

## Culture File 5, Unit 5

### Difficult questions

Some questions are not polite in English. Don't ask new acquaintances about:

#### AGE:

How old are you?

When were you born?

#### MONEY:

How much do you earn?

What's your salary?

Do they pay you well?

#### MARITAL STATUS:

Are you married?

Why aren't you married?

## Culture File 6, Unit 6

### Prices

Because American dollar bills are all the same color and the same size, store clerks often check by saying "Out of (twenty)" when you give them a bill.

### Tax

In the U.S.A., every state has a state tax (between 5% and 9%). This tax is not shown in the price. It is added to the

total at the cash register. So if you buy something at \$6 in a state with 7% tax, the price you pay is \$6.42.

In Europe, part of the price is VAT (Value Added Tax), which was 17.5% in the U.K. in 2003. This tax is already included in the price. If the price tag shows £6 or €6, this is what you pay at the cash register.

## Culture File 7, Unit 7

### Credit cards

There are a high percentage of **credit card** users in English-speaking countries. People also carry **charge cards** (from stores or gas stations), and **debit cards**. Debit cards replace checks and are used instead of cash. The money is immediately transferred from your bank account.

**Debit cards** are usually also **ATM** cards (ATM is **Automatic Teller Machine** in the U.S.A., **cash machine** or **cashpoint** in Europe). You have a **PIN** (Personal Identification Number) which you use with the cards for security. You never write this down, nor tell it to anyone. When you check in at a hotel, they prefer credit cards to checks or cash. They will ask to **swipe** your card on arrival, or they may **take an impression** of your card.

## Culture File 8, Unit 8

### Hotel facilities

In large hotels you can assume that rooms will have facilities like a bathroom, color TV, and direct-dial telephone. Small hotels (or 'boutique' hotels) are becoming more popular.

In larger hotels in North America, most rooms have two double beds. The charge is usually for the room, and in many hotels children can stay free in a room with their parents.