

# Culture notes

## 0.2 In class

**Penélope Cruz** (b. 1974) is a Spanish actress and model. She became famous in Spain when she was only eighteen and she starred in the film *Jamón Jamón* with Javier Bardem. She began to work in big Hollywood films in 2001 and became internationally famous after starring in *Vanilla Sky* with Tom Cruise and *Blow* with Johnny Depp. She married Javier Bardem in 2010 and they have two children. She was also a model for L’Oreal.

**Paulo Coelho** (b. 1947) is a famous writer and songwriter born in Brazil. His book *The Alchemist* has been translated into over fifty different languages.

**Cristiano Ronaldo** (b. 1985) is a Portuguese footballer who has played for the Spanish club Real Madrid, the Italian Juventus and the Portuguese national team. As a child, he was diagnosed with a heart condition, although after undergoing an operation, he began his career. He is officially recognised as one of the two best football players in the world, together with Lionel Messi.

**Angela Merkel** (b. 1954) is a German politician. In 2005 she became the first ever female Chancellor of Germany. She was a research scientist before she became a politician. Many people believe she is the most important leader in the European Union. In 2018 she was voted the world’s most powerful woman for a record fourteenth time by *Forbes* magazine.

**Garry Kasparov** (b. 1963) is a former Russian chess champion. He became the youngest ever World Chess Champion in 1985 at the age of twenty-two, when he beat Anatoly Karpov. In 1984 the final between Kasparov and Karpov became the first and only chess world championship to be abandoned without a result. Kasparov retired in 2005 to concentrate on politics and writing.

**Roger Federer** (b. 1981) is a professional Swiss tennis player who began playing tennis at the age of eight. He is the first Swiss man to win a Grand Slam tournament. By May 2019, he has won a massive total of 342 matches in men’s Grand Slam tournaments, the most that anyone has ever won. He is a very popular player with fans and fellow players alike. He won the Stefan Edberg Sportsmanship Award for the thirteenth time in 2017 and the ATP World Tour Fans’ Favourite award for the sixteenth time in 2018.

**Dakota and Elle Fanning:** Dakota (b. 1994) and Elle (b. 1998) Fanning are American actresses and sisters. Dakota began acting at the age of five. She is famous for her roles in *War of the Worlds* with Tom Cruise and *The Twilight Saga*. Elle is most famous for her roles in *Super 8*, *We Bought a Zoo* and *Maleficent*.

## 0.4 My family

**Arsenal F.C.** is an English football club based in London. They are very successful and play in the English Premier League. The club was started in 1886 and has one of the highest incomes and most fans in the world. Their fans call themselves the ‘Gunners’. Arsenal’s biggest rivals are Liverpool F.C., Tottenham Hotspur, Manchester City, Manchester United and Chelsea.

**London Grammar** are an English indie pop band founded in Nottingham in 2009. As of 2019, they have released two studio albums.

## 0.8 Times and dates

**Valentine’s Day** is celebrated on 14 February. It is a day when we celebrate romantic love and couples give each other cards and gifts such as flowers or chocolates. People often send anonymous cards to someone they like. The legend dates back to the time of St Valentine, who, according to legend, was a priest in ancient Rome.

**New Year’s Day** is celebrated on 1 January. It is a holiday in most countries in the world. People often light fireworks at midnight on 31 December (New Year’s Eve) to welcome the New Year and there are many enormous parties in different parts of the world.

**Halloween** is celebrated on the night of 31 October. It means ‘All Saints’ Eve’ and it is a time when people ridicule the power of death – it is the day before 1 November when people remember their dead loved ones. At Halloween, many children get dressed up as ghosts and skeletons or witches and vampires and in America they go trick or treating. They go to houses and ask for sweets or fruit. People make lanterns from pumpkins and put candles in them to keep away evil spirits.

## Unit 1 Family and friends

### 1.1 Vocabulary

**Kolkata** is one of the biggest cities in India and is located in the east. Kolkata (also known as Calcutta) is considered to be a cultural capital of the country and is also called the City of Joy.

### 1.5 Grammar

**Vlog** (short for a **video blog** or **video log**) is a form of online blog where you do not post text but videos. These usually show a person who explains or presents something to the audience (Internet users). In January 2000, Adam Kontras posted a video next to his blog entry to show that he was moving to Los Angeles, and that was the first ever vlog entry. Now, the most popular video sharing platform is YouTube.

### 1.6 Speaking

**Eminem** (b. 1972) is an American rapper, songwriter, record and film producer, and actor. He is one of the most famous hip-hop artists in the world. His debut album *Infinite* was released in 1999 and as of 2019, he has won fifteen Grammy Awards – the most valued award in the music industry.

**Terry Pratchett** (1948–2015) was an English fantasy novel writer. He is most well-known for the *Discworld* series, which has about forty volumes. He wrote his first short story when he was thirteen and it was published when he was fifteen. He was a journalist before becoming

a full-time novelist. He has won many awards and was knighted in 2009 for his services to literature. He was famous for wearing big black fedora hats. In 2007 he was diagnosed with a rare form of Alzheimer's disease.

**The Colour of Magic** is the first of Terry Pratchett's books in the *Discworld* series. It's about a wizard called Rincewind who isn't a very good wizard and is very cynical. In *The Colour of Magic* he has to make a journey across the Disc with Twoflowers and the two undergo lots of dangerous adventures before they find out that they are in a game controlled by the gods.

**Stephenie Meyer** (b. 1973) is an American young-adult fiction writer. Her most famous books are the *Twilight* series. Before she became an author she was a receptionist in a property company. She had never written anything before *Twilight*. Her sister persuaded her to send the novel to different agents and she was eventually given a publishing deal. She now earns millions of dollars every year and also helps produce her own and other novels for films.

**The Twilight Saga** is a series of fantasy romance films for young adults based on the novels by Stephenie Meyer. The films are about the life of a teenage girl called Bella Swan (played by Kristen Stewart) who falls in love with a vampire called Edward Cullen (played by Robert Pattinson). There are five films in the Saga: *Twilight*, *New Moon*, *Eclipse* and *Breaking Dawn* Parts I and II.

**Orlando Bloom** (b. 1977) is an English actor. He is most famous for his roles in *The Lord of the Rings*, *The Hobbit* and *Pirates of the Caribbean*. When he was young his mother suggested that he take Art and Drama classes and he eventually studied acting at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. He has won many awards. He has a tattoo of the word 'nine' in the invented language of Elvish, like most of the other actors who were in *The Fellowship of the Ring* in *The Lord of the Rings*. He is a Buddhist.

**Martin Freeman** (b. 1971) is an English actor. He is most famous for his roles in the *The Office*, *The Hobbit* and the *Sherlock* TV series. When he was seventeen he decided that he wanted to be an actor and enrolled at the Central School of Speech and Drama in London. He has won several important awards.

**The Hobbit** was written by J. R. R. Tolkien in 1937 and it was later adapted into a film trilogy. It is set before *The Lord of the Rings*. *The Hobbit* follows the journey of Bilbo Baggins and recounts how Bilbo first found the ring. Although it was originally seen as a fairytale for children, *The Hobbit* is full of references to Norse and Anglo-Saxon mythology and culture.

**Norah Jones** (b. 1979) is a musician, singer-songwriter and actress. She was born in New York. She studied jazz piano at university. Her style of music is influenced by jazz, country and soul. She won several music awards whilst she was still at high school. In 2003 she won five Grammy awards in one ceremony and she has sold more than fifty million albums. Her father was the famous Indian sitar player, Ravi Shankar.

**Katy Perry** (b. 1984) is an American singer. She came from a religious background and originally studied gospel singing. Her first single, released in 2008, was *I Kissed a Girl* and it went to number one in the charts. Her second single *Hot 'n' Cold* went to number three. She was married briefly to Russell Brand, the British presenter and comedian. She was the first person to have more than fifty million followers on Twitter. She is an ambassador for UNICEF and donates a lot of money to charity.

**Natalie Portman** (b. 1981) is an Israeli-American actress, born in Jerusalem. She won an Oscar, BAFTA and Golden Globe for her role as Nina Sayers in *Black Swan*. She started dance classes when she was four years old and she also has a degree in Psychology from Harvard University. She is a vegan and an animal rights advocate.

## 1.7 Writing

**Tom Holland** (b. 1996) is an English actor. He is most famous for playing Spider-Man in the Marvel Cinematic Universe.

## Unit 2 Food

### 2.1 Vocabulary

**Brownies** are chocolate cakes, originally from the USA, which are usually fudgy and can include nuts, different types of chocolate, frosting, fruit and other ingredients.

**Spaghetti Bolognese** is a pasta dish with sauce made from tomatoes, minced meat, onions, garlic and herbs. It is extremely popular outside Italy, however it is not originally part of traditional Italian cuisine.

### 2.3 Listening

**Spanish omelette** is a traditional Spanish dish known as *tortilla*. It is made with eggs and potatoes. The potatoes are sliced very thinly and usually fried in olive oil. They are then removed, mixed with eggs and then slowly fried until ready. It is a very popular dish for a snack or a picnic. Some people like to add onions, or ham or sausage to the mix.

### 2.4 Reading

**Pad thai** is a type of popular stir-fried Thai dish which is made with rice noodles, various vegetables, eggs, fish sauce, tamarind pulp and other ingredients. It is commonly served as street food in Thailand.

**Tom yum** is a type of Thai soup which combines sour and spicy tastes. It is usually made with shrimps, herbs, tomatoes, lime juice, as well as a chilli, shallot and garlic paste serving as its base. Tom yum goong has river shrimp as part of its base.

**Quesadilla** is a Mexican dish made with a tortilla which is filled with cheese and then grilled. It is common to add other ingredients and also to serve a dessert version with chocolate inside.