

A Study Guide
for viewing
Mr. Baseball
from the perspective of crossing cultures

1. Upon first entering the Japanese culture, Tom Sellick makes several mistakes, starting with misunderstanding the importance of business cards. What cultural values are involved in this transaction?
2. Other mistakes:
 - a. First Press conference. He is in jeans and a sports coat. All the Japanese are in business suits.
 - b. He uses humor – “I had a Yen to come here”.
 - c. He gives superficial and sarcastic answers to questions about his impressions of Japan.
 - d. Driving through Tokyo, he says “Where are all the temples and rice paddies?” Answer, “It’s a big City”. Reply, “It looks like Cleveland”.
 - e. Enters clubhouse with shoes on.
 - f. He wants to do his own “individual” exercises instead to the “team” exercises.
 - g. He starts to bathe in the community hot tub without first washing himself.
 - h. He cannot accept his interpreter’s translation of his “disrespectful” comments as “saving face”.

Comment on each of these mistakes as they represent differences in cultural values between the United States and Japan.
3. “Saving Face” becomes a strong theme in the film. Give three examples where this is an issue.
4. She says “Sometimes acceptance and cooperation are strengths also”, after criticizing his attitude as “Me, me, me”. What cultural values are in conflict here?
5. When Jack finds that his manager speaks English quite well, he accuses him of “holding out”. What is the manager’s point of view?
6. For the first time, Jack eats a traditional Japanese meal in a Japanese home. What cultural differences does he encounter?
7. Jack confronts his interpreter. “Why didn’t you tell me they were related (girlfriend and manager)? Reply, “I did”. How does this difference reflect: a. Differences in culture, b. difficulties in translation?
8. Translator, “If you want my help, come to me with respect”. How does Jack do this, and how does this also demonstrate “acceptance”?
9. How does he demonstrate these two qualities to his teammates?
10. What is his initial response to “going home”?
11. How does this change?
12. In the last play of the game, the manager allows him to “swing away”. He chooses to bunt. What does this say about both of the individuals involved?