

14a Flight to Rubovia

Paul Emmerson

(Adapted from an exercise in 'The Cross-Cultural Business Pocketbook' by John Mattock)

You are on your first business trip to Rubovia. You board the flight and the cabin crew and passengers are all speaking Rubovian. You don't understand a word. A Rubovian sits next to you and greets you in excellent English. Over the next few hours you have a wonderful opportunity to find out about Rubovia and its culture. What questions will you ask the friendly passenger at your side?

- Write down four questions about general culture in Rubovia, and four about business culture. When you have finished, read out your questions and listen to other people's ideas.

General culture	Business culture
1	1
2	2
3	3
4	4

- Look at the sample questions at the bottom of the page. How many are similar to the questions you thought of? Which questions would you ask if you only had time for ten questions in total?

----- fold -----

----- fold -----

General

- How do you say 'Hello', 'Please', 'Thank you', 'Sorry', 'Cheers' and 'Goodbye' in Rubovian?
- How do people greet each other, by shaking hands or kissing?
- What's good to eat and drink?
- Are there any religious taboos I should know about?
- What are the common mistakes that foreigners make in Rubovia?
- What's the population of Rubovia?
- What's the most popular sport?
- What's the geography of the country like?
- Are there big regional differences inside the country?
- How have things changed over the last ten years?
- What do Rubovians think about my country?
- What is everybody talking about at the moment?

Business

- How should I address people? When do people use first names?
- Are personal relationships important in business?
- How important are punctuality and deadlines?
- Is decision-making quick and decisive, or slow and cautious?
- Is documentation important, or is 'my word' good enough?
- Is it normal to openly disagree with people in meetings?
- If not, how should I show that I'm not happy with something?
- Do people continue the business discussion at lunch?
- Is it expected that you offer a gift at the end of a visit?
- If so, what is appropriate?