

CONCORSO COMUNE LEVEL C1 questions

General Questions:

Name, where lives, hobbies etc.

MORE SPECIFIC QUESTIONS:

Directions:

1. (in Piazza Tasso) – How can I get to Naples?
2. Is there a market in Sorrento? Where is it?
3. (in Piazza Tasso) How do you get to Massa Lubrense?
4. (tourist in distress) – I've lost my purse/wallet?

What are your thoughts on the present situation this year?

What's your favourite holiday destination?

Global warming.

Do you think everyone should speak English? Why?

CULTURE SHOCK QUESTIONS:::

See reading page 12.

BARACK OBAMA QUESTIONS:::

1. Do you think Obama was a good president? Why/not?
2. What was one of the most important things he did during his presidency?

3. WHERE DID HE INVITE MICHELLE TO GO?

4. WHAT DOES SHE MEAN WHEN SHE SAYS

"BARACK LIVED COMFORTABLY IN THOSE TWO WORLDS"?

Let me ask you about when you first met your husband. Before you were married, the two of you worked at a law firm together in Chicago. And I read when he first asked you out, you said, 'No, thank you,' not wanting to mix business with pleasure.

Right.

But then he invited you somewhere. And your view of him changed dramatically. Why was that? And what happened?

X Well, we were friends from the start, because I was his advisor. And my job was to welcome him to the firm. I took him out to lunch. And immediately I liked him because he didn't take himself too seriously but he was very bright, had a very interesting background, just a good guy to talk to. You know, you could laugh easily with him. So I was, like, this is a friend.

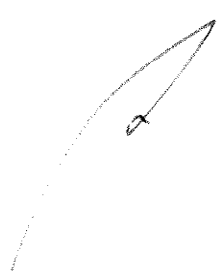
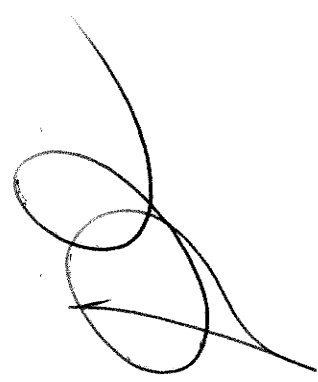
But then he asked me out on a date. And I thought, 'Well, my advisee. Hmm, I don't think that looks right.' But he invited me to go to one of the churches because he had been a community organizer and worked on the far South Side with a group of churches. And he took me to a training session that he was giving. And there were mostly single-parent mothers, mostly African Americans on the South Side.

1 And in this training, he was talking about concepts like the world as it is and the world as it should be and how the job of ordinary people is to try to narrow the gap between those two ideas. And to see him transform himself from the guy who was a summer associate in a law firm with a suit and then to come into this church basement with folks who were like me, who grew up like me, who were challenged and struggling in ways that I never would, and to be able to take off that suit and tie and become a whole 'nother person and connect with people in the same way he had connected with folks in that firm, you don't see someone who can make that transition and do it comfortably and feel comfortable in his own skin and to touch people's hearts in the way that he did, because people connected with his message. And I knew then and there that there's something different about this guy. Because you see people who can live well in corporate America. They can wear that uniform well. They can't make the transition and vice versa. Barack lived comfortably in those two worlds.

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VIGILANCE
6 P.M. P.T.
BARACK

OBAMA



Culture shock

Posted by Joy: Today 10.12 am

X Today marks exactly one year since I came to London! When I made the decision to leave Singapore, it was incredibly exciting. Soon, though, I had to face the challenge of experiencing a different way of life. It hasn't always been easy, living on (literally) the other side of the world. I guess I shouldn't be surprised that people who have grown up in different places have different ways of behaving, thinking and expressing themselves.

Before I set off on my adventure, I had certain images of English people: polite, serious people, always drinking tea, obsessed with the weather ... These things aren't exactly false, but they're only the tip of the iceberg. I soon realised that people's behaviour wasn't always consistent with my preconceptions.

Let's start with the things I love. London is a big, bustling, cosmopolitan city. So, in that respect, things weren't totally new for me. There are lots of things to do all year round and I can go to museums, musicals and plays whenever I want. Also, because of where London is, I can easily just pop over to Paris or Brussels for a weekend getaway.

But after going through the 'tourist phase' of finding everything completely new and exciting, more and more things started to surprise me. I discovered the 'iceberg' hidden under the water and started to gain some insight into British culture. For example, some of the TV programmes and newspapers were a bit of a shock. Sometimes it seems that, in the media, anything goes. The English sense of humour is really interesting, too. A lot of the time, it's really self-deprecating humour. Sometimes it can be quite obvious and crude (and not at all polite). At other times, you don't really know if they're being sarcastic or being serious. It took me a while to get used to that, and read between the lines. But it helped to watch a lot of chat shows and comedies (English people love watching TV – in fact, that's what a lot of their conversation and cultural references are about). In fact these programmes are a rich source of information about the British and the British way of life.

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Reading

1 Work with a partner and discuss these questions.

- 1 Have you ever visited or lived in a foreign country? If so, what cultural differences did you notice?
- 2 What might a visitor to your country perceive to be the biggest cultural difference?
- 3 What is *culture shock*, do you think? Have you ever experienced this?

2 Read Joy's blog about living in London.

- 1 Why does she compare culture to an *iceberg*?
- 2 What is her final piece of advice to people going to live in another culture?

3 Work in small groups and discuss these questions.

- 1 What are the dangers of making general statements about national characteristics?
- 2 What generalisations are made about people from your country? Do you agree with them?