

Cultural intelligence

1 Work with a partner. Look at the information and answer the questions.

- 1 Can you name all of the countries in G8?
- 2 How do representatives from the different countries in the EU communicate?
- 3 Why do you think there is such a difference between the number of countries and the number of languages in the world?

2a Read the magazine article about cultural intelligence. What do you think the term means?

EU	G8	United Nations
28 countries 24 official languages	8 countries 6 official languages	193 countries Languages of the world: 6,500 +
Motto: 'United in diversity'	Aim: to discuss and attempt to reconcile global issues	Most speakers: Mandarin Chinese (1,213,000,000) 6 official languages in the UN: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish

Cultural intelligence is a term which is becoming increasingly important in the world today. The world is getting smaller in the sense that technology makes everything closer and more immediate. Countries have formed groups for defence, such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and trade, such as the European Union (EU). As a result, people from different countries and cultures are having to work together and this requires cultural intelligence.

Definition of Cultural Intelligence

In order to work with different nationalities, people need to be able to speak different languages. However, having a gift for languages is not enough – people also need to have a good grasp of other nationalities' customs and beliefs. This knowledge has become known as 'cultural intelligence' or 'CQ'. There is no specific test for CQ, so there is no score as such. In fact, it is better viewed as a moving measurement, because CQ develops over time as one acquires more experience and knowledge.

Core and flex

In order to attain a good level of CQ it is important to be self-aware. People are made up of two parts: core and flex. The core is what makes us who we are. It includes certain principles that are fixed. The flex is a set of ideas that can be adapted if necessary. Both the core and flex cover everything from identity to behaviour to habit. For example, in the UK when you pay someone you hand over the notes with one hand. This could be considered part of an English person's flex. So when they visit Japan, where it is customary to hold the notes with both hands, the English person could follow the Japanese custom to show their CQ awareness.

Importance of CQ

CQ is vital in economics and politics and increasingly in general society too. More and more businesses want to expand and not just rely on the home market. In addition, countries that want to reach trade agreements with other countries, or to defend mutual borders, need to cooperate with each other. In order to do this, it is essential to know the customs and traditions of potential partner countries. Markets might work differently or companies could function in different ways, and these differences need to be worked out.



CQ Measurements

Although there is no exam to measure CQ, there are ways to assess yourself to see how good your CQ is. There are three main areas to consider: drive, knowledge and adaptability. Drive refers to how much interest you have in other cultures. For example, do you value interaction with other cultures, or do you have confidence in other cultures? Knowledge refers to specific information you have about other legal systems and government, values, social interaction, language, and non-verbal behaviour. Finally, adaptability refers to the ability and willingness to compromise on certain beliefs in your flex in order to work with other cultures.

Benefits of CQ

People are becoming increasingly aware of the importance of CQ as they see the benefits that it offers. Some benefits include:

- ease in adjusting to new work places or living abroad
- increase in one's effectiveness in decision-making in diverse contexts
- better negotiation skills
- ease in building trust and demonstrating empathy
- better service and higher sales in dealing with a more diverse set of customers
- increase in creativity or innovation by making the best use of multiple perspectives.

In conclusion, CQ is growing in importance in today's world, and for those who want to cross borders it is increasingly essential to have a good level of CQ so that they can maximise the advantages of a multicultural society.

2b Read the text again and decide if the sentences are True (T) or False (F). Correct the false sentences.

- 1 Cultural intelligence means having a good command of several languages. T / F
.....
- 2 CQ is not one static measurement because it can change over time. T / F
.....
- 3 The core of a person is an area of beliefs and behaviour that is not changeable. T / F
.....
- 4 CQ is important for international business and inter-country cooperation. T / F
.....
- 5 One way to ascertain your CQ level is to assess how much interest you have in learning about other cultures and interacting with them. T / F
.....
- 6 People with a high CQ level will be less adaptable to different working conditions. T / F
.....

2c Read and circle the correct alternative.

- 1 Cultural intelligence refers to people's ability to copy/empathise with people from other cultures.
- 2 The core and flex refer to people's behaviour and habits/preferences.
- 3 The differences in UK and Japanese education/etiquette are examples of a person's flex.
- 4 One way of determining your CQ is by looking at how adaptable you are. The more flexible/uncompromising you are, the higher your CQ.
- 5 A high level of CQ will make it easier for someone to get on/keep up with someone from a different culture.
- 6 Another benefit of high CQ is the potential for increased innovation/communication based on the ability to draw on different points of view.

Gateway to culture

3a Work with a partner and discuss the questions.

- 1 How important is it to have a good level of CQ in general society today?
- 2 Do you think you have a good level of cultural intelligence? Do you enjoy interacting with people from other cultures? Do you know much about the customs or values of other cultures? Have you ever changed your usual behaviour to make someone from another culture more comfortable?
- 3 How could you improve your cultural intelligence?

PROJECT

3b You are going to work on a presentation about cultural co-operation. Think about your culture and choose another culture that is quite different to yours. Read the questions and prepare your research.

- 1 Work in groups and brainstorm different cultures that you are interested in.
- 2 Choose a culture and find out more about it. Answer the following questions:
 - Are there any connections between your culture and the chosen culture?
 - What aspects of the two cultures are similar and different? Find some examples of core and flex beliefs in the two cultures.
 - Do you think you could have both a high and low CQ regarding another culture? Why/Why not? If so, how could you correct this imbalance?

3c In your groups, use your notes to give a presentation to the rest of the class on the two cultures. Your presentation should be around three minutes long. Make sure you include some specific examples of similarities and differences between the two cultures.