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An Orientation to the United States

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AN ORIENTATION TO THE UNITED STATES

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the Master of Arts in Teaching degree at the
School for International Training, Brattleboro, Vermont.

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This project by Charles Wayman and Marie Eileen Mitchell
is accepted in its present form.

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ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this text is to provide a format through which a foreign student can gain a better understanding of the United States and its people. A secondary goal is to encourage students to use and improve their aural/oral skills. Due to the nature of the topics of the lessons, students should find it easy to contribute to active discussions. At times, the students are forced to mix with the target culture through activities provided at the end of each lesson.

The text consists of fifty lessons with each lesson having a single topic as the focus of contrast, discussion and investigation. The topics fall into the following general categories: Home and Daily Activities, Social Customs, Transportation, Education and Miscellaneous. The first page of each lesson provides the student with a contrast between Iran and the United States. The second page of each lesson supplies additional information on the United States, and offers a variety of activities designed to further the students' understanding of the United States. A majority of the lessons are accompanied by slides to be presented as an introduction to the topics. These slides serve to illustrate a particular aspect of the United States or its culture.

PREFACE

This course has been written as a basic orientation to the United States for intermediate and advanced students who are studying in the U.S. It could also be used in other countries, but the activities at the end of each lesson would have to be modified by the teachers themselves. It is primarily intended for Iranians, but it is suggested that it could also be used with students of other nationalities. It would give those students two countries and cultures with which they could compare their own.

It is hoped that students studying this material will gain a better understanding of the U.S. and its customs. It is also hoped that they will learn to accept and appreciate differences between cultures without placing "good" or "bad" labels on these differences. The students should learn to look beyond the simple facts of daily life in another country and ask themselves why these people live as they do. After learning about and gaining some understanding of the American culture, it is hoped that students will have fewer problems in adjusting to life in the U.S.

Another goal of this course is to encourage and at times force the students to use and improve the language skills they possess. Activities provided at the end of each lesson are designed to promote active classroom discussion. Through these activities, students are also given a reason to converse with Americans and investigate their surroundings. Activities such as interviews can be especially helpful to those students who are reluctant to speak with Americans on their own.

This course is not meant to be the final word on either the United States or Iran. The authors have tried to present a general picture of the two countries in a fair and unbiased manner. However, it should be noted that their middle-class midwestern backgrounds have, undoubtedly, influenced their viewpoints. Students must be made aware of the fact that many

cultural variations exist within a given country. In addition, Iran, as described by the authors, is presented from a middle-class rural perspective.

TO THE TEACHER:

It is necessary that the teacher of this course be an American or someone extremely familiar with the U.S. and its culture. It is not necessary that he be familiar with Iran and its customs because that segment of each lesson is intended to serve only as a contrast to the U.S.

The teacher plays a vital role in the process of promoting a better understanding of the U.S. and its culture. The teacher might periodically remind the students to keep in mind that customs vary greatly from one culture to another; one country does not necessarily have better customs, only different ones. Although it is necessary that the teacher motivate the students by asking questions and encouraging them to express their ideas and opinions, he should refrain from giving his own opinions unless asked by the students. He should also be careful not to defend or attack the customs and attitudes of any culture. It is important that the students feel completely free to express themselves and form their own opinions without the influence of the teacher. To be effective, the teacher must think through the lessons and come to class with thought-provoking questions and ideas aimed at drawing out the more important points of the lessons. Emphasis should be given to the 'why.' For example, with regard to the lesson "Motorcycles and Bicycles," it is more important to know who rides them, the reasons they ride them and the attitudes attached to them as opposed to what kind of motorcycles and bicycles they have. The teacher is encouraged to add material or ideas he feels will further the understanding of the topics. He should be able to organize the material and information the students have collected and help the students interpret the material, discuss it and arrive at their own conclusions.

The following are a few suggestions that might help the teacher in presenting and organizing the lessons. The teacher should not feel bound to this format.

1. Assign one or two of the activities as homework or ask the students a question that they should be ready to respond to the next day. The purpose of this homework is to expose the students to the topics prior to the classroom presentation.
2. Before beginning the lesson, briefly discuss the homework. The teacher may also want to give the students a few questions or ideas to think about as the lesson is presented.
3. Show the slides or other audio-visual aids. Allow the students to ask questions or make observations.
4. Present the lesson. The teacher can read the lesson as a lecture; the students can read the lesson aloud or silently in class; or the teacher can have the students read the lesson prior to their coming to class.
5. After presenting the lesson, the teacher should open the class up for discussion. Depending on the size of the class or for variation, the teacher may want to break the students into small groups. The teacher should be prepared with questions or other stimuli to get the discussion started. He should not allow the discussion to be dominated by particular students or nationalities.
6. Assign part or all of the activities and any other homework you might think beneficial. At times, the teacher may want to assign an activity before the lesson is presented. Some activities can be assigned to all students while others may be divided among them or done in groups. When appropriate, specific students may be asked to organize the results of the homework. Students may be required to present short oral reports or to submit written reports.
7. Allow time the following day for a follow-up on the lesson..

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HOME AND DAILY ACTIVITIES

IRAN:

The Iranian family is a very close or 'tight knit' unit. This is because after God, family is the most important aspect of their lives. Grown children like to live near their families. Parents, especially mothers, hate to see their children leave home. Children usually live at home until they get married. Families and relatives spend a lot of time together; they often get together for picnics, holidays and other events. There is a lot of interdependence among family members.

In general, Iranian married couples expect and want to have children. Many families have a large number of children, but there is a trend among newly married couples to have fewer children. Most couples begin their families soon after marriage. If there are no children after a year, everyone asks why.

USA:

It has become common for Americans to move from city to city, many times spending no more than five years in one place. Grown sons and daughters frequently live far from their parents. This mobility is an important reason for the weakening of the family structure. Most children expect to leave home at the age of eighteen and this is completely accepted by their parents. Parents love and support their children, but as soon as the children can support themselves, they are on their own. A strong desire for independence is the most important factor which affects family structure.

The average American family has two children. For a variety of reasons, many couples wait several years before having their first child. They regard childrearing as a big responsibility that takes a lot of time and money. Some couples also feel that they need a few years to themselves before beginning a family.

Traditionally, the father is the head of the household; however, in many cases, the father and the mother share the responsibilities of the family. They make decisions together and divide the work that has to be done. There are also many single parent families. This is due to the millions of people who get divorced every year and to unwed mothers who keep their children. In recent years, the divorce rate among Americans has greatly increased. Approximately half of all marriages end in divorce. After a divorce, the man usually has to pay alimony and child support for his children. Children usually remain with their mother. However, with increasing frequency, fathers are going to court and succeeding in getting custody of the children.

ACTIVITIES:

1. Interview two or three Americans who are no longer living with their parents. Find out where in America and with whom their parents and brothers and sisters live.
2. From your viewpoint, list the advantages and disadvantages of having a small family. A large family.
3. Why do many Americans move around so much? Does this occur in your country? Why or why not?
4. Write a paragraph stating whether you think alimony is a good idea or not.
5. How would an unwed mother and her child be treated in your country? In the U.S.?

IRAN:

The father's role has changed little in centuries, and it's not likely to change much in the near future. The father is definitely the dominant figure in the Iranian home. Islam clearly states the role that he must play. Long hours are spent at work because, in general, only men have jobs. When the father comes home, he expects dinner to be ready soon. He is also the chief disciplinarian. Children must learn to respect his wishes. Children do not go directly to their father when they want something. They go to their mother who then acts as an intermediary with the father. As a sign of respect, a son never smokes or drinks alcohol in front of his father. Islam allows a man to have four permanent wives simultaneously, but he must be able to support each one in the same manner. However, most men today have only one wife.

USA:

The traditional American father is a man who is king of his castle. His word is final and his wishes dominate. His role as the breadwinner causes him to spend long hours working in order to support his family and get ahead. He is also the chief disciplinarian for serious matters and incidents involving older children. Mothers have often been heard to say, "You just wait till your father gets home." He is a man who must be in control of his emotions. To cry is to be weak.

The father's only duties at home are to take care of the yard and make repairs on the home. He spends many weekend hours watching sports on television, and he sometimes takes a night out with 'the boys' to play poker.

THE U.S. IN DETAIL:

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The role of the father has changed in many American homes during the last generation. The women's liberation movement has worked hard to change the chauvinistic attitudes of so many husbands who believe that a woman's place is in the home. This movement wants men to recognize women as their equals. More than half of all wives now work. Many husbands now share the chores around the home. They help cook meals, clean the house, change babies' diapers and spend more time helping take care of the children. Many husbands prefer the more traditional role, but increasing numbers of young men feel comfortable with the changes that have been brought about.

ACTIVITIES:

1. By talking to an American, find out what chauvinism means. Give an example.
2. Discuss some of the possible situations where a typical American male shows little emotion. Would it be the same or different in your country?
3. Write a paragraph comparing your father with the newer or traditional type of American father.
4. List several qualities that you think the ideal father should have.
5. What does your father do when he is at home? Does he share the chores with your mother?

IRAN:

Traditionally, the Iranian mother stays at home. Her time is occupied by taking care of the children, doing housework and daily grocery shopping. She spends long hours cooking. She also takes care of the courtyard. Because Iranians frequently have guests, she often has extra work to do. When she manages to have some free time, she knits or crochets. Sometimes she weaves carpets for the home or for sale to supplement the family income. Children have a close intimate relationship with their mother. She is often their main source of emotional support and is largely responsible for their social education.

There are a few women, mainly in the cities, that are exceptions to the traditional mother. They include professionals such as doctors, nurses and teachers. Many upper-class women have servants and are freed from their traditional duties and restrictions.

USA:

In her traditional role, the American mother stays at home with the children, at least until they are grown. Most of her time is occupied with housework, sewing and cooking. Although both parents discipline the children, it is more often the mother who is present when there is a need for discipline, especially in less serious situations. She devotes her spare time to hobbies such as reading, knitting, sewing, playing tennis or playing a musical instrument. Many watch soap operas on television every afternoon. Some do volunteer work at a hospital, church or for some other service organization.

The mother's role in the American home has changed greatly during the last generation. Modern conveniences such as washing machines, dishwashers and microwave ovens have made her chores easier. More and more women feel a need to get out of the house and find employment. More than half of all housewives now work. These women get jobs for several reasons. Many need to supplement the family income; others want to have a career and use their education. Sometimes they simply want to escape the boredom that they find at home. Many women find that they can successfully handle the responsibilities of their home and family and pursue a career outside the home as well.

ACTIVITIES:

1. By interviewing Americans, make a list of possible activities and chores which fill an American mother's day. Contrast these activities and chores with those of a mother in your country.
2. Write a paragraph giving your views on whether a mother should work or stay at home.
3. Visit the appliance section of a department store. List at least ten appliances not mentioned in this lesson that are supposed to save the housewife time and make her job easier.
4. List several qualities that you think the ideal mother should have.

IRAN:

The traditional Iranian woman remains at home. She is kept busy with her children and housework. Islam makes it clear that the man is the head of the family. Therefore, the Iranian woman faithfully and loyally attends to her husband's needs without complaining. She rarely questions this role. However, many young women have attended universities and have begun careers in various fields. The majority of these women have put the "chador" (veil) aside. A few women have also fought for equal rights with men. However, with the Islamic Revolution, women are returning to the more traditional role once again.

USA:

The women's liberation movement started primarily when women gained the right to vote. This happened in 1920 with the 19th Amendment to the U. S. Constitution. This movement gained importance and strength in the 1960's.

Many women strongly feel they have a right to a career separate from that of being a housewife and mother. They consider it natural for a woman to be equal to a man in all ways. More and more women are working outside the home in almost all professions. Household duties are performed by the woman or shared by the couple. Children are often assigned a few cleaning duties. The liberation movement has brought about many changes in laws, in family structure, in language and in American society in general.

There are many people now working for a proposed amendment to the U. S. Constitution. This amendment is called the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA). It would forbid discrimination on the basis of sex. In employment, men and women would get the same salary when they hold equal positions. Identical qualifications would be required for both sexes when seeking employment. In criminal law, men and women convicted of the same crime would receive the same punishment. In case of divorce, the husband or the wife would have to pay alimony to the other depending on his or her ability to pay. Some people are afraid this amendment would require women to be drafted along with men into the military.

ACTIVITIES:

1. Find out as many vocabulary words as you can that have been changed or introduced into English as a result of the women's liberation movement. List them.
2. Interview at least four American men and women. Find out why they support or disagree with the ERA.
3. Write a paragraph explaining your views on equal rights for women. Are they equal? Should men and women be treated equally? Why or why not?
4. Is there a women's liberation movement in your country? If so, what are they accomplishing? If not, why not?

IRAN:

Iranians love children, and Iranian children, in return, are very close to their families. Children are kissed, hugged, cuddled, pinched and generally given a lot of attention. It is often preferred that the first child be a boy, but all first born are accepted. By American standards, Iranian children are extremely spoiled. This is especially true in the case of boys. Boys are often allowed to play in the streets without supervision while girls generally remain in the house to help and learn from their mothers. Unacceptable behavior is sometimes excused simply because they are children. Adult behavior is not demanded or expected of them until they reach adult age.

USA:

Most Americans view childrearing as a big responsibility. Parents want their children to succeed in life and be able to function on their own. They want their children to grow up in a good environment. They give them lots of toys, especially educational ones. As teenagers, they are sometimes given motorcycles or cars. Many children are also given weekly allowances that range from fifty cents to several dollars. Sometimes, children do errands or chores to earn this money. Parents feel that such responsibilities help their children learn valuable lessons about life. They learn to value work, manage money and be responsible from an early age.

Some Americans do not like children well enough to have any of their own. They are either too busy to have children or feel that there are already too many children in the world. There are apartment complexes with signs reading, "NO PETS, NO CHILDREN." Some party and wedding invitations request that children be left at home. In such cases or when parents want an evening to themselves, they hire a babysitter.

Because children have been taken unfair advantage of in the past, there are now many laws which protect them. Labor laws limit the types of jobs children can hold and the number of hours they are allowed to work. Other laws protect them from being abused by their parents or other adults. However, parents are not yet protected from being abused by their children.

ACTIVITIES:

1. What are the most common children's toys and games in the U.S.? How do they compare with those in your country?
2. Look up 'spank' in the dictionary. Is this method of discipline used in your country? Why or why not? Discuss your views on how children should be disciplined.
3. Who babysits in the U.S., and how much money do babysitters earn? How does this compare to your country? Discuss the positive and negative aspects of babysitting.
4. Interview one or two American adults. Ask them how being a child now differs from when they were children themselves.

IRAN:

Iranians have a great deal of respect for people who are old. Religious leaders and other town leaders are often quite old. As parents grow old, they often live with their children or visit them for extended periods of time. It is the duty of children to take care of their elderly parents (or even aunts and uncles). They do so without complaining because family ties are very strong. Many Iranians try to work as long as possible because retirement benefits are not available to most of them. A very small number of people with neither family nor money become beggars. They must depend on the charity of others.

USA:

Usually, elderly parents do not live with their children. The children often feel they are too busy to care for their parents, or they do not want to disturb the routine of their home life. At the same time, many elderly parents prefer to live alone because they do not want to be a burden. Others are so independent that they have no desire to live with their children. When an elderly person is no longer capable of taking care of himself, he usually moves into a nursing home where meals, medical care and other services are provided for a monthly fee.

Although there is no mandatory retirement age, most Americans like to retire sometime between the age of 62 and 65. At this age, they become eligible for Social Security benefits. In addition to this, some people also receive monthly checks from state, union or company retirement programs.

There is another option for those with enough money and independence. Retirement communities have been built across the U.S., especially in the warmer states. These communities enable the elderly to be with many people their own age. Group activities are organized, and there is usually a variety of facilities including golf courses, swimming pools, tennis courts, etcetera.

Many Americans seem to be afraid of growing old. The thirtieth and fortieth birthdays are perhaps the most difficult to celebrate. Oils, creams, hair dyes and many other products are bought in the hopes that the aging process can be slowed down or at least disguised. A few people even have face lifts or tummy tucks.

ACTIVITIES:

1. Will your parents live with you in your home when they grow old? Why or why not?
List the advantages and disadvantages of having an elderly parent live with you.
2. Write a paragraph about one of your grandparents. Include such information as where he lives, what he does with his time, what you like about him, etcetera.
3. Visit a home for the elderly. Ask the person in charge what activities they have or provide for the people who live there. Interview a resident of the home if possible. Find out why he or she is there.
4. Interview a man and a woman. Ask them what they plan to do when they retire. Share your findings with your classmates.

IRAN:

Soon after an Iranian dies, the body is taken to a small building near the cemetery to be cleaned and prepared for burial. It is washed by members of the same sex as the deceased and then wrapped in white cloth. If the person has died of natural causes, he is buried as soon as possible (often the same day). The body is carried to the graveyard in an open coffin while a simple prayer is recited by a priest. It is then removed from the coffin, placed in the grave, covered up and marked with a few stones. The dead are remembered on several days of mourning. These include the 3rd, the 7th, the 40th days and one year after death.

When a young man dies unexpectedly, a temporary memorial is set up on the street. It includes a rented display with a large photograph of the dead person, mourning music, colored lights and flowers.

USA:

As soon as an American dies, the body is taken to a mortuary. The mortician drains all of the blood from the body and replaces it with embalming fluid. The body is cleaned, dressed in nice clothing and placed in a casket. Every effort is made to make the person look 'normal' and at rest. A funeral service is held in a church two to seven days after death. Friends and family dressed in black attend the service. Many people send flowers. After the church service, the funeral party goes directly to the cemetery where a few prayers are said and the casket is lowered six feet into the ground. Later, a gravestone is placed at the head of the grave.

In recent years, there have been many complaints about funeral directors taking unfair advantage of grieving families. In their sorrow, the bereaved have agreed to buy nothing but the best for the 'dearly departed.' Caskets can be very expensive, depending on the materials used in their construction. They are made of metal, wood or fiberglass. Some are covered with cloth. They are lined with fabrics such as velvet or satin. A matching pillow is also selected. Some funeral homes even offer a selection of clothing including shoes for the deceased. To make the 'departed' look as nice as possible, make-up is applied to the face and hands and a hairdresser fixes the hair. Cremation has become a less expensive alternative to traditional burial. In some areas, twenty to twenty-five percent of those who die are cremated.

ACTIVITIES:

1. Write an essay giving your views on death.
2. Interview several Americans. Find out as many expressions as you can which replace the verb 'die.'
3. Visit an American cemetery. Discuss your impressions and tell how it is different from a cemetery in your country.
4. Find out as much as you can about Memorial Day. Contact the VFW or American Legion. Consult an encyclopedia or interview an American.
5. Interview several Americans about their attitudes toward death. Are they positive or negative? Do they fear death or not? Do they think about death or do they forget about it, etcetera? Compare what you have found out with the attitudes and beliefs held by people in your country.

IRAN:

Shopping for food can take a lot of time in Iran. There are a few supermarkets in Tehran, but they are small, expensive and never have everything you need. Most groceries are bought daily in a small neighborhood store. Grocery shopping is usually the responsibility of the wife except for the first of the month when the husband buys any items that can be purchased in bulk. It is important to get to know the owner of the store. If he knows and likes you, he'll sell you things that are in short supply. These items are usually hidden under the counter or in the back of the store.

You can't buy all your food in one store. Fruit, vegetables, bread, beef, fish, mutton and chicken are all sold in separate shops. Nearly all food is fresh and unprocessed in any way.

USA:

The supermarket has made grocery shopping in the United States very convenient. A housewife can buy all the food she needs for a week in one trip and thus save time. A supermarket has three main departments: meat, produce and grocery. The meat department has all kinds of pre-cut meat both fresh and frozen. The produce department contains all of the fresh fruits and vegetables. The grocery department is the largest section containing all of the canned and packaged goods. Most supermarkets belong to supermarket chains.

Much of the food that Americans eat is processed or preserved in some way and can be prepared quickly. However, more and more Americans are buying only fresh food or food without preservatives because they feel it is better for their health. If fresh fruit, vegetables or meat aren't available, frozen goods are the next preferred.

There are several ways to save money on groceries. Newspapers usually have lists of goods that are 'on special' for the week. Having 'specials' is a way of attracting more customers to a store. Newspapers also have coupons which can be used for a discount on certain items. Another way of saving money is to pay attention to the brand name of the goods you are buying. Each supermarket has its own brand of goods that it sells more cheaply than name-brand goods. Some supermarkets even sell goods with generic labels on them. These usually have the cheapest prices of all.

ACTIVITIES:

1. Consult a newspaper and look at the supermarket advertisements. List several of the items that are 'on special'. Include the price of those items.
2. Look in a magazine or newspaper. Clip one or two coupons that can be used to receive a discount on food items. Are coupons used in your country? Do you think they are a good idea?
3. You bought an item you wish to return for a refund. Write a dialogue that might occur between the store manager and you.
4. Survey the types of grocery stores available and the differences between them. List the advantages and disadvantages of each.
5. Interview one or two Americans to find out why large supermarkets have replaced the neighborhood grocery stores.

IRAN:

Iranians are very proud of their cooking. They are also particular about their food. It often takes several hours to prepare. Lamb and chicken are the principal meats; pork is forbidden. Generally, Iranians consume much less meat than westerners do. Rice is the most important staple in their diet. Sometimes it is eaten plain; at other times, it is steamed with meat, vegetables and fruit. Iranian bread, which is unleavened and made from whole wheat, is very delicious and nutritious. Vegetables are only eaten in stews. Fresh greens (parsley, mint, etc.) are a must for every meal. Fresh fruit is eaten in abundance as snacks or as a dessert after meals.

Iranians have a complex system that separates food into two categories: hot and cold. In general, hot foods have more calories than cold foods. Certain foods (for example, honey and melon) should never be combined. Other foods are restricted as to what time of the year they are eaten. The origin of these customs is uncertain.

USA:

Because the United States has people of many nationalities, there is a wide variety of types of cooking. The size of the country and the efficient transportation system make almost all foods available year round. Americans eat a lot of beef, chicken and pork. Vegetables are prepared and eaten separately rather than being combined in stews. Potatoes are perhaps the most important vegetable. Salads are very popular, especially with those who want to lose weight. Fruit is usually found in desserts which are often heavy and rich. Pies, cakes and puddings are popular desserts. Generally the American housewife favors quick and easy-to-prepare meals that require only one or two hours out of her busy schedule.

Americans eat large amounts of 'junk' food. 'Junk' food is food that doesn't have much nutritional value or many vitamins. Some examples are candy, potato chips and soft drinks. 'Junk' food is sold almost everywhere -- in grocery stores, variety stores, gas stations, waiting rooms, etcetera. Many parents try to prevent their children from eating a lot of 'junk' food because it is fattening and causes tooth decay.

Many Americans are trying to change their bad eating habits. One kind of store profiting from this trend is the health food store. They only sell food that is supposedly good for you and without chemical preservatives. Their most common items include seeds, nuts, wholegrain products, cheese, yoghurt, vitamins and minerals. They also have a variety of books and other literature on 'health' food and vitamins.

ACTIVITIES:

1. What American foods do you like or dislike? How do they compare with food from your country?
2. Look up 'nutrition' in an encyclopedia. Find and list the four main food groups.
3. Visit a health food store. List four or five food items you've never eaten. If possible, find out why they're good for you.
4. Interview two Americans who have dieted. Ask them what kind of diets they were on, and why they dieted.

IRAN:

At mealtime in the average Iranian home, a plastic tablecloth is laid on the floor for everyone to sit around. Breakfast is eaten around seven or eight o'clock. Some people begin it with a glass of hot water with lime juice to whet the appetite. Breakfast usually consists of bread, butter, white cheese, marmalade and hot tea. Sometimes, eggs and warm milk with sugar are also served. Lunch, the main meal of the day, is served between noon and two o'clock. It consists of rice, one or two meat or vegetable stews, yoghurt, fresh bread and fresh greens. Water or a yoghurt drink called "duq" are the most common drinks. Lunch is followed by fresh fruit and hot tea. In the late afternoon, tea, fresh fruit and pastries are served as a snack. Dinner is served between eight and ten o'clock after evening work hours. It is somewhat lighter than lunch. However, if there are guests, dinner is as large as lunch. At mealtime, families are nearly always together.

USA:

In the United States, breakfast is usually eaten between seven and eight o'clock. Most people eat very little, but some like to have a large breakfast which includes such foods as cereal, eggs, bacon, toast, juice and coffee, tea or cold milk. Lunch is eaten between eleven thirty and one o'clock. It is usually a light meal with soup or salad, a sandwich and coffee, iced tea or milk. Dinner, the main meal of the day, usually includes meat, potatoes, a salad, a vegetable, bread and coffee or tea. It is sometimes followed by a rich dessert. Americans generally eat dinner (sometimes called supper) between five thirty and seven o'clock. Many Americans feel free to snack any time they please. Supermarkets seem to be filled with food made especially for snacks.

Eating habits vary from family to family. Because of their schedules, a family may or may not eat breakfast together. They aren't usually together for lunch. The children eat at school; perhaps both parents eat at work. At lunchtime, they may all eat in cafeterias or restaurants, or they may take their lunches in lunch boxes or paper bags. Dinner is the one meal when the family is usually together.

Depending on a family's religious beliefs, meals are begun with a prayer after everyone is seated. The father usually sits at the head of the table. While eating, Americans usually have a conversation which is usually related in some way to the day's events. Children are often required to clean their plates and ask to be excused before leaving the table.

ACTIVITIES:

1. Find out as many rules of table etiquette as you can by interviewing one or two Americans. How do these rules compare with those of your country?
2. List snack foods that Americans eat. Make another list of the snack foods you eat in your country.
3. With one of your classmates, make up a dialogue for a family of four that is having dinner. a) for the U.S., b) for your own country.
4. Find out what a place setting is. Draw a picture of one and label all of the items. List the function(s) of each item. What differences in items and their functions are there between the U.S. and your country?

IRAN:

Except for neighborhood grocery stores, most businesses are found in the downtown area, on the main streets and in the ancient bazaars. Large modern shops and a few department stores have replaced the bazaars to a certain degree, but the center of business is still in the bazaar. One can wander for miles and miles through the covered passageways and caravanserais of the bazaars. Carpet shops, cloth stores, gold shops and other traditional artisan crafts make up a majority of the businesses there. Prices on many items in the bazaar are fixed by trade guilds, but seldom enforced; bargaining is necessary. Many other shops, however, have fixed prices. Most purchases are made with cash, but in recent years, the installment plan has become more popular.

USA:

It used to be necessary to go downtown to shop. Small towns have changed very little, but there has been a shift toward more convenient shopping in the cities. The ever present automobile and suburban living have given rise to shopping centers and malls. Newer residential areas generally have small shopping centers at every main intersection, and there is a large shopping mall every few miles. Malls are usually one to three stories high and have a variety of department and specialty stores under one roof. Local governments have strict zoning laws that regulate where homes or businesses can be built.

Most purchases are made by writing a check or using a credit card. This is done to avoid carrying much cash. Another option is to make a down payment on an item and then pay the rest in monthly installments. However, some people find themselves in trouble by having bought too much on credit.

In order to get the most for one's money, a person needs to learn the art of comparison shopping. The exact same goods can be found in a variety of shops. Smaller retail shops often have the highest prices. Prices in discount stores are somewhat lower because they buy and sell larger quantities of goods, and therefore, can afford to have a lower profit margin. Warehouse stores usually have the best prices of all. This is because they have no need to decorate their stores or advertise. They give very little extra service to the customers and do not spend extra money on such things as attractive displays and bags for merchandise that has been purchased. A comparative shopper should also pay attention to advertising. A lot of money can be saved by buying an item when it is on sale.

ACTIVITIES:

1. You want to buy a new watch and a stereo. Visit or telephone a retail store, a discount store and, if possible, a warehouse store. How do the prices compare?
2. You want to buy an article of clothing. Working in groups, write a dialogue that might occur between you and a clerk to determine the size you need.
3. Explain what the 'yellow pages' are, and how they can help you in shopping.
4. Visit a shopping mall. List the different types of stores it has. How does the variety of stores differ with those available in your country?

IRAN:

An Iranian home is a refuge from the outside. It is a place where one relaxes and entertains friends. The entire house and yard are surrounded by a high brick or mud wall to ensure privacy and to keep out the desert. Any room can serve as a sewing room, dining room, study, game room or almost any kind of room at almost any time of the day. The kitchen is usually small and occasionally is found outside, across the courtyard from the living quarters. The yard, usually on the south side of the main living quarters, is full of a variety of beautiful flowers. There are usually a few fruit trees, but little if any grass. There is always a small pool in the middle of the yard. Many times the courtyard also serves as a parking place for the family car.

USA:

"A man's home is his castle." Few people are allowed to drop in unexpectedly; most need invitations. It is a place of comfort where one can rest, relax and enjoy privacy. American homes are built about thirty feet from the street and are separated from one another. Nearly all homes have windows which face the street. Each room serves only one or two purposes and has relatively little flexibility. Usually, each family member (even children) has his own room where he can go to have complete privacy. Dad may have a study, a workshop or both. Mom may have a sewing room. There is usually a room reserved for guests if there is enough space. Almost all houses have a garage or carport. There is nearly always a front yard and a backyard. The backyard is sometimes unenclosed but may occasionally have a fence or wall around it. Some Americans dislike fences and walls because they think it looks like you're trying to shut out your neighbors.

There is a wide variety of homes available in the U.S. Their cost depends on location, materials used in construction and demand. Other than single family dwellings, there are duplexes, tri-plexes and 4-plexes: two, three or four homes make up a single building. Condominiums have become increasingly popular in recent years. Basically, a condominium is an apartment that one can buy. They often have club houses and other recreational facilities that all others in the complex share for a monthly fee. Other people invest in old homes (50-100 years old) and restore them. Still others build their own cabins in mountainous or forested areas. Some people prefer mobile homes because they are cheaper and can be moved from place to place. However, they depreciate quickly and can be damaged easily by strong winds.

ACTIVITIES:

1. If possible, visit a model home or a home that is for sale. Gather information that an interested buyer would want to know.
2. Draw a floor plan for a typical American home and a typical home in your country. Compare them.
3. List the advantages and disadvantages of owning or living in a house versus an apartment, a condominium or a mobile home. Interview Americans if necessary.
4. What is meant by Robert Frost's famous quote, "Good fences make good neighbors."

IRAN:

The traditional Iranian home has very little furniture. Beautiful hand-woven Persian carpets are the main home furnishing. Like puzzles, carpets are fit together to cover the floor of each room from wall to wall. There are a few homes which have "mouket" (a low quality American style carpeting). Iranians don't often use chairs. They sit on the floor with large pillows behind them. The rooms are basically empty. Walls may have a picture, photographs or a poster or two on them. Nearly every room has a large mantel on which many small objects such as statues, pictures or dishes are displayed. Some homes have one room with western style furniture for use only when someone special comes to visit.

USA:

Most American homes have neutral colored, wall to wall carpeting. Some homes have wooden floors. Each room is filled with furniture and the walls have paintings or hangings of some sort on them. Major pieces of furniture include a stereo console, a piano, a color television set, a sofa, easy chairs, a dining room set, a buffet or china closet and bedroom furniture. Curtains are chosen to match the furniture and carpeting. Coffee tables, end tables, lamps and accent items (vases, bowls or pictures) are also chosen to go with the furniture. Furniture and decorations fill nearly every part of every room, especially the areas near the walls. It can be quite costly to furnish a home well. Many Americans place a lot of importance on how well their house is decorated and furnished.

There are many different furniture styles in America. Early American furniture was built to be functional. It was very sturdy with simple lines. Gradually, more attention was paid to the decorative aspects of furniture. Now there is a style of furniture to fit just about every possible taste. Some styles have a lot of decoration while others are very simple and plain. Some are very similar to traditional European styles. One new style of furniture, Modern, has very straight lines. Metal, glass and plastic are the materials most often used with Modern furniture. The quality of the furnishings a person has in his home often shows his place in society. Many people like antique furniture which is usually rather expensive. Americans spend about six billion dollars a year on furniture alone. A lot more money is spent completing the decorations in a home.

ACTIVITIES:

1. Visit two furniture stores; one should be a discount furniture warehouse and the other, a nicer furniture showroom. Write a report comparing the quality and prices of the furniture. Also, include the kind of customer service given in each store.
2. Interview several Americans to see if you can find out why their homes are furnished so completely. Ask them how they would feel if their furnishings were reduced by half. Discuss your findings in class.
3. Write a paragraph describing how the family room of an American home you have visited is furnished. Compare this with your family's home in your country.
4. You want to buy a dresser and a chest of drawers for your bedroom. Find out what kinds of wood are available, how their prices compare with one another and how much you would save if you bought unfinished pieces of furniture.

IRAN:

Most Iranian homes do not have separate rooms for sleeping. Practically any room can serve as a bedroom. The bedding, which usually consists of narrow thin mattresses, cotton filled quilts, blankets and pillows, is stacked in one corner of a room. This pile is covered with a piece of cloth during the day. At night, just before bedtime, everything is unfolded. It is common for entire families to sleep side by side in the same room. There is always plenty of extra bedding for the numerous overnight guests that arrive.

Iranians usually go to bed rather late, around eleven or twelve o'clock. Children often stay up until they are overcome by sleep. However, it is customary for everyone to take a nap for a couple of hours in the afternoon.

USA:

Bedrooms are important in the American home. They serve several purposes. Sleeping is only one. They are also places for privacy where one can think, read, write or just be alone. Everyone usually has his own room, except for parents who share a room. Bedrooms are furnished with a bed, a nightstand, a dresser, a chest-of-drawers and maybe a desk. A master bedroom also has a private bathroom.

Most Americans go to bed around ten or eleven o'clock. Children are sent to bed earlier. They usually go to bed at eight or nine o'clock. On weekends and during the summer months, they may be allowed to stay up later. Preschool children have to take a nap in the afternoon after lunch. Adults rarely take naps in the afternoon because they are usually at work. Those at home feel their time is better spent doing work of one kind or another.

Americans feel a good day's work depends on getting a good night's sleep. Therefore, much attention is paid to the kind of bed a person has. Many people prefer firm mattresses to soft ones. The mattress is covered with a mattress pad and a sheet which is then covered with another sheet, blankets and a bedspread. Bedspreads are chosen to match the drapes and carpeting.

There are many variations in size and style of beds. Sizes range from single beds to king-size beds. There are also bunk beds, trundle beds and waterbeds. Some sofas have hideaway beds that can be folded out for guests.

ACTIVITIES:

1. Go to a furniture store and a waterbed store. In your own words, compare the prices and comforts of a regular bed and a waterbed.
2. Draw a floor plan of a master bedroom in an American home. Include all of the furnishings, closet space and a bathroom. Consult an American if necessary.
3. Describe the sleeping accommodations you had in your own home as a child. Compare them with those of a typical American. Explain why they are different or not.
4. Find out what the following terms mean. Write short descriptions for each.

trundle bed

crib

bunk bed

orthopedic mattress

IRAN:

Few Iranians become attached to animals in the same way as Americans. Animals are set far apart from people. Cats can be seen everywhere, but they seldom have owners. Those that have owners are tolerated, but they are not allowed in the house as pets. Islam considers dogs to be unclean. It is quite common to see boys mistreating them in the streets. Only a few foreign-bred dogs owned by wealthier people become pets in the western sense. At night, groups of dogs can be heard as they roam the streets and countryside looking for something to eat. The only animals commonly found in the house are canaries and goldfish. They aren't, however, considered pets. The concept of having pets simply isn't part of Iranian culture. Young boys sometimes raise a chicken or a lamb in the courtyard, but in the end, it will probably be butchered by the father.

USA:

An American home isn't complete without a pet of some sort. Many parents believe that their children should have the chance to have a dog, a cat or some other kind of pet of their own. They feel that having pets can teach a child to be responsible and caring. Pets also offer companionship. Dogs and cats are the most common pets; but if the family has enough land, a child may have a horse. If the family lives in an apartment or if they don't like large animals, they might have birds or tropical fish. It is usually the responsibility of the child to take care of his or her pet by feeding it and keeping its house or cage clean. However, the parents sometimes end up doing these chores.

Out of a need for companionship and someone or something to love, animals in some American homes become substitutes for children. It is very common to see an old couple or a childless couple with a pet they treat the same as they would a child. Some dogs wear bows and may even have their nails painted. Many dogs and cats are allowed to live in the house with their owners. Cats have their own toilet in the house with 'kitty litter' that must be changed once a week. Dogs, however, must be taken for walks. Some Americans like animals so much that they spend large amounts of money on them. Certain dogs can cost hundreds of dollars to buy and taking care of them can be costly. The owner takes his animal to a veterinarian (animal doctor) when it needs vaccinations or is sick. Some veterinarians earn as much money as medical doctors. Stores sell large quantities of goods made especially for animals. Food, vitamins, litter and flea collars are some of them. Supermarkets usually have one whole side of an aisle stocked only with animal supplies.

ACTIVITIES:

1. Write a paragraph telling why you think pets are good or bad for adults or children to have.
2. Interview one or two Americans about pets they have had. Ask them what feelings they had concerning these animals.
3. Find out what kinds of unusual pets some American have. List them.
4. Visit a pet shop or a store with pet supplies. Make a list from your observations of the things that you find. Compare your findings to your own country.

SOCIAL CUSTOMS

IRAN:

A complex set of manners called "ta'arof" is used in many aspects of everyday life in Iran. Many of these formalities have no real function, but one would seem rude if he or she didn't use them. Iranians often spend a couple of minutes at doorways trying to get one another to go through first. In the end, the guest or the one of higher status usually goes first. While you are walking down a street, an acquaintance may see you and invite you into his home. Most likely, he doesn't really mean it and would be surprised if you accepted. Some commonly heard "ta'arof" expressions include: "I am your sacrifice," "May your hand never hurt," "May your shadow never diminish," and the difficult to translate "Befarma'id." "Befarma'id" can mean anything from "Please come to my house," to "Please take some," (when offering something to someone). "Ta'arof" also requires that guests be treated with great respect.

USA:

In America, if someone is said to have good manners, it means that he is a polite and courteous person. There are two kinds of etiquette, formal and informal. Formal etiquette is a complex set of customs that includes the proper way to conduct a wedding, set a table for a formal dinner, etcetera. Informal etiquette is the more important of the two because it controls how people behave in their everyday lives. It includes such things as table manners and the courtesies that a man offers a woman. Its most important aspect is that it requires people to be polite. Americans are taught to respect everyone regardless of their status, age or race. A person can be well-educated and know a lot of formal etiquette, but unless he is courteous to everyone, he is said to have bad manners.

As soon as a child is capable of understanding, his parents begin to teach him manners. An impolite child is an embarrassment. He is taught table manners, respect for other people's belongings, and to always be courteous to others. He should not eat in front of others unless he has enough to share. When at a friend's house, he should not ask for anything. He should wait until he is asked if he would like something. It is impolite to make a lot of noise when others are around. In the South where social manners are perhaps given greater emphasis, children often learn to answer questions with "Yes, Sir," or "Yes, Ma'am."

ACTIVITIES:

1. How did your parents teach you manners? Were they strict or lax?
2. A good friend walks into the room wearing a new outfit. It is very very ugly. Find out what an American would say or not say and why. Would you react in the same way?
3. What is a "snob"?
4. Have you noticed any American rules of etiquette or manners which would be considered impolite in your country? List them and explain.
5. You have been invited to an American's home for dinner. Make a list of what you should and should not do. Make another list for an American invited to dinner in your country. Compare and discuss your lists in class.

IRAN:

Very few Iranians have time as their master; enjoying life is more important than getting ahead. Only those in industry and other modern professions are controlled by it in any way. The average Iranian does not lead a hurried life. There is always "farda" (tomorrow). To be half an hour late for an appointment is to be on time. If someone doesn't keep an appointment, there are no hard feelings. Another appointment can be made. There is no feeling that one will lose out or miss anything. In fact, one can often times drop in because an appointment isn't always necessary.

USA:

Time and its efficient and productive use are very important to nearly everyone in the U.S. The old adage "Time is money" partially explains why it is so important. To waste time is to lose money and be looked down upon by others. To work hard and make the best use of time is to get ahead and be admired and accepted by others.

Being prompt is very important, almost a virtue. You should never be late for an appointment. In fact, it is a good idea to arrive several minutes ahead of time. If you are going to be more than a few minutes late for an appointment, it's a good idea to somehow let the other party know. It will save hard feelings. In many social situations, however, it is common to arrive a little late (fifteen minutes or so).

Americans are concerned not only with what they have to do today, but they look ahead to the future as well. They try to plan their work, activities and vacations far ahead. Most Americans know what they will be doing for the next few hours, days, weeks and months. Many are even able to tell you what they'll be doing five or ten years from now. Nearly everyone has a schedule which is designed to use time in the most efficient way possible. There are office schedules, school schedules and personal schedules. Many Americans carry appointment books and find calendars indispensable. In most cases, these schedules are inflexible; they are given a lot of importance. People become upset and frustrated when they fall behind schedule because of unexpected delays.

ACTIVITIES:

1. You are going to be an hour late in arriving at an American friend's house for dinner. With a classmate, write a dialogue in which you phone your friend and explain your situation.
2. Interview two or three Americans. Find out what they plan to be doing the next day, the next month and five years from now. Would people in your country be able to give the same information?
3. What are your feelings about time and punctuality? Are they important? Why or why not?
4. You are a student who is continually late for class. Make a list of five excuses that an American teacher might accept. Make another list of excuses that the teacher probably would not accept.

IRAN:

Iranians are ready and willing to talk about almost any topic. Money is a favorite subject; however, facts are often exaggerated or slightly less than truthful. Iranians are careful not to offend anyone. For this reason, they never discipline anyone else's children. Also, a man does not comment on the beauty of another man's wife or daughter. Compliments must be worded very carefully. There is a belief that something bad will happen to a child or a possession if it is complimented too enthusiastically. It is better to jokingly say that a child is ugly than to rave about its beauty.

There are also several things that Iranians consider socially impolite. They do not wear shoes in the house. Guests never have to serve themselves. There is very little eye contact between men and women that don't know one another well. It is also impolite to blow one's nose in front of anyone.

USA:

Americans are reluctant to talk about several things. They dislike discussing their personal life with others perhaps because they are afraid of exposing themselves to others. One should not ask why a couple has no children. People, especially women, don't like to reveal their age. Perhaps money is the most sensitive of all topics. Americans don't like to tell others how much they earn. They don't like to talk about how much they paid for something either. It is undesirable to borrow or lend money; if you are an adult, you don't even want to borrow money from your parents.

Americans are sensitive about touching and the area around them. To stand closer than three feet when having a normal conversation makes most of them feel uncomfortable. Eye contact should not be too intense; staring is impolite. Friends of the same sex do not hold hands (except children) and have little body contact.

There are many other things that Americans find distasteful. They don't like to lend or borrow things. This is because they have a strong sense of ownership and are often very possessive of their belongings. "What's mine is mine, and what's yours is yours." Americans like orderliness. If a person tries to crowd in line, he might hear someone say, "The line forms at the rear." Americans also try not to compare two people when they are both present. They are afraid of hurting someone's feelings. "If you can't say something nice, don't say anything at all."

ACTIVITIES:

1. Are there any American customs that would be considered impolite in your country? If so, list them and explain why.
2. Suppose an American were coming to your country. What do's and don't's would you tell him about?
3. Some do's and don't's are only superstitions.* Interview one or two Americans to learn a few of these superstitions. Contrast them with those of your country.
4. Find out from an American when and how to give compliments. Write five compliments for five different situations.
5. Interview one or two Americans to find out when, where and with whom kissing is permitted. Discuss your findings in class.

*For example, if a groom sees his bride-to-be the night before the wedding or the hours preceding the ceremony, the couple may have bad luck during their married life. Another example would be not to take someone's last cigarette from a pack because it could bring bad luck to that person.

IRAN:

Most Iranians have guests or are guests themselves two or three times a week. Guests are a very important part of life for them. The host and the hostess treat their guests extremely well; they shower them with attention. The minute a guest arrives, he is given hot tea and fruit. He sits on the floor and pillows are placed behind him to make sure that he is in no way uncomfortable. He is encouraged to sit in the best place in the house. A guest of higher status may be entertained in a room filled with western style furniture. In this setting, entertaining is always formal. Guests often stay late until the 'last tea' is offered, or they are asked to spend the night.

USA:

Americans used to visit their families and friends quite often. Today, however, most people are guests no more than once or twice a month, perhaps because of the increasing availability of home and outside entertainment. Guests are invited a week or so ahead of time and are given a specific time to come.

The host and the hostess set the tone of the evening. The guests take their cues from them. Usually, the atmosphere is casual. When the guest arrives, the host or hostess usually offers him a cup of coffee, a glass of tea or a drink. If the guest is a good friend, the host may say, "If you want something, help yourself." If the host begins to yawn or the conversation slows down, it is time for the guest to leave. Serving dessert late may also be a sign that the guest should leave.

Most Americans entertain in a very informal setting. There are few rules that a guest must follow. When a guest arrives, he probably won't even shake hands with the host. The guest doesn't have to bring a gift either. However, in recent years, it has become rather fashionable to bring a bottle of wine. If the host and the guest are very good friends, the guest may offer to bring something such as a salad, rolls or a dessert. A woman often offers to help the hostess in the kitchen. She might help get dinner ready or set the table. She often helps clear the table, and occasionally helps wash the dishes.

ACTIVITIES:

1. A guest comes to your home. With a classmate, write a dialogue in which you greet him, invite him in, etcetera.
2. Make of list of some compliments a person may give while he is a guest in an American's home. How does this list compare with the compliments you might give in your country?
3. Refer to a book of etiquette. Find some rules that apply to formal dining. List them.
4. Suppose a guest were coming to your house. What preparations would you make? Compare these preparations with your classmates'?
5. Write three or four examples of things an American guest might say when he or she wants to leave. Would it be different in your country?

IRAN:

Having friends is very important to most Iranians. It can also be a big responsibility. Being friends not only means that you have good times together, but also that you are ready to help each other and listen to one another's problems whenever necessary. An Iranian friend will not hesitate to give his time and money in order to help a friend. Families are so large that a person's best friends are likely to be among his relatives.

Men and women never hold hands in public, but it is normal for two men or women to walk together holding hands. It is a sign of friendship. If two friends of the same sex haven't seen each other for several days or weeks, it is customary for them to kiss each other on both cheeks. They also kiss each other when saying good-bye.

USA:

As a whole, Americans are fairly easy going on the surface. You can chat with them and become casual friends quickly, but it can take a long time to become close friends. They are wary of someone who wants to become too close too fast. There are limitations even after becoming close friends. They do not visit one another too often because they don't want to impose. People are frequently too busy for friends because of many outside activities and interests.

There aren't many outward signs of affection between friends. Men may pat one another on the back or shake hands if it has been some time since they have been together. It is acceptable for women to kiss each other on the cheek or for a man to kiss a woman on the cheek, but two male friends would never kiss.

There is a big difference between having a girlfriend and a friend that is a girl. If a boy has a girlfriend, it means that he dates her and is romantically interested in her. If a boy has a friend that is a girl, it means that he is interested in her only as a friend. Men and women are often friends without having romantic interests in one another.

Americans have a great many acquaintances, but few close friends. Many Americans want to be popular. It is a desired quality to be liked and admired by everyone, even at a distance. Popularity is an important consideration when choosing one's friends.

ACTIVITIES:

1. Describe your best friend. What makes him or her your best friend?
2. Can a spouse be one's best friend? Why or why not?
3. Can a boy and a girl just be friends in your country? Explain.
4. Interview two or three Americans. Ask them what they consider to be the two most important qualities that a friend should have. How do your findings compare with your own beliefs?
5. Interview an American to find out what he would or would not do for a friend. Compare your results with what you would or would not do.

IRAN:

Dating, in the American sense, is not permitted in Iran because of Islam. The only exceptions are a few children from wealthy families in northern Tehran and a few students at major universities. It is not uncommon, however, for a boy and a girl to see each other secretly. A girl might visit her best friend more frequently because she likes her friend's brother. Although she is not left alone with him, she does have the chance to talk to him and get to know him a little better. Dating is allowed only after a couple becomes engaged. The boy is then allowed to take his fiancée to a movie, a restaurant or to visit relatives. They are usually accompanied by a younger brother who acts as a chaperone.

USA:

Young people in the U.S. usually begin to date when they are fourteen or fifteen years old. The boy asks the girl if she would like to go out with him. They usually go to a movie, a dance or a party. If they are out of high school, they may eat in a restaurant first. Usually, the boy pays for everything, but this custom is slowly changing. If the girl is living with her parents, they may give her a curfew. It is usually sometime between eleven o'clock and one o'clock. An individual often chooses to date a variety of people. When dating becomes restricted to only one person, the couple is said to be 'going steady'. Many feel dating helps to complete one's social education.

People date for a variety of reasons. Dating can be simply for fun, but getting to know and understand members of the opposite sex is perhaps the most important reason. A person chooses his or her spouse by dating. Parents usually approve of the person their son or daughter is dating. However, occasionally, a boy or girl will continue to date someone their parents disapprove of or dislike.

There are no dating rules that apply to all boys and girls. Holding hands, kissing and sex are perhaps the most difficult aspects of dating to explain. Kissing and holding hands are accepted by nearly all Americans, but not always on the first date. Sex often comes much later in the relationship and may be reserved for marriage.

ACTIVITIES:

1. A boy wants to ask a girl out for a date in America. With a classmate, write a dialogue including all the necessary questions, answers and information.
2. What is a computer dating service? Write a paragraph giving your opinions on such a service. Could such a service ever become popular in your country? Explain.
3. Write an essay giving your views on dating as you see it in the American culture.
4. Find out what the following terms or expressions mean:

love at first sight

to have a crush on someone

puppy love

to go Dutch

a blind date

to make up

a double date

a fox

IRAN:

Most marriages in Iran are arranged by the parents who have greater experience and wisdom. Villagers generally marry at a younger age than city dwellers, and girls are usually several years younger than their husbands. A young man often marries one of his uncles' or aunts' daughters. Before the marriage, the families of the bride and groom bargain to decide what the bride must be promised in case the marriage ends in divorce. The groom agrees to owe the bride a certain amount of gold, land or other valuable goods that serve as a kind of insurance in case of divorce. Her family, on the other hand, must furnish the couple with everything necessary to start life in a home of their own. There is often a courtship period of a year or two after the marriage contract is signed. The couple is then married by a Moslem priest. The marriage is consummated anytime from a day to a year later when the families have a big reception for friends and family.

USA:

In the United States, a young person is free to choose the person he or she wants to marry. This person is usually found by dating a variety of people. Parents usually don't want their children to become serious about any one person until they have finished high school or later.

There are no timetables for how long a couple should date or be engaged. When they decide they love each other and want to get married, they simply become engaged and together decide on a date for the wedding. When a girl accepts a boy's proposal for marriage, it is customary that he give her a diamond ring. Parental approval is not necessary, but it is usually asked for and granted.

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Plans for the wedding are made mostly by the bride and her family. They send invitations to friends and relatives of both families and make other preparations such as reserving a church, buying the wedding dress and arranging for flowers. They may arrange for a dinner and a dance after the wedding ceremony. Usually the bride's family pays for nearly all the wedding expenses. The groom's family may pay for a dinner party the evening before the wedding. Guests to the wedding bring gifts to a reception or send them to the bride's home before the ceremony.

Weddings are usually held in a church with a minister or priest present to perform the ceremony. However, some couples simply go to a Justice of the Peace. The government requires that they purchase a marriage license and have a blood test before getting married.

ACTIVITIES:

1. At what age do the majority of boys and girls get married in your country? What about the United States? At what age do you think couples should marry?
2. What are the wedding customs of your country? How do they differ from those in the U.S.?
3. Write a short proposal of marriage to a girl or a boy. Explain why you want to marry him or her. (Would a woman ever ask a man to marry her in your country?)
4. Write a composition describing the person you would ideally like to marry.

IRAN:

Iranians, as a whole, have a pretty easy going attitude towards work. If something can't be done today, there is always tomorrow. When one needs a plumber, a mechanic or someone else to perform a service, it can take days or weeks to get the job done. The key is to know someone who can do the job or help you find someone to do it. Only factory workers and a few working in modern professions have strict schedules to follow. Usually, only the poorest of people do manual labor. Most people look down on those who work with their hands. The goal of many is to become a "ra'iss" (boss), a status position. A "ra'iss" sits behind a desk in a big office; he gives orders and delegates responsibility. Servants often bring him and his guests tea. People lower than him in position sometimes back out of his office as a sign of respect for his position and power.

USA:

The work ethic is a very important part of American culture. The first Europeans who came to America had to work extremely hard to conquer the land. Many feel that the only way to get ahead in life is by working hard. An unemployed person on welfare is looked down upon by most of society. Americans have the expression, "Never put off until tomorrow what you can do today." Prompt service certainly attributes to the success of any business. Almost everyone is expected to work hard. Most people in management positions get their jobs because of the quality of their work, not because of the people they know. Most employees work eight hours a day, five days a week. However, some businesses have implemented a four-day workweek for their employees.

Workers' rights and wages are protected by the federal government and by labor unions. The government sets the minimum wage and states that all persons must be given equal opportunity for employment regardless of race, religion, sex or political preference. Women, however, are still struggling to gain more complete equality. Certain professions are unionized. These unions help their members maintain good salaries and benefits. Benefits include such things as paid vacation, medical, life and disability insurance and sick leave. Every three or four years, unions negotiate with employers in order to raise salaries and improve benefits for their members. When there is no agreement between employer and union, the workers go on strike.

ACTIVITIES:

1. List several professions or jobs which are highly respected in your country. Make a second list of jobs that are looked down upon. Do the same thing for the U.S. and compare your findings. Which jobs are restricted to a specific sex?
2. Find out what the minimum wage is in the United States. How does this wage compare with the lowest wages in your country?
3. Interview several Americans. Find out what manual work they do themselves instead of hiring someone else to do it. Would it be the same in your country?
4. Discuss how much power unions should have. Should there be any government controls? Should some professions be forbidden to strike? Does your country allow unions? strikes?

IRAN:

At one time, nearly everything except groceries was bargained for in Iran. Many things must still be bargained for, but as Iran has become more modern, prices on many things have been fixed. Most items produced in factories now have fixed prices. This is especially true of government owned stores. In contrast, nearly everything can be bargained for in the bazaar where buying expensive items such as a nice carpet can take several days. The custom of bargaining and drinking tea is enjoyed by customers and shopkeepers alike. A customer should first get to know the shopkeeper a little bit before talking about the price of an item. A customer in too much of a hurry will always pay a higher price.

USA:

Americans don't seem to understand or like bargaining. They usually don't question prices. If the goods are too expensive, they simply don't buy them. A few things, however, are bargained for. These include such items as houses, cars, horses and land.

When a person needs to buy a specific item, he may look in several stores before finally making the purchase. The larger discount stores often have the best prices, but the customer needs to be careful about the quality of the item he's buying. Some stores try to present an image of prestige and luxury. They have higher prices and the customer pays extra for the conveniences they offer and the name brands they sell.

Competition between stores is a very important aspect of business in the U.S. Stores are constantly trying to attract more customers by advertising low prices on a few select items and by offering better services than their competitors. A supermarket, for example, might have a bank or a post office inside it to attract customers. This competition has been good for the customer, but many small stores have gone out of business because they can't lower their prices as much as the large stores can. Small stores are usually owned by individuals while large stores are owned by corporations. Some large discount stores sell goods at a profit of only three to five percent.

ACTIVITIES:

1. You want to buy a car. With a classmate, write a dialogue between a car dealer and you in which you bargain.
2. Find out what extra services department stores, grocery stores, pharmacies, and appliance stores may provide in order to attract customers. Do stores in your country offer the same or similar services? Why or why not?
3. What are the advantages and disadvantages of bargaining? List them.
4. What role does competition play in business dealings in your country?

IRAN:

Except for villagers and ethnic minorities, Iranians dress in a conservative western style. The "chador" (veil) and baggy pajamas which are worn at home are almost the only remaining signs of traditional Iranian dress. New clothes are often bought once a year at the beginning of the year. Most people like to dress up. Men wear suits and ties and women wear dresses with short or long sleeves. Sleeveless blouses or dresses and short skirts are considered immodest. Blue jeans are very popular among the young as are Italian style shirts and slacks. In the villages, many men wear traditional baggy slacks and cloth shoes. They nearly always wear a sportcoat as well. Tribal people are the only Iranians that haven't been affected very much by western clothing styles. They still wear their traditional clothing; tribal women do not wear veils.

USA:

Clothes and the impression they make are very important to Americans. Most people change their clothing daily and have different clothes for work and home. They spend large amounts of money on their wardrobe which is selected to conform to concepts of fashion and popularity. Teenagers and young adults like comfortable casual clothes; blue jeans is a main item in their wardrobe. Women are perhaps the most fashion conscious. They wear dresses or slack outfits. Men wear slacks, shirts and sometimes vests; three piece suits are popular. However, they do not wear ties and sportcoats as often as men in other countries.

There are many clothing stores in the United States. Department stores sell all types of clothing for every kind of person. Smaller stores often specialize by selling clothing designed for only one specific group of people. These stores might specialize in clothing for tall people, athletes, large people, small people, children, pregnant women, etcetera.

In a clothing store, a customer is free to select several items and take them to a dressing room to try them on. Clerks are usually present to help the customers find the correct sizes, etcetera, but they also keep their eyes open to discourage and catch shoplifters.

Tailors are not common in the U.S. It is much cheaper to buy ready-made clothing. However, many American women sew clothes for themselves and their family. There are plenty of fabric shops which sell everything needed to make clothes at home.

ACTIVITIES:

1. Write a paragraph giving your impressions on how Americans dress. Make comparisons with people in your country.
2. Explain the proverb, "Clothes don't make the man." Do you have a similar expression in your language?
3. How do American clothing sizes differ with those in your country? Make comparisons.
4. Find out what kind of clothing most Americans would wear to school, a class party, a funeral, a movie and to bed. Would you wear the same type of clothing in these instances?

IRAN:

The Iranian housewife keeps her home quite clean. It is always presentable because guests may arrive unannounced at any time. Personal cleanliness varies greatly and is somewhat related to class. It can take several hours to take an Iranian style bath. The public bathhouse is a place for social gatherings for women taking their weekly baths. They often bring food and spend hours talking with their friends.

The same standards of cleanliness are not found in public places. Many restaurants, bus stations and even hospitals would be considered health hazards by American standards. Many public places have containers of water with one cup attached to be used by everyone. On inter-city buses, the driver's helper always passes down the aisle of the bus offering water to passengers from the same glass.

USA:

Generally, American homes are clean, but they are not always orderly. Hundreds of cleaning products are available to keep the kitchen floor shining, the carpet smelling fresh, the bathroom sparkling and germ free, etc. Most Americans are concerned with personal cleanliness. Many take a bath or shower every day. They find body odor offensive and spend millions of dollars on deodorant soaps, deodorants, mouthwash, breathmints and perfumes. They usually change their clothing every day.

Parents try to teach children the importance of cleanliness by having them wash their hands after handling animals, before meals, etcetera. Children are often responsible for cleaning their own rooms and may be required to help in cleaning the house.

Standards of cleanliness in public places are strictly controlled by federal and state agencies. Kitchens in eating establishments must be spotless; dishes must be sterilized. In many states, those who prepare food must have their heads covered. Hospitals, day care centers, nursing homes and many other public places are also regularly inspected by these agencies. Any of these places can have their licenses revoked and can be closed if there are any flagrant health violations. Other agencies are responsible for strictly inspecting food (such as meat and dairy products) before it is sold to the public. Water is regularly tested and treated with chlorine.

ACTIVITIES:

1. Visit a bar or restaurant. Ask the manager what he must do to meet state health requirements. Make a list. Are the requirements the same in your country? Have a discussion.
2. Write a paragraph describing what your mother does/did to keep the house clean.
3. With one of your classmates, write a commercial for some type of cleaning product. Dramatize it.
4. Find the meanings of the following vocabulary words:

bleach	disinfect
deodorize	scrub
detergent	stain

IRAN:

If an Iranian has a choice, he will usually choose to eat at home. This is because, in general, restaurant food differs greatly from that served at home. The cities have a few good restaurants; but, in most parts of the country, restaurants are rather dirty and usually serve only rice and kebab. Waiters (there are very few waitresses) are often treated as lower class people. Customers are often very rude to them. Better restaurants add a fifteen percent service charge to the bill, but this money isn't given to the waiter. If the waiter has given good service, the customer should hand him a tip.

When two or more friends eat in a restaurant, leaving can take a long time because everyone does his best to pay the bill. Usually, the person that suggested eating out ends up paying the bill.

USA:

Most Americans eat out on a regular basis because the food and service are usually good. It also gives the family, especially the mother, a break in routine. A lot of families have the habit of eating out at least once a week. Some people take guests to restaurants. Businessmen often take clients to a restaurant for lunch or dinner.

When a customer sits down in a restaurant, a waitress soon brings him a glass of water and a menu. If the waitress gives good, fast and polite service, the customer should leave her a tip of fifteen percent of the bill.

Americans seldom argue over who pays the bill. When several people eat together, one person may pay for all, or they may ask for separate checks. The bill is usually paid at the cash register as you leave.

A majority of eating establishments in the United States are fast food restaurants. Many of them belong to what are called 'chains'. A chain is a group of restaurants with the same name. There may be several hundred or thousand restaurants in a chain. There are several American chains that have restaurants in other countries as well. These chains sell such foods as hamburgers, fish, chicken and pizza.

Cities have restaurants for almost every kind of person. The rich, the poor, the foreign, the young and the old can all find a restaurant to suit their tastes. Eating out is a form of entertainment for many. Some restaurants have musicians to entertain their customers. Others have old-time movies and player pianos. Many restaurants are entertaining simply because of the unusual atmosphere they have.

ACTIVITIES:

1. Survey the area in which you are living. Make a list of all the different kinds of restaurants you can find. Would it be the same in your country? Discuss your findings in class.
2. With a classmate, write a dialogue in which you and a friend order lunch or dinner at an American restaurant.
3. Interview two or three Americans. Ask them how often they eat out and what their reasons for eating out are. How often does your family eat out in your country?
4. Find out what bad service is to an American and how he or she would respond to it. Compare your findings with responses you would expect to receive from natives of your own country.

IRAN:

In general, Iranians spend most of their free time with friends or with their families and relatives. This is because family and friends are given priority in daily life. They frequently spend their Fridays picnicking in parks or in the country. In the late afternoon or evening, they take leisurely strolls. Television is a growing form of entertainment, it has become quite popular. Movies, attended almost exclusively by males, are not as popular as in many countries because they are looked down upon by Islam. By American standards, there are very few other recreational activities available. Iranians spend much of their time at home.

USA:

Because Americans are spending fewer and fewer hours at work, they have more free time than ever before. Much of this time is spent outside the home participating in sports, going to movies or taking part in other recreational activities. Schools have many activities for the young. There are sports, school dances, music groups, etcetera which keep students busy. Churches, clubs and other organizations have recreational activities for groups ranging in age from the very young to senior citizens. Businessmen have responded quickly to the need for recreational facilities. They have built miniature golf courses, amusement parks, water slides, ice and roller skating rinks, game halls, etcetera.

Some Americans have become used to being entertained rather than entertaining themselves. Perhaps television is the greatest entertainer of all. In major cities, as many as twenty channels are available through cable television. Almost every home has at least one set; many have two or three. Video tape machines enable a viewer to tape one program for later viewing while watching another. A number of games have been invented which can be played when they are connected to a television set.

Many people complain that their families watch too much television. Some watch it as much as thirty or forty hours a week. Others criticize it because they say most programs are too violent or unfit for younger audiences. However, for the most part, television ratings determine what is shown on commercial television.

ACTIVITIES:

1. Survey the area in which you are living. List all the entertainment facilities that are available to you. Which would you find or not find in your country?
2. Interview three Americans of different ages. Ask them what they do for recreation or entertainment. How do these activities compare with the activities of people of similar age in your country?
3. Do you think T.V. programming should be censored? Why or why not?
4. How do you spend your free time in your country? Have you changed these habits since your arrival in the U.S.? If so, how?

IRAN:

"Noh Ruz", the Iranian New Year, is the favorite time for Iranians to go on vacation. It begins on March 21st. Universities, schools and many businesses close for a period of up to two weeks. Even the government curtails its services. Most people like to visit relatives, the warmer areas in the South or one of the larger cities like Esfahan or Shiraz. During these two weeks, it is almost impossible to buy transportation tickets to anywhere.

The Caspian Sea is a favorite vacation spot during the summer months. Beaches and resorts are filled with thousands of tourists until September. Workers also get many religious and political holidays off. A majority of the religious holidays, however, are days of mourning and therefore, not to be celebrated.

USA:

Most Americans get two to four weeks of paid vacation per year. The amount of vacation depends on the number of years one has worked. Some people enjoy visiting relatives or simply taking it easy at home, while others like to visit beautiful or unusual places. Hawaii, California, Florida, Colorado, Yellowstone Park and the Grand Canyon are some of the most popular sites. You can arrange your own trip or let a travel agent do it for you. Travel agencies also offer a variety of package tours and cruises at reasonable rates.

In addition to regular vacations, most workers get a number of paid holidays off. These include New Year's Day, George Washington's birthday, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving and Christmas. Several of these holidays are arranged so that workers have a three or four-day weekend.

Camping is becoming a very popular way of spending a vacation or weekend. Some people put up tents while others have campers that fit on the back of pick-up trucks. They often have beds, heaters, small stoves and room for storing supplies. They are especially nice for fishing trips or long highway trips when one doesn't want to spend money on motels. Those with enough money often buy motor homes. These motorized vehicles offer nearly all the comforts of home. There are many sites in government parks and along highways where the vacationer can park his vehicle or set up camp. These sites often offer such conveniences as electricity, sewer hook-ups, swimming pools, organized tours, etcetera. Entertainment programs for evening enjoyment are also organized at many of these sites.

ACTIVITIES:

1. Plan a summer vacation in America for yourself. Write your itinerary and draw your route on a map.
2. Describe the best vacation you have ever had. Where did you go? What did you do there?
3. What are the most common vacation spots within a 300 mile radius of where you are living? List them.
4. Interview one or two Americans to find out how they celebrate Thanksgiving and Christmas.
5. Research an American holiday assigned to you by the teacher. Give a short oral report in class.

IRAN:

Sports are popular in Iran; however, participation is limited mainly to students and young men. Favorite sports include soccer, volleyball, ping pong and wrestling. Boys of all ages can be seen playing soccer in the streets and empty lots. There are also several professional soccer teams in major cities. Schools teach students how to play sports and often hold matches with other schools. The Iranian wrestling team usually performs well at the Olympics.

A very old traditional sport called "varzeshe bostoni" is still practiced in some cities. A variety of wooden weights and chains are used to perform difficult exercises. This sport requires a lot of practice, strength and discipline in order to become skilled.

USA:

Sports play a major role in the American way of life. There is a sport for nearly every age and season of the year. Organized competition in football, baseball and soccer often begins for boys at the age of six. Girls also take part in sports, but not as much as boys. Schools have mandatory physical education classes where students have the opportunity to practice many different kinds of sports. Junior high and senior high school teams compete with other schools quite frequently in such sports as football, basketball, baseball, wrestling, tennis, swimming, gymnastics and track and field. Girls chosen by the students often accompany football and basketball teams as cheerleaders. Adults enjoy such sports as tennis, swimming, racquetball, baseball, golf, bowling, boating and many, many others.

Colleges and universities often spend huge sums of money on their athletic programs (especially football and basketball). Great importance is given to having a winning team because Americans don't like losers. Sports facilities are built with gate receipts from football and basketball games and donations from alumni.

Scholarships (and sometimes other benefits) are given to young men who are exceptionally good at a sport. These athletes, sometimes referred to as 'jocks', often major in Physical Education. Many of them get through college on nothing more than their athletic ability. College sports also serve as a kind of proving ground. The best players are drafted by professional teams as soon as they graduate.

ACTIVITIES:

1. Make a list of the sports facilities available to you in the area in which you are living. Would similar facilities be available to you in your country? Explain.
2. Write a paragraph giving your opinion on the role sports should or should not play at a university.
3. Find out what the following expressions mean and when they are used.
 - "It doesn't matter whether you win or lose, but how you play the game."
 - "He's a poor sport."
4. Choose a sport played in America or an unusual sport played in your country. Prepare an oral report explaining how it is played and what its rules are.

IRAN:

Iranians are especially fond of music, but few parents encourage their children to become musicians. For many, it plays an important role in their everyday lives. Radios and cassette players, owned by nearly everyone, can be heard playing a variety of traditional and modern songs. A bus ride is not complete unless the driver is playing the radio or a cassette tape as loudly as possible. Music and dancing is a must at picnics and other family gatherings. One or two people often get up to dance in front of the others at these events. Then, they in turn, try to get someone to take their places. Religious leaders are trying to discourage music in many of its forms. They say that it corrupts the soul the same as opium.

USA:

Most Americans feel that music makes a person well-rounded. Parents often consider music to be a necessary part of their children's education. They pay instructors to give their children private voice lessons or lessons on a variety of musical instruments. Piano lessons are perhaps the most common. All schools offer music classes. Many students become members of the concert band, the marching band or a singing group.

Dancing is enjoyed as a group activity by most Americans except for those who consider it against their religion. Disco, square dancing, folk dancing and ballroom dancing are the most common types of dance. However,

most Americans would be embarrassed if they were asked to sing or dance in front of others. They prefer to be part of group activities rather than have attention focused only on them.

There is some kind of music to suit nearly every taste and age group in America. Bluegrass, folk, country and western, jazz, classical, disco and hard rock are only a few. Radio stations often specialize in one particular kind of music so that they can develop a regular audience. Recording companies and performers make millions of dollars from music. Companies market mood music which is played in supermarkets, doctors' offices and other places frequented by the public. Cities and even small towns have a variety of discotheques, concerts of all kinds and many other music related events.

ACTIVITIES:

1. What exposure did you have to music when you were growing up? How important is music to you now? What are your favorite kinds of music? What is your opinion of American music?
2. Interview two or three Americans. Find out if they played a musical instrument as a child and if they play one now. Would the results be the same in your country?
3. How many music related events will there be in the area within the next month? Make a list of them.
4. Find out what kind of stereotyped person is associated with each of the following kinds of music. Do you have similar stereotypes in your country?

Bluegrass

Jazz

Disco

Country and Western

Classical

Hard Rock

IRAN:

There are no visible alcohol or drug problems in Iran. Islam forbids the drinking of alcohol, but it can be easily purchased on the black market. Hashish, brought in from Afghanistan, is smoked by a few young men, especially in the cities. The main drug problem comes from the use of opium among men all over Iran. Intense peer pressure at social gatherings encourages its use. Men over sixty years of age can get a permit to buy opium from their local drugstore. It is also available on the black market to anyone who wants it. Some say that it is a cure for everything but itself.

USA:

All aspects of American society have been affected by the excessive use of alcohol and drugs. Alcohol is available nearly everywhere in the United States. The legal drinking age ranges from 18 to 21 depending on the state. Social drinking is enjoyed by a majority of the population, but there are many who become alcoholics. Heavy drinking and alcoholism is a major factor in many traffic accidents. Illegal drugs have become a big problem among American youth during the last fifteen years. Marijuana, hashish and cocaine are some of the most common drugs that are used. Drugs intended for medical purposes have become so easy to obtain that many depend on these 'uppers' and 'downers' to get them through the day.

Drug users and alcoholics often alienate themselves from friends and family. They lie and steal; some even abuse their spouse and children. They become so dependent upon their vices that they can't give them up without help. Federal, state and local governments have set up a variety of programs that work to rehabilitate these people. Efforts are being made to help both them and their families. Methadone maintenance programs for heroin addicts, Alcoholics Anonymous, special homes and counseling for disturbed teenagers and prevention programs in the public schools are examples of some of the most common programs.

ACTIVITIES:

1. What drug problems, if any, are you aware of in your country? How does the public react to people who use drugs?
2. Find out what programs have been established locally to discourage the misuse of drugs and alcohol. What are your views on such programs?
3. Do you think there should be an age restriction on alcoholic beverages? Why or why not?
4. Find out as many expressions as you can that mean to get drunk or high on drugs.
5. Find the meanings of the following terms. Interview Americans if necessary.

a head

a nickel bag

DWI

a social drinker

to trip

dope

booze

a teetotaler

TRANSPORTATION

IRAN:

Because of high import taxes, automobiles are so expensive in Iran that a majority of families still don't own one. Those who don't have cars may have motorcycles, motorbikes or bicycles.

Public transportation in the cities is good. There are many taxis both legal and illegal which take people anywhere within the city for a small fare. Taxi drivers try to fit as many people going in the same general direction into their cabs as possible; occasionally, a passenger even sits to the left of the driver. Tehran has many public buses, but other cities have only a few. Buses are usually crowded.

Transportation between cities and towns is very good. A wide variety of private bus companies transport people all over the country at reasonable fares. Air and rail service is available between major cities.

USA:

Privately owned automobiles are the most common means of transportation in the U.S. Most families have two cars. It is not unusual for someone to drive as many as twenty or thirty miles to get to work. Having so many cars has decreased the need for public transportation. A few cities have subways. Most cities provide bus service. Most people prefer using their own cars, but more people are beginning to use the public transportation system. Taxis are available but expensive; they take only one fare at a time.

The most common form of public transportation between cities is air travel. Nearly every town has an airport or airfield nearby. Airlines often stop in towns with as little as 10,000 population. Buses are still a common economical way to travel. Trains, however, are expensive and common only in certain areas of the country.

Until a few years ago, there were many passenger trains in the U.S. Because most of these lines were losing money, Amtrak, a government company, took over the passenger trains in most parts of the country. They are still losing money because there is little public interest. Train fares are almost as high as air fares. People looking for economy turn to the major bus lines, especially for short trips.

In 1977 and 1978, the government deregulated the airline industry making it possible for there to be greater competition between airlines. There are now many kinds of super-saver tickets available. The result has been a large increase in the number of passengers. Airports have become so crowded in the summer months that a passenger may spend a couple of extra hours departing and arriving.

ACTIVITIES:

1. You want to travel by air from where you are to a major city in the U.S. Telephone a travel agency and ask for the different fares available. Be sure to inquire about 'super-saver' flights.
2. Compare traveling costs by air, bus and train (if possible) from one city to another in the U.S.
3. What is car pooling? What else are Americans doing to conserve fuel? What do people do in your country to conserve fuel?
4. What is the main function of the railway system in the United States? Compare your country to the U.S.

IRAN:

Iran has a need to improve its system of streets and highways. Many highways have been built, but road construction is very slow because much of the work is done by manual labor. Huge traffic jams occur in the cities because there are relatively few streets large enough to carry rush hour traffic, and also because drivers pay little attention to driving rules. Most residential streets are narrow alleyways called "kuche". In newer areas, these alleyways are wide enough for parking and one lane of traffic, but in older areas, there often isn't room for a car at all. All streets and most "kuche" have open gutters called "jube". They are about a foot wide and a foot deep. It is not uncommon to see a car with a wheel stuck in the "jube".

USA:

Billions of dollars are spent annually in the United States to build and maintain a sophisticated system of roads and highways. The federal government is responsible for interstate highways, many of which are super highways. Highways that serve local areas are maintained by state or county governments. Those running north and south have odd numbers while those running east and west have even numbers.

There are traffic jams in American cities, but their number and size have been reduced because of the many wide streets and freeways that have been built. Nearly all streets are wide enough to allow parking on both sides of the street and at least two lanes of traffic. Alleys are built between the streets to allow for garbage pick-up and other maintenance services.

Streets in many American cities run in straight lines. They are often numbered or in alphabetical order. Newer residential areas, however, have fewer through streets. In these areas, the streets have many curves, dead-ends and cul-de-sacs. They are built this way to reduce traffic, create smaller neighborhoods, and in some parts of the country, for aesthetic reasons.

There is a wide variety of machinery used to clean and maintain streets and highways. A lot of money is spend on greenery to make the medians and right-of-ways as attractive as possible. Whenever a crew is working on a street or highway, they must have yellow flashing lights and signs to warn drivers of their presence.

ACTIVITIES:

1. Describe how the streets are organized in the area in which you are living. Contrast your findings with the organization of streets in your hometown. Think of one or two reasons why the organization is different.
2. Working in pairs, plan a trip to a distant city in the U.S. Use a road map. List the numbers of the highways that you would take. Figure out how long the trip would take and where you would stay overnight en route.
3. With the class divided into two or three groups, plan and draw a city. Decide how to organize streets and freeways. Include a downtown area, parks, factories, churches, etcetera. After the maps are completed, take turns asking for directions to various sites.
4. Find the meanings of the following terms:

shoulder	pavement	overpass	fork in the road
detour	cloverleaf	median	curb and gutter
5. In the U.S., much more money is spent to build and maintain streets and highways than public transportation systems. Interview one or two Americans. Ask them what it is about the U.S. and/or Americans that makes streets and highways more important than public transportation systems. Also ask them why good streets and highways are so important to Americans in their daily lives.

IRAN:

Before an Iranian can get a driver's license, he must attend an expensive driving school. He must practice driving with an instructor and learn all the rules, but as soon as he gets his license, he's practically free to drive as he pleases. Iran has all the usual traffic laws, but the law that is enforced most frequently is the one for parking in the wrong place. This lack of law enforcement contributes to huge traffic jams and many accidents.

Drivers in Iran must learn to be aggressive. Most drivers concern themselves with what is in front of them and to the left and right. They don't worry about what is behind them. When the light turns yellow for the opposing traffic, nearly all drivers proceed as though the light were already green. It's not necessary to be polite to other drivers. When frustrated, drivers often honk their horns and shake their fists at other drivers.

USA:

Most Americans begin to drive when they are sixteen years old. Parents may teach their children how to drive, or students can take a driver's education course in high school. If they pass this course, they receive a regular driver's license from the state they are living in on their sixteenth birthday. Additional licenses are required to drive a truck or bus.

Traffic laws are very strict in the United States. State and local police are supplied with radar and other modern equipment. They try to stop anyone who breaks the law and give him or her a ticket. Americans, in general, obey most traffic laws. However, the speed limit is broken by many. The presence of many policemen has resulted in more orderly traffic and fewer accidents.

When a person gets a ticket in the U.S., he usually has to pay a fine. This fine can be as little as \$20 or as much as several hundred dollars. If a driver has too many moving violations within a year, he may lose his driver's license or have to attend a special driving clinic. Driving while intoxicated is one of the worst offenses. These drivers are requested to 'walk a straight line' and/or take a breath analyzer test. If they refuse the test, they can automatically have their driver's license revoked.

The maximum speed limit in America was reduced to 55 mph in 1975 in an effort to reduce the consumption of gasoline. It is obeyed by some, but ignored by many. Citizen band radios and radar detection devices help drivers in finding out when 'Smokey' is nearby.

ACTIVITIES:

1. List as many differences in driving rules and habits as you can between your country and the United States.
2. List the advantages and disadvantages of owning and driving your own car in the United States.
3. Find out what kinds of insurance are available for car owners. What factors determine the premium you must pay? What is full coverage?
4. Do you think a 55 mph speed limit is a good idea or not? Explain. What is the speed limit in your country?
5. Find out how an American driving a car would feel and respond in the following situations. Compare your findings with your own culture.
 - Someone driving behind you continually honks his horn.
 - An ambulance comes in your direction with its siren blowing.
 - Someone passes you at a high rate of speed and quickly pulls in front of you.

IRAN:

Service stations are not very numerous in Iran. A city of 500,000 people may have only twenty stations or so. Many service stations in Iran are privately owned while others are owned by the government. The gasoline and oil prices in all stations are set by the government. These prices are the same all over the country. Only gasoline, oil and diesel fuel are sold at these stations. They do not have mechanics on hand and do not provide any extra services to the customers. When a worker fills your car with gasoline, it is customary to give him a small tip. Many stations are open seven days a week from early morning until about ten o'clock at night.

USA:

There are many filling stations in the U.S. A small city of 20,000 people may have fifty to one hundred stations. If there are important highways that go through the city, there will be more stations.

Private individuals own most of the service stations in the United States. The owner of a station has a lease with a large oil company, but he usually sets his own prices (the government sets maximum prices). Many stations have both self-service and full-service pumps. Gasoline is several cents a gallon cheaper at a self-service pump. At a full-service pump, the attendant not only fills your gas tank with gasoline, but he may also clean the windshield and check the oil, water, battery and tires. Stations hours vary greatly. A few are open twenty-four hours a day.

Most filling stations in the U.S. offer extra services to their customers. These services usually include changing the oil, lubrication, tune-ups and washing cars. A few stations offer complete mechanical services. An average station has room for two or three cars in its garage. Most stations sell a number of items such as tires, batteries, fan belts and other accessories for cars. In addition to items for cars, most stations have vending machines that sell soft drinks, candy and cigarettes. Some stations also sell a limited number of grocery items.

ACTIVITIES:

1. Survey the area where you are living. Make a list of all the different service stations you find. How much do their prices differ?
2. With a classmate, write a dialogue between you and a service station attendant. You are at the full-service pump.
3. Compare service stations in your country with those in the United States. List as many differences as you can.
4. Discuss your view on the nationalization of the oil industry in many countries. What are the pros and cons?

IRAN:

In Iran, motorcycles and bicycles are an important means of transportation used almost exclusively by the lower middle and lower classes. Motorcycles and bicycles are essential to some people in their jobs. They are used to transport vegetables, deliver gas capsules, bread and so on. In addition, many boys and young men ride bicycles and motorcycles for fun. Women and girls don't ride motorcycles and bicycles; however, they are occasionally seen riding as passengers. Car drivers often become frustrated with people on motorcycles and bicycles because they disregard most traffic rules and cause a lot of accidents. They often ride on sidewalks at fast speeds and irritate pedestrians as well.

USA:

Motorcycles and bicycles are used primarily for recreation and exercise in the United States. However, they are becoming more popular as an inexpensive way to get to school or work. With the energy crisis, it is also a good way to save fuel. Motorcycles and bicycles have no class or age barriers. Almost anyone can ride them without being ridiculed. In the early evenings, it is common to see entire families out riding their bikes together; there are special seats for babies. A majority of riders are children and young adults. Many programs are given at schools and other places to teach children motorcycle and bicycle safety. Motorcycle and bicycle riders are expected to obey the same traffic laws as car drivers.

Unfortunately for cyclists, most American cities have been built and designed with the automobile in mind. However, because more and more people are riding motorcycles and bicycles to places where they drove their cars before, many cities now have bicycle lanes and routes. These routes have also been extended along some highways.

Serious cyclists invest a lot of money in their bicycles and motorcycles. Bicyclists buy special helmets, special shorts, gloves, toe clips, etcetera. Some of these cyclists join one of the many clubs which organize events for bicyclists and motorcyclists. Most of these clubs encourage cycling because of its recreational value and its value as a means of keeping fit. There are also a few clubs organized for people interested in the more negative aspects of life. Perhaps the most notorious of all these clubs is the Hell's Angels. The members of this club are feared by many because of their involvement in drugs, violence and crime.

ACTIVITIES:

1. Find out as many safety rules about riding bicycles and/or motorcycles in the U.S. as you can. How is cycling safety encouraged in your country?
2. Take a survey of at least four Americans. Find out how many own motorcycles and/or bicycles, why they ride them, and the average distance they ride them everyday.
3. Interview two Americans to find out what they think about motorcycle and bicycle riders. Ask them if their opinions are the same when they are pedestrians as when they are driving a car. How do your findings compare with your own culture? Compare notes with your classmates.
4. What is a motorcycle gang? Do you have any in your country? Can anything be done about them?

EDUCATION

IRAN:

There has been much recent revision in the Iranian public school system. Free education is available to all from elementary through university levels. This free education is often extended to adult education programs as well. All education is strictly controlled by the Ministry of Education.

Elementary school consists of five grades. This is followed by three years at a guidance school. Here, students begin to specialize. They may concentrate on the humanities, natural sciences or mathematics. Some may attend vocational guidance schools for technical training. Specialization continues through the four years of high school. After high school, students may attend a vocational school, a teacher training college or a university. Boys and girls attend separate schools until they finish high school. If a student chooses to let the government pay for his university education, he is required to work for the government for a number of years after graduation.

USA:

The American public school system is supported by local, state and federal governments; however, it is directly controlled by local school boards elected by the public. By law, children must attend school from the age of six until they are sixteen. Public education is free until students have finished high school.

There are several systems for dividing the twelve years of public education. The first six or eight grades make up the elementary school. Most school districts have two or three years of junior high school before students enter senior high school. During the three or four years of senior high school, students begin preparing themselves for future careers. A number of general courses must be taken by all students. Other courses, which are called electives, are college preparatory or vocational in nature.

The American public school system attempts to meet the needs of individual students. There are special classes for the emotionally disturbed, the mentally handicapped, slow readers and the mentally gifted. In some areas of the country, there are also special classes for bilingual students. Schools provide teachers with a wide variety of audio-visual equipment and other teaching aids that help them teach more effectively.

An important issue for public schools is that of desegregation and bussing. The Supreme Court has ruled that schools must be racially balanced, when possible, in order to achieve equality in education. Students are often bussed several miles to meet this requirement. Many parents have staged protests across the country as a result of bussing. Others have put their children in private schools.

ACTIVITIES:

1. Describe your elementary school or high school education. Contrast it with the American school system.
2. Interview two or three Americans to find out if they think children should be bussed in order to achieve racial balance in schools. Then, give the results as well as your own opinion in class.
3. What is an exceptional child? To what degree should these children be given special treatment in the public school system? What is available to such children in your country?
4. What extra-curricular activities do American high schools have? Interview Americans. What extra-curricular activities are available to students in your country?

IRAN:

Many parents now demand that their children go to school in order to make a better future for themselves. However, many Iranians feel the lessons of daily living are more valuable than the lessons learned in a classroom. School attendance is higher in urban areas than in rural areas. Some students claim they don't learn very much in schools. There is a shortage of well-trained teachers, and classrooms are almost always very crowded. Most schools have few teaching aids. Homework is often monotonous and requires students to copy and memorize lessons. Students 'help each other' a lot with classwork, homework exercises and tests. There is, however, a great deal of respect for teachers; they are often given flowers or other small gifts by students.

USA:

Almost every American feels that education is important. Education is thought of as the key to a good job and a better life. Almost everyone finishes high school and many go on to get higher degrees.

In America, teachers must earn the respect of students. Some schools have serious discipline problems. Teachers, in general, are not allowed to strike students. In some cases, the principal may spank students, but only in the presence of witnesses. Violence has become a problem in many schools. A few schools in cities even hire security guards to keep order. Nearly all school districts are forced to spend large amounts of extra money each year because of vandalism by students.

For most students, however, school is a serious matter. Competition can be quite strong. Cheating is a very serious offense. In such cases, students receive zeros, or at a university, they may be expelled and not allowed to return.

A few parents believe public schools are doing a poor job of educating their children. Many also think that public schools are too lax in all respects. Others think there is too much negative peer pressure for their children. These pressures include violence, dope and sex. More and more of these parents are turning to private schools or are educating their children themselves at home. Such children must pass state exams in order to remain outside of the public school system.

PTA's (Parent Teacher Association) at public schools try to solve problems and improve the quality of education. Parent-teacher meetings are held regularly to discuss student progress and any problems the students might be having.

ACTIVITIES:

1. Interview two or three school-aged children. Find out what they think about school, their teachers and the homework that they are required to do. Compare your findings with what you believe children's attitudes are in your country.
2. Interview two or three Americans to find out why violence has increased in many U.S. schools over the past twenty years. Can you think of any possible solutions to the problems? Do you have similar problems in your country?
3. Write a paragraph giving your views on grading. Should grades be given at all? Should teachers be strict in giving grades? Compare the grading system of the U.S. to that of your country.
4. What differences do you see between education in the U.S. and in your country? What value is placed on education in your country? Explain. Are different things emphasized? Explain.

IRAN:

Iran has built many new universities in recent years, but so far, only ten percent of the students who apply are admitted. High school students must choose their courses carefully, study hard and get good grades in order to have a chance of entering the university. After finishing high school, interested students must take a university entrance examination. The results of this test determine the student's course of study at the university. The field of medicine requires the highest score of all. Students who fail the examination have an opportunity to take the examination again six months later. In recent years, many students whose families have had enough money have gone to foreign countries to study. A majority of these students have studied in the United States.

USA:

The United States has many good universities both public and private. It isn't usually very difficult to get admitted to these schools for undergraduate studies. A student needs a high school diploma and approximately a B average in his schoolwork. Most universities require that foreign students also get at least a score of 500 on the TOEFL examination. All students must study hard in order to remain at a university. If a student's grades are too low, he may be told by the administration that he can't return the following semester.

Students are free to choose their field of study in the U.S. The first two years of study are made up mainly of general study courses. Students often don't declare their major field of study until their junior year.

The cost of studying in the U.S. depends on several factors. Tuition at private universities is usually several times that of state universities. Community colleges and smaller state universities have lower fees than larger universities. The cost of living depends on the part of the country and the size of the city. Housing is generally cheaper in smaller cities while food costs may be less in larger cities. In general, the Midwest and the South are less expensive than the Northeast and the far West. Nearly all universities award a number of their students grants or scholarships. Grants are given to good students whose families aren't capable of supporting them. Scholarships are given to students with outstanding scholastic or athletic abilities. Most universities also have work-study programs available to their students.

ACTIVITIES:

1. Contact a university or a college and a community college that are near you. Find out what the tuition fees are for in-state and out-of-state students.
2. By looking at a university catalog or by interviewing Americans, find several courses of study that might seem unusual in your country. Would a student in your country have a similar catalog from which to choose courses? Explain.
3. Write a letter to the registrar's office of a university. Ask for an application for admission, general information about the university, and any other information that would be helpful to a foreign student.
4. Contact a nearby university or college. Find out which courses are required for all students. Would it be different in your country? Explain.

IRAN:

Only the best students have the opportunity to study at a university in Iran. University student bodies are made up almost exclusively of young adults. Studying is usually the center of these students' lives. Tehran and Shiraz have a few restaurants and discotheques near the universities, but only a few of the students socialize much in the western sense. Islam forbids social contact between male and female students.

Most university students in Iran live in dormitories or with their families. A few students rent rooms from families near the university. Room and board is usually cheap. Few students do their own cooking. The universities have cafeterias that sell meals to students at low prices.

USA:

Universities in the U.S. have become much more than centers of learning. There are so many activities that a student who has only recently left home might easily forget his studies. Sports, bars, discotheques and dating can take up a lot of a student's time. It has been said that some female students go to a university to find a good husband.

Students have a variety of living accommodations available to them. Freshmen are often required to live in dormitories near campus. Students who live in dormitories get both room and board for a set price. Most students prefer to live in apartments. Two or three students can live together cheaply. These students learn to cook, do laundry and manage their money. A few students join social organizations called fraternities and sororities. These organizations usually offer room and board to their members as well.

American universities are open to all age groups. In recent years, more and more older people have gone to universities to earn degrees. Some want to change careers. Others, many of whom have finished raising a family, simply want to study for enjoyment and to enrich their lives. Many of these older students commute to their classes instead of living near or on campus. A number of correspondence courses are available to students who can't come to a university to attend classes. These students come to the university only to take tests. Summer school, workshops and Saturday classes are very popular with commuter students.

ACTIVITIES:

1. Discuss with your classmates your opinions on how many and what kind of extracurricular activities university students should regularly take part in.
2. What is a student union? What role does it play at a university? Do universities in your country have them? If not, is there anything that takes their place?
3. Suppose you were a student at a university and your father, mother or a grandparent were one of your classmates. Describe how you would feel and why.
4. Are correspondence courses available in your country? List the advantages and disadvantages of taking a course by correspondence.
5. Could a middle-aged person change careers in your country? Explain.

MISCELLANEOUS

IRAN:

In Iran, most work is done by hand. Streets are swept with brooms, ditches are usually dug by Afghani or Baluchi workers, and most farmwork is done by hand or with the help of animals. There are still a lot of uneducated workers who do these jobs at low wages.

Many factories are being built, especially in the largest cities. Iran is becoming an industrialized country, but not without problems. At present, there is a struggle between religious customs and modernization.

Iran has always been an artisan craft center. However, more expensive labor may soon cause a decrease in the amount of artisan crafts produced. The future of the Persian carpet industry is uncertain. If a family has enough money, the wife may not want to spend long hours weaving carpets.

USA:

There is very little manual labor in the United States today. Nearly all work is done with the help of some machine because it is felt they are more efficient. Machines have almost become synonymous with progress. Streets are swept with large motorized vehicles, ditches are dug with backhoes and farmwork is done by tractors, combines and trucks.

Farmers make up a small minority of the population. Most people live in cities and work at 'blue collar' jobs. These workers hold maintenance, construction or factory jobs. 'White collar' workers include businessmen, office workers and most supervisors. 'Blue collar' workers are paid by the hour while 'white collar' workers are given a weekly, monthly or yearly salary.

There are relatively few artisan crafts produced in the U.S. In recent years, however, many Americans have become interested in handmade items. These items are found in specialty shops and are usually expensive.

Computers have become an important part of life in the United States. Office work or research that might take weeks for individuals to do can be done by computers in seconds. This information can be recalled at anytime with the touch of a few buttons. Many businesses and companies have become extremely dependent on these machines. Computers, however, are not without their problems. If, for example, a computer makes a mistake with your paycheck, it can take weeks before the mistake is straightened out. Companies usually place the blame on the computers as though they had minds of their own.

ACTIVITIES:

1. What artisan crafts are available in your country? How are these craftsmen regarded by the public? What artisan crafts are available in the U.S.? Do most of these craftsmen have their craft as their only source of income?
2. Interview two or three Americans to get their opinions on manual labor. Ask them if they ever do manual labor themselves, and what they think of people who make their living in this way. Compare your findings with your own country.
3. Interview two or three Americans. Ask them how their lives have been affected as a result of the invention of computers. How widely used are computers in your country? Explain.
4. Do machines mean progress? Does modernization always mean a better life? Discuss and explain your views.

IRAN:

Medical services in Iran have improved in recent years. National insurance has made medical care and medicine available to all at low prices. New hospitals have been built in nearly every city and town in the country. There is still a shortage of doctors in rural areas, but government doctors now make frequent visits to these places as well. Many of these doctors have been foreigners from India, Pakistan and other countries. There still aren't many qualified nurses because it has traditionally been looked down upon as a profession.

In many parts of the country, health problems have traditionally been taken care of with home remedies. Before there were many doctors, grandmothers did much of the doctoring. Butchers were thought to be qualified as bone specialists. Men and boys went to barbers every spring to have the bad blood in their bodies bled out through razor cuts in their backs.

USA:

The United States has some of the best medical facilities in the world. Even small cities have a variety of doctors including several specialists. Some hospitals are run by the city or county. Others are run by religious or other private organizations.

Most Americans depend completely on doctors for their medical needs. There are only a few home remedies for minor ailments like colds, sore throats, etcetera. Doctors' and hospitals' services have become so expensive in recent years that medical insurance has become a necessity for everyone. Without insurance, a patient can lose his entire life savings because of a single major illness.

Many hospitals in larger cities have highly trained trauma teams which are specialized in emergency medicine. They greatly increase the chances of survival for severely injured emergency patients. Most hospitals also have facilities to keep patients alive after they might otherwise be dead. Iron lungs and life support systems have saved many lives; they have created a few problems as well. A patient's brain might stop functioning, but machines keep him 'alive'. There has been a lot of discussion about an individual's right to die. Many people feel that a person who has a very slim chance or no chance of surviving should be allowed to die with dignity.

ACTIVITIES:

1. Look up 'euthanasia' in the dictionary. Find a synonym for it. Write a composition giving your opinion on it.
2. Should life be prolonged by machines as long as possible? What does it mean to die with dignity? Discuss these questions with your classmates.
3. You feel very ill. With a classmate, write a dialogue you might have with a doctor. Include all your symptoms. Dramatize it.
4. How are doctors and nurses regarded in your country? What kind of rapport is there between doctor and patient? Do doctors give patients a complete explanation of their illnesses?
5. The U.S. does not have a national health plan for all its citizens. Interview two or three Americans to find out the advantages and disadvantages of such a plan. What are your views?

IRAN:

There are many banks in Iran, but, by American standards, they are not very busy. Relatively little business is done by check; most people prefer to carry large amounts of cash. Also, the new government has forced many banks out of business and enforced strict usury laws.

Most bank transactions are written out by hand. When a customer enters the bank, he first approaches the bookkeeper. If the customer wants to cash a check, the bookkeeper must look at his file, stamp and sign the check three or four times, give the customer a number, and hand the check to the bank manager for his approval. When his number is called, the customer goes to the teller's window to complete the transaction.

USA:

Because Americans are afraid to carry large amounts of cash, they buy nearly everything by writing a check or using a credit card. For this reason and also because of convenience, nearly everyone finds it necessary to have a bank account. Setting up a checking or savings account is a simple process, but one should first check around to see which bank offers the best services.

Banks try hard to make their services as convenient as possible for the customer. The customer has the option of going inside or using drive-up windows. He should always have the proper deposit or withdrawal slip filled out ahead of time so that the teller can handle his transaction as quickly as possible. One teller can usually take care of all of one's transactions with the aid of business machines, microfiches and computers.

Many banks have installed day and night tellers which offer 24-hour service. At any time of the day or night, a customer can make a deposit, a withdrawal or check the balance of his accounts with these machines. The amount of withdrawal, however, is usually limited to \$200 or \$300 a day. A personalized bankcard must be inserted into the machine and your secret code entered before you can make a transaction. This card can also serve as a check guarantee when purchasing something with a check.

You must always be careful to have enough money in your account when writing a check. If the check bounces, the business that accepted the check will charge you an extra amount of money for their inconvenience. You can lose your credit rating and even get in trouble with the law by writing bad checks.

ACTIVITIES:

1. Telephone or visit two different banks. Find out what kind of accounts they have, what services they offer, and if they have any service charges. For example, you might ask the following questions:

Is there a charge for writing checks?

Do I have to maintain a minimum balance?

Do checking accounts at your bank draw interest?

How long would it take you to process a foreign bank draft?

2. List the differences between banks in your country and the U.S. Discuss them in class.
3. You want to write a check at a place of business. With a classmate, write a short dialogue between yourself and the cashier.
4. Find the meanings of the following terms:

a cashier's check

overdrawn

a safety deposit box

a joint account

counterfeit

IRAN:

Iran has a relatively low crime rate compared to the U.S. There is a certain amount of burglary and armed robbery, but it is not common. People convicted of crimes are usually given long prison sentences. The prisons in Iran often have harsh living conditions. The Shah's government used the French legal system. The new government, however, is trying to implement the Koranic system of justice whereby, after the third time a person is convicted of stealing, his right hand is cut off. Adulterers receive lashes while adulteresses are stoned to death. There are many who believe that this system of justice discourages people from committing crimes.

USA:

Many Americans say "Crime doesn't pay," but the number of felonies committed every year seems to prove the opposite to be true. Compared to most other developed countries, the United States has a high crime rate. Prisons are full of men and women who have been convicted of burglary, armed robbery, murder, etcetera. The variety of crime ranges from misdemeanors committed by juveniles to the organized crime of the Mafia. Shoplifting and burglary have made it necessary for many businesses to hire security guards and install burglar alarms. Although there are many policemen and very strict laws, the number of crimes committed annually continues to rise.

States spend a lot of time and money trying to rehabilitate those in prison or on parole. However, it is generally found that these programs have a low success rate. Inmates can learn trades and earn money. If their behavior is good, they can get out of prison early on parole. While on parole, they must report regularly to a parole officer. Many Americans have complained that there is not any victim justice. They feel that a convicted criminal should be forced to pay restitution of some kind to the victim or his family.

Crime has forced the public to take precautions in order to protect themselves. To avoid becoming a victim, you should keep several things in mind. Never carry large amounts of cash. Avoid areas of cities where crime rates are high, especially at night. Bicycles should not be left outside at night even if they are chained. You should also consider buying insurance policies for your car and the belongings you have in your home or apartment. "It's better to be safe than sorry."

ACTIVITIES:

1. Write an essay giving your views on capital punishment.
2. Interview two or three Americans to find out what they do to discourage or avoid crimes being committed against them. What do people do in your country?
3. What are the most common crimes in your country? If a person is found guilty of committing one of these crimes, how is he punished?
4. Do you have rehabilitation programs in your country? With your classmates, discuss the pros and cons of such programs.

IRAN:

The domestic situation in Iran is in a state of turmoil. A number of political and ethnic groups are fighting to gain more power for themselves. The government in power calls itself an Islamic republic. There is a president elected by the people and supported by a constitution. Interference from the clergy, however, has made it difficult for the government to operate. There is also a legislative branch called the "Majlis", also elected by the people. It is dominated by the clergy and other Moslem fundamentalists. The fundamentalists are trying to bring back the Koranic system of justice. These same fundamentalists often label anything not to their liking as going against the precepts of Islam.

USA:

The United States has a democracy based on its constitution and the Bill of Rights. It is a government "by the people, of the people and for the people." There are three branches of government: the executive, the legislative and the judicial. A system of checks and balances prevents any one branch from becoming more powerful than the others. The executive branch is headed by a president who is elected to serve four years. He appoints the members of his cabinet and staff. The legislative branch, Congress, consists of elected representatives and senators. The number of representatives is based on population; they serve two-year terms. Each state has two senators who serve six-year terms. The judicial branch is headed by the Supreme Court which has nine judges. They are appointed for life by the president and confirmed by Congress.

Although the Constitution gives all political groups the right to exist, two major parties dominate American politics. They are the Republican and the Democratic parties. In general, the Republican party supports traditional and conservative views. For example, it supports a strong national defense program. Corporations and big business often support the Republican party because of its stand on issues such as free enterprise, taxes, etcetera. The Democratic party is more liberal than the Republican party. It usually supports a wide variety of social programs. Organized labor, Southerners, Catholics and other minority groups are among its strongest supporters.

ACTIVITIES:

1. Write a composition explaining what is meant by 'a system of checks and balances'.
2. Discuss with your classmates the advantages and disadvantages of a democracy. Socialism. Communism. Dictatorship.
3. Interview two or three Americans to find out if they are registered voters or not. Ask them which political party they prefer and why. Discuss your findings in class.
4. Contrast the American form of government with the government in your country. Have a discussion.
5. Find the meanings of the following terms:

primary election

nominate

lobby

campaign

impeach

veto

IRAN:

About ninety-eight percent of the population of Iran is Moslem, most of whom belong to the Shiite sect. There are also a few Sunni Moslems. The remaining two percent of the population is Christian, Jewish, Baha'i or Zoroastrian.

Religion plays a big role in all aspects of Iranian life. This is reflected by constant references to God and the Koran. Before an Iranian makes a major decision such as marriage or beginning a business, he goes to a Moslem priest who consults the Koran. Being religious is an admired trait; it certainly helps those who are businessmen. Nearly all Iranians are well informed about their religion and strongly support it.

USA:

Freedom of religion is a right given to everyone in the United States by the Bill of Rights of the Constitution. This also includes the right not to follow any religion. Of the 226 million people in the U.S., about two thirds are associated with (but not necessarily active in) a religious group. Ninety-five percent of the population is Christian and almost five percent Jewish. A small number of Americans are Buddhist, Moslem or members of other faiths. Protestants make up about two thirds of the Christians while the remaining third is Roman Catholic. There are about 250 different Protestant sects.

Religious concepts play a more important role in the everyday life of most Americans than the churches themselves. People try to be truthful, honest and helpful when dealing with others. God is not often referred to in conversation. Many Americans don't enjoy listening to someone who publicizes his religion and religious ideas, especially if he tries to change others.

Because most Americans feel that religion is a private matter, many think that certain religious groups evangelize too much. It is not unusual for members of a religious group to come to your door trying to convert you to their religion. Other groups visit schools and universities trying to help students 'find the Lord'. Sunday morning television is dominated by evangelical programs, healers and a variety of other religious programs. Some areas of the country have television channels that only show religious programs. Many TV evangelists receive large donations from their viewing audience.

ACTIVITIES:

1. Survey the area in which you are living. How many different churches can you find? Which ones can be found in your country?
2. Write a paragraph explaining the role of religion in your life.
3. Compare the religious customs of your country with those of the United States. List as many differences as you can.
4. Interview two or three Americans. Ask them which religions 'turn them off' and why?
5. From the list you obtained in Activity 1, with a classmate, choose one religion and find out what makes that religion different from others. Report back to the class and have a class discussion.

IRAN:

There was an obvious separation of church and state during the Shah's regime. Under the Islamic Republic, however, church and state are viewed as inseparable. The "Majlis" (Parliament) is controlled by the clergy and the civilian government isn't capable of functioning without the approval of the Moslem priests and religious fundamentalists. There is a wide variety of opinions among the leaders. Each is fighting for a place within the power structure. An undetermined amount of time will be needed to resolve these power struggles. It is certain, however, that Islam will remain a powerful force within the Iranian government.

USA:

The United States Constitution clearly states the separation of church and state. One is not allowed to interfere with or control the other. Attempts to name a state religion have failed. Churches are self-supporting organizations. Because they are non-profit, the government does not tax their income. Members give donations (sometimes called 'tithing') of up to ten percent of their income. Churches, like companies and other organizations, are allowed to lobby for or against the passing of laws in Congress. For example, most churches are against legalized abortion. Some religious organizations have become powerful enough to affect the outcome of certain elections.

The government has, in recent years, begun investigations into the operations of various cults and religions. Parents have complained that their university-aged children have been hypnotized or brainwashed by certain religious groups. These young people often give up everything they have in order to work for their new religion. The parents of these converts sometimes kidnap their own children and take them to specially trained psychologists who then try to deprogram them. A few other religious organizations are being investigated because of the possible misuse of their funds.

ACTIVITIES:

1. Interview two or three Americans to get their opinion on separation of church and state. Should religion play an important role in government? Report your findings and give your own views as well.
2. Write a composition describing the relationship between religion and government in your country.
3. Find out what "atheism" means. By talking to Americans, find out what activities atheists have been involved in in recent years. Could such things happen in your country? Why or why not?
4. What is a "parochial school"? Do you have any in your country? Should such schools receive government support? Discuss your opinions with your classmates.

IRAN:

The vast majority of Iranians are non-Arab conservative Shiite Moslems. There is a wide variety of other ethnic, religious and political groups. Many of Iran's political problems are caused by the fact that there are so many different groups, each with its own ideas. Turks, Turkoman, Kurds, Lurs, Qashqa'is, Bakhtiaris, and Baluchis are the largest of the ethnic groups. Some of them are fighting to gain more autonomy. Minority religious groups include the following: Sunni Moslems, Zoroastrians, Jews, Armenian Orthodox Catholics, Roman Catholics, Anglicans, and Baha'is. All of these religions are tolerated to a certain degree except for the Baha'i. Certain beliefs that the Baha'i have go against the teachings of Islam.

USA:

Because people from nearly every country in the world have immigrated to the U.S. during the last two hundred years, America is known as a melting pot. These people left their former countries to escape poverty or political repression. America has often been thought of (sometimes mistakenly) as a land of unlimited opportunity. In recent years, a majority of immigrants have been refugees from Indochina and Cuba. A look at the population of the U.S. shows the following breakdown: 85% White, 10% Black and 5% other. The largest group of whites are the WASP's (white Anglo-Saxon Protestant).

The American Indians are the only people native to the USA. They have been treated unjustly over the years. Many were killed in wars with European settlers and their land was taken from them. Most Indians now live on reservations administered by the federal government. These reservations often seem like separate countries because of the contrast in culture and the fact that Indians are allowed to make and enforce their own laws.

Many Black and Hispanic Americans are in the lowest income groups. Many of them live in inner-city ghettos where living conditions and employment opportunities are not good. They have been and still are, to a certain degree, the victims of prejudice. Life, however, has improved greatly for many of them in recent years. Civil rights laws now provide equal opportunity for everyone.

ACTIVITIES:

1. Find out the ancestry of two or three Americans by interviewing them. Discuss your findings in class. Compare them with your country.
2. What had you heard about minority problems in America before coming to the United States? Are your impressions any different now? Do you have any minority problems in your country? Explain.
3. How would you react in the following situations. Explain your feelings.
 - A member of a racial, religious or ethnic minority group (Black, Hispanic or other) moves into the apartment next to yours.
 - Your sister or daughter tells you she wants to marry someone who is racially, religiously or ethnically different.
4. Find the meanings of the following terms:

bias	discrimination	a racial or ethnic slur
a bigot	a ghetto	

IRAN:

Much of Iran is on a high plateau approximately 5,000 ft. above sea level. Most of the country is mountainous with some mountains reaching 18,000 ft. Two large uninhabited deserts make up nearly half the area of the country. Most regions of the country are extremely arid receiving as little as 3-6 inches of rain per year. Farming requires intensive irrigation. The main crops are wheat, barley, fruits and vegetables. The area around the Caspian Sea is an exception to the rest of Iran. It lies at sea level, receives sufficient rainfall, and is extremely humid. Much of Iran's rice, tea and citrus fruits are grown there. Two of Iran's main natural resources are oil and copper. Other export items include caviar, pistachios and Persian carpets.

USA:

One can find nearly every kind of climate, topography and vegetation within the fifty states. Alaska and Hawaii, the 49th and 50th states, are the only states not part of the continental United States. The continental states cover an area approximately 5,000 kilometers from east to west and 3,000 kilometers from north to south. The eastern and western sections of the country have many forested mountains and hills while plains make up most of the central region. Except for the desert Southwest, there is enough rainfall to support a wide variety of crops. America's main natural resources include its farmland, coal, iron ore and wood.

There are many extremes in the weather of the United States. Hurricanes, that begin in the Caribbean Sea or the Gulf of Mexico, do a lot of damage whenever they strike the Gulf coast. The Midwest often has terrible blizzards in the winter and strong thunderstorms in the summer months. These thunderstorms can create hail as large as grapefruit and occasionally form tornados. Tornados have the strongest winds in nature. Temperatures vary greatly in the United States as well. The hottest temperature ever recorded in the U.S. was 57 degrees Centigrade in Death Valley, California while the lowest was -62 degrees Centigrade in Alaska.

ACTIVITIES:

1. Which places in America had you heard of before you came here? Does the country look different than you had imagined? Explain.
2. Write a paragraph describing the geography of the area you are living in. Compare it with the geography of the area where your family lives.
3. List some of the most famous natural sights in America. Locate them on a map. Ask an American for help if necessary.
4. Choose one famous natural sight in the U.S. or in your country. Gather as much information about it as you can. Give a short oral report in class.

APPENDIX: SLIDE DESCRIPTIONS

SLIDE DESCRIPTIONS	Slide No. 1	Slide No. 2	Slide No. 3	Slide No. 4	Slide No. 5
Family Structure	(no slides)				
The Father's Role	Football, beer, popcorn	doing yard work	cleaning house	changing diaper	cooking
The Mother's Role	kitchen appliances	cooking	sewing	knitting	playing piano
Women's Lib	Ms.	ERA	Equal Employment Affirm. Action	policewoman in car	policewoman
Children	toy store	child with toys	boy doing chores	child psy- chology books	Child Abuse Clinic
Growing Old	a grandmother	creams & lotions	retirement community ad	retirement community	retired people in golfcart
Death and Burial	traditional cemetery	memorial cemetery	mortuary	embalming table	coffin
Buying Groceries	coupons	weekly specials	generic products	produce aisle	check-out counter
Food	meat	potatoes	frozen food	diet foods	health food shop
Mealtimes	breakfast	lunch	dinner (supper)	dessert	snack foods
Shopping	discount store	warehouse store	convenience market	shopping mall	shopping mall
The House	house being built	typical house in the southwest	condominiums	apartments with security gate	mobile home
Home Furnishings	family room	dining room	living room	dining room	patio
Sleeping Customs	L-shaped bunkbeds	regular bunkbeds	girl's bed	typical double bed	waterbed
Pets	girl walking dog	mother dog with pups	pet store	veterinarian spaying cat	pet cemetery

SLIDE DESCRIPTIONS	Slide No. 1	Slide No. 2	Slide No. 3	Slide No. 4	Slide No. 5
Manners	(no slides)				
Time and Punctuality	(no slides)				
Some Do's and Don't's	(no slides)				
Guests	(no slides)				
Friendship	(no slides)				
Dating	(no slides)				
Courtship and Marriage	couple walking hand in hand	engagement rings	wedding chapel	wedding rentals	wedding
The Work Ethic	(no slides)				
Bargaining	(no slides)				
Clothing	clothing store with sale	jeans	maternity shop	store for large women	fabric store
Cleanliness	cleaning agents in store	cleaning agents in average home	dishwasher	USDA inspected meat	cook wearing hat
Restaurants	Kentucky Fried Chicken	McDonald's	Pizza Hut	Chinese restaurant	waitress taking order
Recreation	amusement park	manmade surf	ice skating	video-game arcade	Atari
Vacations and Holidays	motorhome	pickup/camper	camping trailer	Grand Canyon	Grand Canyon
Sports	basketball	golf	football	cheerleaders	health spa
Music	music class	girl playing violin	boy playing piano	music store	country and western disco

SLIDE DESCRIPTIONS	Slide No. 1	Slide No. 2	Slide No. 3	Slide No. 4	Slide No. 5
Alcohol and Drugs	warning to minors	liquor store	Alcoholics Anonymous	diet pills	teenagers with drug problem
Public Transportation	airport	taxis	municipal bus	train station	5-car family, no need public tram.
Streets and Highways	freeway	residential street	alley	street cleaner	road repair
Driving	55 mph	police man with radar	driving school notice	CB radios	radar detector
Service Stations	self-service station/garage	self-service station	traditional service station	full-service pumps	office interior, extra services
Motorcycles and Bicycles	bicycle shop	bicycle lane	motorcycle shop	Hell's Angel type motorcycle	3-wheel recreational vehicle
Public Schools	junior high school	school interior	class listening to story	Special Ed. teacher/students	day-care center
School Attitudes	(no slides)				
Universities	library	sports arena	Science Bldg.	students walking across campus	bulletin board/special classes
University Life	dormitory	student apartments	sorority house	Memorial Union	TOEFL
Labor and Machines	garbage truck	backhoe	kitchen appliances	computer	farm machines
Medical Services	front desk in hospital	emergency room facilities	baby in incubator	kidney dialysis machine	radiation therapy
Banking	outside view of bank	bank interior	drive-up teller	day and night teller	typical bank forms.
Crime	security guard	shoplifting sign	store alarm	home alarms	jail
The Political System	state capitol	city hall	dep. county attr	courtthouse	courtroom

SLIDE DESCRIPTIONS	Slide No. 1	Slide No. 2	Slide No. 3	Slide No. 4	Slide No. 5
Religion	traditional church	modern Catholic church	Jewish Student Center	non-denominational church	Mormon church
Church and State	(no slides)				
Minority Groups	Blacks	Blacks	Chicanos	American Indians	Japanese farmer
Geography	(no slides)				

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