



Bridging Refugee Youth & Children's Services

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Cultural Quizzes

By Bethany Christian Services

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1-888-572-6500/ info@brycs.org/ www.brycs.org

The following quizzes were created by Elimu program staff at Bethany Christian Services in Grand Rapids, Michigan. These quizzes are used by Elimu staff when providing cultural awareness trainings to teachers and other staff in the public schools. These quizzes were based off of information found in the Cultural Profiles and Refugee Backgrounders from the Center for Applied Linguistics' Cultural Orientation Resource Center, which can be found at: <http://www.cal.org/co/publications/>.

Read the profile on Somalis (<http://www.cal.org/co/somali/index.html>) and take the following quiz.

Somali Culture Quiz –True or False

1. Somalis abstain from pork, gambling, and alcohol, and receiving or paying any form of interest.
2. Somali names have three parts. The first name is the given name, and is specific to an individual. The second name is the name of the child's father, and the third name is the name of the child's paternal grandfather.
3. The common way to greet someone is to say salam alechem and shake their hand.
4. The left hand is considered the clean and polite hand to use for daily tasks such as eating, writing, and greeting people.
5. Pneumonia is treated with fire-burning, herbs, and sometimes percutaneous removal of fluid from the chest.

Somali Culture Quiz - Answers

1. True. Many of the Somali social norms come from their religion. For example, men shake hands only with men, and women shake hands with women.
2. True. Thus siblings, both male and female, will share the same second and third names.
3. True. Salam alechem is roughly translated as "God bless you."
4. False. The right hand is considered the clean and polite hand. If a child begins to show left-handed preference, the parents will actively try to train him or her to use the right hand. Thus left-handedness is very uncommon in Somalia.
5. True. Fire-burning is a procedure where a stick from a special tree is heated till it glows and then applied to the skin in order to cure the illness.

Read the profile on Iraqis (<http://www.cal.org/co/pdffiles/Iraqis.pdf>) and take the following quiz:

Iraqi Culture Quiz –True or False

1. When in the presence of Iraqis, be careful not to raise or cross your legs in such a way that the sole of the foot faces others in the room.
2. It is polite and good practice to inquire about an Iraqi man's wife or other female relatives.
3. The OK sign, a circle made with the thumb and index finger, is a positive symbol in traditional Iraqi culture.
4. Men commonly hold hands or kiss when greeting each other, but this is not the case for men and women.
5. The left hand is considered unclean so it is never used when eating.

Iraqi Culture Quiz - Answers

1. True. This action is considered unclean and is perceived as one of the greatest insults.
2. False. Traditional Iraqi culture states that a man's household and family are private matters. Therefore, it is inappropriate and disrespectful to ask after another man's wife.
3. False. This gesture is considered the sign of the evil eye in Iraq and should be avoided.
4. True. Greetings between men and women – usually a handshake is acceptable, but a nod can replace that among conservative Muslims. It is taboo for religiously observant men to touch women and vice-versa.
5. True. As in other Islamic cultures, the left hand is considered unclean so it is never used when eating.

Read the profile on Burundians

(http://www.cal.org/co/pdffiles/backgrounder_burundians.pdf) and take the following quiz:

Burundian Culture Quiz –True or False

1. Cattle are herded as signs of wealth and status rather than for their value as food.
2. A typical greeting involves both parties wishing each other large herds.
3. It is not considered rude to turn down food or drink when it is offered.
4. Traditional beliefs place a strong emphasis on fate as opposed to free will.
5. Diviners, or fortune-tellers, are believed to have a special connection with the spirit world and can be called upon as go-betweens.

Burundian Culture Quiz - Answers

1. True. Meat is consumed by most Burundians only about once or twice a month.
2. True. Exchanges often include literal or figurative references to cattle.
3. False. It is considered rude to turn down food or drink when it is offered.
4. True. Everything is in the hands of Imana, the source of all life and goodness.
5. True. The Hutu use their services to appease the spirits of their ancestors.

Read the profile on Burmese (<http://www.cal.org/co/pdf/files/refugeesfromburma.pdf>) and take the following quiz:

Burmese Culture Quiz – True or False

1. Pointing your feet toward a senior person is considered rude in Burma.
2. It is appropriate to pat a child on the head.
3. In Burma, showing emotions and losing one's temper in public is acceptable.
4. Burmese treat older people and Buddhist images and objects with respect.
5. Use your right hand to give something to, and receive something from, an older person.
6. Normally, Burmese and Karen walk behind those who are their seniors and elders.
7. Saying "no" is often a way to be modest.
8. A Burmese or Chin student will establish direct eye contact with a teacher.

Burmese Culture Quiz – Answers

1. True. The feet are regarded as the least noble part of the body, and it is disrespectful to point them toward someone deserving your respect.
2. False. Don't touch people on the head, which is considered the spiritually highest part of the body. Patting a child on the head not only is improper but is thought to be dangerous to the child's well-being.
3. False. Losing one's temper is a sign of bad manners and poor upbringing, and such behavior is not easily forgiven.
4. True. For example, one would not normally place household objects above a Buddha image in a home.
5. False. Use both hands to give something to, and receive something from, an older person.
6. True. Burmese and Karen avoid walking in front of others. Go behind those who are seated, or ask first and apologize.
7. True. Do not be upset if someone answers a question with "No" when an affirmative answer might seem more appropriate. Saying "no" is often a way to be modest.
8. False. Looking a speaker in the eye can be considered an act of challenge. Thus, a Burmese or Chin student will not normally establish direct eye contact with a teacher.

Read the profile on Bhutanese (http://www.cal.org/co/pdffiles/backgrounder_bhutanese.pdf) and take the following quiz:

Bhutan Culture Quiz –True or False

1. Touching someone else's head is considered a sign of respect.
2. Beckoning someone with the palm up is considered appropriate.
3. Whistling is impolite and winking may be interpreted as an insult.
4. If your shoes or feet touch another person, apologize.
5. The word "no" has harsh implications in Bhutan.

Cultural Quiz - Answers

1. False. The head is considered the seat of the soul. Never touch someone else's head, not even to pat the hair of a child.
2. False. Beckoning someone with the palm up and wagging one finger can be construed as an insult. Standing with your hands on your hips will be interpreted as an angry, aggressive posture.
3. True. Whistling is impolite and winking may be interpreted as either an insult or a sexual proposition.
4. True. Never point your feet at a person. Feet are considered unclean. If your shoes or feet touch another person, apologize.
5. True. The word "no" has harsh implications in Bhutan. Evasive refusals are more common, and are considered more polite. Never directly refuse an invitation, a vague "I'll try" is an acceptable refusal.