicured her nails, watched the hotpot, telephoned constantly or was typing on her mobile.

**Thailand:**

- The train started half an hour later because the driver was talking with smb over the mobile and didn't watch the time, then they waited for another hour to leave the station.
- Project meeting with the students – the Thai didn't show up on time, others found them playing cards with some friends.
- In Germany every day is planned very precisely from morning till night, in Thailand you just start your day and you live in it.
- Time is defined by the sun.

**Spain:**

Laura was really unpunctual every time we wanted to meet. She would say: “For what?” (*...shall I stress myself with a hassle*).

In business cases she is trying to be absolutely on time. For private appointments she is trying to be punctual, but mostly it doesn't help. “I guess there is no pressure” she says. Once, I reminded her of the day when she showed up an hour and a half later and her excuse was a Skype session. We laughed a lot. I also asked her if their friends here in Stuttgart are that unpunctual as well or if they complain about her being late all the time. She laughed at this, saying that the German friends complain every week about it but the Spanish don't.

**Armenia:**

When having an appointment with an Armenian it often occurs that Armenians show up late. That's because Armenians are impulsive and change their plans very quickly and a one hour appointment can be extended to a half a day meeting which of course affects the schedule of the entire day. Artur explained that if an Armenian is spending a lot more time with you than was actually planned it is a good sign, as it shows that he likes you. When this happens at a business meeting it is a positive indication for the deal. Artur explains he has a different approach to making appointments with German and Armenian customers at his shoe repair shop. For the German customers it is very important to be served on the agreed time while his Armenian customers often show up late and it is usual and important to drink a tea first and have some small talk when they show up in the store.

**Handout 5. Deal- vs Relationship Orientation (45 min.)****Host**

You are about to meet two colleagues for the first time five minutes before an international project meeting. You don't have much time to build the relationship before getting down to the business of the meeting.

Talk to Kari first and then meet Miguel. Try to adapt your communication style to the different personalities.

You have heard that Kari is quite serious about his work so be careful in your questions.

You have heard that Miguel is very easy to get on with and likes to socialise with colleagues.

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**Visitor: Kari**

As a person, you are task-focused and do not usually invest a lot of time in small talk. People often say you are quiet and reserved. You often give short answers when questions are asked and ask few questions back. You do not smile often because you think business is a serious activity. You are punctual and you like to start meetings on time. Read your profile below.

Personal Profile	Professional Profile
<b>Home:</b> Stockholm, Sweden	<b>Responsibilities:</b> Head of Marketing in Scandinavia
<b>Family:</b> Married, no children	<b>Current Task:</b> Developing a new strategy for Finland
<b>Out of work interests:</b> Football and fishing	<b>Work abroad:</b> In Helsinki, three days per week
<b>Relationship at work:</b> You have good contact with the CEO of the company, Eric Hallberg	<b>Business Development at work:</b> Looking to expand into Estonia next year

### Visitor: Miguel

As a person, you are relationship-focused and you like to make small talk. You enjoy speaking about personal subjects like home and family, and are very ready to show photographs of your children to strangers. You also like to ask personal questions to get to know people. Read your profile below.

Personal Profile	Professional Profile
<b>Home:</b> Moved to Porto, Portugal, two months ago	<b>Responsibilities:</b> Head of Marketing
<b>Family:</b> two young sons (one at school now)	<b>Current Task:</b> Marketing strategy for Portugal and Spain
<b>Out of work interests:</b> you play in a rock band	<b>Work abroad:</b> 3 months in Madrid
<b>Relationship at work:</b> Valdemar Baretto (Head of Finance) has left the company	<b>Business Development at work:</b> Working closely with Italy to develop joint strategy

## Module 4. Communication Styles. Direct vs indirect communicators.

### Handout 6: Cross-cultural Dialogues (45 min.)\*

- (1) Get together into small groups, read the dialogues and reflect on cultural assumptions of each side concerning the situation. Share the insights inside your group.
- (2) What direct and indirect communicators might think of each other as personalities (use adjectives to describe them)? Fill in the table, p.18 in Worksheets.

### The Flu

SARAH: I was hoping we could have that meeting of the sales team tomorrow morning.

FELICE: Actually, my daughter has some kind of flu and I was going to take her to the doctor tomorrow morning.

SARAH: I see. Well, let me check with Bob and see if he can sit in for you. Shouldn't be any45 problem. I'll let you know.

FELICE: Thank you.

SARAH: Don't mention it.

### A Nuisance

BILL: How did it go with Nigel?

MARY: Much better than I expected. These English  
are hard to figure.  
BILL: What happened? Did you explain everything  
to him?  
MARY: Yes, completely. I said we were very sorry but  
we simply weren't going to be able to meet the deadline.  
BILL: And?  
MARY: He said, "That's a bit of a nuisance,"  
and changed the subject.  
BILL: That's great!

### **A Good Price**

MS. YOUNG: We will charge you \$5 per unit if you  
order 10,000 units.  
MR. KAWABATA: That's a good price, Ms. Young.  
MS. YOUNG: So you accept that price?  
MR. KAWABATA: It's very good.  
MS. YOUNG: Great! Let's talk about the delivery  
schedule then.

### **Thumbs Down**

JENNY: How did the meeting go last night?  
TOMOKO: It was a very useful discussion.  
JENNY: How so?  
TOMOKO: We all talked. And Mr. Takeda explained his  
reservations about the proposal.  
JENNY: Did anyone else agree with him?  
TOMOKO: No. He was the only one who has some doubts.  
JENNY: Then we won the vote.  
TOMOKO: Oh, there was no vote of course. We postponed it.

### **Making a Recommendation**

MS. REYNOLDS: Have you had a chance to look at our  
suggestions for repairing a dam?  
MR. ZHANG: Yes. We've read them all with great  
interest.  
MS. REYNOLDS: So which one have you chosen?  
MR. ZHANG: My colleagues and I like #5 the best.  
The others are very good too, but only  
#5 will do what we want.  
MS. REYNOLDS: So when can we start hiring  
contractors?  
MR. ZHANG: We must first get the approval of our  
superior, Mr. Hu.  
MS. REYNOLDS: I see. So you will recommend #5 to him?  
MR. ZHANG: We will explain the situation to him  
and ask if he has any advice.

MS. REYNOLDS: Does he have any background in this area?

MR. ZHANG: Oh no. My colleagues and I are the technical experts.

MS. REYNOLDS: Then Mr. Hu will accept your recommendation.

MR. ZHANG: Oh, we won't be making a recommendation.

### **Dinner on Wednesday**

MR. SOGO: Mr. Collins! Good to hear your voice again! What brings you to Osaka?

MR. COLLINS: Good to hear you too, Sogo-san. I am here on business with my new company. I'd like to invite you and Ozawa-san to dinner on Wednesday.

MR. SOGO: Thank you very much. I'll tell Ozawa-san. Did you hear his good news?

MR. COLLINS: No.

MR. SOGO: He's been made president of the company.

MR. COLLINS: That's wonderful. Please give him my congratulations. I look forward to seeing you both on Wednesday.

MR. SOGO: I'm sure Ozawa-san will be very pleased to see you again. Where shall I tell him to meet you?

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\* **Storti, Craig (2017):** *Cross-Cultural Dialogues. 74 brief encounters with cultural differences.* Intercultural Press.

### **Module 4. Communication Styles. Non-verbal Language.**

#### **Handout 7: Increasing our awareness of non-verbal communication (45 min.)**

Discuss the following in small groups. Can you associate any of the nonverbal cues you describe with a particular culture?

In conversation:

1 Which messages are conveyed by eye contact/lack of eye contact?

2 Which messages does smiling transmit?

3 Think of some messages transmitted by different postures.

4 How can you see that the person you are talking to is disturbed by your proximity?

5 How do people end conversations nonverbally?

6 Describe some gestures that replace oral communication.

7 Think about your personal reactions to being touched (in conversation).

8 Can you think of any other nonverbal messages conveyed in conversation?

Finally, what conclusions can you reach with regard to nonverbal communicative awareness in cross-cultural meetings? How should we behave? Which strategies can we use in order to cope with the unknown or the misunderstood?

Summarise your conclusions and present them in a whole group.

## **Module 5. Business Applications**

### **Handout 8: Working in multicultural teams**

**Name of activity:** You are not on your own!

**Type of activity:** a three-step reflective task where participants think about multicultural groups they have belonged to and then reflect upon what makes a group successful or not successful.

**Topic:** multicultural group dynamics

**Goal:** to raise awareness of necessary stages in successful and effective multicultural group development and to explore concrete ways of achieving development

**Time:** 45 min.

**Procedure:** Step 1: Work individually and write down some multicultural groups that you have belonged to. Choose one group you really like and write down two aspects which make that group effective. Then think about the group you do not like and write down two aspects which make it a less effective group.

Step 2: Working in groups (3 or 4) look at your notes for Step 1, make a list of what you consider makes an effective, or successful group and list and explain 3-5 aspects.

Step 3: Discussion. Working in a whole group, the following questions are discussed: how team responsibility might be encouraged from the start; how we might help team members to find workable ways to address their differences; how might we keep the creative edge alive and ensure that unhealthy complacency does not take hold.

**Follow up:** Share lessons learned with colleagues.

Select and elaborate appropriate measures for relevant and/or specific multicultural contexts.

Collect them on the flip chart and present to the whole group.

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\*Teaching Culture, [www.teaching-culture.de](http://www.teaching-culture.de) (last access 20.04.2022)

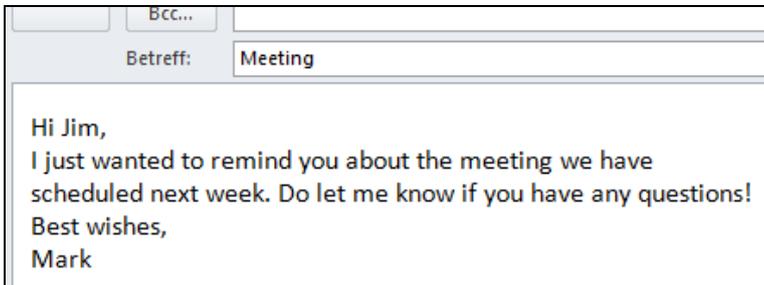
## **Module 5. Business Applications**

### **Handout 9**

## Writing e-mails\*

Please comment on the following e-mails: Did the e-mail writer perform a good job?

### E-mail: #1



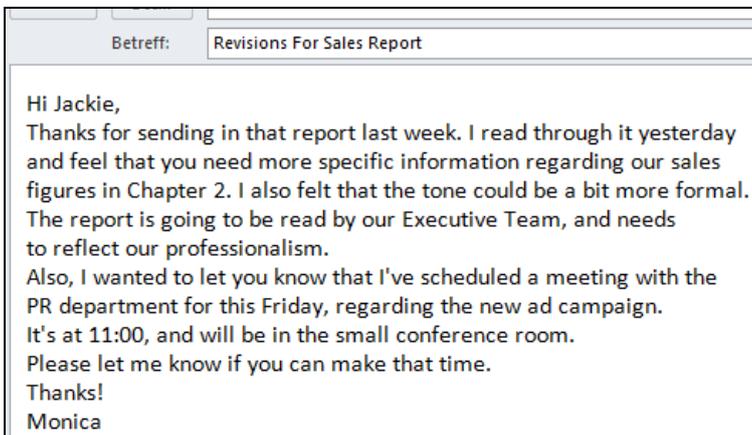
Comments:

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### E-mail: #2



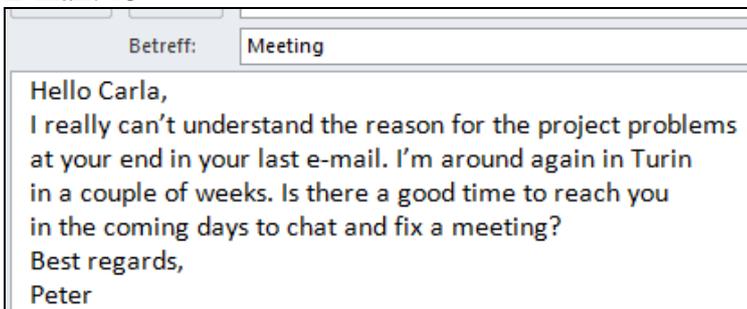
Comments:

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### E-mail: #3



Comments:

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## Writing E-mails across cultures

### Example in a relationship-oriented culture

Betreff: Kick-off

Hi Peter,  
 how are you doing? Still travelling a lot? Bet it's getting tiring with all those meetings. Anyway, take care. Looking forward to seeing you at the meeting tomorrow.

Just a quick question: do you want me to kick off the presentation of the last quarter results, or do you want to take the lead? If you want people to understand the big picture, maybe I should do it. Not sure.

Cheers,  
 Jackie

### Example in a task-oriented culture

Betreff: Kick-off

Dear Peter,

Do you want me to kick off the presentation of the last quarter results? If you want people to understand the big picture, I think I should do it.

Best regards,  
 Jackie

### What are some typical elements?

	Relationship-oriented Cultures	Task-oriented Cultures
Style		
Frequency		

\*Based on: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JjgWiJnGS5g&t=12s> (last access Apr 30, 2022)