

# The seating game

# Answers

**LINKS TO:**

Stage 2, Module 16

Learning Object 2: Interesting facts

## Exercise 1

Sample answers:

### 1.1

#### 1.1.1 Which individuals share common interests?

There are two groups of individuals who share common interests. First, Graham Simpson, Stephen Rodgers and Wendy Brown all like to play lawn bowls and are visiting Jakarta for the first time. Second, Jessica Simpson, Susan Jensen and her husband Peter Jensen, and William Morris are all very talkative and like to tell stories of their experiences. Peter Jensen and William Morris also share an interest in motorcycles.

#### 1.1.2 Which individuals share common personality traits?

Graham Simpson and Chloe Wilkinson are generally quiet and not very outgoing.

#### 1.1.3 Whom do you think Mr and Mrs Smart would enjoy sitting with? Explain why.

Mr and Mrs Smart would probably enjoy sitting with the Ambassador and his wife because they are personal friends. In fact, the Ambassador helped Mr Smart obtain his current position in Jakarta.

#### 1.1.4 Whom should you not put next to Great-uncle Alfred? Why?

It would probably be best to sit Great-uncle Alfred at the same table as Stephen Rodgers, his brother, who would most likely be more tolerant of him and more prepared to look after him.

#### 1.1.5 With whom do you think the groom's sister would get along? Why?

Because Chloe Wilkinson is quiet and not very outgoing perhaps she would be better suited to sitting next to someone older who shares her personality traits. Graham Simpson, the bride's grandfather, is probably suitable because he doesn't like to talk much either. Perhaps he would feel more comfortable talking to someone younger like Chloe because she can speak a little Indonesian and might be able to tell him about the country and the language. It may also be easier for someone like Chloe to be more open with someone much older than her, rather than someone her own age.

#### 1.1.6 Whom would you not seat next to the groom's sister?

The groom's boss at the Embassy, William Morris, should be kept away from Chloe, the groom's sister. She once went on a date with him and found him boastful and slightly obnoxious. They are obviously not at all suited to each other.

#### 1.2 Create a seating plan for the guests described above.

##### TABLE D

Australian Ambassador  
 Ambassador's wife  
 Michael Smart  
 Susan Smart  
 John Wilkinson  
 Robert Simpson  
 Julienne Simpson

##### TABLE E

Jessica Simpson  
 Susan Jensen  
 Peter Jensen  
 William Morris  
 Great-aunt Josephine Jensen

##### TABLE F

Graham Simpson  
 Chloe Wilkinson  
 Margaret Rodgers  
 Stephen Rodgers  
 Great-uncle Alfred Rodgers  
 Wendy Brown

### 1.3

#### 1.3.1 How did you keep in mind the needs of the older people and those with special needs?

I placed the older people close to the washroom and the exits for mobility purposes, and further away from the teenagers. I put the table where Peter Jensen will sit near the speaker so he would be able to hear the speeches.

#### 1.3.2 How did you separate the groom's parents without making one of them feel excluded?

I would seat the groom's mother, Margaret Rodgers, at Table D, in between her father and her daughter. This way she would have immediate family either side of her and would not feel excluded. As a former senior diplomat, I would seat the groom's father at the same table as the current Ambassador to Indonesia, his wife and Mr and Mrs Smart. Being seated at such

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a prominent table, and giving his speech from there, would bring back memories of attending important functions and sitting with foreign dignitaries during his days as a diplomat.

### 1.3.3 Whom did you place closest to the bride and groom's table? Why?

Because the function is being held at the Australian Embassy, and is being attended by the Australian Ambassador and his wife, I found it fitting to place them closest to the bride and groom's table. Furthermore, the father of the groom, also a former senior diplomat, will be sitting and presenting a speech from this table so it is important that this table is close to the main table.

### 1.3.4 Whom did you place next to the groom's supervisor? Why?

The groom's supervisor at the embassy was placed at Table E. The main reason for this is that he has had an unsuccessful date with the groom's sister so he needed to be kept away from her. As it turned out there was another guest at the function who shared his interest in motorcycles and liked to talk at length of his experiences. It was therefore a logical and satisfactory arrangement to have them sit together. Because the Australian Ambassador was also in attendance, it would not be polite to give the place of honour close to the bridal party to a lesser embassy official.

### 1.3.5 Who was the most difficult person (or people) to place? Explain why.

Great-uncle Alfred Rodgers was the most difficult to place because of his lack of patience with young people and his cranky temperament. It was therefore decided to place him next to his brother who would probably be more tolerant and accepting of his demeanor than the other guests.

## Exercise 2:

Sample answers:

### 2.1 Describe some of the similarities and differences between Indonesian and Australian wedding receptions and seating etiquette.

There is a wide variation of practices for wedding receptions in Indonesia, which is to be expected considering there are more than 300 different ethnic groups throughout the archipelago, with each group conducting their marriage rituals in accordance with the cultural norms (*adat*) and religious practices.

What can be said, with a degree of certainty, is that the purpose of an Indonesian reception is for the guests to meet and give their well-wishes and blessings to the married couple and their extended families. There is a great deal of queuing and waiting to shake hands with the wedding party. This is normally followed by a buffet dinner where people stand, mingle and chat as they

eat. Some seating is provided but it is often in chairs lined up along walls or in rows so that people can sit down if they want while eating.

When the reception takes place at a restaurant, tables and seating are provided, along with either a buffet dinner or a meal consisting of a number of courses. However, the only organised seating is reserved for the main wedding party. The rest of the invited guests are free to sit wherever they choose.

Australian wedding receptions can also vary widely in the form they take, depending on the bride and groom's preferences. However, a traditional reception would have a formal, organised seating plan for the guests. A formal seating plan allows the bride and groom to control who sits where, and removes the stress from the guests of having to decide where to sit and with whom.

The bride and groom are seated prominently on the most important table where all the guests can see them. Usually, their bridal party, depending on how many there are, are seated with them. Sometimes, the couple's parents may be seated on the main table.

### 2.2 What other similarities and differences are there between typical Australian and Indonesian wedding receptions?

Australian wedding receptions are enjoyable and entertaining occasions, where the wedding party and their invited guests can celebrate after the solemnities of the wedding ceremony itself. They include speeches, dancing and other culturally specific practices such as pinning money on the bride.

Indonesian wedding receptions, on the other hand are a continuation of the solemnity of the marriage ceremony itself. In Indonesia only the immediate family and very close friends attend the actual wedding ceremony, whether it takes place in a church (for Christians) or in the mosque or bride's home (for Muslims).

The reception, whether it is held at a reception venue or in the family home, is the place where all of the invited guests come to meet, greet and give their blessings to the married couple and their families. Because it is a solemn occasion, any speeches given by representatives of each family are serious in tone and thank the guests for coming and for their blessings. They will also ask for forgiveness if the arrangements for the reception are found wanting. There is no dancing, as is customary at Australian wedding receptions, because the reception is seen as a continuation of the solemn marriage ceremony.

After greeting the married couple and their families, the guests eat and mingle with other guests and then take their leave from the married couple before going home.

### 2.3 What do these differences suggest about Australian and Indonesian values, attitudes and beliefs?

In line with Indonesian beliefs and values, the wedding and reception are solemn, spiritually significant events

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to be shared with family, friends, work colleagues and other invited guests.

The Indonesian belief that marriage is a sacred union, one of the main purposes of which is to have children, is reflected in the solemnity of Indonesian weddings, and the focus on religious ceremonies.

The reception continues the solemn mood of the wedding itself. Unlike Australian wedding receptions, there is no phase where the married couple relax the solemn mood. In fact, the reception is an extension of the wedding, providing an opportunity for the guests who do not attend the ceremony to show their respect and to give their prayers and blessings to the married couple and their extended family.

Australian wedding receptions take place after the solemnity of the church wedding. As soon as the married couple step out of the church as husband and wife, they are showered in confetti or rice. Australian wedding receptions reflect a belief that weddings are a time for celebration: a joyful and exciting time for the couple, their family and friends.