

1. A ride to the airport

Naomi was visiting her friend, Keiko, in Hawaii. On Naomi's last day, Keiko's friend, Ricky, drove her to the airport. At the airport, Naomi got off and stood by the sidewalk and waved. Ricky waved back but Naomi continued to stand there and wave. Ricky waved back again but Naomi was still there waving. Finally, Ricky looked puzzled and asked Keiko why Naomi was still standing there. Why was Ricky puzzled?

1. Ricky was not used to people being polite to him.
2. Ricky was not used to people thanking him for a ride.
3. Ricky expected Naomi to just thank him and walk away.
4. Ricky was hoping Naomi would give him a hug.

2. A drive down the coast

One Sunday, Sam invited four friends to go on a drive down the coast of Oregon. Dan, Rina, Akemi, and Cindy were ready to jump in when Rina started giggling and pointing at the front passenger seat saying, “Dan, I think you should sit there.” Dan looked at Rina and said, “Why, because I’m fat?” Rina giggled. There was an awkward silence and the three girls sat in the back seat of the car. As they got closer to the coast, Sam stopped at a gas station. The five got out and bought different snacks. As Dan was eating beef jerky, Rina approached him, giggled, and said, “It smells.” By the time they go to the coast, Dan was not happy. Why was Dan unhappy?

1. As Americans tend to be sensitive about appearances, suggesting that someone is overweight is rude.
2. As Americans tend to be sensitive about the way they smell, suggesting that someone smells is rude.
3. Giggling can be considered rude in America.
4. Dan thought Rina disliked him.

3. Thank you for waiting

Karen was visiting Japan with her husband. She noticed that every time she used the elevator in the hotel, the elevator operator would say, “Thank you for waiting,” even if they had not been waiting at all. One day, she went to the beauty salon. After a long and relaxing shampoo, the stylist said “Otsukaresama-deshita!” When she found out what this meant, Karen wondered why the stylist would thank her for her hard work when all she did was sit there and have her hair washed. She thought to herself, “Shouldn’t I be the one thanking her for her hard work?” Why was Karen confused?

1. Karen was not used to people being polite.
2. Karen was not used to being thanked for her efforts.
3. Karen was not used to these particular greetings.
4. Karen was used to the slow service in the U.S.A. so she did not expect to be thanked for her patience.

4. Toilet paper etiquette

Kayoko studied Spanish in Tokyo. The first time she went out of Japan was to a Spanish-speaking South American country for work. She stayed at a hostel for women. On her first night there, she went to use the toilet and noticed that the toilet paper roll was hung the wrong way. (The loose end hanging from below the roll instead of above the roll.) She was disturbed and thought that someone made a mistake. She turned it around. But when she looked at all the other stalls in that hostel toilet, she found that they were all hanging the wrong way. Why do you think this happened?

1. Kayoko was staying at a cheap hostel so the service was terrible.
2. South Americans are laid back and don't care which way the toilet paper is hanging.
3. They did this to annoy Kayoko.
4. This is the way toilet paper is usually hung in this country.

5. The difficult landlord

Jack had been living in his apartment in Japan for a few months. His Internet was slow, and he wanted to get a faster connection. He called the Internet company and asked them to install a fiber-optic line in his apartment. The Internet company told him he needed to get permission from his landlord. So, Jack called his landlord and asked him if he could install a fiber-optic line in his apartment. His landlord replied that it would be difficult to do so. Jack said he would do whatever it takes to get faster Internet. His landlord replied again that it would be difficult. Jack said he didn't care how difficult it was; he would do anything. Again, his landlord replied that it was difficult. Jack asked if it was a matter of money, but it was no use. His landlord continued to say that it would be difficult, and Jack never got a faster Internet connection. Why didn't Jack get faster Internet?

1. Jack's Japanese was not good enough.
2. The landlord was being vague.
3. The landlord was lazy or afraid of doing anything difficult.
4. The landlord was hiding something.

6. The doctor's diagnosis

It was Lito's first winter in Japan, and he got a sore throat. Lito always got a sore throat in winter at home, and at home the doctor always diagnosed him with strep throat, gave him antibiotics, and he was better in a few days. So Lito did some research, translated "strep throat" and "antibiotics" and went to the doctor's. When he met the doctor, the doctor asked him what was wrong. Lito told the doctor that he had strep throat, that he always got it this time of year, and that a few days of antibiotics would make him better. Lito was trying to save the doctor some time and felt he was being very helpful. However, the doctor didn't seem pleased. He examined Lito silently, looking in his nose and throat. After a quick examination, he told Lito that it was only a cold and he should go home, drink plenty of tea, and rest. Lito explained again that the doctor was wrong, that this was the same sickness he always had, and that he needed antibiotics. The doctor got angry and left the exam room. Lito left the clinic without paying. Why didn't Lito and the doctor get along?

1. The doctor made a mistaken diagnosis.
2. Lito doesn't have strep throat.
3. Lito treated the doctor with disrespect.
4. The doctor doesn't like foreigners.

7. The on-time arrival

Ian worked as an ALT at a Japanese school. He was invited to go along on a school bus trip. The teachers told him that since the buses were leaving at six, everyone should arrive at school by 5:45. Ian set his alarm, woke up on time, and arrived at the school at exactly 5:45. He was surprised to find that all the students and teachers were on the buses. The vice principal met him and told him what bus to get on. When he got on the bus, no one said anything to him and he could tell the other teachers were not happy. The bus started moving shortly after he sat down. Why were the teachers unhappy with Ian?

1. The teachers were talking about Ian before he arrived.
2. Ian was late.
3. Ian mistook the arrival time.
4. The teachers told Ian the wrong time.

8. The pet-trimming student

Sean was teaching an English class of Japanese students. He told them to talk about their dream jobs. The class was going well, and Sean was walking around the class listening to the students' conversations. He overheard a girl telling her partner about becoming a trimmer. He didn't understand what she meant and asked what a trimmer was. She explained that a trimmer was someone who cut the hair of people's pets. Sean was surprised and thought the student had misunderstood the assignment. He told her that this conversation should be about her *dream* job: the job she would choose if she could be anything. He gave examples like a doctor or an astronaut. The girl promptly burst into tears and ran out of the classroom. Why was she upset?

1. Pet-trimming is a prestigious job in Japan.
2. The student didn't understand the activity.
3. The student has an unusual dream.
4. Sean thought the student should have a more important job.

9. Irrashaimase

After graduating from university, Stephen moved to Japan to join his girlfriend. Shortly after his arrival, he noticed that every time he entered a restaurant or a store or a hotel, the staff would say irasshaimase! Stephen would smile back and say irasshaimase back to them and bow. After noticing the shop clerks giggle or look shocked, he stopped doing this but even after many years in Japan, when he hears irasshaimase he still wants to say something back to the shop-keepers. Why do you think Stephen has this reaction?

1. Stephen likes to make people laugh so he is trying to be funny.
2. Stephen is used to storekeepers and customers giving reciprocal greetings.
3. Stephen still does not understand what irasshaimase means.
4. Stephen was annoyed by the loud greeting and wanted to show his frustration.

10. You look tired

Brad really enjoys going to Tokyo on weekends to study with his friends. Saturday classes are long and hard, but they are also interesting and he was looking forward to the class on Sunday. He got a cup of coffee and was feeling happy and energetic as he walked into the classroom. Some classmates looked a little sleepy and others had their noses in their textbooks. Makoto was sitting alone in the corner and Brad went over to him. “Hey, Makoto, how’s it going?” Makoto looked up. “Hi. You look tired!” he said. Brad felt embarrassed and didn’t know what to say. Why was Brad embarrassed?

1. Makoto was worried about the narrator.
2. Makoto probably didn’t do his homework for Sunday’s class.
3. Brad thought that Makoto was rude.
4. Brad was tired from studying on Saturday.