

# Your International IQ: 4 Points of Focus

*An introductory model for globally minded students*

People with a high International IQ are different! They're open-minded, curious and highly adaptable.

They can chat comfortably about global issues. They know how to land on their feet and make connections in new environments at home and abroad. And they actively pursue exciting cross-cultural experiences. Explore the simple model below and discover the four main building blocks of building an outstanding International IQ!

## Your International IQ: 4 Points of Focus

**Political, economic & geographic knowledge**



**Knowledge about the international aspects of your field**



**Cross-cultural knowledge & skills**



**Personal coping & adapting skills**

Set learning objectives in each of the four categories above to boost your International IQ!

## Political, economic & geographic knowledge

People with high International IQs can converse intelligently about international news and world events. They are aware of diverse cultures and ethnicities worldwide.



Imagine a lively conversation taking place over dinner in your temporary home of Ouagadougou, the capital of Burkina Faso. Your guests are from France, Belgium, the US and Burkina Faso. The conversation is lively and intellectually rewarding, with topics ranging from politics to economics and geography. The conversation feels so much richer than typical North American small talk about weather, home renovations and the latest neighborhood gossip. Being able to keep up and contribute to this conversation makes you feel truly international.

- Keep abreast of the latest world news. This can include anything from sports, science or culture to global market trends, politics or areas of conflict.
- Dive into foreign culture. Explore literature, film and music from other countries.

**TAKE ACTION:** To become international, start reading world news.

Travel as often and as widely as possible and learn world geography.  
*Your first test: How many countries are there on Earth?*

## Knowledge of the international aspects of your field

Every industry, field of study and area of interest has an international component. To build your International IQ, you'll need to understand the global aspects of your particular field.

- Learn which organizations work internationally in your area of expertise, what jobs there are and what aspects of your work have an international application.
- Learn how your specialization is practiced internationally to focus your education, research, networking and discussion with peers, all with the target of landing an international job in your field.



**TAKE ACTION:** With a little bit of research, you can uncover the international aspects of your field.

Search for umbrella organizations, major websites, industry blogs/newsletters and international conferences. *Your first challenge: Talk to professionals in your field who have worked overseas. Find out what skills they have and how they broke into working internationally.*

## Cross-cultural knowledge & skills

International people are like cross-cultural detectives!



They study a country's belief systems, behaviors and attitudes before arriving. When in an unfamiliar culture, they are sensitive and skillful, quickly displaying the appropriate behavior to make any new relationship work.

- Are you good at quickly noticing and analyzing non-verbal cues and nuances in cross-cultural situations?
- Can you tell when to engage in small talk and when to get straight down to business?
- Can you figure out how close to stand next to a stranger in an elevator or while chatting at a cocktail party?

Cross-cultural skills are portable and can be carried from country to country.

**TAKE ACTION: Start by acquiring these skills at home.**

Seek out people from other cultures, become active in cross-cultural groups and learn a second or third language. *Your first challenge: Plan your first cross-cultural encounter by befriending an international student at home.*

## Personal coping & adapting skills

International people are highly adaptable.

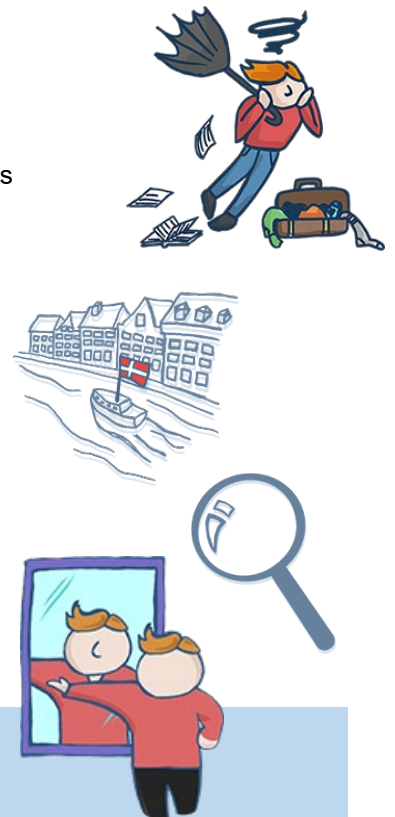
They have a personal resilience and enjoy venturing into the unknown, immersing themselves in new and challenging ways of living. Ask yourself how well you handle change.

- Could you deal with eating soup for breakfast (as they do in some parts of India) instead of cereal?
- Could you adapt to sleeping under a mosquito net, with the noise of goats and chickens outside your bedroom window?
- Could you keep your cool in a culture that doesn't adhere to schedules? Where you never know what time the bus will arrive or when your dinner partner will show up?

**These are just a few examples of the small cross-cultural differences that can build up into a tornado if you don't have high levels of personal flexibility.** But with practice and insight you can improve your personal coping and adaptation skills to better deal with culture shock. As you face changes in culture, friends, work, climate and food, patience and a sense of humor will be your best friends.

**TAKE ACTION: Prepare yourself for culture shock.**

Volunteer or become active in organizations that put you in direct contact with other cultures, either in your home country or by visiting a country where the culture is radically different from your own. *Your first test question: Do you enjoy change? This may be the single biggest factor in assessing your suitability for work and life abroad.*



# A Last Word About Going International

Now that you've learned the four pieces of the International IQ puzzle, it's time to start planning your next steps.

Not only is this a fun, exciting and eye-opening process; it will also boost your impact with recruiters when searching for internationally oriented work. Use this model as a simple guideline for going global and keep your international skills inventory in mind as you take action in all four areas. If you can professionally describe your high International IQ to an employer or organization, your next assignment abroad will be right around the corner!

**Want to learn more  
about going global?  
Check out these articles:**



[\*The Global You\*](#)

for life success

[\*The 3 Core Global Competencies and Career Readiness\*](#)

for career success

[\*The Culture Tree\*](#)

for understanding culture

Whether you're mingling at a cocktail party abroad or applying for a globally oriented professional position, it's your International IQ that sets you apart!



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