

## Exercise 3

### Quiz: How British do you sound?

Answer the following multiple-choice questions from the perspective of a British person and then check out your score to find out how British you sound. Remember to think about grammar as well as cultural differences.

1. You're working as a waiter in a busy Edinburgh restaurant. A crowd of people is making a lot of noise and is beginning to annoy other guests. What do you say to them?
  - a. You must be quiet now, please!
  - b. Just shut the fuck up, please!
  - c. Would you mind keeping the noise down, please?
2. You want to buy some sausages from the butcher's stand at the local supermarket. What do you say?
  - a. I become a pound of sausages.
  - b. A pound of sausages, please.
  - c. Please give me pound of sausages.
3. Your boss wants you to come into work on Saturday but it's your birthday and you have planned to go to Cornwall for the weekend. Your boss asks, "Could you come in tomorrow to finish this work off?" What do you say?
  - a. No, I couldn't. I'll go to Cornwall for the weekend.
  - b. I'm afraid not. I'm going to Cornwall for the weekend.
  - c. No. It's not possible. It's my birthday.
4. You are at your local supermarket and you see your elderly neighbour Mr Patel trying – and failing – to reach the cat food on the top shelf. You want to help. What do you say to him?
  - a. Just a moment. I'll help you, Mr Patel.
  - b. Just a moment. I'm helping you, Mr Patel.
  - c. Just a moment. I'm going to help you, Mr Patel.
  - d. Just a moment. I help you, Mr Patel.
5. . You bump into a friend in town. He suggests that you go for a coffee. What do you say?
  - a. I'd love to, but I have to pick my daughter up from school.
  - b. I'd love to, but I must pick my daughter up from school.
  - c. I'd love to, but I pick my daughter up from school.
6. A stranger approaches you in the street and asks, "Have you got the time?" What do you say to him?
  - a. Time for what?
  - b. Yes, I have. Thank you very much.
  - c. Yes, it's twenty-five past three.
  - d. Yes, it's five before half past three.

7. You are sitting next to a friend on a train. She offers you a toffee. What do you say?
  - a. No, thanks. I'm having new dentures fitted tomorrow.
  - b. No, thanks. I will have new dentures fitted tomorrow.
  - c. No, thanks. I have new dentures fitted tomorrow.
  - d. No, thanks. I'm going to have new dentures fitted tomorrow.
  
8. You've just been to the cinema to see a film by your favourite film director with an amazing cast of actors and a great storyline. You are still on a high as you walk down the street and bump into an old friend. You strongly recommend the film to him. What do you say?
  - a. I've just seen The Marmite Monsters from Macclesfield. You have to see it too.
  - b. I just saw The Marmite Monsters from Macclesfield. You have to see it too.
  - c. I just saw The Marmite Monsters from Macclesfield. You should see it too.
  - d. I've just seen The Marmite Monsters from Macclesfield. You must see it too.
  
9. You are out cycling with a friend and she gets a fly in her eye. You both stop. What do you say to her?
  - a. Don't worry. I'm going to have a look.
  - b. Don't worry. I have a look.
  - c. Don't worry. I must have a look.
  - d. Don't worry. I'll have a look.
  
10. You're driving your car in the Scottish Highlands and you accidentally move to the right-hand side of the road when you pull out of a petrol station. This results in your hitting a car coming in the other direction. No one has been injured and the damage to both cars seems to be minimal. What do you say to the other driver?
  - a. Sorry! I'm from Germany.
  - b. Sorry! It was my fault.
  - c. Oh dear. Let me call my insurance company.
  - d. Sorry! Why can't you drive on the right like the rest of Europe?

## Answers

1. c. Definitely not b! Swearing isn't acceptable, even if you've heard people say such things.
2. b. Definitely not a, but I'm sure I don't need to tell you that.
3. b. You would sound very German if you said c.
4. a. Because it's a spontaneous decision.
5. a. Because the obligation is from the "outside" – however much you love your daughter.
6. c. You would utterly confuse people if you said d.
7. a. Present progressive for future time – because the appointment has been fixed.
8. d. Use *must* here for the most emphasis.
9. d. Because it's a spontaneous decision.
10. c. Resist the urge to apologize or take the blame if insurance companies are likely to become involved.

## Scores

How many did you get right?

- If you scored 4 or below, you need to brush up either your grammar or your knowledge of quirky British etiquette – or both. Keep trying.
- If you scored between 5 and 7, you're well on your way to grasping the slippery rules of the English language and British society. Well done!
- If you scored 8 or above, congratulations! You're bound to be welcomed with open arms by people from Land's End to John O'Groats – as long as you don't let your perfectionism get on everyone's nerves.