



Culture and Traditions

Vocabulary Long List

Topic vocabulary, useful phrases, phrasal verbs and idioms | Cambridge IGCSE ESL

<p>1 Learn by theme Study one table at a time.</p>	<p>2 Notice combinations Learn complete phrases, not isolated words.</p>	<p>3 Use the examples Adapt each sentence for speaking or writing.</p>
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Celebrations

Word or phrase	Meaning	Example sentence
celebration	a special event for an important occasion	The celebration brought the whole neighbourhood together.
festival	a public event with cultural activities	The festival includes music, food and dance.
ceremony	a formal event with traditional actions	The ceremony began with a speech.
parade	a public procession through streets	Crowds gathered to watch the parade.
fireworks display	a show of fireworks for celebration	The fireworks display marked the end of the festival.
special occasion	an important or unusual event	Families often prepare traditional food for a special occasion.
public holiday	a day when many people do not work because of a national or religious occasion	The celebration takes place during a public holiday.

Customs and traditions

Word or phrase	Meaning	Example sentence
custom	a usual practice in a community	It is a local custom to greet elders respectfully.
tradition	a belief or practice passed down over time	The village has kept this tradition for generations.
respect traditions	treat traditional practices with care	Visitors should respect traditions even if they are unfamiliar.
take part in	participate in an activity	Students take part in the school cultural day.
ritual	a repeated formal action with meaning	The ritual symbolises a fresh start.
traditional clothing	clothes connected with a culture or ceremony	Performers wore traditional clothing.
symbol	an object or image that represents an idea	The lantern is a symbol of hope.



CULTURE AND TRADITIONS | CORE VOCABULARY

Food and hospitality

Word or phrase	Meaning	Example sentence
traditional food	food connected with a culture or occasion	Traditional food is often shared during festivals.
hospitality	friendly treatment of guests	The family's hospitality made visitors feel welcome.
family recipe	cooking instructions passed through a family	My grandmother taught me a family recipe.
shared meal	a meal eaten together by a group	A shared meal can strengthen relationships.
local speciality	food or product strongly connected with a place	The market sells a famous local speciality.
serve guests	provide food or help to visitors	It is polite to serve guests first.
seasonal dish	food traditionally eaten at a particular time of year	Families prepare a seasonal dish for the festival.

Language and communication

Word or phrase	Meaning	Example sentence
learn a language	study how to speak or understand a language	Learning a language helps people communicate across cultures.
mother tongue	the first language someone learns	Many children use their mother tongue at home.
translation	changing words from one language into another	Accurate translation reduces misunderstanding.
communicate across cultures	share ideas with people from different cultures	English can help students communicate across cultures.
gesture	movement used to express meaning	A gesture can have different meanings in different countries.
misunderstanding	a failure to understand correctly	Cultural differences can cause misunderstanding.
bilingual	able to use two languages	Bilingual students can help visitors understand local signs.



CULTURE AND TRADITIONS | CORE VOCABULARY

Identity and belonging

Word or phrase	Meaning	Example sentence
cultural identity	the sense of belonging to a cultural group	Music can be part of a person's cultural identity.
identity	who someone is and how they see themselves	Language is closely linked to identity.
heritage	traditions and history passed from the past	Museums help protect local heritage.
sense of belonging	feeling accepted as part of a group	Community events create a sense of belonging.
shared values	beliefs that a group considers important	Respect and kindness are shared values in many cultures.
community pride	positive feeling about a community	The festival increased community pride.
roots	a person's family, cultural or historical origins	Learning traditional music helped her understand her roots.

Globalisation

Word or phrase	Meaning	Example sentence
globalisation	increasing connection between countries and cultures	Globalisation has changed food, fashion and entertainment.
cultural exchange	sharing ideas and traditions between groups	Student visits encourage cultural exchange.
international community	people and countries connected globally	The international community can learn from cultural diversity.
multicultural	involving several cultures	The city is proud of its multicultural population.
blend of cultures	a mixture of cultural influences	The neighbourhood shows a blend of cultures.
global influence	an effect coming from worldwide connections	Social media has a strong global influence.
cross-cultural	involving different cultures	The exchange programme encourages cross-cultural friendships.



CULTURE AND TRADITIONS | CORE VOCABULARY

Respect and diversity

Word or phrase	Meaning	Example sentence
cultural diversity	the existence of many cultures in one place	Cultural diversity makes school life richer.
tolerant	willing to accept differences	A tolerant society respects different beliefs.
open-minded	willing to consider new ideas	Travel can make young people more open-minded.
stereotype	a fixed and often unfair idea about a group	Education can challenge a stereotype.
show respect	behave politely towards others	We should show respect for unfamiliar customs.
inclusive event	an event designed to welcome different people	The school organised an inclusive event.
mutual respect	respect shown by both sides	Mutual respect makes multicultural classrooms successful.

Change and preservation

Word or phrase	Meaning	Example sentence
preserve culture	protect traditions from being lost	Recording stories can help preserve culture.
modern lifestyle	the way people live in the present day	A modern lifestyle can change family traditions.
pass down	give knowledge or customs to the next generation	Elders pass down stories to children.
adapt a tradition	change a tradition to suit new circumstances	Communities may adapt a tradition while keeping its meaning.
lose touch with	stop feeling connected to something	Young people may lose touch with local customs.
keep alive	continue to practise or remember something	Festivals keep local traditions alive.
oral history	spoken stories about the past	Grandparents shared oral history with the class.



CULTURE AND TRADITIONS | LANGUAGE BUILDER

Phrasal verbs

Use these natural verb combinations when speaking or writing about this topic.

Word or phrase	Meaning	Example sentence
grow up with	experience something regularly as a child	She grew up with two languages at home.
hand down	pass something to a younger generation	Stories were handed down through families.
join in	participate	Visitors were invited to join in the dance.
dress up	wear special clothes	Children dress up for the celebration.
bring together	unite people	Festivals bring together different generations.
fit in	feel accepted in a group	New students want to fit in without losing their identity.
stand for	represent or mean	The colour red can stand for good luck.
open up	create opportunities or access	Language learning opens up new friendships.
come from	have origin in a place or tradition	This custom comes from an old harvest festival.
look back on	remember the past	Grandparents look back on earlier celebrations.
pass on	give knowledge to another person	Parents pass on values to their children.
keep up	continue something	The family keeps up an old New Year tradition.

High-value collocations

respect traditions	take part in a celebration	prepare traditional food
protect cultural heritage	preserve cultural identity	learn a language
communicate across cultures	encourage cultural exchange	celebrate diversity
challenge stereotypes	show hospitality	pass down customs
adapt to change	build community pride	join the international community
share cultural values	avoid misunderstandings	keep traditions alive



CULTURE AND TRADITIONS | LANGUAGE BUILDER

Idioms and figurative expressions

Use these selectively. One natural expression is more effective than several forced into the same answer.

Word or phrase	Meaning	Example sentence
when in Rome	adapt to local customs	When in Rome, visitors should follow local dining customs.
break with tradition	do something differently from the usual way	The organisers broke with tradition and held the event online.
old habits die hard	familiar habits are difficult to change	Old habits die hard when families move abroad.
a melting pot	a place where cultures mix	The city is a melting pot of languages and food.
the best of both worlds	advantages from two different situations	Bilingual children may enjoy the best of both worlds.
put yourself in someone's shoes	imagine another person's situation	Put yourself in someone's shoes before judging a custom.
bridge the gap	reduce differences between groups	Cultural exchange can bridge the gap between communities.
keep something alive	continue a practice or memory	Music helps keep cultural heritage alive.

Exam-ready language

Purpose	Useful sentence frame
Introducing a benefit	<i>One significant benefit is that...</i>
Introducing a drawback	<i>A possible drawback is that...</i>
Balancing an argument	<i>Although this offers clear advantages, it may also...</i>
Explaining a result	<i>As a result, people may...</i>
Giving an example	<i>A clear example of this can be seen when...</i>
Making a comparison	<i>Compared with..., this option is...</i>
Giving advice	<i>People can improve the situation by...</i>
Suggesting action	<i>One practical solution would be to...</i>
Expressing caution	<i>It is important to consider whether...</i>
Giving an opinion	<i>In my view, the most sensible approach is to...</i>