

Generalising about Britain, America and your country

Label the manners below as “UK”, “US”, “UK/ US” or “-” for neither.

Be careful not to tell jokes that are sexist, racist or homophobic

Waiters often introduce themselves and tell you to enjoy your meal.

Even in supermarkets in big cities, it is normal to start conversations with shop assistants.

It isn't considered strange to turn to the person next to you in the train or plane and introduce yourself.

When people first meet, they try to find a connection with you such as living in or having visited the same places.

It's okay for your tip to just be “Keep the change”.

Tipping is very important and almost always a fixed amount, as waiters often get most of their money from tips.

It is impolite to cut up your food first and then switch your fork to your right hand.

People may use affectionate names even with strangers such as: dear, dearie, flower, love, my lover, chick, chuck, duckie, mate, guv, son, ma'am, madam, miss, sir, or treacle.

It is impolite to slurp your food or eat noisily.

It's okay to pour beer or wine for yourself, but it is more polite to pour it for people on either side too.

You usually give an envelope of money at weddings and funerals.

It is normal to share a glass to show close friendship.

Underline useful language for not overgeneralising in the sentences above, then brainstorm more.

Compare your extra ideas with the next page.

Useful phrases for generalising

“(When you first meet them), people from this country seem to be...”

“Most/ the majority of people from this country...”

“The stereotypical view of people from this country is that they are...”

“People from this country are traditionally (considered to be)... (but nowadays...)”

“There is one famous person/ There are a few famous people from this country and he is/ she is/ they are...”

“If you believed the television, you’d think that these people were all...”

“Judging from the films/ TV/ pop videos/ photos I have seen about/ from this country, I would say they are...”

“Compared to my country, people from this country are said to be...”

“I don’t know much about this country, but if they are anything like other countries in that region they must be...”

“From my own (limited) experience, I would say these people are usually...”

“I only visited this country for a day/ three days/ a month, but my impression was that the people were...”

“This is just my opinion, but I would say...”

“If the people from this country are anything like their music and dancing, they must be...”

“There are exceptions of course, but generally people from this country are (quite)...”

“(The impression I get from the newspapers/ from the TV news is that) people from this country think people from my country are...”

“I (personally) find some people from this country to be too...”

“To my ears, the way they speak is (quite)...”

In pairs of people who are from the same country or region, use the language on this and the previous page to talk about similarities between your country and Britain and/ or America.