

ANTICIPATING CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

- Decide what information you might need to know.
- Consider possible difficulties caused by cultural differences.
- Work out how and where to get the information you need.

A Read the information from AIESEC, a global student-run organisation. Then imagine you are going to apply for an internship in Cameroon. Complete the table with some questions about the culture that you would like answered before you go.

PERSONAL & PROFESSIONAL CHALLENGE IN A GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT

The Global Internship Programme gives students and recent graduates the opportunity to take on a cross-cultural professional development experience with leading global brands and small- to medium-sized enterprises in 125+ countries and territories. The programme specifically targets skill development both to meet the education plan of the intern participating as well as to support filling a talent need for the company.

Details:

- Duration: 6 weeks to 18 months
- Salary covers living costs except some development internships.
- It takes between 2–7 months to find an internship and complete the selection process.
- Application fee varies by country.
- Airfare is usually not included.

Clothing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do interns dress formally or informally? • _____ • _____ • _____ 	Food <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What time of day is the main meal eaten? • _____ • _____ • _____ 	Time <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do meetings usually start on time? • _____ • _____ • _____
Gifts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are some appropriate gifts to bring from my country? • _____ • _____ • _____ • _____ 	Making friends <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do men and women socialise together? • _____ • _____ • _____ 	Other <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • _____ • _____ • _____



Self and Society

Work and Career

Study and Learning


B  Read this blog entry from a previous intern. Then discuss the questions in pairs.

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28th July

The Centre here offers a range of trips, so I decided to climb Mt Cameroon with some of the other interns. We had a three-day weekend recently, and I wasn't sure I'd get another chance. But I almost thought we wouldn't make it! We set a time with the bus driver the day before – 8.00am. At 9.15, I went to the driver's house to get him. Finally, we were all on the bus, but we still faced more delays. First, the driver needed to buy petrol. Why didn't he do that yesterday? Then at the petrol station he started talking to some friends. Come on! If he stopped to chat with whoever he met, we'd never get there. One of the other interns helped me relax, though. She reminded me that socialising is an essential part of Cameroon's culture. Friends and relationships are so important here. It stands to reason that if you run into someone you know, you'll spend time talking to him. I value my friends too, but sometimes when faced with work or school, I ignore them. And you know what? We got there in plenty of time, and Mt Cameroon was outstanding. Click [here](#) for my hiking photos.

- 1 What difficulty did the intern have?
- 2 What caused this difficulty?
- 3 What values do you imagine are common in the intern's home country that are different in Cameroon?
- 4 What information could the intern have researched before his internship that would have prepared him for this situation?

C  Work in pairs. Look at the sources and think about what kind of information they provide. Then compare with your list of questions from Exercise A. Where would you go to find the information to answer your questions?

- the website of the internship organisation
- a citizen of Cameroon
- a former intern from your own country
- a guidebook
- a travel agency
- an online blog by a foreign tourist visiting Cameroon
- a news article about current events in Cameroon
- the Embassy of Cameroon in your own country

D  Work in groups. Discuss these questions.

- 1 Look back at the questions you wrote in Exercise A. Which ones are relevant for a visitor to your country? How would you answer them?
- 2 What other cultural information about your country do you think would be important for a visitor to know?



REFLECT ... How can the skill of anticipating cultural differences be useful to you in **Work and Career** and **Study and Learning**?

HOW TO SAY IT

It's not that common for ... to ...

It's normal to ...

They'd need to know that whenever we ...

If they don't want to stand out too much, they'd have to ...



RESEARCH ...

Choose an upcoming event or decision in your life such as a job, internship, holiday or new course for which you will need information in advance. Prepare a list of questions for which you want answers. Decide where you will go to find the answers, and then conduct your research. Report back to the class about the process.