

## Topics and Role Plays

What do we call the man and woman in a wedding? What do we call the friends of the bride and groom who take part in the wedding? Do you have bridesmaids, groomsmen and ushers in your countries?

Do wedding guests give money or presents in your countries? What do people do here in America? How do the guests know what to buy? (Talk about registering at a big store and the list that guests look at, and how things get checked off the list as people buy them.) Would you rather do it that way or give money? Why? What do you think most people would rather get when they get married?

What do the bride and groom wear in your countries? What do they wear here? Do you think grooms here buy or rent their tuxedos? What about the brides' dresses? Why don't they rent them? What do women in your countries do with their wedding clothes after getting married? What do you think women here do with their dresses after getting married?

There are two parts to a wedding in the US. What are they called? (Ceremony and reception.) Have any of you been to a wedding in America? What happens in the ceremony? What happens in the reception? Are wedding ceremonies and receptions different in your countries?

Are casinos legal in your countries? Are they legal in Nebraska? Where do people go to gamble around here? Is gambling popular in your countries (in or out of casinos)? What do people bet money on? Do you have any games that people bet on that we don't have in America?

Do your countries have lotteries? Are they like the ones here? What do you think about lotteries? Have you bought a lottery ticket? What would you do if you won a million dollars? RP: Tell your boss you won the lottery. RP: Tell your friend.

What sports are popular in your countries? What do you think is the most popular sport to watch on TV in the US? What do you think about football? Americans aren't very interested in soccer, the rest of the world is crazy about it; Americans are crazy about football, the rest of the world doesn't care about it. Why? What sports do you have that we don't have here? What sports have you played? What do you like to watch? Why?

RP: S/he just kicked the winning goal in a soccer game. You are all reporters. What will you ask him/her? RP: You're the owner of a soccer team. I'm on the team, but I'm not very good, so you're going to trade me. How will you tell me?

How old were you when you started to study English in school? Did you like your English classes? How about the teachers? How do you study English at home now? What do you like to work on more when you study at home, reading, listening, vocabulary, grammar? How do you learn new words, on lists or in context? Do you study American TV or movies? How do you like to study TV or movies, watch it straight through or rewind when you don't understand something? Do you like to watch with or without subtitles?

Are there different languages in your countries? Dialects? Can people from one part of the country understand people from all the other parts?

Describe your hometown. What part of the country is it in? Is it big or small? How is the weather? If we all made a trip there, what would you recommend we do? What should we eat? When is the best time of year to go?

How is driving different in your country than in America? How is the traffic in the big cities? Are there a lot of scooters and bicycles? Is it common for people to go through red lights? How is it at rush hour? Would it be difficult for Americans to drive in your countries? How about crossing the street? How old do people have to be to drive? Did you drive in your country? Is the test hard? Is it expensive to get a driver's license and license plates?

In Lincoln a lot of the streets have letters and numbers for names. When we say where something is, we say the numbered street first, like 9<sup>th</sup> and G. Do streets in your countries have letters and numbers for names? In the US, the streets are mostly straight. How about in your countries?

What American holidays do you like? Why? What are the most important holidays in your countries? How are they celebrated? When are the New Year's celebrations in your countries? How is it celebrated? What do people do here on New Year's Eve? New Year's Day? We make New Year's resolutions. Do you have New Year's traditions like that? What traditions do you have for birthdays?

A lot of American high school students have part-time jobs. How about in your countries? Did you have a part time job when you were young? RP: Do interviews for those jobs. The people who had the jobs are the hiring managers.

How much of your shopping do you do online? What do you buy online? Do you use PayPal? How is shopping different in your country than in America? Do the shop employees talk to the customers the same way they do here? In what month do Americans spend the most money? Is there a time of year when people in your countries do a lot of shopping or spend a lot? How do people in your countries pay for things when they go shopping? Cash, check, credit card, debit card...? Do a lot of people in your countries have problems with credit card debt?

Bargaining isn't very common in America. When do Americans bargain for something? Is it common to bargain in your countries? What kind of places do people bargain in? (Use their examples for role plays). RP: You want to buy a \_\_\_\_\_ from him/her. Try to get a low price. Are you good at bargaining? What are your bargaining techniques?

How much should people leave for a tip in a restaurant? In what kind of restaurants do/don't people give tips? What do you think about that custom? Would you rather have the bill be more expensive? How do you think the service would be if the waiters didn't work for tips?

Did you wear a uniform to school? What did it look like? What did you think about your uniform? What's good and bad about school uniforms? What classes did you like in school? Why? What classes didn't you like? Why not? Who was your favorite teacher? Did you have any strict teachers? Strange teachers?

The American school year starts in August and has a fall and spring semester. How about in your countries? Do students have homework during the holidays? What did you do in the winter or summer vacations when you were a student?

How much homework do kids have in your country? Do you think that's a good amount? RP: A kid is playing computer games when s/he should be studying. Parents tell him/her to do homework. RP: Half an hour later the kid is playing computer games again. RP: Kid listens to loud rap music. RP: Kid wants a tattoo.

RP: Policeman/woman pulls someone over for speeding and it's their friend.

RP: It's their boss. RP: "You better not give me a ticket. My dad is your boss."

RP: It's their mom/dad.

What do you think about the way people dance in the US? Do people dance differently in your countries? Are you a good dancer? What countries do you think have good dancers?

WM: go Dutch. In your countries when two or three friends go out to eat, do they go Dutch? How about a bigger group? How about a couple on their first date? RP: You two are eating in a restaurant. Both of you want to pay the bill. I'm the waiter. Here's the check. What do you say? RP: You're alone in a restaurant and you forgot your wallet. (To another student) You're the waiter. Give him the check.

Do women in your countries change their last name when they get married? Do they add their husband's last name to their own? What about the children's last names? How do people choose names for their children? Do people have middle names? Do most names have meaning? Does yours?

RP: S/he's an alien who just came to Earth. Ask him/her some questions. RP: S/he's an alien who wants the people on his/her planet to move to the Earth because his/her planet is too polluted.

If someone has a noisy neighbor, what should they do? RP: You're his/her neighbor. His/her music is too loud. What will you do?

Someone is playing ping pong with their boss. Their boss is losing badly and getting really angry. Should they let their boss win? RP: You're the boss, you think s/he's letting you win. What do you say?

RP: You own a restaurant and you want to hire a new chef. They all want the job. Ask them where they learned to cook, what they're good at cooking, how much they want to get paid, etc. RP: After working for 3 months, cook asks for a raise.

RP: You're the boss. S/he's late for work. RP: Now it's the next day and s/he's late again! RP: Ask the boss if you can get off work early today. RP: Ask for a day off.

Have you ever bought or sold anything on eBay? What do you have in your countries like that? Do some people have problems? What can you do if you buy something and the condition it's in isn't what they said? RP: S/he sold you a laptop but the keyboard is missing the Z.

What do people on airplanes do that bothers you? What would you do if you were on an airplane and the person next to you was asleep and started snoring? What if their head leaned on your shoulder? What if the person next to you took off their shoes and their feet smelled bad?

RP: Your company buys 100 chairs from his/her company. The chairs arrive and they only have 3 legs. RP: Boss of a small company tells employees the company is going bankrupt. RP: A manager in an office sees that a staff member has come to work with a new tattoo - on their neck. RP: staff member comes to work with blue hair. RP: You're the boss. I work in your company and you don't think I do a good job. Fire me.

This is a situation between three people in a company: the top manager, the middle manager, and one of the middle manager's staff. (Write them on the board and label them A, B and C. A is the staff member.) A has a great plan for the company and tells B. B says s/he'll think about it. Then B tells C and says it's his/her own plan. C loves the plan and gives B a raise. What should A do? If A tells C, what do you think C would say? RP: A confronts B. RP: A tells C. RP: C calls in A and B.

Have you ever heard of the tooth fairy? What does the tooth fairy do? What do people do in your country when a child loses a baby tooth?

Here's a situation: two people work in the same office. One walks by the other's desk and sees a paper with information about their salary on it. Do you think that person would stop and look closely? What would you do? RP: (Busted) Hey! What are you looking at?

Have you ever seen or met anyone famous? If you could meet anyone in the world, who would you want to meet? Why? RP: Each person plays the famous person they mentioned; the rest of the students are reporters. The famous person just made a great/terrible movie, had a great/terrible game, etc. The reporters ask questions. RP: A famous person gets stopped for speeding and tries to get out of getting a ticket. It can be the person the student mentioned or Obama, Tom Cruise, etc.

If someone from your hometown asked you to describe Lincoln, how would you describe it? What places do you like in Lincoln? What restaurants do you like?

What kind of job would you rather have, one with a high salary and a lot of pressure, or one where you make enough to live comfortably and don't have a lot of pressure?

Do kids in your countries get a weekly allowance? RP: Kid asks for raise in his/her allowance

What do you like more, eating out or eating at home? Would you want to eat out five times a week? Is it common to see people selling food on the street in your countries? Mexican food is very popular here. What foreign foods are popular in your countries? How about McDonalds or KFC?

Would you rather work for a big company or a small one? Would you rather live in the city or in the country? Which is a better place to raise kids? Which is a better place to retire? Would you like to live in New York? What's good and bad about living in New York? How about Hawaii?

Which do you think look better, the old houses in Lincoln or the new ones? If you were rich, would you rather live in an old house with a beautiful design or a new one without much style?

What would you do...  
if you had a month off with pay?  
if you had ten kids?  
if you lived in Los Angeles?  
if you were seven feet tall?  
if you were three feet tall?

What are fortune tellers? Are there a lot of fortune tellers in your countries? What do they look like? How do they tell people's fortunes? What do they usually say will happen in the future? Do they tell bad fortunes? Do they make a lot of money? Do they sell things to people? RP: You're a fortune teller. Try to sell him/her a good luck stone. RP: S/he's a fortune teller and s/he said you would be rich in one year. Now it's a year later and you're still not rich. What will you say to him/her?

What's a superstition? In America it's bad luck if you walk under a ladder, break a mirror, open an umbrella inside, if a black cat crosses your path, if you don't blow out all your birthday candles... 13 is a bad number: in hotels, Friday the 13<sup>th</sup>. What about in your countries? What brings good/bad luck? Are there any superstitions about New Year's Eve or New Year's Day?

RP: I'm a guest in your home. It's getting late, but I don't leave. What will you say?

RP: Call in sick. RP: At lunch that day the boss sees you in a restaurant with a friend.

What would you say if you were a manager and a staff member called you saying they couldn't go to work because... (these are actual excuses from a survey of managers)

I didn't sleep well last night. I'm too tired.

My garage door doesn't work. I can't get my car out.

My favorite team lost last night. I'm too sad.

I'm trying to quit smoking and I'm in a bad mood.

I got on a plane by accident.

My plastic surgery doesn't look right.

I lost a lot of money gambling. I need to win it back.

I was driving to work and had to stop quickly, and my false teeth flew out the window.

Somebody glued my doors and windows shut.

I bit my tongue and now I can't talk.

I can't decide what to wear.