**Culture Essay**

**Prompt**

In the article “Dimensions of Culture,” Geert Hofstede discusses ways in which cultures are similar and different. Explain Hofstede’s research and cultural dimensions. Then, using the report from the “Country Comparison” tool\*, discuss the following question:

**Overall, is your culture more similar to or different from that of the U.S.?**

Use references from the ‘Country Comparison’ report and your own experiences to support your ideas.

**Points to remember:**

* Your essay should have an introduction, 3 body paragraphs and a conclusion
* Be sure to reference the article (Hoftstede’s website) clearly at least twice in your essay.
* To get the ‘Country Comparison,’ go to <https://geert-hofstede.com/countries.html>
Be sure to generate two reports. If you start with the U.S. and then compare your country, you will get more information about the U.S. If you start first with your country and put the U.S. as the second country, you get more information about the U.S.
* Your introduction should include some basic background information about Hoftede and his research (Be sure to paraphrase).
<https://geert-hofstede.com/national-culture.html>
* You must include a concession as the third body paragraph
* You may also bring in your own reasons or examples to support your ideas, but please do not cite other articles or research.
* Be careful not to overgeneralize. Use words to soften your statement. Ex. *tend to, often, many (vs. all), etc.*

**Topic Sentence Writing Guide**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Position** **= more similarities** | **Position** **= more differences** |
| **Thesis statement** *Although there are differences between the U.S. and \_\_\_\_\_, there are significant similarities including \_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_.* | **Thesis statement** *Although there are similarities between the U.S. and \_\_\_\_\_, there are significant differences including \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_.* |
| **Paragraph 1** = Similarity #1*One major similarity between \_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_ is ….* | **Paragraph 1** = Difference #1*One major difference between \_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_ is ….* |
| **Paragraph 2** = Similarity #2*Another major similarity between \_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_ is ….* | **Paragraph 2** = Difference #2*Another major difference between \_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_ is ….* |
| **Concession** = Major Difference*Despite these similarities, one major difference is….* | **Concession** = Major Similarity*Despite these differences, one major similarity is….* |
| **Umbrella** *In conclusion, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ have more similarities than differences.*  | **Umbrella** *In conclusion, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ have more differences than similarities.* |

**Sample Paragraph from an essay comparing the U.S. and India.**



**Thesis statement**

*Although there are similarities between the U.S. and India, there are significant differences including its attitudes toward power distance and indulgence.*

**Sample Body Paragraph (Version 1)**

*One major difference between India and the United States is how they think about hierarchy and power. The U.S. is much lower on the power distance index than India. In traditional Indian culture, it is natural to place people in groups based on status. This dynamic can be seen in the caste system, which has existed for thousands of years. Some people are considered lower or higher in society, and this can determine their jobs or opportunities in life. For example, people in the lowest caste are called ‘untouchables’ and often are considered dirty by the higher castes. In contrast, the U.S. prides itself on being a land of equality, where all people should be treated with respect. For example, when people go into a restaurant and a waiter serves them, it is important that they use polite language. Just because the waiter is serving them, it does not mean that the waiter is somehow lower than they are in status. In short, Americans tend to value the idea of equality more than Indians and have a less hierarchical society.*

**Sample Body Paragraph (Version 2)**

*One major difference between India and the United States is how they think about hierarchy and power. The U.S. is much lower on the power distance index than India. In traditional Indian culture, it is natural to place people in groups based on status. According to Hofstede, Indian society is based on the idea that people, “[have] acceptance of unequal rights between the power-privileged and those who are lesser down in the pecking order.” This dynamic can be seen in the caste system, which has existed for thousands of years. Some people are considered lower or higher in society, and this can determine their jobs or opportunities in life. For example, people in the lowest caste are called ‘untouchables’ and often are considered dirty by the higher castes. In contrast, the U.S. prides itself on being a land of equality, where all people should be treated with respect. For example, when people go into a restaurant and a waiter serves them, it is important that they use polite language. Just because the waiter is serving them, it does not mean that the waiter is somehow lower than they are in status. In short, Americans tend to value the idea of equality more than Indians and have a less hierarchical society.*

**Sample Body Paragraph (Version 3)**

*One major difference between India and the United States is how they think about hierarchy and power. The U.S. is much lower on the power distance index than India. In traditional Indian culture, it is natural to place people in groups based on status. According to Hofstede, Indian society is based on the idea that people, “[have] acceptance of unequal rights between the power-privileged and those who are lesser down in the pecking order.” This dynamic can be seen in the caste system, which has existed for thousands of years. Some people are considered lower or higher in society, and this can determine their jobs or opportunities in life. For example, people in the lowest caste are called ‘untouchables’ and often are considered dirty by the higher castes. Although the caste system still has a strong presence in India, the society has been becoming more egalitarian in recent years. In contrast, the U.S. prides itself on being a land of equality, where all people should be treated with respect. For example, when people go into a restaurant and a waiter serves them, it is important that they use polite language. Just because the waiter is serving them, it does not mean that the waiter is somehow lower than they are in status. However, this is just an ideal, and, in fact, Americans do connect jobs with status. This can be seen by the way Americans always ask ‘What do you do?’ when they first meet someone. In short, Americans tend to value the idea of equality more than Indians and have a less hierarchical society.*

**Sample Concession (Version 1)**

*Despite these differences, one major similarity is in feelings about uncertainty avoidance. Both the U.S. and India score a bit low on this scale and are fairly flexible in dealing with new situations or problems. Indian people tend to believe that life is not always predictable, so they are ready to make changes based on the situation. Hofstede explains, “In India, there is acceptance of imperfection; nothing has to be perfect nor has to go exactly as planned.” This worldview is reflected in how trains are often delayed in India. It is normal for people to simply adjust to that new schedule and just get on the train when it arrives. Everyone understands that the train might be delayed so they keep a certain amount of openness in their plans. In a somewhat similar way, Americans tend to accept different ways of doing things and are able to innovate. Because there are so many cultures mixing in the U.S., it is hard to feel like there is one right way of doing things. For example, companies like Apple, Facebook, and Google are successful because they embrace uncertainty and come up with new ideas. Part of the success of these companies comes from their ability to think differently and adapt quickly to changes in society. In short, both India and the U.S. are able to deal with the unexpected, but the underlying reasons for this attitude are different.*

**Sample Concession (Version 2)**

*Despite these differences, one major similarity is in feelings about uncertainty avoidance. Both the U.S. and India score a bit low on this scale and are fairly flexible in dealing with new situations or problems. Indian people tend to believe that life is not always predictable, so they are ready to make changes based on the situation. This worldview is reflected in how trains are often delayed in India. It is normal for people to simply adjust to that new schedule and just get on the train when it arrives. Everyone understands that the train might be delayed, so they keep a certain amount of openness in their plans. In a somewhat similar way, Americans tend to accept different ways of doing things and are able to innovate. Because there are so many cultures mixing in the U.S., it is hard to feel like there is one right way of doing things. For example, companies like Apple, Facebook, and Google are successful because they embrace uncertainty and come up with new ideas. Part of the success of these companies comes from their ability to think differently and adapt quickly to changes in society. In short, both India and the U.S. are able to deal with the unexpected, but the underlying reasons for this attitude are different.*