

Sunburst

3

Secondary
Reader's Book



Pearson





Sunburst

READER

3

Secondary



Dear young readers,

Open this book at your own risk, for inside you will find new worlds and adventures.

Keep your eyes wide open. You will be taken through fictional stories and non-fiction texts. In the fictional stories you will find narrations in the form of imaginative or invented short stories. In the non-fiction texts you will find also narrations now offering information about facts and reality. As you make your way along the stories, study their content and characteristics closely.

The activities at the end of each text will help you do this. And then, the glossary on some pages will give you the meaning of difficult words. It also includes the part of speech of the word or expression:











<i>n.</i> noun	<i>adj.</i> adjective
<i>v.</i> verb	<i>adv.</i> adverb

Phrase means that it is a group of words that function as a single unit.

Phrasal verb means it is a phrase that combines a verb with a preposition or an adverb or both.

Turn the page and expect the unexpected...

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Are our Habits Completely "Normal"?

A comparison between customs from different countries



Written by
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Our routine is very simple. We wake up, have some food, go to work or school, go back home, do some other things, and go to sleep. In the meantime, we perform a lot of actions that seem normal to us: greet people, doze on the bus or take a nap, blow our nose, use cutlery, and so on.



However, the way we carry out all those procedures might not seem normal to other people, especially if they come from other countries. Everybody learns habits depending on the society they live in. Basically, our culture teaches us how to behave.

In this globalized world, it is important to know what is **appropriate**¹ in other cultures and what is not. If we visit another country, we do not want to be the disrespectful tourist who does weird things.



¹ **appropriate:** *adj.* right for a particular situation

Imagine your nose starts itching and you can't breathe well. Probably, your first reaction is to blow your nose. If you are in public, probably nobody will care. If you are having a meal, you just turn to one side and blow it.

In some countries, it is not as simple as that. In Japan, China, and Saudi Arabia, they find it **repulsive**² to blow your nose in public, particularly at the table. The idea of using a handkerchief, which goes into your pocket after you use it, is not very attractive either.



So, if you are dining in Japan and you want to blow your nose, you better go to the privacy of the nearest bathroom. If it is really urgent, try to turn away from the table as far as you can and avoid being very noisy.



² **repulsive:** *adj.* extremely disgusting

In Western countries, taking off your shoes at a friend's house would be considered **impolite**³, but in Asia and Hawaii it is a different story. Their habit is to remove their shoes before entering their house.

In their opinion, leaving their shoes at the door represents leaving the outer world behind. Besides that, you do not want to ruin your Vietnamese host's lovely white floor. Do not worry about someone stealing your shoes. When you go outside, they will be there, right where you left them.



Also, a recent survey by an important Japanese newspaper showed that an increasing number of Asian families have a pair of slippers on hand for their guests. As some activities like chatting, having a meal, or sleeping are done on the ground, it is very important to keep the floor clean.



³ **impolite:** *adj.* rude

Our hands are one of our most valuable tools. We can achieve many things with them, even offend someone if we are not careful. Each culture has a particular way to signal needs or thoughts with the hands, and those movements become an unconscious habit.

Pointing at someone with the index finger is considered rude in some countries, so they use other mechanisms. In Nicaragua, for example, you have to point with your lips. How? Make a duck face and move your head toward the person or direction you want to point. Next time someone asks you where the bathroom is, try it like a real Nicaraguan.



In countries like Malaysia and Indonesia, it is the custom to point with the thumb, since it is more polite than using the index finger. In many African countries, it is acceptable to point at objects, but not at people.





In the US, when you want someone to come nearer, you curl your index finger toward yourself. However, you should get rid of this habit if you are in the Philippines or in Japan. In many Asian countries, that hand movement is used only for dogs. If you **beckon**⁴ a person in this way, it would be extremely rude. In the Philippines you can even get arrested and have your finger broken.

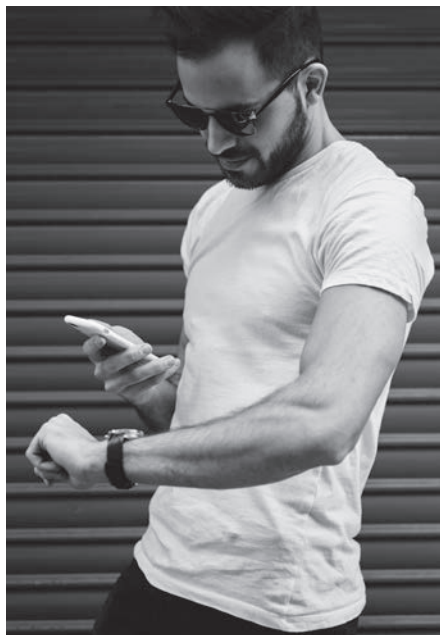


It is a common habit for politicians, artists, or people appearing in photos to make the “peace sign” or the “V for victory.” If you are in the UK, Australia, or South Africa, make sure the back of your hand is facing you; otherwise, you would be making a very insulting gesture.



Experts in good manners recommend *keeping your fingers to yourself* when you are with people from other countries. You could be offending somebody without realizing it.

⁴ **beckon:** v. to make a signal to someone with your hand or head in order to tell that person to come closer



One more gesture that can cause problems is moving your arm to look at you wrist. If you turn to your wristwatch constantly when you are talking to someone, they might think that you are not interested in having a conversation with them. It can also be interpreted as a sign of impatience or irritation. Maybe you are not impatient; maybe you just have another date and don't want to be late. Anyway, you will make the other person feel uncomfortable.

Punctuality is another habit that varies from place to place. While unpunctuality is considered offensive in the US, Japan, South Korea, and Germany, it is tolerated in other countries.

In some countries, being half an hour late is perfectly fine. Mexicans are **infamous**⁵ for **showing up**⁶ late even to weddings. Of course in formal appointments and business situations, punctuality is the norm. But most of them schedule a wedding ceremony knowing that many guests will arrive up to one hour late. This makes us think that they might have other peculiar habits in their wedding celebrations.



⁵ **infamous:** *adj.* famous for something considered bad

⁶ **show up:** *phrasal verb* to arrive, especially at the place where someone is waiting for you

Weddings in Mexico share some traditions with ceremonies in other countries. One of them is *tossing the bouquet*. The women who are single gather around the bride, and she turns her back on the group. Then, she throws the bouquet over her shoulder. The woman who catches it is supposed to be the next one to get married. The bride and groom also dance to a song or cut the big, beautiful, wedding cake.



There are other customs, however, which happen particularly in Mexican weddings. One of them is the *Money Dance*, in which the guests dance with the bride and groom, and then attach money to their clothes so that they spend it on their honeymoon or on their new home.

Music is an important element at the party. There could be duets or trios, but the mariachi band is definitely the king of the night. The members of the band always wear a unique gala “charro” suit.



And there is one more famous tradition, which is dancing “La víbora de la mar” (The Sea Snake). The bride and the groom stand on separate chairs facing each other in the center of the dance floor. They form an arch with her veil or with their arms, and three or four people hold them firmly to prevent that neither the bride nor the groom gets knocked off of their chairs while the “snake” passes through them.

All the single ladies stand up, form a line holding hands, and move forward to the rhythm of the song “La víbora de la mar.” They dance in between the tables, but when they pass under the arch, they try to knock the bride off the chair before the song ends.

After the ladies’ turn, men do the same but now to the groom. Since they tend to behave less carefully after a few toasts and don’t wear long party dresses, they usually succeed in their goal. In my opinion, it is one of the most hilarious experiences you can have in Mexico.



If you think that those traditions are strange, you have not seen it all. In Germany, on the night before the wedding, the couple and their friends get together to break porcelain dishes. They believe the noise scares evil spirits away.



In Greece, the guests pretend to **spit**⁷ on the bride and groom to protect them from evil spirits. In South Korea, the groom's **character**⁸ is tested after the wedding ceremony. His family members take his shoes off and beat his feet with a stick. It is a bit painful, but the ritual is meant to be quick and amusing.

So before you get married, do some research. You should know in advance if you need to have an ambulance phone number at hand.



⁷ **spit:** v. to eject saliva from your mouth

⁸ **character:** n. the qualities in a person



Culture has a big impact on many aspects of our lives: our gestures, habits, celebrations, and more. As we already discussed, those cultural expressions vary from place to place, so we should try to know more about them. As the saying goes, “When in Rome, do as the Romans do” in order to avoid problems. Therefore, it is a good idea to pay attention to what locals do when we travel to another region. Even when you go to another house, show respect for their customs, and be careful with your own habits that could upset them.



Jane Stine, the managing director of a student travel organization that arranges projects around the world, recommends: “The first thing to remember is that most of what we think is ‘best’ [or ‘normal’] is just what we’re most used to, so try not to judge something as ‘worse’ if it’s just new.” ☀️

