U.S. Culture Survival Tips

10 Social Norms in the United States
It is important to understand these social norms for how things work in daily life in the USA.

---

1. Be on Time
Arriving on time shows respect. Being late without notice is often seen as rude in schools, jobs, and appointments.

2. Make Eye Contact
Looking someone in the eye (briefly) during conversation shows confidence and honesty. Avoiding eye contact can seem like you're hiding something.

3. Smile and Greet Strangers
It's common to say "Hi" or smile at people, even if you don't know them. It's a friendly habit, especially in small towns or schools.

4. Personal Space is Important
People like space between them—about an arm's length. Standing too close can make someone feel uncomfortable.

5. Ask Questions
In the U.S., asking questions is a sign of interest—not a sign that you're unprepared. It's okay to ask for clarification.

6. Say "Please" and "Thank You" Often
These words are used a lot, even for small things. Politeness is shown through words, not just actions.

7. Take Turns Speaking
Interrupting is usually seen as rude. People expect you to wait your turn in a conversation or raise your hand in class.

8. Respect Other Cultures and Opinions
Diversity is valued. It's polite to avoid strong opinions about religion, politics, or someone's background unless invited to share.

9. Keep Conversations Positive in Public
People try to avoid loud arguments or personal topics in public places like buses, restaurants, and stores.

10. Tipping is Expected
In restaurants and salons, tipping 15–20% is standard. It's how many workers earn a living.

Reflection Question:

What's one social norm that surprised you?
 What new American habit have you learned recently?