



THE PAL PROGRAM GUIDE

UCDAVIS

International & Academic English

Office of Undergraduate Education

Understanding

CULTURE

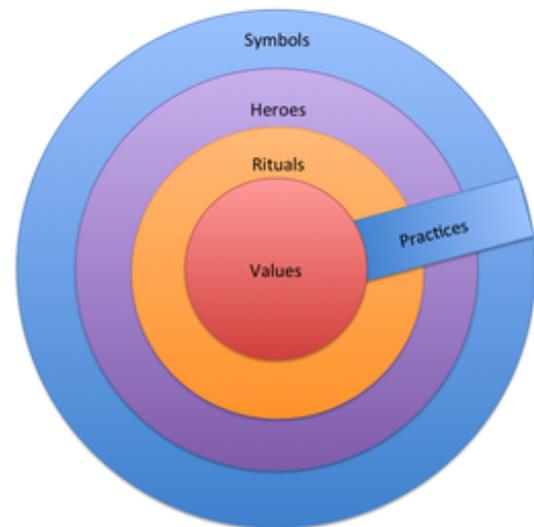
The purpose of the Pal Program is to provide students with an intercultural exchange experience that will broaden their worldview and help them understand their partners' cultural perspectives. However, understanding culture is not always such an easy task.

One frequently used method to understand culture is (Geert) Hendrik Hofstede's "Cultural Onion".

Culture as an Onion

THE LAYERS

- **Symbols:** US flag, red envelopes
- **Heroes:** Jackie Chan, John F. Kennedy
- **Rituals:** Shaking hands, serving tea
- **Practices:** Wearing a hijab, talking about the weather
- **Values:** Honesty, Cleanliness, Morality



INNER LAYERS VS. OUTER LAYERS

Using the onion model, consider the layers of your own culture. You may notice it is much easier to think of examples for the outer layers than the inner. This is because a culture's values are not always immediately apparent, even to those who live within it. But peeling back the outer layers can give us an insight into the core of culture - your personal values.

As you get to know your Pal, be patient and keep the onion model in mind. Ask yourself questions like, "Why is my partner so obsessed with LeBron James?" One explanation could be that her culture values competition, physical strength, and financial success.

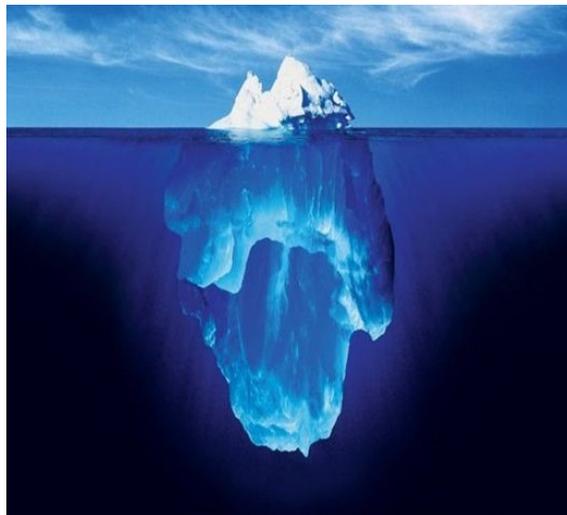
Understanding

CULTURE

There are two perspectives from which to view an iceberg. Above the surface of the water you will see a chunk of ice jutting out. But, as you can see in the picture below, this visible chunk is just a small part of the entire iceberg, most of which is hidden below the surface of the water.

Consider the visible, surface-level aspects of culture, as compared to the deeper, richer elements hidden below the surface.

*Culture
as an
Iceberg*



ABOVE THE SURFACE

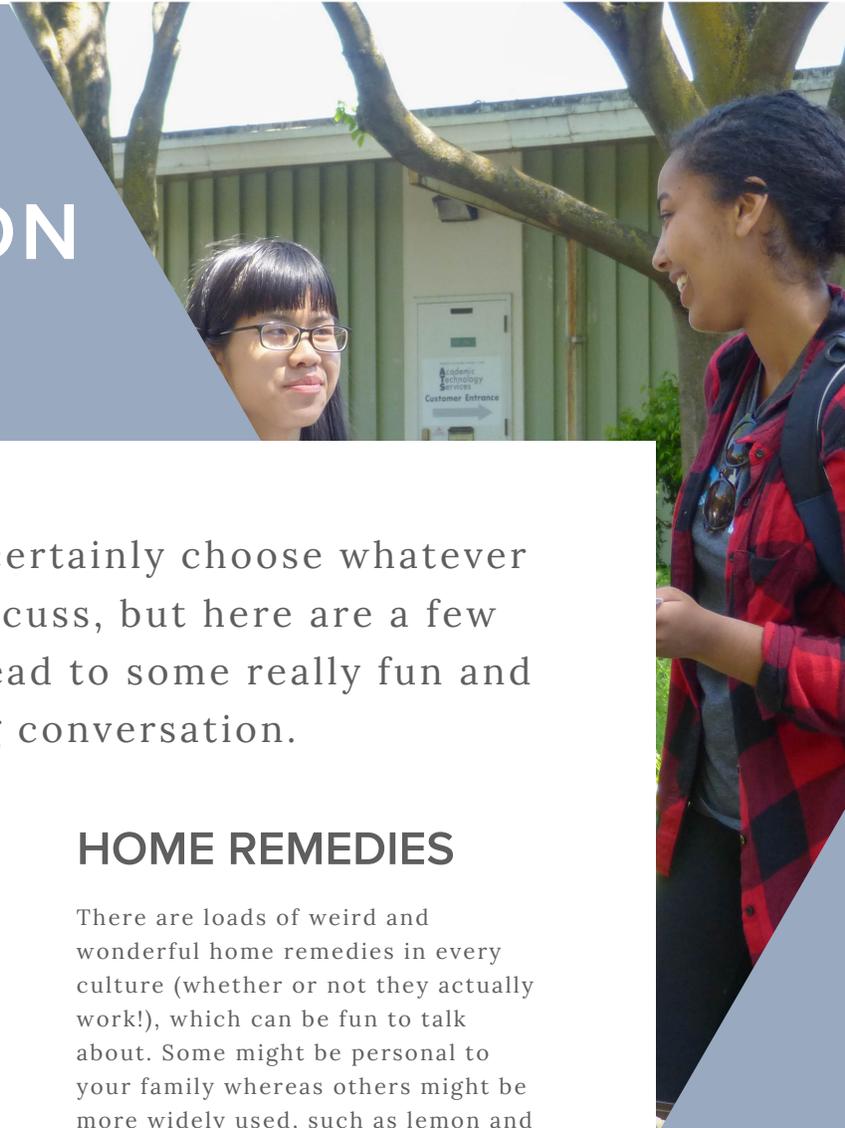
Oftentimes people can identify a culture by words or actions performed by people within the culture, like food, dances, music, or other rituals. People on the outside of this culture can see these items in action and will then associate them with the culture. For example, dancing the Tango in Argentina or eating curry in India.

BELOW THE SURFACE

However, we are much more complicated than that. Consider a culture's ideas of morality, politeness, respect, loyalty, beauty, humor, or family. These values inform our behavior and may be passed on through the generations. Understanding the "why" will bring you closer to your partner and their genuine culture.

Getting Started

CONVERSATION STARTERS



You and your Pal can certainly choose whatever topic you want to discuss, but here are a few suggestions that can lead to some really fun and interesting conversation.

FOOD

This is a topic that never fails to start a lively discussion! Possible questions could be:

- What food from home do you miss the most?
- What's the strangest food you've ever eaten?
- What's your favorite food that you've tried since you came to Davis? Your least favorite?
- How do you eat food in your country/culture (chopsticks, fingers, right or left hand, spoon, scoop?)
- Do you share from one central dish or have individual plates?



HOME REMEDIES

There are loads of weird and wonderful home remedies in every culture (whether or not they actually work!), which can be fun to talk about. Some might be personal to your family whereas others might be more widely used, such as lemon and honey for a sore throat. Some examples of home remedies:

- Hiccups: Bend forward and drink a glass of water “upside down” or take a teaspoon of sugar.
- Warts: Cover with duct tape for several weeks (apparently, this really works!).
- Cold: Drink “tea” made with crushed raw garlic cloves or chew raw garlic (sounds strange, but garlic is a natural antibiotic).

Starting Out

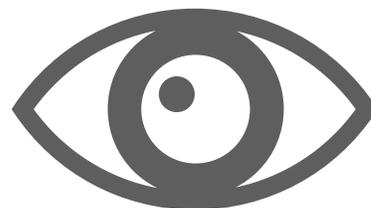
CONVERSATION STARTERS



BODY LANGUAGE

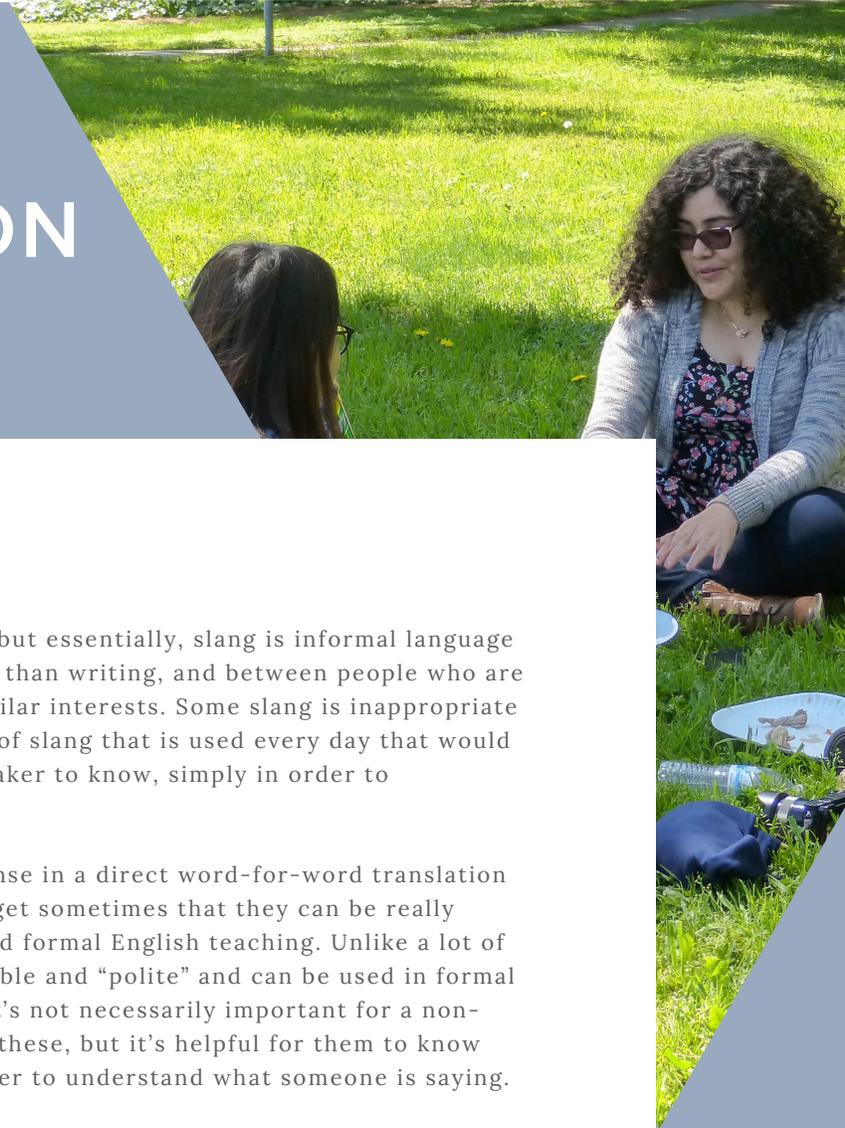
You and your partner can discuss which of these gestures listed below you might have in common and which have different meanings. They are common in the U.S. but can have very different interpretations elsewhere!

- Waving (hello, goodbye, to get attention, to dismiss someone)
- Circling finger at temple (to indicate craziness)
- High five (likely specific to U.S. but so common, it would be good to introduce it to your international partner)
- Shrugging shoulders (“I don’t know” or “I don’t care”)
- Shaking head to indicate “no”
- Nodding head to indicate “yes”
- Thumbs up/Thumbs down (good/bad)
- Making an OK sign with thumb and forefinger (warning: this is very rude in Brazil!)
- Averting your eyes when speaking or being spoken to (in the west, this is considered suspicious)
- Looking directly into the eyes of someone speaking to you (some Asian countries consider this aggressive)
- Shaking hands (as opposed to bowing, as they do in Japan)
- Pointing to something or someone with a forefinger (again, some cultures find this very impolite)
- Social (as opposed to romantic) kissing or hugging



Starting Out

CONVERSATION STARTERS



SLANG & IDIOMS

These are sometimes interchangeable but essentially, slang is informal language that tends to be used in speech rather than writing, and between people who are familiar with each other and share similar interests. Some slang is inappropriate in the Pal context, but there is plenty of slang that is used every day that would be useful for a non-native English speaker to know, simply in order to understand what someone is saying.

Idioms are phrases that don't make sense in a direct word-for-word translation but are so commonly used that we forget sometimes that they can be really confusing to someone who has only had formal English teaching. Unlike a lot of slang, they are mostly socially acceptable and "polite" and can be used in formal as well as informal situations. Again, it's not necessarily important for a non-native English speaker to learn to use these, but it's helpful for them to know some of the more common ones in order to understand what someone is saying. Also, it's a fun topic of conversation.

SLANG

- Hang out
- Awesome
- Cool
- Hot
- Chill out
- Dope
- Crushing on
- Have a blast
- Bail
- Creep
- Couch Potato
- Crash
- Cram
- For real
- Nerd
- Rip off
- Dude
- Cut class
- Totally
- Freaked out
- No brainer
- What's up?
- You rock
- Stoked
- Lighten up
- Screw up
- All-out/All-in
- On point

IDIOMS

- That class was a piece of cake
- I heard through the grapevine that Sam and Tania are splitting up
- These jeans cost an arm and a leg
- My professor and I don't see eye to eye
- I feel like I have to study 24/7
- Take it easy
- I'm sick and tired of my roommate leaving dishes in the sink
- Don't let the cat out of the bag
- Don't jump the gun
- She walked in out of the blue
- It's the best of both worlds

Starting Out

SAFETY & LOGISTICS

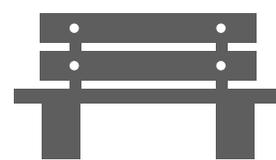
As always, we encourage you to be safe and careful when meeting with your PAL partners.

Follow the tips below:

- Meet your partner in public places. Do not meet at your home or in isolated areas until you are comfortable with them.
- Do not consume drugs or alcohol when spending time with your people you don't know well.
- Because your partner may have a different first language and culture, it's important to make sure you are both completely comfortable with any plans made.
- Avoid driving or traveling too far away from campus.

Choose meeting places that are easily accessible for both partners. Here are some suggestions:

- Pal game nights or other Pal-organized events
- Coffee shops/cafes on campus or downtown
- The Community Center, the ARC, Memorial Union, etc.
- Public events happening on campus or in town
- Parks or other comfortable outdoor areas on campus



Earning

COURSE CREDIT

Intercultural Communication for Pals is a course offered to Pal Program participants who choose to meet with two assigned Pals throughout the quarter. Objectives include self-awareness, goal setting, reflective writing, and ultimately, a higher level of intercultural competence through consistent in-person interactions with students from different cultures, countries, and/or language groups.

ASSIGNMENTS INCLUDE:

- Intercultural Effectiveness Scale
- In-Person Debrief
- Goal Setting Assignment
- Case Study
- Final Summary-Evaluation Essay
- Optional Journal Entries

EDU 198: Intercultural Communication for Pals

Course credit is not required to participate in the Pal Program. However, if you would like to earn one unit of credit per quarter, follow the steps below carefully:

- Indicate on your application that you would like to earn one unit of credit by working with two Pals for two hours a week throughout the quarter.
- Register for EDU 198 on Schedule Builder using the course CRN published on the website.
- Commence your weekly Pal meetups.
- Complete required and optional assignments.

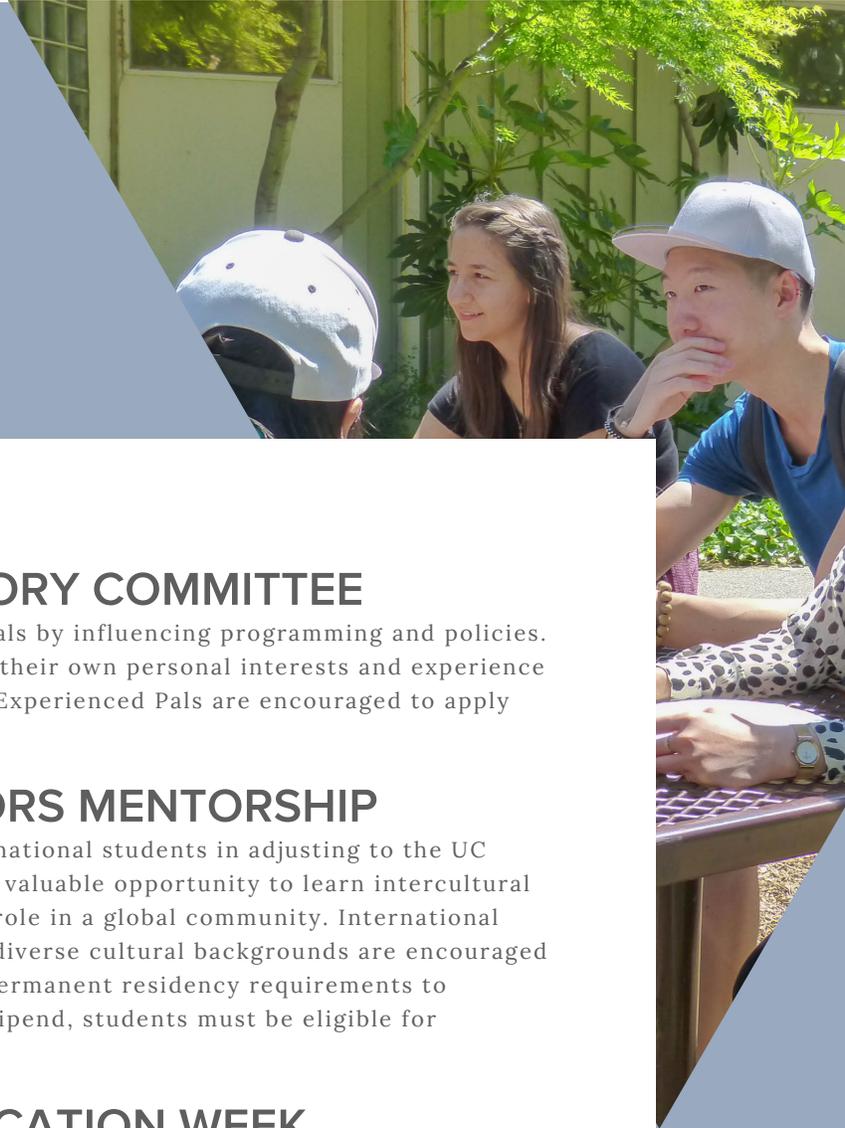
INTERCULTURAL EFFECTIVENESS SURVEY

Pals seeking credit will have the opportunity to complete the online Intercultural Effectiveness Scale.

This assessment asks questions and rates your intercultural competence in 4 key areas. Students will use these results to create their own personal development plan for the quarter.

- Complete the online assessment
- Attend in-person debrief review your results
- Use your results to set goals for the quarter

PAL & BEYOND



PAL STUDENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Use your Pal experience to help new Pals by influencing programming and policies. Members meet once a quarter and use their own personal interests and experience to promote and improve the program. Experienced Pals are encouraged to apply for this committee.

GLOBAL AMBASSADORS MENTORSHIP

SISS is seeking mentors to assist international students in adjusting to the UC Davis campus and US culture. This is a valuable opportunity to learn intercultural leadership skills and understand your role in a global community. International students and American students from diverse cultural backgrounds are encouraged to apply! There are no citizenship or permanent residency requirements to participate. However, to receive the stipend, students must be eligible for employment in the U.S.

INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION WEEK

Every third week in November is International Education Week. UC Davis and Global Affairs will host a variety of events, fairs, classes, festivals, lectures, and activities on campus to showcase the benefits of international education and exchange worldwide.

STUDY ABROAD

Take your international skills abroad! UC Davis offers study abroad options of varying lengths of time, locations, purposes, and types of course credit. Seminars and internships abroad are also offered.

CLUB INTERNATIONAL

Club International (“Club-I”) is a group of international and American students that plan activities throughout the year, including trips around California, cultural dinners, potluck and parties. They meet every Friday evening, usually somewhere in Davis, to socialize and have fun. Whether it’s a potluck or a trip, join them by sending an email to the coordinator at club-i@internationalhousedavis.org, or join their Facebook group, “Club-I Davis”, for more helpful information.

CONTACT

The Pal Program is managed by International & Academic English, a unit of Undergraduate Education.

LOCATION

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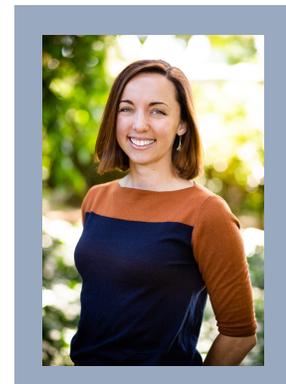
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