Beyond First Impressions

How learned customs shape choices and judgments

S.2.3 "Analyze how culture influences individuals, including the mechanisms of ethnocentrism, cultural relativity, and culture shock."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two moments when a learned custom changes Elena's actions, and circle the judgment she makes using her own habits as the standard. Write 1 beside a sign of culture shock and 2 beside a step that helps her adjust.

Dinner with a Host Family

1. On her first evening with a host family in Kyoto, Elena stopped at the doorway. Everyone placed outdoor shoes on a shelf before entering, and the host offered her slippers. At Elena's home in the United States, guests usually keep their shoes on. She nearly walked across the living room in her sneakers, then noticed the shelf and changed course. The family's practice helped keep the floors clean, but it also communicated respect for the shared space. Elena's pause shows how habits learned in one setting can feel automatic until a different set of expectations makes them visible.

2. At dinner, Elena reached toward a shared plate with the chopsticks she had used to eat. Her host, Mika, gently pointed to a separate pair for serving. Elena first thought, "Our way is easier, so this rule is fussy." That judgment treated her familiar habits as the measure of what made sense, an example of ethnocentrism. Instead of arguing, she asked why the extra chopsticks were there. Mika explained that her family used them to keep shared food separate from utensils that touched each person's mouth. Elena could now interpret the practice in its own setting, using cultural relativity without having to adopt it everywhere.

3. During the next week, Elena felt tired from checking small choices she once made without thinking. She worried about missing a cue at meals and called home more often. This disorientation in unfamiliar routines was culture shock, not proof that either family's customs were wrong. Mika showed her where the serving chopsticks were kept, and Elena asked questions when she was unsure. Soon Elena could relax at dinner and even explained the serving practice to another visitor. Learning the reason behind a custom changed her behavior and reduced her anxiety, while leaving room for both families to have different habits.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did Elena's habits at home affect what she nearly did at her host family's doorway?

2. Why is Elena's first judgment about the serving chopsticks an example of ethnocentrism?

3. How did Mika's explanation help Elena use cultural relativity to understand the serving chopsticks?

4. What showed that Elena was experiencing culture shock, and how did she begin to adjust?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Invent a newcomer to a community group with an unfamiliar custom. In five sentences, show the newcomer's familiar expectation, an ethnocentric judgment, an explanation that helps the newcomer understand the custom in its own setting, a sign of culture shock, and one action that helps the newcomer adjust.

ANSWER KEY

Beyond First Impressions

HIGH SCHOOL · S.2.3

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two moments when a learned custom changes Elena's actions, and circle the judgment she makes using her own habits as the standard. Write 1 beside a sign of culture shock and 2 beside a step that helps her adjust. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did Elena's habits at home affect what she nearly did at her host family's doorway?	**Because guests at Elena's home usually keep their shoes on, she nearly entered the living room in her sneakers.**
2	Why is Elena's first judgment about the serving chopsticks an example of ethnocentrism?	**She called the rule fussy because it differed from the way she was used to eating, treating her familiar practice as the standard.**
3	How did Mika's explanation help Elena use cultural relativity to understand the serving chopsticks?	**Elena learned that Mika's family used separate chopsticks to keep shared food apart from utensils that had touched someone's mouth. She understood the practice in the family's setting rather than judging it by her own habits.**
4	What showed that Elena was experiencing culture shock, and how did she begin to adjust?	**She felt tired from checking small choices and worried about missing cues. Mika showed her where the serving chopsticks were, and Elena asked questions when unsure.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

At a neighborhood planning meeting, Noor expected people to speak whenever an idea came to mind, but participants waited to be invited by the facilitator. She first decided that waiting meant they did not care, judging their behavior by her own meeting habits. After asking, she learned that this group used a speaker list so quieter members had a chance to contribute. Noor felt uneasy about when to speak as she adjusted to the unfamiliar routine. She added her name to the list and began to feel more comfortable.

For Part 3, accept plausible invented customs and explanations that interpret the practice in its group setting. The culture shock sign should show discomfort or disorientation, not simply disagreement.