

## A business trip to China

***Mr Parker, a department director of a company in Southern England, has travelled to China in order to conduct negotiations. He is welcomed by the Managing Director of the Chinese company. But Mr Parker is not satisfied with the way the negotiations are going...***

This scenario consists of:

Part A: 'Visiting the Managing Director'

Question 1

Part B: 'Initial conversation and first steps'

Questions 2–4

Part C: 'Culture and tradition'

Questions 5–8

### Visiting the Managing Director

We are in the reception room of Mr Wang, the Managing Director, who is waiting with his interpreter for Mr Parker. Both sides are intending to conclude a co-operation contract. For three days Mr Parker has been negotiating with Mr Li, Mr Wang's department director. These negotiations have been quite difficult and tiring. So Mr Parker is looking forward to this meeting and wants to seize the opportunity to clarify a few issues face to face with the director of the company.

### Welcome

**Parker:** I am delighted to meet you.

**Wang/Interpreter:** *(takes his business card and hands it over to Mr Parker)* Here is Mr Wang's business card.

**Parker:** *(takes Mr Wang's card and puts it in his pocket)* And here is mine. *(he hands Mr Wang his card)*

**Wang/Interpreter:** *(Wang reads the card very attentively)* Oh, you have even got Chinese characters on your visiting card! That's most kind of you. We have a saying in China: 'When a friend has come from very far away, then that is a very joyful event.' Mr Wang is therefore very glad to be able to welcome you here today.

Mr Parker, what would you like to drink? Tea or coffee?

**Parker:** Coffee please.

**Wang/Interpreter:** Mr Wang would like to know how you have spent the past few days in Shanghai. Have you been able to settle in and get used to the climate?

**Parker:** Thank you for asking. I do have a few problems with my hotel. The air conditioning doesn't really work, so I've caught a cold. And also there are ... some problems with the negotiations with your company...

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**Wang/Interpreter:** Mr Parker, if you should have any problems whatsoever, please let Mr Wang know. We will do our best.

**Parker:** Thank you very much.

**Question 1**

***Mr Parker is interrupted in his description of the problem:***

**Wang/Interpreter:** Mr Parker, if you should have any problems whatsoever, please let Mr Wang know. We will do our best.

***What could Mr Wang mean by this?***

## Initial conversation and first steps

**Wang/Interpreter:** Mr Parker, are you married?

**Parker:** *(slightly surprised)* Yes.

**Wang/Interpreter:** Have you any children yet?

**Parker:** No, I don't have any children yet ... You know, with all this travelling I have to do ... *(forces a smile)*

**Wang/Interpreter:** Mr Parker, Mr Wang has been reading your business card. And he has noticed that you are sales director, and you are still so very young. There is, as we say in China, a bright future lying ahead of you. Therefore Mr Wang hopes that our ... that the negotiations will take place on the basis of mutual trust and that they will be fruitful as a result of our joint efforts.

**Parker:** So do I. You know that our company has a high level of expertise in technological products. Since we are convinced that our Chinese partners will appreciate this, I hope that we will be able to conclude our negotiations successfully and soon.

**Wang:** *(laughs)*

**Parker:** What I would particularly like to know, Mr Wang, is how your company performs on delivery dates? Will you manage to keep to deadlines?

**Wang/Interpreter:** Oh, Mr Parker, there is your coffee. It is getting cold.

**Parker:** Thank you. *(drinks)* But what about the delivery dates?

**Wang/Interpreter:** You are welcome to discuss these questions tomorrow with Mr Li in more detail.

### Question 2

**Why is Mr Wang interested in Mr Parker's family situation?**

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**Question 3**

**Mr Wang makes the following remark on Mr Parker's age and his position:**

**Wang/Interpreter:** Mr Parker, Mr Wang has been reading your business card. And he has noticed that you are sales director, and you are still so very young. There is, as we say in China, a bright future lying ahead of you.

**What do you understand by Mr Wang's remark?**

**Question 4**

**Mr Parker asks Mr Wang about the delivery dates of his company:**

**Parker:** What I would particularly like to know, Mr Wang, is how does your company perform on delivery dates? Will you manage to keep to deadlines?

**Wang/Interpreter:** Oh, Mr Parker, there is your coffee. It is getting cold.

**Why does Mr Wang turn his attention to the coffee at this point?**

## **Culture and tradition**

**Wang/Interpreter:** Mr Wang would like to know why you have not brought your wife with you this time?

**Parker:** Well, my wife is not all that interested in my business, and then she doesn't really like long journeys.

**Wang/Interpreter:** Mr Wang thinks that is a pity, since Shanghai is a very nice city. There are many beautiful sights in the Shanghai area. So you really must bring your wife next time.

**Parker:** I will try to convince her. But that is going to be very difficult.

**Wang/Interpreter:** Mr Parker, have you had a chance to get to know the Chinese culture in more detail yet?

**Parker:** No, I'm afraid not. But I am not here on holiday. This is strictly a business visit.

**Wang/Interpreter:** Mr Parker, I am sure you have heard that the Chinese have a very long cultural tradition. So Mr Wang will tell Mr Li to take you to the 'Yuyuan' tomorrow for a visit. There you will find also many shops that sell objects of cultural interest.

**Parker:** (*growing rather impatient*) Thank you very much, Mr Wang. But ... perhaps we can return to that later?

**Wang/Interpreter:** Mr Wang has been very glad to welcome you here today. He hopes that our co-operation will be fruitful. The car that we have ordered for you has just arrived. Mr Wang would like to show you out.

**Parker:** Now, that's a bit sudden. We haven't talked about business yet.

**Wang/Interpreter:** As Mr Wang just said, you will be able to talk business with Mr Li tomorrow.

**Parker:** (*disappointed*) All right.

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**Question 5**

**Mr Wang asks Mr Parker the following question:**

**Wang/Interpreter:** Mr Parker, have you had a chance to get to know the Chinese culture in more detail yet ?

**Parker:** No, I'm afraid not. But I am not here on holiday. This is strictly a business visit.

**Why does Mr Parker react in this way?**

**Question 6**

**Why does the Chinese executive director repeatedly tell the English manager to discuss business issues with Mr Li?**

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***Please watch the three parts of the conversation between Mr Parker and Mr Wang one more time and then answer the following questions.***

**Question 7**

***What are the communication problems between Mr Parker and Mr Wang? Please give a brief description and explanation.***

**Question 8**

***How could Mr Parker and Mr Wang improve their communication? Please make some suggestions.***