

Chapter 17: Making your argument flow

Task 1

Text 1 contains topic sentences from a chapter which defines culture shock and examines its causes and ways of coping with it. It is taken from Jean Brick's book *China: A handbook in inter-cultural communication*.

Use the topic sentences to answer the following questions:

- a How does Brick define culture shock?
- b What are the physical symptoms of culture shock?
- c What are the major stages of culture shock?
- d Do all people go through all stages?
- e The author mentions two extremes that need to be avoiding in coping with culture shock.
 - List one extreme.
 - Do the topic sentences tell the reader what the other extreme is?
 - Can you suggest what it might be?
- f The original chapter included three sub-headings. They were:
 - What is culture shock?
 - Experiencing culture shock
 - Coping with culture shock.

Where do you think these three sub-headings were originally placed?

Next, identify the word chains that link the topic sentences to each other.

- Which do you think is the most important chain? Why?

Text 1

1. When people move from one culture to another, they suddenly find that much of what they have learned about interpreting the actions of people around them is suddenly irrelevant.
2. This sudden psychological transition from competent adult to ineffective child inevitably results in the serious erosion of people's feelings of self-worth.
3. Culture shock is the result of the removal of the familiar.
4. Physical symptoms of culture shock may include headaches, stomach aches, diarrhoea,

constant fatigue, difficulty in sleeping or excessive sleep and a general feeling of malaise.

5. The important thing to recognise about culture shock is that it is universal.
6. While culture shock is universal, this is not to say that it takes the same form in each and every individual.
7. In general, people go through four stages in the process of adaptation.
8. The initial feeling of euphoria gives way, more or less rapidly, to a sense of alienation.
9. While this state of affairs lasts for an indefinite period of time and is the stage that the symptoms of culture shock manifest themselves, in most people it is replaced by a stage of adaptation.
10. The fourth stage, the stage of acceptance, of acculturation is not reached by all people.
11. While it is impossible to avoid culture shock altogether, it is possible to hasten the process of adjustment and to mitigate to some extent the severity of the experience.
12. Firstly, it is important to remember the universality of the adjustment process.
13. Secondly, and this is more difficult, remember that the host culture does have its own logic, its own reasons for doing things in a certain way.
14. In trying to come to terms with the host culture, one of the most important resources for newcomers is people from a similar cultural background who have already been through the experience of adjustment.
15. Members of the host culture itself are also important.
16. Two extremes need to be avoided.
17. The second extreme to be avoided is the attempt to integrate totally and rapidly into the host culture, avoiding all contact with people of the same cultural background.
18. Reading background literature on the new country, its history and geography, its system of government and its economy, helps to build a total picture of the culture.
19. Most importantly, newcomers should remember that relief will come, that they will not always feel frustrated, angry and alone, that others have been through the same experience and survived, and that the rewards to be gained in terms of broader horizons and a greatly enhanced understanding of both self and mankind make the whole process worthwhile.

Task 2

Text 2 is paragraph 16 of the chapter in full. Identify the word chain(s) that tie the information in the paragraph to the topic sentence. NB: The text has been broken into numbered clauses to facilitate identifying word chains.



Text 2

1. Two extremes need to be avoided.
2. The first is to mix exclusively with people from a similar cultural background
3. and to avoid contact with members of the host culture as far as possible.
4. This strategy tends to prolong feelings of alienation
5. because it limits opportunities to explore the host culture.
6. Newcomers should seek opportunities to mix with host-country nationals
7. and there are such opportunities.
8. The major one is provided at work.
9. Newcomers should make a conscious effort to participate in the informal groups that form at morning tea and lunch times.
10. This participation may at first be passive,
11. but as the situation becomes more familiar
12. and confidence in language use grows,
13. participation can gradually become more active.
14. Students will find similar opportunities before lectures and tutorials.

Task 3

Text 3 consists of paragraphs 11-19 of the same text used in Tasks 1 and 2.

- Match the paragraph (1-8) on the left with the topic sentence (a-h) on the right. Be ready to explain the reasons for your choice.

Text 3

Paragraph text

1. This can be done by adopting a questioning and accepting attitude.

Topic sentence

- a. While it is impossible to avoid culture shock all together, it is possible to hasten the process of adjustment and to mitigate to some extent the severity of the experience.



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| <p>2. Rather than starting from a belief that people are acting irrationally, that they are unfriendly and obstructive, it is more useful to start from the assumption that people in fact have valid reasons for acting as they do, even if those reasons are not immediately obvious. The task then is to discover what those reasons are. This is the first step on the road to cross-cultural sensitivity.</p> <p>3. Such people will have lived in the host culture for an extended period and can provide valuable insights into the way it operates. At the same time, their own experience of the adjustment process can reassure newcomers that their feelings of alienation is not unique and that adjustment is possible.</p> <p>4. Newcomers should be prepared to ask questions about anything that they do not understand. People in general tend to enjoy explaining aspects of their own culture to others. However, it is important to phrase questions well. Rather than raising issues in a critical way, newcomers are likely to find that they get a better response if they raise problems or criticisms in a non-threatening manner. For example, in trying to understand the behaviour of an apparently rude shop assistant, they should attempt to describe the whole situation, including their own behaviour and the behaviour of the shop assistant and then ask for comments from the host national.</p> <p>5. The first is to mix exclusively with people from a similar cultural background and to avoid contact with members of the host culture as far as possible. This strategy tends to prolong feelings of alienation because it limits opportunities to explore the host culture. New-comers should seek opportunities to mix with host-country nationals and, difficult as this may be in a society like Australia, there are</p> | <p>b. Members of the host culture itself are also important.</p> <p>c. The second extreme to be avoided is the attempt to integrate totally and rapidly into the host culture, avoiding all contact with people of the same cultural background.</p> <p>d. Secondly, and this is more difficult, remember that the host culture does have its own logic, its own reasons for doing things in a certain way.</p> <p>e. Reading background literature on the new country, its history and geography, its system of government and its economy, helps to build a total picture of the culture.</p> |
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such opportunities. The major one is provided at work. Newcomers should make a conscious effort to participate in the informal groups that form at morning tea and lunch times. This participation may at first be passive, but as the situation becomes more familiar (and confidence in language use grows), participation can gradually become more active. Students will find similar opportunities before lectures and tutorials.

6. Adapting to a new culture is an exhausting process. The individual needs to retreat to a familiar environment from time to time so as to be able to relax and let off steam.

7. Reading some of the valued works of literature, in translation if necessary, watching films and attending festivals and other such public events are all important in creating a rounded picture of a culture.

8. Most importantly, newcomers should remember that relief will come, that they will not always feel frustrated, angry and alone, that others have been through the same experience and survived, and that the rewards to be gained in terms of broader horizons and a greatly enhanced understanding of both self and mankind make the whole process worthwhile.

- f. In trying to come to terms with the host culture, one of the most important resources for newcomers is people from a similar cultural background who have already been through the experience of adjustment.
- g. Most importantly, newcomers should remember that relief will come, that they will not always feel frustrated, angry and alone, that others have been through the same experience and survived, and that the rewards to be gained in terms of broader horizons and a greatly enhanced understanding of both self and mankind make the whole process worthwhile
- h. Two extremes need to be avoided.





Task 4

Select a paragraph of your own writing and identify the clauses.

- Identify the words and phrases that tie each clause together.
- Identify places where new information is introduced at the end of a clause, before being placed at the beginning of the subsequent clause.

