

<b>Lesson Title</b>	What are the possible causes of cultural misunderstanding?		
	<b>Age Range/ Year Group</b>	KS4	
<b>Resources</b>	<b>Learning Outcomes</b>		
1. Ability to show internet clips (with sound) to the students. 2. 'How is my culture misunderstood?' ('Connecting Cultures' photograph). 3. 'Causes of misunderstanding.' ('Connecting Cultures' photograph). 4. Resource sheet 1 - Common misunderstandings about different cultures. 5. Resource sheet 2 - Why might people think what they do about other people's cultures?	By the end of this lesson students will be able to; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore why people might think what they do about their culture.</li> <li>• Describe what they base their opinions on when thinking about other people's cultures.</li> </ul>		

**LESSON INTRODUCTION**

This lesson encourages students to contemplate the causes of cultural misunderstandings. It also invites them to discuss what they base their own opinions on in terms of other cultures.

**STARTER (10 mins)**

- Ask students to discuss briefly (in pairs) what a stereotype is.
  - Ask students to give examples briefly (in pairs) of stereotypes about certain cultures (including their own).
  - Invite students to share their ideas with the class. Prompt questions might include:
    - What is dangerous about stereotypes?
    - What are the causes of stereotypes?
    - Has anyone in the class ever been treated in a certain way because of cultural misunderstandings?
  - Give each student a copy of 'Resource 1'.
  - Ask students to complete the table at the bottom of resource one.
  - Remind students about the glaring inaccuracy of stereotypes and encourage them to offer examples of people who defy stereotypes. Go through answers with the class.
- Answers:

<b>A.</b>	2	<b>D.</b>	5
<b>B.</b>	6	<b>E.</b>	3
<b>C.</b>	1	<b>F.</b>	4

Encourage students to comment on the information that they have read.

An example of a comment might be:

"I was really interested in the stereotype about French people because my grandmother's French and lives in France. She never drinks wine and hates garlic. She speaks three languages and has never smoked. The stereotype made me laugh but it also made me feel sad. I got the same feeling when I read the Oman stereotype. It made me wonder how many people actually think that the information is fact, rather than a stupid and lazy way of viewing citizens in Oman."

**MAIN ACTIVITY (20 mins)**

- Give students 'Resource 2'.
- Explain to students that an organisation called 'Connecting Cultures' unites young people from different cultures. This is achieved through these young people meeting each other and describing their own cultures as well as their perceptions of other cultures.
- Tell students that they will need to answer the ten questions in their book/on paper whilst they watch two 'Connecting Cultures' media clips.
- Show students the first 'Connecting Cultures' 'YouTube' clip (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o3of3Ny3hoM> - approximately four minutes long).
- Show students the second 'Connecting Cultures' 'YouTube' clip (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fAA8oR9Vm0Y> - approximately five minutes long).
- Encourage students to share their answers with the class. Praise those that do so.

**Suggested answers:**

1. Hafren believes that there are many causes of cultural misunderstandings. List four of them.

Any four of the following: consumer society/cultures self-absorbed/ ignorance about world events/people spend too much time thinking about themselves/ environmental mistrust/barriers made rather than broken.

2. What can Rachida act as that not many people in the Western world can?

Due to the fact that she was born in Morocco but lives in the Netherlands, she can act as a link between the Western world and the Arab world.

3. What is Hafren's opinion about the media in terms of cultural misunderstandings?

She says that the media is the best way for different cultures to communicate but that a lot of media images about people from different cultures are negative or irrelevant. She points out that the media rarely celebrates diversity within cultures.

4. How does Alia describe the stereotypical view of someone from Oman?

Someone with an oil field in their back garden who rides to school on a camel.

5. At the beginning of the media clip, Hafren explained that modern society makes barriers rather than breaks barriers. What does she mean? Do you agree or disagree?

Students' own interpretations required. They might wish to refer to certain websites, TV coverage, actions of politicians etc.

6. Bastiaan says that what is normal in one culture can be outrageous or offensive in another culture. Give an example from your culture to support his opinion.

Students' own interpretations required. They might wish to refer to religious cartoons, exposure of certain body parts etc.

7. What does Hashil suggest that the media could do in order to portray different cultures more positively?

Disseminate positive information about issues such as new schools/ hospitals/ streets as well as about Prime Ministers, politicians and voting.

8. What does Charlie think should be changed in order to remove some of the causes of cultural misunderstanding?

He would like people in the Western world to have compulsory Religious Education until at least the age of eighteen.

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He would like people in the Western world to have compulsory Religious Education until at least the age of eighteen.

9. How far do you agree with Khalid's opinions?

Students' own interpretations required. They might wish to comment upon how (dis)similar his views are to those of Hashil (i.e. the other male representative for the Arab world).

10. Earlier in the clip, Bastiaan mentioned that it is normal in some cultures to criticise religion, whereas in other cultures it is not 'allowed'. Which approach do you think is more likely to cause cultural misunderstandings? Explain your answer.

Students' own interpretations required. They might wish to mention the advantages and disadvantages of freedom of speech.

- Encourage students to share their answers (especially those that are opinion-based). Praise those that do so.

#### SUMMARY (10 minutes)

- Explain that some young people from the 'Connecting Cultures' project were asked to write down their ideas about cultural misunderstandings and that photographs were taken of their work.
- Show students 'How is my culture misunderstood?' and 'Causes of misunderstanding.'
- Give students 'resource three'.
- Ask students to get into groups of three or four so that they can discuss the photographs. Ask them to complete task three.
- Invite students to share their answers (refer to example to prompt them).
- Ask students to complete task four.
- Invite students to share their answers. Example of answers might be:

(a) "My culture is definitely misunderstood and a lot of this is caused by the media's negative portrayal of citizens of the Arab world. I saw a British newspaper a few months ago and every story featuring a Muslim person seemed to involve terrorism! It's true that some Muslims are terrorists but it's such a tiny percentage that it's irresponsible of journalists to focus on it all the time. How can Westerners be expected to understand us if that's what they read every day?"

(b) "Stereotyping about people from Oman definitely leads to cultural misunderstandings. A lot of people in the Western world believe that no-one values women's education over here. This might affect the chances of a woman from Oman being accepted at a Western university or being trusted in a job over there."

(c) "According to my uncle who lives in Spain, people don't seem to be very well educated about our culture. He says that this causes problems because people aren't sure how to treat him when they invite him to their houses. They seem to get so worried about offending him that they don't relax around him. I think that schools in every country should teach children about the values and daily lives of people from all over the world."



- Encourage students to share their answers/recap their learning.

Are your opinions about other people's cultures well-informed and unbiased?

What do you base your opinions about other people's cultures on?

What do foreigners base their opinions about your culture on?

Are their opinions well-informed and unbiased?

What has been the most important aspect of today's lesson in your opinion?

#### EXTENSION/FOLLOW UP IDEAS

Imagine that you are a journalist.

You want to write a front page newspaper story about a citizen from a culture very different to your own.

You want the article to positively portray the people of that country. As such, you want to choose someone who is a positive role-model, and whose story breaks down stereotypes about the culture. For example, you might choose a famous politician, a famous female scientist, a musician or someone involved in charity work.

Who are you going to choose? What will be the focus of your story?

Be ready to share your ideas next lesson.

#### CHECK THE WEB

1. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o3of3Ny3hoM> (for task two).
2. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fAA8oR9Vm0Y> (for task two).
3. [www.connectingcultures.co.uk](http://www.connectingcultures.co.uk) to find out more about the 'Connecting Cultures' project.

#### NATIONAL CURRICULUM LINKS

**KS4:** 1.1.c, 1.2.c, 1.3.c, 1.3.d, 2.1.a, 2.1.b, 2.1.c, 2.1.d, 2.2.a, 2.2.b, 3m, 4a, 4b, 4c, 4h & 4i.

## What are the possible causes of cultural misunderstanding?

### TASK ONE. What are some common misunderstandings about different cultures?

Match the cultures below with the stereotypes.

1. Oman.

3. France.

2. UK.

5. Netherlands.

4. Australia.

6. Germany.

**VOCABULARY CHECK:**  
**STEREOTYPE** - a fixed idea that people have about what someone or something is like, especially an idea that is wrong.

**A.** Everyone wears dark clothing and drinks tea at 4pm every day. All citizens are fascinated by the Royal family and live near the capital city. The people are unfriendly and very reserved. Everyone gets drunk all the time.

**B.** Everyone is obsessed with having things organised. People are very strict with themselves and don't have any fun. No-one makes or understands jokes. All citizens agree with Hitler's actions in World War Two.

**C.** Men are superior to women and all women have to completely cover themselves and keep quiet. All citizens support terrorism. The people are really rich due to oil. No-one is properly educated.

**D.** Citizens all smoke cannabis, wear clogs and rides a bicycle. All people are blonde and tall and everyone is sporty. Everyone speaks perfect English.

**E.** People drink wine every night and put garlic in every meal. Everyone is arrogant and refuses to learn other languages. Citizens hate religion. Everyone smokes. No-one cares about safe driving or their job.

**F.** Everyone has a barbecue for lunch and dinner. People all live in a house on the beach. Everyone laughs and jokes all the time and no-one takes anything seriously. Citizens sunbathe all the time and drink a lot of beer.

A		B		C		D		E		F	
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**What are the possible causes of cultural misunderstanding?**

**TASK TWO. Why might people think what they do about other people's cultures?**

Write your answers to the questions below each question. Questions 1-5 refer to the females' media clip, and questions 6-10 refer to the males' media clip.

**USEFUL VOCABULARY:**

**Alia** (Oman), **Bastiaan** (Netherlands), **Charlie** (UK), **Hafren** (Zambia/UK or Wales), **Hashil** (Oman), **Khalid** (United Arab Emirates) and **Rachida** (Morocco/Netherlands).  
aggression barrier (un)biased cinema communication (in)correct cultural  
discredit (un)educated (un)ethical fact (un)fair harmful harmless ignorance  
information internet magazine journalist media misleading negative  
newspaper (ab)normal (in)offensive opinion portray positive prejudiced  
racism religious (mis)represent (ir)responsible sacred secular stereotype  
television (in)tolerance tradition (mis)understanding

1. Hafren believes that there are many causes of cultural misunderstandings. List four of them.

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2. What can Rachida act as that not many people in the Western world can?

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3. What is Hafren's opinion about the media in terms of cultural misunderstandings?

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4. How does Alia describe the stereotypical view of someone from Oman?

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5. At the beginning of the media clip, Hafren explained that modern society makes barriers rather than breaks barriers. What does she mean? Do you agree or disagree?

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## What are the possible causes of cultural misunderstanding?

6. Bastiaan says that what is normal in one culture can be outrageous or offensive in another culture. Give an example from your culture to support his opinion.

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7. What does Hashil suggest that the media could do in order to portray different cultures more positively?

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8. What does Charlie think should be changed in order to remove some of the causes of cultural misunderstanding?

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9. How far do you agree with Khalid's opinions?

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### **TASK THREE. What do I base my opinions on?**

Look at the ideas that other young people had about cultural misunderstandings and their causes.

Choose three ideas that you agree with. Explain why you agree.

Example: I agree that cultures are usually ethnocentric. I definitely base my opinions on what my parents or what the TV in my country tells me. It would be better for me to look at foreign news sites on the internet too.

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_





**What are the possible causes of cultural misunderstanding?**

**TASK FOUR. How do the causes of cultural misunderstandings affect the way that my country is viewed?**

Explain how the following issues affect the way that your culture is misunderstood. Don't forget to think about the beginning of the lesson and the 'YouTube' clips.

**(a) MEDIA FOCUS ON NEGATIVE ASPECTS OF MY CULTURE:**

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**(b) STEREOTYPES ABOUT MEMBERS OF MY CULTURE:**

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**(c) LACK OF EDUCATION ABOUT MY CULTURE:**

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