

Social customs in your country (Language of generalisation)

Below are some things that books like Culture Shock and Lonely Planet tend to over-generalise about. Try to agree what completely accurate sentence you would write for a foreigner (e.g. someone coming to Korea on a business trip) about one of the topics below, then move onto another. Start with the easiest topics first.

1. Blowing your nose in public
2. Constant sniffing to avoiding having to blow your nose
3. Spitting in the street
4. Eating your rice with chopsticks
5. Writing someone's name with red ink
6. Leaving your chopsticks stuck in your rice
7. Filling your own glass (e.g. pouring beer for yourself)
8. Passing things with your left hand
9. Touching people on the head
10. Wearing shoes indoors
11. Kissing in public
12. Eating with your hands
13. Holding hands or walking arm in arm with your boyfriend/
girlfriend/ same sex friend
14. Tipping
15. Gesturing with your chopsticks
16. Jewellery for men
17. Leaving food at the end of the meal
18. Giving someone four flowers
19. Opening a gift in front of the person who gave it to you
20. Ripping open presents
21. Taking off your jacket in a business meeting
22. Eating while you are walking
23. Picking your bowl up while you are eating
24. Slurping while you are eating
25. Drinking directly from a soup bowl

Useful language for generalising

(Only) older people/ young people/ children/ teenagers/ conservative people/ traditional people/ rural people/ people from small towns/ the elite/ posh people/ women/ the religious...

The vast majority of people/ almost everyone...

Quite a lot of people...

Only a minority of people/ (Very) few people...

People usually/ generally/ almost always...

People rarely/ seldom/ hardly ever/ almost never...

These days/ In the modern world, people...

Traditionally/ A generation ago/ Until..., people...

People tend to/ make a habit of/ try to...

... don't care one way or the other/ don't have any strong feelings on this

... disapprove of/ hate/ object to/ are offended by...

... think it is rude (= impolite = bad manners)/ strange/ offensive/ unacceptable/ ill-bred/ disgusting (= revolting)/ disrespectful/ unhygienic to...

... are superstitious about.../ think... is bad luck/ ... have religious reasons for...

... don't/ avoid...

...are shocked/ surprised/ offended (by...)

... expect you to...

... are impressed/ flattered if you...

... tend to/ make a habit of/ try to...

... disagree about...

It's (completely) taboo (for ... people/ in ... situations), because...

It's (very/ extremely) important to...

It is (very/ perfectly) normal/ (very) common to...

It is acceptable/ polite to... (when/ as long as...)