

## Introduction

Defining culture is very easy: it is the sum total of everything that a person belonging to an identifiable group shares—to a greater or lesser extent—with other members of that group. Unfortunately, defining culture so that it can be taught or learned is far from easy. While anthropologists, sociologists, or language teachers may agree on many of the same broad categories of culture, they may still differ in the details. Brooks (1964, pp. 90-95) made an extensive list for language teachers that includes language conventions, politeness, taboos, folklore, childhood literature, holidays, games, music, movies, transportation, careers, and many other topics that fit nicely into the concept of what is described in this article as cultural literacy. The importance of culture in language teaching is set forth by Robert Politzer who noted:

As language teachers we must be interested in the study of culture...not because we necessarily *want* to teach the culture of the other country but because we *have* to teach it. If we teach language without teaching at the same time the culture in which it operates, we are teaching meaningless symbols or symbols to which the student attaches the wrong meaning (cited in Brooks, 1964, pp. 88-89).

When we learn a second language, we can hardly avoid learning about the second culture, though we may feel that we can never become as knowledgeable about the target culture as we think we may need to be. We have two complementary goals in seeking to understand another culture well: (1) It can allow us to communicate more effectively with members of that culture, and also make it more likely that we will be able to avoid some of the misunderstandings that could arise from not understanding the values and norms of that culture. (2) It can make it possible to understand more deeply what we read and hear in the target language. Being culturally literate helps a person achieve both of these goals though it is the second one that we focus on in this article.

Two groups of people who communicate across cultures as part of their daily routine include international business people and translators (including interpreters). They are intercultural communicators. The needs of these two groups and the students who one day may join one of these professions underpin the following discussion. While the kind of cultural knowledge and degree of sensitivity to cultural diversity needed by the two groups may not be the same, both groups require higher levels of cultural literacy than most other learners or users of a second language.

The main purpose of this article is not to review the many ways in which culture can be defined or elaborate systems for classifying various aspects of it. Hence, we

will forego a review of the extensive literature on this subject and examine specifically cultural literacy and situate it in the broader context of cultural intelligence, which should be more interesting and useful to intercultural communicators.

Peterson (2004) uses the term cultural intelligence to describe the vast body of behaviors, skills, and personal qualities needed by international business people and new immigrants to a country, who need to negotiate between cultures successfully. This can also be described as the awareness of intercultural differences and socio-cultural assumptions underlying those cultures, which may differ from one's own cultural norms. Cultural intelligence also subsumes what Hirsch (1987) calls cultural literacy. Cultural literacy involves more discrete items of knowledge as illustrated in the next section; Peterson does not treat this aspect of cultural intelligence at all in his discussion of the subject. Language teachers, as trainers of intercultural communicators, should be experts in both the L1 and L2 cultures and be able to function in both, as well as be biculturally literate (literate in their own culture as well as the target culture) if they intend to teach them and foster the ability to make comparisons that will benefit their students. Other intercultural communicators also need to be similarly knowledgeable. Figure 1 graphically illustrates the relationship between three levels of cultural knowledge for a person from Culture A, who also must interact with people from Culture B.

Figure 1. Culture, Cultural Intelligence, and Cultural Literacy

**Culture A**  
**Culture B**  
**Cultural**  
**Literacy**  
**Cultural**  
**Intelligence**



The knowledge of cultural intelligence and cultural literacy that comprises English speakers' ability to communicate efficiently and effectively and to understand what other members of the same culture are talking about can be presented in many ways. Some of it can be recorded in detailed lists such as was done by E.D. Hirsch in his pioneering work on cultural literacy (1987; Hirsch, Kett, & Trefil, 1988; Hirsch *et al.*, 2002). A more holistic approach uses analogies or metaphors to exemplify culture; details can then be filled in as needed.

Taking the holistic approach, Peterson (2004) uses the analogy of an iceberg to illustrate his view of culture. Certain aspects of a culture are visible to even the most casual observer. But the deeper aspects are hidden below the waterline and one must go below the surface to see them. Figure 2 illustrates the two-way distinction in cultural content he proposes with complementary icebergs: one outlines broad categories and the other specific details. The dotted line represents the waterline in this analogy. As guidelines for topics to discuss in training the more comprehensive area of cultural intelligence, Peterson's analogy and concepts would be most appropriate. For our discussion, however, we will follow Hirsch's method since we want to focus on specific items of cultural literacy as depicted in the situation-comedy *Friends*.

Figure 2. Peterson's Analogy of Culture as an Iceberg

Broad Categories	Details
Behaviors	Music
Five senses	Pace of life
Architecture	
Sports	
Literature	
Language	
Gestures	
Opinions	
Tolerance for change	
Viewpoints	
Role of family	

Attitudes  
Comfort with risk  
Philosophies  
Importance of work / jobs  
Values  
Attitudes about gender roles  
Convictions  
Individualism

### **Cultural Literacy**

To communicate effectively with other cultures and to understand what we read and hear, we must “speak the same language” as the writer/speaker. This includes not only the linguistic aspects of the language, but also the cultural knowledge that literate or educated members of that culture share. It is that shared, broad knowledge that writers/speakers and readers/hearers have absorbed as lifelong members of a culture and that they refer to when they speak or write, often without explanation, that we call cultural literacy. It comprises a large amount of specific information drawn from a wide range of fields. Even though the acquisition of a culture is a lifelong pursuit, implicit in our discussion is the belief that cultural literacy can be taught and learned by second language learners.

We can illustrate the widespread appeal to shared background knowledge or cultural literacy in society by taking a TV commercial in Taiwan as an example. We have all seen the throat lozenge (枇杷潤喉糖) commercial featuring Meng-Jiang Nü (孟姜女) from early Chinese history or myth: Once she has taken a soothing lozenge she cries out and the Great Wall, which is the backdrop for the commercial, tumbles to the ground. Every person sharing a Chinese heritage knows immediately who she is and the story for which she is famous. Of course, it is possible to sell throat lozenges without referring to ancient Chinese history, but the advertisers are counting on their audience’s instant, collective recognition of the scenario presented, and the fact that it is done in a humorous way undeniably attracts the viewers’ interest and fixes the product in their memory. Everyone who has seen this commercial remembers it. There are many such commercials on television today in Taiwan and elsewhere that make use of well-known cultural themes as the backdrop for their pitch. Cultural literacy is just this kind of knowledge that people of a given group (e.g., nationality, ethnicity, religion) share and can refer to in speaking or writing and expect other members of the group to know what they are talking about without elaboration.

Some of the concepts that form cultural literacy are more easily defined or

illustrated than others. A list with brief explanations might suffice for presenting famous authors, literary works, famous quotations, events from history, and characters from literature that literate members of society are familiar with. In contrast, attitudes towards men's and women's roles in society or the importance of personal independence would require lengthier discussion and could hardly be explicated in a simple list.

In an attempt to provide an outline of core knowledge that could inform the curriculum for American primary and secondary schools, Hirsch (1987) and Hirsch and colleagues (1988, 2002) devised 23 general categories of cultural literacy. Thus, they are specifically interested in American cultural literacy. Americans conversant with the detailed contents of this list presumably would have much of the basic background knowledge assumed by American speakers and writers, who tend not to explain these items when they mention them because they expect their audience to already know them. To the extent that the list accurately represents some kind of core knowledge shared by literate Americans—and critics claim that it is not and cannot be exhaustive—we can see how important such knowledge would be not only to native English speaking Americans but also to ESL and EFL learners for whom American English is their model.

Of the more than six thousand specific cultural items Hirsch *et al.* (2002) include in their *New Dictionary of Cultural Literacy*, Hirsch claims that 80% have been in use for one hundred years (p. xvi) and therefore represent a stable body of core knowledge that should be known by every literate American. Table 1 lists the 23 general categories of Hirsch and colleagues.

Table 1. Cultural Literacy Categories (Hirsch *et al.*, 1988, 2002)

- The Bible
- Mythology and Folklore
- Proverbs
- Idioms
- World Literature, Philosophy, and Religion
- Literature in English
- Conventions of Written English
- Fine Arts
- World History to 1550
- World History since 1550
- American History to 1865
- American History since 1865
- World Politics
- American Politics

World Geography  
American Geography  
Anthropology, Psychology, and  
Sociology  
Business and Economics  
Physical Sciences and Mathematics  
Earth Sciences  
Life Sciences  
Medicine and Health

Although Hirsch *et al.* designate their core knowledge as “What Every American Needs to Know”, much of it is actually part of universal cultural literacy—knowledge that all people in the world should know some details about. Specific knowledge under categories with the word *world* in them (e.g., World History, World Geography, World Literature) or *science* (e.g., Physical Sciences, Earth Sciences, Life Sciences) or not confined to any specific culture (e.g., Medicine, Technology) are probably known to literate people all over the world regardless of the language they speak. This knowledge should contribute to their understanding of their own language and culture as well as that of other languages and cultures they come in contact with. Some cultural items, however, are not so universally known. They may be familiar to just English speakers around the world rather than speakers of other languages (e.g., Proverbs, Idioms, Literature in English). A third kind of cultural literacy are those items most likely to be known to Americans (e.g., American History, American Politics, American Geography), though even some of this knowledge probably belongs to the broader category of English-speakers’ cultural literacy or universal cultural literacy.

Students or any users of English as a foreign language will be able to understand what they read and hear in English better if they have a wide background in the specific kinds of knowledge classified under Hirsch’s 23 categories. For example, stories, themes, and names from the Bible are known to many Americans, even those who may not be Christian or Jewish. Writers and speakers often allude to them because they know their readers or listeners will understand them.

One additional category that is important to include, which is not covered by Hirsch, could be designated as Popular Culture, which would include shared bits of cultural knowledge that members of a culture learn through movies, TV, songs, games, common childhood experiences, and the like. These may change more rapidly than Hirsch’s core items and vary more between groups (e.g., age groups), but they are still widely known and alluded to frequently in literature and the popular media, as will be seen in the examples from *Friends* below.

Using Hirsch *et al.*’s 23 categories plus the additional Pop Culture category as labels, we have selected seven examples from various English novels to illustrate

some of the forms cultural allusions take. These are for illustration purposes only. Some of them may be well known to many EFL speakers like the number 13 being unlucky in the West. Others, such as those from the Bible, may be unfamiliar to many people around the world. These examples have been taken from a database of nearly 400 cultural allusions appearing in American novels, for the most part, collected by the author (Good, n. d.). Each example consists of the cultural literacy category, our description of the context of the item in the novel, followed by the direct quotation from the novel in quotation marks containing the reference to the cultural item, which is given in boldfaced italics. In one case the original writer provides additional information that may clarify the allusion—as in the comment about not having a 13<sup>th</sup> floor in a building, but even in this example she takes for granted that the reader knows that the number 13 is considered bad luck. Generally, the cultural literacy category should be sufficient to give a clue as to the significance of the items, especially since they belong to universal cultural literacy or the cultural literacy of English speakers and are not necessarily limited to American cultural literacy.

Perhaps none of these examples would necessarily lead to a total breakdown in communication, though nonnative readers unfamiliar with the relevant cultural background knowledge might be left wondering what the author meant if they encounter them in their reading. One way to assess the difficulty of these items for intercultural communicators is for readers to imagine how the boldfaced italicized portion could be translated into their own language and how difficult it would be to comprehend without the relevant cultural background.

◆ **World Literature—Bible**

J. is asked to make a difficult decision and she thinks:

“I felt like *King Solomon, about to suggest splitting that biblical baby in half.*” (Wald, 2000, p. 134.)

◆ **World Literature—Bible**

Daum is loading Miles’ ship with what Daum claims is agricultural equipment. Miles believes that he is actually smuggling weapons. He wants to assure Daum that he is willing to help him even if his cargo is illegal.

“‘I’m not [a spy for your enemies],’ said Miles, ‘although it would be a great ploy, if I were. Load up you and your weapons, take you halfway, and make you get out and walk—I appreciate your need for caution.’

‘What weapons?’ said Daum, attempting belatedly to regain his cover.

‘Your *plowshares and pruning hooks*, then,’ said Miles tolerantly. ‘But I suggest we end the game and get to work. I am a professional—...’” (Bujold, 1997, p. 106.)



◆ **Literature in English—Shakespeare: Henry V**

Dirk has come to a planet where the society is based on a feudal social structure of medieval Europe transplanted from Earth. Dirk has just been attacked by a menacing demented giant and is fighting back.

“Dirk decided to press the advantage while he had it. He swung his staff up, bellowing, ‘*For God, Harry, and Saint George.*’” (Stasheff, 1986, p. 11.)

◆ **Literature in English / Movies—My Fair Lady**

The narrator, who is a detective, wants to interview a potential murder suspect, Robert Stern. He is rich and has a butler, who opens the door.

“Still not looking at me, the butler asked in an icy English accent—so upper class it made Queen Elizabeth *sound like Eliza Dolittle*, ‘Is Mr. Stern expecting you?’” (Wald, 2000, p. 110.)

◆ **World History to 1550 / Literature in English—Shakespeare: Julius Caesar**

Commander in Chief of the United Planetary Forces, Donal Graeme, presided over a peaceful confederation of planets for 2 years, 9 months, and 3 days. That was about to change: war is coming. He is talking to his aide Lee.

“[Donal] picked [the watch] up and stared at it with blurry eyes. ‘March ninth,’ he murmured. ‘That right, Lee?’

‘That’s right,’ responded the voice of Lee, from across the room. Donal chuckled, a little huskily.

‘Not yet the *ides of March*,’ he murmured. ‘But close. Close.’

‘Sir?’

‘Nothing.’” (Dickson, 1960, pp. 225-226.)

◆ **World History since 1550—World War II**

The author is telling about the name of a Japanese restaurant in Vladivostok.

“...and a Japanese restaurant with the *second-worst-imaginable name: Nagasaki*.” (O’Rourke, 1998, p. 159.)

◆ **Pop Culture / Customs—Superstitions: the number 13**

Modesty refers to the custom of not having a 13<sup>th</sup> floor in a building because of the superstition of bad luck associated with the number.

“‘How come there’s *never a thirteenth floor in any of these fancy old buildings*?’ Modesty asked. ‘I can understand the Marriott Marquis not having one, but wouldn’t you think an architect of this caliber would have had better sense? I think thirteen has been given a bad rap.’” (Wald, 2000, p. 199.)

In each case, the author assumes the reader will share the same background in universal, pan-English speakers', or American cultural literacy and therefore understand what the author means. In the example citing the "ides of March" the commander in chief's aide does not recognize the significance of the fast approaching date of March 15, but Dickson (1960) certainly expects his readers to recognize it. The quote from O'Rourke (1998), who is a political satirist, is particularly provocative. He expects his readers to understand why Nagasaki might be a bad name for a Japanese restaurant (i.e., it was the second city that the USA dropped an atom bomb on to end World War II). By calling it the "second-worst-imaginable name" he also clearly expects that every culturally literate (at least American) reader should be able to guess what he thinks would be the worst imaginable name (i.e., Hiroshima—the first city to have an atom bomb dropped on it). Readers who do not share this cultural background will be at a disadvantage in understanding what they read. Novels and other written texts are not the only place where evidence of shared cultural knowledge can be found. Movies and television programs are also a rich source of cultural literacy.

### *Friends*

In choosing teaching materials decisions about what to use must be based on the goals of the course they will be used in. Two of our goals for students in our advanced English conversation class include practice in understanding authentic spoken American English and learning to identify American cultural themes and values and being able to discuss them, and compare and contrast them with the native culture. Both of these goals can be facilitated by using *Friends*. The situation-comedy *Friends* provides generally comprehensible language models and numerous opportunities for students to be exposed to American culture. Both cultural literacy knowledge and American attitudes and values can be pointed out in teaching EFL students about American culture. There are more than 200 episodes to choose from since it was a perennial favorite among American viewers airing weekly for ten seasons. It has continued to be shown almost daily in syndication since the end of the series, and it is available on DVD and VHS video tapes. Scripts are also readily available. All of these features and the fact that EFL students majoring in English in Taiwan in particular have found it to be an engaging show make it a valuable teaching resource.

Shared background knowledge is important to American viewers of *Friends* if they want to understand the show more thoroughly because some of the meaning of the sit-com is never expressed explicitly. Many of the jokes or puns depend on a thorough familiarity on the part of the audience with the English language in general or American culture in particular. This does not mean that viewers must

have a good command of cultural literacy to enjoy the show, but it does mean that without it they cannot expect to understand it at all levels. Seven examples are explained below in detail. The Internet can be an excellent source of pictures of cultural icons like Mr. Potato Head and Mr. T mentioned below in two episodes, but never shown to viewers. Such pictures would allow students to see what American immediately visualize in their minds when they hear these cultural icons mentioned. Additional cultural items and themes in six episodes of *Friends* are listed in the appendix without explanation because of space constraints. All of these episodes were chosen from the first two seasons.

#### ◆ Pop Culture

In the pilot episode Rachel mentions that her fiancé Barry (whom she left at the altar) looks like Mr. Potato Head. By using the word *potato* every viewer can probably guess that this is not a flattering description. However, if viewers have never seen the real Mr. Potato Head, they cannot know how funny this really is.

#### ◆ American Geography

The coffee shop where the friends spend a lot of their time is called Central Perk. English speakers know that *perk* is an appropriate verb used to describe making coffee. In addition to knowing this rather infrequent English word, American viewers also know that the main park in New York City where the comedy is set is called Central Park. The name of the coffee shop is a pun based on this item of knowledge every culturally literate American can be expected to know.

#### ◆ World Literature—Bible

When Joey asks Phoebe if she would mind if he dated her twin sister Ursula, Phoebe tries to appear as if she does not care by saying she is not responsible in any way for her sister by saying “I mean, *I'm not my sister's, you know, whatever*”. This is an admittedly oblique reference to the Bible story where God asks Cain where Cain's brother Abel was. Since Cain had just killed him, he wants to disclaim any responsibility for having to know where his brother is and replies, “Am I my brother's keeper?” (Genesis 4:9).

As suggested above, in addition to the basic core knowledge that changes only slowly over the years, viewers will also need to be culturally literate in modern pop culture to understand *Friends*. There are many references to TV shows (*Joanie Loves Chachi*, *The Patty Duke Show*, *The Flintstones*), TV show characters (Judy Jetson, Urkel, Mr. T, Laverne and Shirley), movies (*Airplane*, *The Unbearable*

*Lightness of Being*), and games like Scrabble and Pictionary. These are part of the shared background knowledge of pop culture that people who have grown up watching many hours of American television will know and that the writers of *Friends* assume their viewers will recognize. Few of these may be part of the more general core knowledge that is represented in Hirsch *et al.*'s broader based and more conservative lists, but they are still widely known. Examples of Pop Culture follow.

◆ **Pop Culture**

Phoebe gets upset when *The Patty Duke Show* comes on TV. This happens in the episode where we find out Phoebe has a twin sister that she does not like very much. If viewers do not know that *The Patty Duke Show* is about twins (actually identical cousins), then they will not understand why Phoebe does not like the show.

◆ **Pop Culture**

The friends are afraid to play the board game Pictionary with Monica because she went crazy once when they were playing it. The game requires one person to draw a picture representing the name of a movie, a book, etc. and the other players must guess what it is. If viewers do not know what kind of game it is, they cannot understand why Monica gets so upset when Rachel draws a simple, hard-to-interpret picture and Joey immediately guesses what it is—*The Unbearable Lightness of Being*—which ought to be almost impossible to draw a recognizable picture of.

◆ **Pop Culture**

As the friends help Rachel put copies of her résumé into envelopes to send out so she can find a job, they whistle the theme song from *The Bridge over the River Kwai*. The movie name is not even mentioned, but viewers familiar with pop culture recognize it immediately as an appropriate tune for a group of people working together—just as the World War II prisoners of war in the movie worked together to build the bridge for the Japanese.

◆ **Pop Culture**

Joey gives Chandler a gaudy, tasteless gold bracelet as a friendship gift. Chandler tells Phoebe that it is a reject from the Mr. T collection from the TV show *The A-Team*. Chandler then mimics Mr. T's famous and often repeated "I pity the fool..." line. This is only meaningful to viewers who know that Mr. T always wore lots of gaudy, gold jewelry and was always saying this catchphrase.

### **Using Friends to Promote Cultural Literacy**

The most effective way to use *Friends* to enhance cultural literacy and raise students' cultural awareness is to explicitly expose them to cultural items and themes they will come across in their contact with the target culture. Merely viewing an episode will not accomplish this. It can best be achieved by teachers doing the following:

1. Providing students with a script (available from the Internet) and having them read it before they view an episode.
2. Giving quizzes about content to encourage students to read the script before watching the episode.
3. Highlighting selected cultural items in the script before giving it to students and giving brief explanations to alert them as to the significance of the item.
4. Alternatively, giving students worksheets asking about selected cultural items that can be filled out using the Internet as a reference tool to explain them.
5. Having students discuss in small groups after viewing an episode cultural images, themes, value, and attitudes.

These recommendations are based on ongoing classroom-based research involving fourth-year English majors at a university of science and technology. Informal feedback suggests students enjoy having the additional background knowledge they gain through these activities. Nevertheless, there are limits on how much homework should be required for cultural literacy since it is only one aspect of why we use *Friends* in class. Students are never required to spend so much time investigating background information that they no longer enjoy watching *Friends*. Other ways to use *Friends* are also possible: Because locally available DVDs have English and Chinese subtitles, teachers can more easily tailor the presentation of the episodes to the level of their students and the purpose for viewing. Additional research remains to be carried out to formally assess the effectiveness of this approach in raising cultural awareness.

### **Conclusion**

Intercultural communicators, especially business people and translators, may encounter situations requiring a fairly substantial understanding of the target culture. Ignorance of socio-cultural assumptions or misunderstandings of cultural norms could lead to hurt feelings, embarrassment, offense being taken or an inaccurate transfer of information. Images and themes from American culture and a deeper appreciation of broader cultural issues like values and attitudes that make up cultural intelligence often need to be taught explicitly; otherwise, they may not

be noticed or learned. After some practice in identifying and delving into the meaning of cultural allusions, students should be able to recognize when they need to explore something more thoroughly because it is probably a cultural item. We have looked at a few examples found in novels and additional examples from *Friends*. Because of the popularity of *Friends*, students are likely to be more willing to invest time and effort into improving their understanding of the sit-com; they should also enjoy watching it more because they comprehend what they are viewing better. They will also begin to develop an awareness of and appreciation for the vast area known as culture and especially the target culture. Of course, using *Friends* in the classroom should be only one component in a more comprehensive approach to teaching culture, cultural literacy, cultural intelligence, as well as the language.

As we stated above, cultural literacy is made up of a wide range of very specific knowledge. This knowledge is widely shared by members of a society. Students can begin their initiation into American culture and the broader culture of English speakers by being exposed to authentic materials that Americans are also exposed to like *Friends*. Admittedly, some cultural items are more important for students to know than others. Since students are unlikely to be able to identify which cultural allusions are perhaps more important, teachers should take the responsibility of selecting the most common ones for students to learn more about. Pop culture items, of which there are many, may be more interesting to young adult language learners, but the more general, basic items like those found in Hirsch *et al.*'s (1988, 2002) dictionaries comprise the bulk of the shared core knowledge of literate Americans of all ages and backgrounds. ESL and EFL readers can benefit by learning more of the background knowledge required to understand the target culture. Serious intercultural communicators such as students, international business people, and translators/interpreters can benefit most because of their desire and need to develop their cultural intelligence, which depends to a large extent on their cultural literacy.

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## **Appendix**

### **Selected Cultural Items in *Friends***

Only a few of the cultural items appearing in each episode are given here. They are intended to be representative of what is found in six *Friends* episodes from the first and second seasons, not to list every possible item. The cultural literacy category is given first, followed by the cultural item. A few cultural themes are also included. These represent values and attitudes that many American may share and that would be important for students and others to understand as they become sophisticated intercultural communicators.

### **The Pilot or The One where Monica Gets a new Roommate**

English Language: Pun: Central Perk coffee shop name

Pop Culture: New Age philosophy—Phoebe cleansing Ross’s aura

Pop Culture: Mr. Potato Head

Pop Culture: TV show—*Joanie Loves Chachi*

World Literature: Pinocchio

Cultural Themes: Appropriate wedding gifts; notion of independence; dating—a line

### **The One with Two Parts, Part 1**

Pop Culture: Lamaze class

Pop Culture: TV show—*Jeopardy* [not specifically named] “I’ll take ‘Idiots in the Workplace’ for \$200, Alex.”

World Literature—Bible: “I’m not my sister’s, you know, whatever...”

Pop Culture: TV show—*Laverne and Shirley*

Pop Culture: TV character—Urkel

American Geography: NY landmark—Chrysler Building

Pop Culture: TV show—*The Patty Duke Show*

Pop Culture: TV cartoon character—Judy Jetson (Phoebe had a Judy Jetson thermos)

Cultural Themes: Body image—importance of being thin

### **The One with Two Parts, Part 2**

Pop Culture: Movie/TV star—Ernest Borgnine

Pop Culture: TV Cartoon character—Bugs Bunny

Pop Culture: Gestures: Ursula crosses her fingers for luck

Pop Culture: TV show: *Jeopardy* [mentioned by name]

Pop Culture: Game—Scrabble

Cultural Themes: Birthday parties; vegetarianism; blind dates



### **The One with All The Poker**

Pop Culture: Movies: *Bridge over the River Kwai* [name not mentioned: Friends whistle the theme], *Airplane*, *Airport*, *Airport '75*, *Airport '77*, *Airport '79*, *Bye Bye Birdie*, *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*

Pop Culture: Magazine: *Popular Mechanics*

Pop Culture: TV cartoon—*The Flintstones*

American History: settlement of Jamestown; King George III

Pop Culture: Game—Pictionary

Pop Culture: TV commercial—Trident sugar-free gum ('4 out of 5 dentists recommend...')

Cultural Themes: Job hunting—résumés; playing cards

### **The One with Where Ross Finds Out**

Pop Culture: Spandex

Pop Culture: Movie: *Diner*

Cultural Themes: Fitness and exercise—being fat; aftermath of a breakup: closure; pets; feminism; importance of job to self-esteem

### **The One with the Prom Video**

Pop Culture: Spelling *Casey*, "is it like '*at the bat*' or '*and the Sunshine Band*'?"  
Casey, is it like '*at the bat*' or '*and the Sunshine Band*'

Pop Culture: Entertainer—Liberace (known for ostentatious clothes)

Pop Culture: TV star—Mr. T

Cultural Themes: Job interviews