

Transatlantic Letter List of Topics



<p># 1 Why Are Americans Always Smiling? <i>Sep. 15, 2005</i></p>	<p>First of all, like people everywhere, there are times when Americans smile, and times when we do not. What is noticeable about Americans ...</p>
<p># 2 Why Are Germans So Unfriendly? <i>Sep. 29, 2005</i></p>	<p>This is often the impression Americans get after arriving here. In over 30 years of experience with the Germans, however ...</p>
<p># 3 Action Seekers <i>Oct. 13, 2005</i></p>	<p>Americans often become impatient with Germans and their love of thorough discussions. Americans are action seekers ...</p>
<p># 4 Truth Seekers <i>Oct. 27, 2005</i></p>	<p>Germans tend to be truth seekers who take a lot of time in discussing the issues involved, and who strive for building up a broad consensus ...</p>
<p># 5 Bantering — an American Greeting Style <i>Nov. 10, 2005</i></p>	<p>Culturally different greeting styles can lead to serious misimpressions. Let's suppose that Larry Johnson is new to Germany ...</p>
<p># 6 Criticism — Cross-Cultural Crossfire <i>Nov. 24, 2005</i></p>	<p>We have different ways of offering and receiving criticism. Americans usually begin with some sort of personal gesture, often reassuring ...</p>
<p># 7 The Simple Art of Conversation <i>Dec. 8, 2005</i></p>	<p>You meet someone and engage in some sort of conversation. Just be yourself and find topics you have in common ...</p>
<p># 8 Oh, Christmas Tree! <i>Dec. 22, 2005</i></p>	<p>Christmas is coming, so let's have something a little different. We have a common heritage in the way we celebrate Christmas ...</p>
<p># 9 The Frontier Experience <i>Jan. 5, 2006</i></p>	<p>There is a concept of "frontier" that seems to be very American. Germans usually learn in school that the word means the border ...</p>
<p># 10 The Weight of History <i>Jan. 19, 2006</i></p>	<p>Germans show quite a bit of interest in history, more so than Americans as a rule, and for good reason. The lessons of history ...</p>
<p># 11 Conceptual Frames <i>Feb. 2, 2006</i></p>	<p>When interacting with a culturally different person, each of us is thinking in different ways, and deriving meaning from the world ...</p>
<p># 12 American Individualism <i>Feb. 16, 2006</i></p>	<p>Perhaps no country is as noted for individualism as the United States. We Americans think of ourselves as individuals, responsible for ...</p>
<p># 13 The German "Konzept" <i>Mar. 2, 2006</i></p>	<p>Few words in the German language have given me so many headaches as the word "Konzept." Germans love this word and use it ...</p>
<p># 14 The Game of Culture <i>Mar. 16, 2006</i></p>	<p>Culture matters; culture is a factor in your life greatly influencing how you deal with other persons, and in turn, influencing how they ...</p>
<p># 15 U.S. Patriotism <i>Mar. 30, 2006</i></p>	<p>One of the first things that strikes Germans when they travel to the U.S. is the open display of patriotism — flags flying everywhere ...</p>

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<p># 16 Culture</p> <p><i>Apr. 13, 2006</i></p>	<p>Few topics these days are so widely discussed as culture, and few are so consistently misunderstood and so drastically underestimated ...</p>
<p># 17 Order Must Be!</p> <p><i>Apr. 27, 2006</i></p>	<p>Maybe you get the point — Ordnung muss sein! — is not easy to translate. The closest thing in the U.S. would be “Get your sh*t together” ...</p>
<p># 18 The Acid Test</p> <p><i>May 11, 2006</i></p>	<p>In discussing culture, people sometimes get worked up about the use of “profiles” or “characteristics” in describing a people ...</p>
<p># 19 Achievers</p> <p><i>May 25, 2006</i></p>	<p>We Americans like to define ourselves by what we achieve, or more precisely, how others evaluate what we achieve. These evaluations ...</p>
<p># 20 Argumentation</p> <p><i>June 8, 2006</i></p>	<p>Again and again, I’ve had German professionals come to me and ask about “argumentation.” For a long time, I didn’t really understand what ...</p>
<p># 21 Football</p> <p><i>June 29, 2006</i></p>	<p>After writing the last Letter, I watched the opening match of the world cup games, Germany versus Costa Rica, and was very pleasantly ...</p>
<p># 22 Why Don’t Americans Learn German?</p> <p><i>July 13, 2006</i></p>	<p>Of course some of us do (wirklich). Most Americans, however, couldn’t be bothered learning some crazy foreign language ...</p>
<p># 23 Do Germans Ever Relax?</p> <p><i>July 27, 2006</i></p>	<p>Of course they do — at home and in other situations they see as private or informal. Nevertheless, the general perception that ...</p>
<p># 24 Different Ways of Thinking</p> <p><i>Aug. 10, 2006</i></p>	<p>We speak two different languages, English and German. We acquire the one, our mother tongue, from childhood on; we must learn the other ...</p>
<p># 25 Technical Solutions</p> <p><i>Aug. 24, 2006</i></p>	<p>If there’s one thing that Americans love and rely on, it’s technology. Somewhat less noticed perhaps is that the word technical also has ...</p>
<p># 26 Those Stiff Germans</p> <p><i>Sep. 7, 2006</i></p>	<p>Here’s a straightforward proposition for you: behind every action there’s a positive intention. I believe this very strongly, and furthermore ...</p>
<p># 27 Build a Transatlantic Work Culture</p> <p><i>Sep. 28, 2006</i></p>	<p>Whenever we work together, we generate a work culture; it is our way of getting things done and producing results. This work culture ...</p>
<p># 28 Transatlantic Detective Skills: Observe</p> <p><i>Oct. 12, 2006</i></p>	<p>In the last Letter, I talked about building a transatlantic work culture — generating a new, common mental platform for effective work ...</p>
<p># 29 Transatlantic Detective Skills: Inquire</p> <p><i>Oct. 26, 2006</i></p>	<p>To inquire means “to seek information by asking questions or the equivalent.” As transatlantic detectives, the second important skill is seeking ...</p>
<p># 30 Detective Skills: Uncover Assumptions</p> <p><i>Nov. 16, 2006</i></p>	<p>Every day we are making assumptions about what is right, true, trustworthy, and so on, in the world we live in. When you drive over a bridge ...</p>

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<p># 31 Detective Skills: <i>Test Hypotheses</i> <i>Dec. 14, 2006</i></p>	<p>At some point while investigating, a good detective forms a hypothesis — a theory about what he believes has happened. In the same way ...</p>
<p># 32 Detective Skills: <i>Reconstruct the Case</i> <i>Jan. 11, 2007</i></p>	<p>In the last four Transatlantic Letters we have been examining skills similar to those used by a good detective. The final such “detective skill” is ...</p>
<p># 33 The American Flag <i>Feb. 15, 2007</i></p>	<p>Perhaps the most celebrated picture of the U.S. flag is the one during World War Two showing marines in full battle-gear raising the flag over ...</p>
<p># 34 Theater of Learning <i>Mar. 15, 2007</i></p>	<p>Shakespeare said that “all the world’s a stage, and all the men and women merely players” We are actors playing numerous and changing roles ...</p>
<p># 35 The Campus Shootings <i>Apr. 19, 2007</i></p>	<p>On Monday of this week Cho Seung-Hui, a young Korean student at Virginia Tech University, walked into a classroom building and shot ...</p>
<p># 36 Recognition and Compliments <i>May 24, 2007</i></p>	<p>There is one basic human need that comes up again and again in cross-cultural encounters, and that is the need for recognition. We all feel ...</p>
<p># 37 Enthusiasm <i>June 14, 2007</i></p>	<p>The word “enthusiasm” means emotional involvement in something; you can have or show, for example, “a lot of enthusiasm for football” ...</p>
<p># 38 Abstractions <i>July 12, 2007</i></p>	<p>When we use abstractions, this often causes confusion and misunderstandings. These are words for “things” you cannot see, hear, feel ...</p>
<p># 39 German <i>Sachlichkeit</i> <i>Aug. 16, 2007</i></p>	<p>A strong ideal in modern Germany, especially in business, is called “Sachlichkeit” Usually translated as “objectivity,” it could just as well ...</p>
<p># 40 Us and Them <i>Sep. 27, 2007</i></p>	<p>Cross-cultural encounters, especially if they are problematic, always seem to revolve somehow around “us and them.” As often as not...</p>
<p># 41 Money <i>Oct. 25, 2007</i></p>	<p>Ever since Copernicus spoiled the perfect universe back in the 16th century, humankind has not been the same. The sun as the center of everything...</p>
<p># 42 Empathy <i>Nov. 29, 2007</i></p>	<p>Here’s a scene that has probably been going on since the beginning of time. The husband comes home from work, finds his wife upset about ...</p>
<p># 43 Growing Up in Portland <i>Dec. 28, 2007</i></p>	<p>The year is drawing to an end, and that brings back memories of old. Here’s something a bit different — a few impressions of growing up ...</p>
<p># 44 Trust in Transatlantic Teams <i>Jan.31, 2008</i></p>	<p>More and more these days, people in organizations are required to work in teams, very often on short notice and with persons they hardly know.</p>
<p># 45 Success and Recognition for Americans <i>Feb.28, 2008</i></p>	<p>Americans place great value on the approval and admiration of their fellows. Friendly gestures, praise, and complements all play a central role...</p>
<p># 46 Who Elects the President? <i>Sept.26, 2008</i></p>	<p>The upcoming national elections this year in the U.S. are attracting even more interest than usual. One thing many of my German friends ...</p>

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# 47 The Sara Palin Show <i>Oct. 25, 2008</i>	At the end of August this year, many people were surprised when John McCain announced Sarah Palin, governor of Alaska, as his choice ...
# 48 The New President <i>Mar. 19, 2009</i>	With the inauguration of Barack Obama in January, that “other America” was back — the one that is politically liberal ...