

10 Tips Communicating Across Cultures

1. Avoid metaphors and colloquialisms.

It's your turn at bat.
As straight as the crow flies...
2. Avoid emotional trigger words.

You have to do this or
Because I told you to...
3. Be sensitive to cultural stands on social issues, for example, womens' rights, or alcoholism.
4. Avoid over-simplification of terms which may seem insulting.

A nickname is a pet name given to a friend.
5. Don't use jargon. Do define any that you must use.

...the public interface with the justice system...
6. If a word or concept is not understood, do not repeat the same thing over again louder or slower as though the listener has a hearing problem. Reword your thoughts.
7. Ask the listener to confirm instructions *in their own words*.
8. Show concern. Acknowledge the cultural differences without bias and try again.
9. Consider whether the best form of communication is being used. For example, instructions given in a memo are not as effective as a demonstration of the technique.
10. Study and evaluate cultural generalizations. Understand that even valid generalizations have to be reconsidered when applied to individuals.

Short Course in Bureaucratese from ROB KYFF in The Hartford Courant

- 1) Bubbles of gas, rising from a liquid contained in a vessel or receptacle to the surface of said liquid, is a phenomenon not witnessed by those who subject such liquid to constant, searching scrutiny.
- 2) A warm-blooded vertebrate of the class avis grasped in the terminal prehensile portion of the upper limb of the human body is equal in value to one plus one of the aforementioned vertebrates in a shrub.
- 3) Herbage, when observed in that section of enclosed ground being the property of an individual other than oneself, is ever of a more verdant hue.
- 4) The positive appeal of a visual object depends not so much upon the objective standards against which said object is measured, nor upon the image said object records upon the retina and optic nerve, as it does upon the cerebral interpretations of the image recorded by the organ of vision of the individual who observes said object.
- 5) Courting a state of dormant quiescence during the first part of the crepuscular period and forsaking said suitable place during the first part of the matinal period results in myriad benefits to Homo sapiens, among which benefits may be noted a substantial increase in body soundness, monies, and sagacity.
- 6) A promising number of shell cases (those consisting of keratin fibers and calcite crystals and enclosing embryonic fowl) should not be of such encouragement to an individual that he immediately assumes that the ensuing number of forthcoming fowl will be equivalent to that of the number of such above-mentioned shell cases.
- 7) It has been observed that the individual who devotes himself continuously to gainful pursuits, and thus neglects the cultivation to be derived from diversion, emerges thereby as a listless and uninteresting personage.

Answers:

- 1) A watched pot never boils.
- 2) A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.
- 3) The grass is always greener on the other side of the fence.
- 4) Beauty is in the eye of the beholder.
- 5) Early to bed and early to rise makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise.
- 6) Don't count your chickens before they hatch.
- 7) All work and no play make Jack a dull boy.