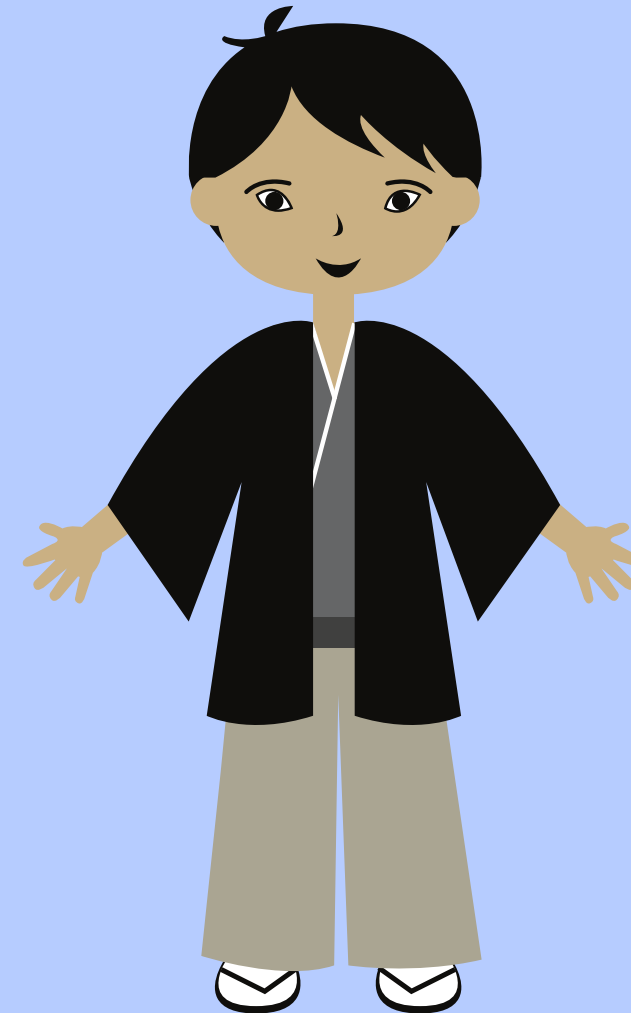
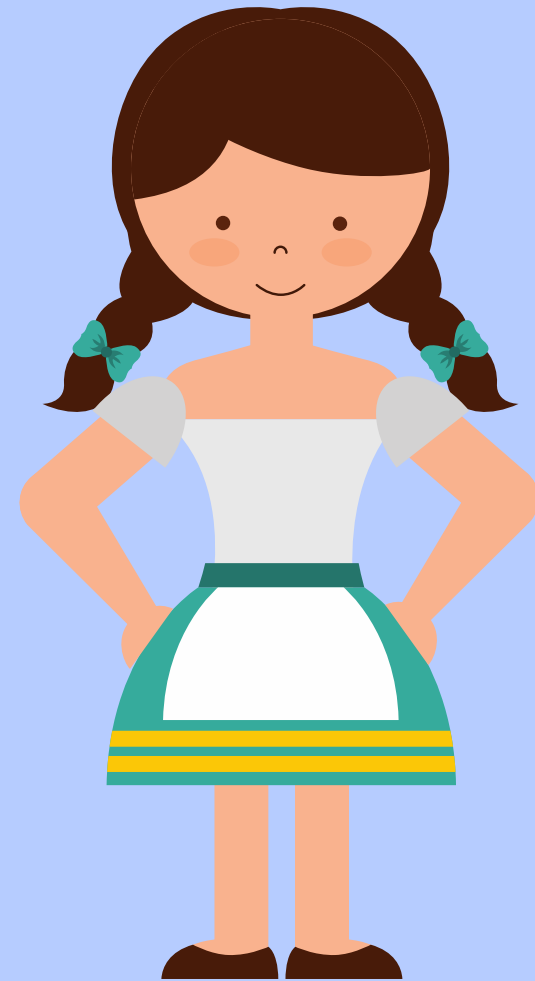
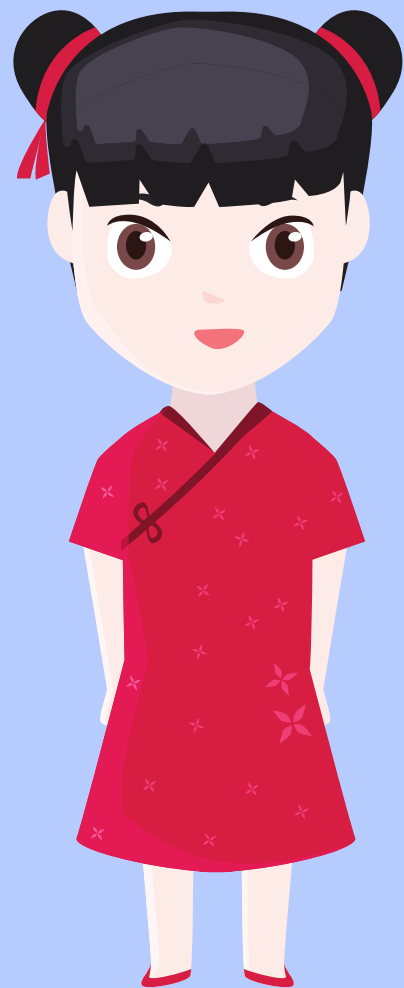


Monochronic and Polychronic Time

“There is more to life than simply increasing its speed.”
(Mahatma Gandhi)



Monochronic and Polychronic Time



Traditionally, cultures are divided into monochronic (where time is regarded as linear, people do one thing at a time and lateness and interruptions are not tolerated) and polychronic (where time is seen as cyclical, punctuality is unimportant and interruptions are acceptable).

(Daily Telegraph, Dec. 1999)

Do you belong to a monochronic or to a polychronic culture?



Monochronic and Polychronic Time



The major monochronic (linear-active) cultures of the world are the USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Northern and Central Europe, Russia

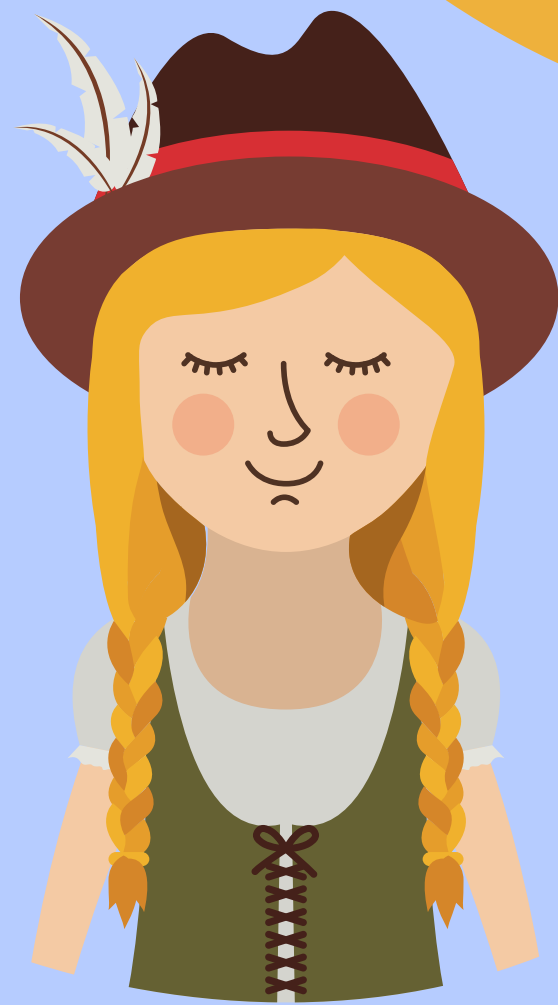


The major polychronic (multi-active) cultures of the world are Latin America, the Arab part of the Middle East and sub-Saharan Africa, Southern Europe, Asia

"To waste time". "Time is money".
Monochronic cultures see time as something linear (from A to B, one event follows the other), tangible, universal, and inflexible. It's a precious commodity that can be "wasted", "lost", "killed". It is associated with efficiency and preciseness

Focus is on doing one thing at the time, on keeping to plans and respecting previous commitments. Careful planning is assumed, it is important to establish "when" things must be achieved. Schedules are more important than people or tasks. Punctuality relates to reputation

Members of a monochronic culture believe that there is a place and a time for everything. They value orderliness and appropriateness and don't appreciate being interrupted



Polychronic cultures see time as something cyclical, a repetition of natural cycles and patterns. Punctuality is not a primary concern, people tend to live for the moment and to do many things at once



Members of a polychronic culture manage interruptions well, without distress and without worrying about deadlines. Their main concern are personal relationships

Life is unpredictable and distractions are part of it: scheduling is not fundamental, previous commitments will be respected if possible. Things people are doing are valued over the time-frame in which they are happening, plans can be altered to fit a situation as it changes

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