



Why People Around the World Live So Differently

KS3 MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Ages 11-14 ⌚ 4 min read

What Is Culture?

Culture is the way a group of people lives their life. It includes the **languages** they speak, the **food** they eat, the **holidays** they celebrate, the **clothes** they wear, and the **values** they believe in. Every country has its own culture, shaped by its **history**, **geography**, and the people who live there.

Think of culture like a family recipe that gets passed down through generations. Just as your family might have a special way of making Sunday dinner, countries have their own special ways of doing things.

Think of it like... a recipe book. Your family's recipes are different from your friend's family recipes. In the same way, different countries have their own 'recipes' for how to celebrate, eat, and treat each other.

Language Differences

The most obvious cultural difference is **language**. There are approximately **7,000 languages** spoken around the world. In **Japan**, people greet each other by bowing, while in **France**, people might kiss on both cheeks. The same word can mean something completely different in different countries—sometimes funny, sometimes rude!

Food and Celebrations

Food traditions are incredibly important. In **Italy**, families spend hours eating Sunday lunch together. In **Thailand**, food must balance **sweet, sour, salty, and spicy** flavours. **Celebrations** vary too: **Christmas** is huge in Western countries, while **Lunar New Year** is the biggest celebration in **China, Vietnam, and Korea**.

Many countries have **religious festivals** that shape their culture. **Diwali** is celebrated by **Hindus, Sikhs**, and others across **India**. **Ramadan** is a sacred month for **Muslims** worldwide.

Think of it like... different birthdays. Your birthday is special to your family, and you celebrate it your own way. Different countries celebrate their own special days in their own special ways.

Values and Behaviour

What people think is **polite** or **respectful** changes between countries. In some **Asian cultures**, showing respect to older people is extremely important. In some **Western cultures**, people value **independence** more. Some countries are very **punctual** (being on time matters a lot), while in others, time is more relaxed.

Why These Differences Matter

Understanding cultural differences helps us be better global citizens. When you learn about other cultures, you become more **respectful**, **curious**, and **empathetic**. You realise that different doesn't mean wrong—it just means different. This is why learning **modern foreign languages** is so valuable: it opens doors to understanding how other people see the world.