

Student name: _____

Class: _____

Date: _____

Practice

- 1  You are going to read the text below called 'Time across cultures' both as a skim read and as a close reading exercise. You will work in groups of three.
- 2 Skim read individually and make some notes on the general idea of the text. You should take only two minutes to read the text.

Time across cultures

One of the biggest differences between cultures around the world is how they see time. It is also one of the biggest reasons for conflict between cultures.

People sometime criticize each other by saying 'they are always late' or 'all they think about is being on time'. Sometimes different views of time can just be frustrating, but in work or places of study it can be more serious than that.

The expert in cross-cultural communication Richard Lewis, in his book *When Cultures Collide: Leading Across Cultures: Leading, Teamworking and Managing Across the Globe*, divides cultures around the world into two different categories depending upon how they manage time. The first category is called *linear active*. Linear active people usually see time as a straight line and would generally work on one thing at a time. They don't like to be interrupted in the middle of their work. The best examples of linear active people would probably be Germans, Swedes or Dutch. The other category of people are referred to as *multi active*, and they see time as a zigzag. They start one project then move to another one, then move back to the first one, then to a third one and then back to the second one. For them, time is much more fluid, while linear active people see it as solid. Typical multi active people are Arabs and Latin Americans.

These two groups of people do not always work well together. If we think, for example, of a business meeting, linear active people will normally arrive on time and expect the meeting to start and finish on time, but multi active people may arrive late and will be comfortable if the meeting finishes late. Equally, linear active people do not like distraction in a meeting, but multi active people will be happy to change direction or even take a phone call. Of course, this can cause conflict.

There are solutions to the conflict, and the simplest one is for people to discuss the problems and find a compromise. These discussions can be difficult, but there is no other solution.

Source: *When Cultures Collide: Leading Across Cultures: Leading, Teamworking and Managing Across the Globe*, Richard Lewis, 2005.

- 3  Compare your notes with the other two people in your group. Are they similar or different?
- 4  In your group, agree a list of three points that explain the general idea of the text. You must all agree to all of them.
- 5 Individually, read the text again to answer the following questions:
 - a What are the two categories of cultures?
 - b How are they different?
 - c Why do they sometimes have conflicts?
 - d How can we solve these problems?
- 6  Once again, compare your individual answers with the other group members. Be ready to share your answers with the teacher if they ask you for them.

- 7 If another student asked you for help with skim reading and close reading, what advice would you give them?
Be ready to tell the teacher.

Reflect

- 8 Will you try these reading techniques in your own reading for your course? What might be difficult when you use them?